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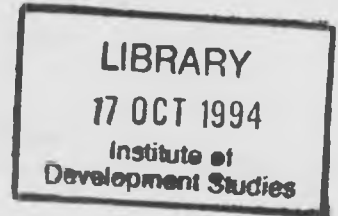
RESEARCH REVIEW

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KWAME NKRUMAH, GEORGE PADMORE AND W.E.B. DU BOIS

Kwadwo Afari-Gyan

From 1945 Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972) developed close relations first with George Padmore (1902-1959), a Trinidadian, and then with Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963), an African-American who became a Ghanaian citizen soon before he died. As Men of thought and action, they exerted great influence on the affairs of their day; and, through their writings, they continue to exert considerable influence on contemporary thinking in the black world. They all lie buried in Ghana. This essay seeks to explore the basis of their relationship.

Kwame Nkrumah spent ten years in America (1935-1945) furthering his education. During the period he developed a pan-Africanist orientation.¹ In this he was perhaps most deeply inspired by the pan-Africanist ideas of Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican who had gone to America in 1916 and had subsequently founded and led the largest black movement of his time. Interestingly, Garvey's ideas and *modus operandi* were highly objectionable to both Padmore and Du Bois.²

In 1943 Nkrumah became friends with C.L.R. James, a West Indian. James had gone to America in 1938 from London, where he had worked closely with Padmore, a long time spokesman for the rights of colonial peoples, who had settled in London since 1935 and had declared himself to be neutral in nothing affecting African people. Nkrumah had been highly impressed by Padmore's writings on the colonial situation, but he did not know him in person. So, before leaving America for Britain in 1945, he got James to write to Padmore imploring him to meet Nkrumah on his arrival in London because he knew nobody there and had nowhere to lodge. In the letter, James told Padmore that Nkrumah was *determined to throw the Europeans out of Africa*³ Padmore met him and took him to lodge at the hostel of the West African Students' Union. According to James, for over two years *Nkrumah worked and lived in the very closest association with Padmore*⁴ In fact, from that meeting in London began a long and intimate friendship between the two men, which grew stronger with the passage of time and was ended only by Padmore's death.

Nkrumah's original intention in going to Britain was to study law or continue work toward a doctorate degree in philosophy. But neither was to be. He got so involved in the activities of workers and students from the colonies that he hardly had time for much else. Along with Padmore, he also associated closely with intellectuals of socialist and anti-colonial orientation in and around London.

Nkrumah viewed these activities as part of a general search for solutions to Africa's problems. And it was in pursuit of the same aim that he got actively involved in the Pan-African Conference held in Manchester in 1945, a meeting which would finally consolidate the pan-African idea for him. The conference was considered to be the continuation of a series which had become closely associated with the name and activities of Du Bois. As far back as 1897, Du Bois had written that *Should the Negro become a factor in world history, this will be through a Pan-Negro movement*.⁵ And since 1919 he had been the driving force

behind the pan-African congresses antecedent to the Manchester meeting. Thus, in acknowledgement of his enormous contributions to the pan-African cause, Du Bois, then aged seventy-seven, was invited to preside over the Manchester meeting. And Nkrumah says that although he had known Du Bois in America and even spoken on the same platform with him, *it was, however, at the conference in Manchester that I was drawn closely to him.*⁶ James saw the coming together of the three men at the conference as an auspicious event in pan-Africanism. According to him, *The merging of the two currents represented by Padmore and Du Bois and the entry of Nkrumah signalled the ending of one period and the beginning of another.*⁷

The merger was truly significant; for even though they had been pursuing similar causes, Padmore and Du Bois did not see eye to eye for a long time. The reason for this would seem to be ideological. After joining the Communist Party of the US in 1927, Padmore would reprove Du Bois as a '*petty bourgeois Negro intellectual*' for his *reflexive anti-communism.*⁸ In fact, while Du Bois would not become a communist for a long time, from 1929 - when Padmore took part in the congress of the League Against Imperialism held in Frankfurt - to 1934 he was perhaps the most important black man in official communist circles. For most of that period he served as the representative of the black world on the Communist Trade Union International (Prornintern), and in that capacity he lived and worked in the Soviet Union and Europe.

Padmore broke with the communists after 1934. He had come increasingly to feel that the communists were not really interested in the problems of black people. And the crunch came when the Soviet Union joined the Western European-dominated League of Nations in 1934. The League's collective security doctrine implied that thenceforth the Soviet Union would collaborate closely with Western Europe to the detriment of the anti-colonial struggle. For Padmore this was demonstrated the following year when the Soviet Union proved unwilling to assist Ethiopia when she was invaded by Italy. Padmore was formally expelled from the Communist Party, ironically accused of *petty bourgeois nationalist deviation* and an incorrect understanding of the colonial problem.⁹

It was after his disaffection with the communist that Padmore began to seek collaboration with Du Bois on the problems of black people. In 1934 he wrote to Du Bois, probably for the first time, asking: *Will you help us in trying to create a basis for unity among Negroes of Africa, America, the West Indies, and other lands? We think it can be done if men like you were to lend a helping hand.*¹⁰ From that time on, Padmore would inform Du Bois about important events concerning black people in Africa and Europe. And whatever he may have thought of Du Bois previously, it now became increasingly evident that he held him in the greatest esteem. On Du Bois' eightieth birthday, Padmore sent him a letter in which he spoke of his sincerity and tenacity of purpose, and described him as a *fighter for freedom and democratic justice*, who had earned a place in the hearts of black people the world over.¹¹

After the break with the communists, Padmore's outlook on the colonial problem changed. Before 1934 he had worked with dedication in communist circles because he believed that capitalism in metropolis and colony alike would be liquidated through the solidarity and collaboration of the world's working classes. But gradually, as a result of his experiences, he came to the conclusion that *colonial problems could be settled only by colonial peoples.*¹² Consequently, he was now looking for ways to *centralize the activities of the various organizations* of whatever description dealing with Africans and peoples of African descent as a means of promoting greater awareness and co-operative action. He also now believed that colonial intellectuals had a *crucial role to play* in giving leadership to the

decolonization effort. In view of what James had said about Nkrumah in his letter introducing him to Padmore, one can understand the *instant* attraction between the two men upon their meeting in London. Nkrumah later wrote, perhaps not without a tinge of exaggeration:

*When I first met George Padmore in London ... we both realized from the very beginning that we thought along the same lines and talked the same language. There existed between us that rare affinity for which one searches for so long but seldom finds in another human being. We became friends at the moment of our meeting and our friendship developed into that indescribable relationship that exists between two brothers.*¹³

After the Second World War, Padmore became *more and more concerned with West African Affairs ... to the exclusion of an active interest in events transpiring elsewhere on the continent.*¹⁴ This was because events were picking up so fast in West Africa as to make him believe that the right conditions were being created for a successful anti-colonial revolution, particularly in Ghana. By 1954, based on events in Ghana, Padmore would write optimistically to Du Bois: *Believe me, dear Doctor, no force on earth can now hold back the forward march of Africa.*¹⁵

Padmore's changed outlook on the colonial problem forms an important backdrop to the proceedings of the Manchester conference. As joint-secretaries, Padmore and Nkrumah devoted much time and energy to organizing the conference. With Du Bois they also played a significant role in the writing of the declarations of the conference. Padmore now saw pan-Africanism as an ideology in its own right, neither communist nor capitalist; an ideology which would enable Africa to steer clear of any entanglements in the cold war then fast shaping up. From the Manchester conference on, Nkrumah too came to see pan-Africanism as a political force which had the potential of uniting Africa against colonialism and imperialism.

After a detailed examination of the colonial situation, the following major conclusions emerged from the deliberations of the conference:

1. colonial governments should be replaced with institutions responsive to the needs and aspirations of the colonized peoples;
2. racial discrimination in all its forms should be abolished;
3. the principle of self-determination should be applied to all peoples without exception;
4. in the struggle for independence, unless prevailing circumstances made violence the only viable option, Positive Action (defined as the *constitutional application of strikes, boycotts and non-cooperation based on the principle of absolute non-violence*) should be used;¹⁶
5. finally, the only way to defeat colonialism was for the participants to return to their respective countries and organize the masses of people in support of the struggle for independence.

The positions adopted by the conference and the association Nkrumah had formed with Padmore and Du Bois were to have considerable influence on his subsequent political career:

(1) In line with the recommendation of the conference, and with Padmore's active prodding, Nkrumah returned to Ghana in December 1947 to become the Secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), a political movement formed earlier that year in the quest for self-rule. But by the middle of 1949 Nkrumah had parted ways with the movement. Ideological and organizational differences mainly accounted for the breach. On

the one hand was Nkrumah, the avowed socialist and grassroots organizer (trade unions, youth movements, women's organisations, etc.) given to confrontational agitation. On the other hand were the majority of the UGCC leadership, who preferred a more conservative, constitutional form of political agitation and collaboration with the chiefs to mass political organization. The breach might have served to draw Nkrumah even more closely to Padmore.

(2) Having broken with the UGCC, Nkrumah formed his own political party, the Convention Peoples Party (CPP), in 1949 to mobilize the broad masses of people in the struggle for independence.

(3) In 1950 Nkrumah used Positive Action against the colonial government when he felt that it was dragging its feet on the issue of self-government.

(4) Just as Padmore had repudiated both communism and capitalism, for some time Nkrumah entertained the idea of a socialism peculiarly suited to Africa and formulated the idea of *philosophical consciencism* as its basis.¹⁷

(5) Beginning from their London days, Padmore became a close adviser to Nkrumah, and from December 1957 till his death served as his Special Adviser on African Affairs.

As Special Adviser Padmore's role was described by A.L. Adu, then Permanent Secretary in Ghana's Foreign Affairs Ministry, as to *carry through (Nkrumah's) policy for the emancipation of those parts of Africa still under foreign rule and therefore to work with nationalist movements and political parties, an area of activity which it would be inappropriate for civil servants to engage in at the time.*¹⁸ Be that as it may, another reason for setting up the new office was Nkrumah's dissatisfaction with the general performance of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. He felt that the Ministry *did not have an adequate sense of urgency; that it could not anticipate events.*¹⁹ And, according to Dei-Anang, a top civil servant at the time, Nkrumah was worried in particular about the Ministry's *capacity to interpret his African policies with his own vigour and vision.*²⁰ There can be little doubt, too, that both Nkrumah and Padmore saw the new office as at least a partial fulfilment of a desire expressed at the Manchester conference to have a central place to *keep in touch with the whole of the African world and know what is going on.*²¹ But, of course, the Special Adviser's work would entail much more than keeping track of happenings in Africa; it would seek to change and direct affairs in accordance with Nkrumah's vision of pan-Africanism.

Padmore came to the office with very impressive credentials indeed. His commitment to African emancipation was unquestionable. He had a firm theoretical understanding of the working of colonialism. He was widely known and respected by African nationalists. He had practical experience of organizing groups (students, workers, etc.) for anti-colonial causes. He had had long contact with Africa's liberation movements. And he was a trusted brother who had run errands for Nkrumah since the early 1950s.

While Nkrumah naturally saw Padmore as the logical choice for the new office, there was considerable opposition to his presence. Some people objected on the ground that there were already several West Indians in senior positions in the administration and the judiciary. Others erroneously thought that he was still a communist. Some top civil servants, especially in the Foreign Ministry, resented the fact that Padmore's office was a parallel organization in the country's foreign service, mostly insulated from control by the Ministry. Finally, some members of the CPP resented his role in the National Association of Socialist Students Organization (NASSO), where, in weekly discussion sessions, sometimes attended by Nkrumah, he tried to instil proper socialist ideals and attitudes as opposed to what he considered to be phoney socialism of some of the CPP members.²²

As joint architect and the implementer of Nkrumah's pan-Africanist vision, Padmore organized conferences, accompanied the Prime Minister on visits to African countries, and ran errands for him. Unfortunately, he was not long in the office; he died in London in August 1959. As could be expected, Nkrumah was highly distressed at Padmore's death. In a fitting tribute, Nkrumah called him a personal friend whose loss was irreplaceable. He said he had worked with him for nearly fifteen years toward the independence and unity of Africa, and had all along been impressed by his indomitable spirit and his profound dislike for colonialism and every kind of oppression and subjugation.²³ On another occasion Nkrumah said: *One day the whole of Africa will surely be free and united, and when the final tale is told the significance of Padmore's work will be revealed.*²⁴ On 10th October, 1959 Padmore's ashes were brought down from London and buried at the Castle, amid protests by the parliamentary opposition. After Padmore's death the special adviser's office was converted into the Bureau of African Affairs to carry on similar work.

It is most doubtful if any man of his day knew more about Africa than George Padmore. So it was most fitting that in 1961 Nkrumah established a library in Accra devoted to research on Africa and named it after him. But in the general panic to undo practically everything that had any connection with Nkrumah after his overthrow, his opponents, in an act tantamount to collective amnesia, renamed the Padmore Library the Research Library on African Affairs.

Until Padmore's death, it was hardly possible to speak about Nkrumah's relationship with Du Bois without talking about the intermediation of Padmore. As the official representative of Nkrumah's party in London till he took office in Accra, Padmore was always abreast with major happenings and sometimes sought his advice, which he then passed on to Nkrumah.

On March 1, 1954 Nkrumah made an important economic policy statement in an address to the Legislative Assembly.²⁵ He said that, with the exception of public utilities, Ghana would welcome foreign capital and participation in all her industries. He added that he did not envisage any restrictions on the free transfer of profits, and promised a tax holiday and import duty relief. Nkrumah expressed similar sentiments at a press conference on June 17, 1954 when he said that his government would be socialist in the British sense and stated categorically that there would be no nationalization of industry.²⁶ In reaction to this development, Du Bois told Padmore that Nkrumah's economic policy was a source of great concern to him, because he did not seem sufficiently to appreciate the power and danger of Western capital. Padmore replied that Ghana had opted for a policy of neutrality and would take a middle road by adopting the good features of both capitalism and communism. Du Bois countered by saying that it was dangerous for Ghana to think that she could develop through reformed capitalism. He advised Nkrumah instead to seek aid from the socialist countries to build a viable public sector of the economy.²⁷

On the eve of Ghana's independence in 1957, Du Bois sent a message to Nkrumah in which he offered *a few words of advice for the future of Ghana and Africa.*²⁸ First, he told him to initiate a new series of pan-African congresses. This conformed with Nkrumah's own position that only united African action could eventually defeat imperialism. Thus in April 1958, barely a year after gaining independence, he called the first Conference of Independent African States. He followed this up in December with the All-African Peoples' Conference, which brought together for the first time anti-colonial forces and freedom fighters from various parts of the continent. It is not surprising that Du Bois was the only person from outside the continent invited to address the meeting. He could not do so in person because of ill-health, but his address was read on his behalf by his wife.²⁹ Quite apart from

these conferences, one of the most outstanding features of Nkrumah's political career was what Marais has described as his *intense drive towards African unity*.³⁰ In 1956, a year before Ghana's independence, he declared that: *We have a duty not only to the people of this country, but to the peoples everywhere in Africa who are striving towards independence*.³¹ On the eve of Ghana's independence he made the famous statement that: *Our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent*.³² And Nkrumah's efforts towards the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) are too well known to require recounting.

Secondly, Du Bois asked Nkrumah to work hard to achieve peace on the continent and in the world as a whole. This advice also conformed with Nkrumah's belief that the new nations of Africa could achieve development only in an atmosphere of general peace. At the conference of independent African states, he said one of their major tasks was *to examine the problem which dominates the world today, namely, the problem of how to secure peace*.³³ On a visit to America in 1958 he expressed his profound concern about the peace situation in the Middle East to President Eisenhower. Nkrumah's concern for peace led him to stand firmly against African countries joining military alliances, and against siting military bases and testing nuclear weapons on African soil. His prescription of a policy of non-alignment and positive neutrality must also be seen in the context of his general concern for peace. He believed that by not taking a predetermined stand on the East-West conflict, the non-aligned nations would constitute a force with the potential to hold the balance between the super powers in favour of peace. During his visit to America in 1958 he declared that the major task facing the non-aligned nations in the United Nations was *to use our strength wisely and objectively on the side of peace*.³⁴

Finally, Du Bois advised Nkrumah to build socialism as the only way to beat back the forces of neocolonialism. He believed that capitalism, white or black, could never bring about true development in Africa. In fact, by the end of 1959 Du Bois would come to the firm conviction that communism offered the only prospect for mankind to realize itself.

This conviction was borne of long study and experience. It is somewhat ironical that about the time Padmore parted ways with communism and began to collaborate with Du Bois, the latter was about to embark on a rather long journey to formal acceptance of that ideology. Du Bois did not fall for communism on his first visit to the Soviet Union in 1926. About that visit he later wrote: *I did not believe that the communism of the Russians was the program for America*.³⁵ But on subsequent visits, beginning from 1936, he began to change his view. He says that whereas affluence and stark poverty existed side by side in the West, he noticed, particularly in the Soviet Union, such systematic and economic progress as threatened to abolish poverty altogether.

In addition to his observations about the general progress of mankind in the communist world, certain specific incidents helped push Du Bois toward communism. He says that while no American university, excepting the black institutions, ever recognized his claim to scholarship, he received honours from several Eastern European universities and institutions.³⁶ He was particularly impressed by an honorary degree from Charles University in Prague, Czechoslovakia, a University which he says was *founded 100 years before Columbus discovered America*. He later wrote that: *This gesture of a communist nation doubtless prejudiced me in favour of socialism. But I do not think it alone was decisive*.³⁷ In 1959 he was highly impressed with, and most grateful for, medical care he received when he fell ill on a visit to the Soviet Union. In the same year he writes that while he was on an extended visit to China, beyond his expectation, *his birthday was given national notice ... and celebrated as never before*.³⁸

Against the foregoing background, toward the end of 1959 Du Bois had come to the end of the road. He wrote:

*I have studied socialism and communism long and carefully in lands where they are practised and in conversation with their adherents, and with wide reading. I now state my conclusion frankly and clearly: I believe in communism.*³⁹

He added that he once believed that capitalism could attain the same ends as socialism, namely, the welfare and happiness of mankind. But that: *After earnest observation I now believe that private ownership of capital and free enterprise are leading the world to disaster.*⁴⁰

In the light of the foregoing, one could understand Du Bois' insistence that Nkrumah should build socialism. But on this Nkrumah wavered. He began to move more to the left in economic matters after Padmore's death, which might suggest that Padmore influenced his *mixed economy* approach in the early period of independence. It would be true to say that Padmore eventually envisaged a socialist Ghana, but he was prepared to welcome foreign capital for some time. In any case, while at the ideological level Nkrumah always saw himself as a socialist, at the level of practice he began to show signs of some movement toward socialism only after 1960, in the form of a rapid expansion of the state sector of the economy at the expense of the private sector, as had been suggested earlier on by Du Bois. And having entertained the idea of a socialism specifically suited to Africa's conditions, it was not until after his overthrow that he finally came fully to embrace *scientific socialism* as the only valid solution to Africa's problems.

Upon Nkrumah's invitation, Du Bois came to Ghana in October 1961, after having formally joined the Communist Party of the United States in that year. He took Ghanaian citizenship on February 17, 1963.

One thing which attracted Du Bois to come and live in Ghana was the Encyclopaedia Africana project. Conceived as a twenty-volume inter-African project, the Encyclopaedia would offer Africa the opportunity *to reveal the genius of her people, their history, culture and institutions; their achievements as well as shortcomings.*⁴¹ According to Nkrumah, *I asked Dr. Du Bois to come to Ghana to pass the evening of his life with us and also to spend his remaining years in compiling an Encyclopaedia Africana, a project which is part of his whole intellectual life.*⁴² Du Bois had conceived the idea of such an encyclopaedia as far back as 1909, but he had to drop it for lack of financial support. He revived the idea in 1934 with assistance from Phelps Stokes, but dropped it ten years later, again for financial reasons. So the encyclopaedia was indeed a project Du Bois had wanted to undertake all his life, and this explains why he accepted the job of directing it at the ripe age of ninety-three. He knew too well that at that age he could not devote as much energy to the project as he would have wished; nonetheless, he felt happy that he was doing what he could toward bringing it to fruition.

In addition to the attraction the encyclopaedia held for Du Bois, there appears to have been another, if sentimental, reason for his coming to live in Ghana. On the occasion of his becoming a Ghanaian citizen, he said:

*My great grandfather was carried away from the Gulf of Guinea. I have returned that my dust shall mingle with dust of my forefathers. There is not much time left for me. But now my life will flow on in the vigorous young stream of Ghanaian life, which lifts the African personality to its proper place among men. And I shall not have lived in vain.*⁴³

When Du Bois came to Ghana the Government gave him a house. In presenting the house to him Nkrumah said: *I want my father to have easy, comfortable and beautiful*

days.⁴⁴ The Du Bois' were given two cars, and the household help consisted of a steward, cook, driver, and night watchman. Nkrumah used to visit often, sometimes with his wife and children.

Du Bois died at his home in the night of Tuesday, August 27, 1963. Two days later his coffin, dressed in the Ghanaian flag, was carried along a three-mile route to the burial place at Osu, the seat of Government, where the remains of Padmore already lay. In the evening of that day, Nkrumah paid glowing tribute to his *real friend and father* in a broadcast to the nation. After recounting Du Bois' role in the pan-African movement, Nkrumah called him a great son of Africa, who in addition to achieving great distinction as a poet, historian and sociologist, stood steadfastly against all forms of racial inequality, discrimination and injustice; and fought undauntedly for the emancipation of colonial and oppressed peoples. He spoke of his profound and searching scholarship, brilliant literary talent, and deep and penetrating mind. He saw the essential quality of Du Bois' life and achievement to consist in his *intellectual honesty and integrity*. He concluded by calling upon Ghanaians to let Du Bois continue to live in their memory as a phenomenon, a distinguished scholar and a great African patriot.⁴⁵

Nkrumah's call has not gone unheeded. On June 22, 1985 Flt.-Lt. J.J. Rawlings, Ghana's Head of State, officially dedicated the house in which Du Bois had lived his last years as the W.E.B. Du Bois Memorial Centre For Pan-African Culture. Later in the same year (November 2), the Government declared the house a National Monument. Then on August 27, 1986 the remains of Du Bois and the ashes of his wife were enshrined in a memorial tomb at the Centre. The Centre was charged with establishing a special research library, a display gallery for manuscripts and other Du Bois memorabilia, as well as facilities for lectures, film and video shows, and other educational and cultural programmes. It is envisaged that the Centre will eventually develop into a place where scholars and practitioners of African culture would meet, share their experiences and exchange ideas to the general enrichment of pan-African thought and culture.

In this essay I have tried to show that Nkrumah's relations with Padmore and Du Bois were based on a high degree of ideological affinity and mutual respect. Of course, the three men did not always speak quite the same language; but they were nonetheless solidly united in their singular dedication to African unity and the emancipation of black people in the diaspora.

Nkrumah's relations with Padmore and Du Bois proved to be salutary to all. Nkrumah learned much from their wide store of theoretical and practical knowledge; and, in view of their immense popularity and prestige, the association no doubt added to his international prestige and acceptability. As a matter of fact, some of Padmore's writings placed the burden of Ghana's revolution toward independence squarely on the shoulders of Nkrumah, thus contributing to his international visibility and stature as a revolutionary.⁴⁶ But, on the other side of the coin, it must have been most gratifying for Padmore and Du Bois to witness in the activities of Nkrumah's Ghana, as the first independent black African country, the flowering of their common dream and vision of black emancipation.

References

- 1) Imanuel Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1974) p. 375.
- 2) Padmore regarded Garvey's movement as a 'peculiar form of Zionism which

- ... toys with the aristocratic attributes of a non-existent "Negro Kingdom" ...' (James R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary: George Padmore's Path from Communism to Pan-Africanism*, London, Pall Mall Press, 1967, p. 12).
- While Du Bois saw Garvey as a great leader of men, he however "called his methods bombastic, wasteful, illogical and almost illegal." (Herbert Aptheker (ed.), *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois*, International Publishers Co., Inc., First Edition, 1968, p. 273.)
- 3) Basil Davidson, *Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Allen Lane, 1973) p. 39.
 - 4) C.L.R. James, *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (London: Allison and Busby, 1977) p. 77.
 - 5) Imanuel Geiss, op. cit., p. 173.
 - 6) *Daily Graphic*: Accra, August 30, 1963.
 - 7) C.L.R. James, op. cit., p. 76
 - 8) James R. Hooker, op. cit., p. 24
 - 9) For the virulent attacks on Padmore's integrity prior to his expulsion, see *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.
 - 10) *Ibid.*, p. 40
 - 11) *Ibid.*, pp 107-108
 - 12) *Ibid.*, p. 88
 - 13) *Ibid.*, pp. 139-140
 - 14) *Ibid.*, p. 103
 - 15) *Ibid.*, p. 122.
 - 16) Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Panaf, 1979) p. 92.
 - 17) See his book *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization* (Monthly Review Press, Revised Edition, 1970).
 - 18) Michael Dei-Anang, *The Administration of Ghana's Foreign Relations, 1957-1965: A Personal Memoir* (London: Athlone Press, 1969) p. 13.
 - 19) *Ibid.*, p. 2
 - 20) *Ibid.*, p. 12
 - 21) James Hooker, op. cit., p. 96.
 - 22) For Padmore's views on socialism in the African context, see William H. Friedland and Carl G. Rosberg (eds), *African Socialism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), Appendix 1, pp. 223-237.
 - 23) *Daily Graphic*, Accra, August 17, 1959.
 - 24) James Hooker, op. cit., p. 140
 - 25) *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 1 March, 1954.
 - 26) *Daily Graphic*, Accra, June 18, 1954.
 - 27) Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986) p. 341.
 - 28) Herbert Aptheker (ed.), op. cit., p. 400.
 - 29) The speech is reproduced in *ibid.*, pp. 402-404.
 - 30) Genoveva Marais, *Kwame Nkrumah: As I know Him* (Chichester: Janay Publishing Company, 1972) p.129.
 - 31) Kwame Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology* (London: Mercury Books, 1962) p. 71

- 32) *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- 33) Kwame Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path* (London: Panaf, 1973) p. 128.
- 34) For an account of how Ghana's mission at the UN in the early years of independence tried to realise this, see W.S. Thompson, *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966: Diplomacy, Ideology and the New State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) pp.52-53.
- 35) Herbert Aptheker (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 290
- 36) He received honorary degrees from East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union.
- 37) Herbert Aptheker (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 25
- 38) *Ibid.*, p. 49
- 39) *Ibid.*, p. 57
- 40) *Ibidem.*
- 41) Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia, in a Prefatory Note to Vol.1 of the *Encyclopaedia*, p.11. Entitled *Dictionary of African Biography*, it consists of biographical entries on Ghana and Ethiopia.
- 42) *Daily Graphic*, Accra, 30 August, 1963
- 43) *Ibid.*, 29 August, 1963
- 44) Gerald Home, *op. cit.*, p. 350
- 45) *Daily Graphic*, Accra, 30 August, 1963
- 46) See in particular his *The Gold Coast Revolution: The Struggle of an African People from Slavery to Freedom* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1953). Also his articles in the *Socialist Register*, 1954 and the *Crisis*, January 1955 and April 1957.

THE POLITICS AND NATIONALISM OF A.W. KOJO THOMPSON: 1924-1944

S.S. Quarcoopome

Introduction

During the period of his public political career spanning from 1924 to 1944, the Hon. A.W. Kojo Thompson aroused extreme emotions and judgements in both foes and admirers alike. To his critics and foes, he was *more extravagant than constructive*; an opportunistic self-seeker without any clearly cut political conviction and programme¹, an agitator, *hostile and condemning native authorities all the time*²; had no respect for the Europeans *who opened our eyes*³; and that his appeal as a politician was only to the *rabble*.⁴

On the other hand, estimation of his capabilities by his admirers more often than not had been rapturous. Nnamdi Azikiwe described him as *a man of destiny*.⁵ A newspaper reporter described him as *the most talked of politician in the Gold Coast*⁶; and that *he was fearless, independent, outspoken, conscientious and self-sacrificing patriot and leader; hero of the people, and a terror at the Legislature*⁷; who aimed at *purity and the highest probity in thought and action*.⁸ He was *saviour of Accra*⁹, *hero of Accra politics*¹⁰ and *patriot number one*.¹¹

Augustus William Kojo Thompson was prominently in the forefront of political activities both locally in Accra and nationally, particularly as a municipal member at the Legislative Council, during the period under review. It was a complex and explosive period during which the nationalists of the Gold Coast, both traditional and educated were forced, as it were, to re-state, reformulate, re-articulate and re-align their political and nationalistic convictions, in the face of the adoption of Indirect Rule¹², as the underlying principle of colonial administration in the Gold Coast. The subsequent adoption of such controversial measures as The Municipal Corporations Ordinance of 1924,¹³ the 1925 Constitution,¹⁴ the setting up of the Provincial Council System,¹⁵ the introduction of the elective principle¹⁶ and the coming into being of local political parties. The Native Administration Ordinance of 1927,¹⁷ among others, broke the ranks of the chiefs and the intelligentsia, who had previously co-operated under the umbrella of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS).¹⁸ In effect, the period was one of struggle for political leadership between the chiefs, with the support of the colonial administration, and the western educated elite whose ranks had been broken in 1920 with the formation of The National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA).¹⁹

Research by this writer has revealed that, unlike most of his well-known contemporaries such as I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, Nnamdi Azikiwe, W.E.G. Sekyi, Dr. F.V. Nanka-Bruce, Dr. J.B. Danquah et al., A.W. Kojo Thompson never attempted to articulate and document in the form of a book, monograph, pamphlet, newspaper articles etc. his political and nationalistic persuasions, objectives and ideals. This observation by no means implies that he had none; for it is indeed unimaginable that a man, who dominated politics in Accra and was one of the most prominent nationalists and Pan-Africanists that the Gold Coast had ever produced, could be without a political direction. Indeed so much had been written about

him favourably and - more often than not, especially in official circles - unfavourably, in the Press, Debates of the Legislative Council, Official Reports, etc.

The aim of this article is, as far as possible, within the context and circumstances of the period of his public political career, to try to bring out the politics and the nationalism of the Hon. A.W. Kojo Thompson.

The Prelude

Until the formation of the National Congress of British West Africa in 1920, the Gold Coast nationalist forces made up of the traditional and western educated elite, were generally united, and their views given articulation and expression by the ARPS, which was formed in 1897 and which successfully fought a 'pernicious' Land Bill.²⁰ Subsequently, the Society constituted itself into the mouthpiece and representative of the aboriginal people of the Gold Coast, and demanded - and was granted albeit grudgingly by the colonial administration²¹ - the right to be consulted on all legislative and political issues concerning the colony.

As a political and nationalist organisation, the ARPS under the influence and leadership of such men as John Mensah Sarbah,²² J.E. Kwegyir Aggrey,²³ J.W. Sey,²⁴ J.W. de Graft Johnson²⁵ and Rev. Attoh Ahuma²⁶ advocated extreme pride in African culture and the revival of its institutions. The Society therefore came down strongly on those Africans whom it regarded as having severed their links with, and for that matter behaved as though they looked down on their cultural and traditional heritage. History, to the ARPS, was to be the instrument of political agitation, advocating for western educated Africans and not Europeanised natives. In the words of The Gold Coast Aborigine:

*We simply want our education to enable us to develop and to improve our native ideas, customs, manners and institutions*²⁷.

In the event of the controversy over the Lands Bill of 1897, which in the eyes of the ARPS displayed a lack of meaningful understanding and appreciation of native institutions, the Society asked to be seen as an aid to the colonial administration, to educate it in the *idiosyncracies, customs, laws, habits, and modes of thought peculiar to the natives*.²⁸

Although it advocated the progressive transformation of traditional institutions to assume responsibility in modern administrative practices, in reality, the Society tended to be conservative. Furthermore, although it claimed to represent all the aborigines of the colony, in reality it was a small group of western educated people based at Cape Coast who, by and large, ran the Society and took decision on its behalf. Serious cracks began to appear in the Society from 1912 onwards. A section led by J.E. Casely Hayford influenced by the changed economic and political situation in the world,²⁹ began to extend their political vision and aspirations beyond the Gold Coast to cover the whole of British West Africa. The narrow and insular objectives of the ARPS, as well as the conservatism of its leadership, proved a hindrance and Casely Hayford and his supporters broke off from the ARPS. In March 1920, with representatives from Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, The National Congress of British West Africa was successfully inaugurated in Accra.³⁰

Opposition to Casely Hayford led by E.J.P. Brown was bitter and vehement. Joining forces with some traditional leaders led by Nana Ofori Atta I, they charged the Congress with elitism, unrepresentative of both traditional authority and the aboriginal people, but themselves and their class interests.³¹ The colonial government, naturally, threw in their lot with the chiefs and refused to co-operate with the Congress and successfully undermined the mission of its delegation to London.

When in 1922, members of the Congress captured the leadership of the ARPS, a small

but militant and intransigent group, led by Kobina Sekyi continued to espouse the original ideals of the Society. By and large, the activities of this group, in particular, that of its leader, Kobina Sekyi, as will be seen, immensely, affected the political drama that unfolded in Accra between 1924 and 1944, in which the Hon. A.W. Kojo Thompson was a crucial player.

The Man and his Politics

There is no doubt that Kobina Sekyi,³² though many years younger, exercised a palpable and an overwhelming influence on Kojo Thompson, particularly during the early years of his career and generally in the latter years. Kobina Sekyi was unique and very sophisticated in his perception of nationalism, the basis, of which to him, was history, culture and tradition. In the words of Wight, Kobina Sekyi's

Exercised an intangible influence as the moving spirit of the Aborigines Society..... a central figure in nationalist politics. He is not simply the leader of the intelligentsia, his thoughts and motives are often beyond their range; he is rather an intellectual, something almost uniquely rare in African life.³³

Indeed the circumstances surrounding the entrance of Kojo Thompson into nationalist politics clearly reveal that he was a sympathiser of the original ARPS ideals championed by Kobina Sekyi. Kojo Thompson's close co-operation and collaboration with Kobina Sekyi which lasted throughout his political career began in 1921, in the famous Asamankese case. The two worked together as counsels for the chiefs of Asamankese and Akwatia in their bid for independence from the Paramountcy of Akim Abuakwa.³⁴ The case which lasted for fourteen years was to earn Kojo Thompson and Kobina Sekyi the displeasure and hostility of Nana Ofori Atta and for that matter a substantial number of influential chiefs in the Gold Coast and the colonial government.

A further indication of this close relations, and for that matter, the espousal of original ARPS ideals by Kojo Thompson, was in connection with the Municipal Corporation Ordinance of 1924. This Ordinance was meant to replace the one that had been in existence since 1894, which over the years had elicited much criticism and discontent. It turned out that the 1924 Ordinance for which the western educated elite, particularly - the NCBWA - had fought so hard to have enacted, was not to be implemented but had to be withdrawn, in the face of a determined opposition to it in Accra.³⁵ An opposition led by Kojo Thompson and ably supported by Kobina Sekyi which, incidentally, also marked the beginning of the public political career of Kojo Thompson.

The role that Kojo Thompson and Kobina Sekyi played in the fight against the 1924 Ordinance must be appreciated in light of the struggle between the Old-guard ARPS and Casely Hayford. In this light, it is significant that Accra since 1920 had become a stronghold of the Congress, with the Paramount Chief, Nii Tackie Yaoboi, a leading supporter. It is also significant that it was Kobina Sekyi who wrote the petition against the Ordinance on behalf of the opposing Divisional Chiefs and elders of Accra.³⁶ It is further significant that when the Ga Mantse, Tackie Yaoboi, took legal action against the traditional leaders of the opposition, who sought his destoolment, he was represented by Messrs. Frans Dove, H.F. Ribero, Akilakpa Sawyer and Sackey, all lawyers belonging to the Congress; while the defendants were represented by Kobina Sekyi and Kojo Thompson.³⁷

The position adopted by Kobina Sekyi and Kojo Thompson, vis-a-vis the Municipal Corporation Ordinance of 1924 clearly reveals their allegiance to the old ideals of the ARPS. In the first place, contrary to ARPS aspirations, the new Ordinance marginalised traditional authority; the proposed councils were to be headed by Mayors, not from the ranks of the

traditional rulers or nominated by the ARPS as an electoral college and as a body representing the aboriginal people, but from the ranks of the western educated elite only. Secondly, the mode of election was contrary to traditional practice; election of the Councillors was to be by all ratepayers of the town; both male and female, who were twenty-one years and above. Thirdly, contrary to the stand of the Society, there was no way the new Councils would act as a basis for the training and as an educational institution for modern administrative practices for traditional authority.

Clearly therefore, the withdrawal of the Ordinance of 1924 was a victory not only for the destooling party in Accra, although they failed in their ultimate objective of having the Ga Mantse, Nii Tackie Yaobi destooled by associating him with the enactment, but also a moral and political victory for the ARPS old-guards vis-a-vis, the National Congress of British West Africa. Above all, it also reveals the political leaning of A.W. Kojo Thompson. Having established this, we certainly need to find an explanation for his attitude with regard to the 1925 Constitution.

The 1925 Constitution, introduced by Governor Guggisberg to reform the Legislative Council, was summarily rejected by conservatives and progressives of the ARPS and the Congress alike. Primarily, the rejection was on the issue of unofficial African representation at the Council; of the nine available to them, three were for the municipalities of Accra, Cape Coast and Sekondi from the ranks of the educated elite, while the remaining six were to be elected by the Provincial Councils of Head of Chiefs from their ranks.³⁸ In the words of Casely Hayford:

*Although we have been given the elective principle, it is more like getting the shadow rather than the substance ... we who have worked hard on this Council for the past 10 years had hoped that the result of our work would be such as to encourage Government to extend the franchise to more educated Africans to be able to serve their countries.*³⁹

He continued:

*The representation should be one and the same ... there should be no attempt to divide the people, as it were into sections, because our own constitution from our own usages ... we are one people. The division between educated and uneducated is a false one, because if education is good for the country, we must not at any time seek to divide the educated from the uneducated.*⁴⁰

The ARPS led by men like Kobina Sekyi, also rejected the Constitution, more or less along the lines of the argument of Casely Hayford. Furthermore, it argued for equal representation between official and unofficial members, and also objected to the way in which the constitution had marginalised the Society by not, first of all, consulting it in the drafting of the Constitution and secondly, by being given no role to play at all in its provisions. The society enjoined its members, both chiefs and western educated people, not to co-operate nor accept nomination to serve on both the Provincial Councils and on the new Legislative Council.⁴¹

There was a 'limiting condition' which made the acceptance of the Municipal Corporations Ordinance of 1924 a pre-requisite by the towns of Accra, Cape Coast and Sekondi, for electing their representatives to the Council. When the Ordinance was withdrawn, the Government had to suspend the limiting condition and approached the Ga Mantse, Nii Tackie Yaoboi, to nominate a western educated person to represent Accra until the necessary amendments were made to the Order-in-Council, for municipal elections to be held. The Ga Mantse replied that he could find no one willing to accept the nomination. But his detractors who were seeking his destoolment quickly submitted the name of Kojo

Thompson, who was introduced to the public at a mass rally at Bukom Square.⁴² Kojo Thompson's acceptance of the nomination surprised everyone, particularly the ARPS and the Congress. He was subjected to severe criticisms, and verbal insults. This landed him in social and political isolation for the next ten years.

Why did he accept the nomination? Needless to say he must have known that by so doing, he was, as it were, helping to make ineffective the boycott championed not only by the Congress, but also his own faction of the ARPS led by his friend Kobina Sekyi. Secondly by that act, he must have known that he was helping the colonial administration, for which he had no sympathy, out of an embarrassing and tight situation. Was it simply a matter of political immaturity or inordinate ambition? Be that as it may, it is very probable that he never wanted to disappoint those who nominated him, who had helped him to fight successfully against the Municipal Corporation Ordinance of 1924, and with whose help he had formed the Manbii Party, to enable him fight the municipal elections. In this connection, it is significant that one of the first things he did on the floor of the Legislative Council was to attack the Government's refusal to acquiesce to the decision of the people to destool Nii Tackie Yaoboi. Whether or not he was aware of the full consequences of accepting the nomination is not so clear for he never answered his critics.

In arriving at the decision to accept the nomination, it is very likely that he was influenced by the thought that it was only at the centre that there was a chance of influencing Government policy and possibly demanding further reform. If one accepts this argument, then it could be seen that the difference between him and the ARPS and the Congress, was not in the objectives, but in the means of achieving the objectives of the boycott. It is significant that at the Council, he held on and defended principles which clearly fell along the lines of the ARPS. He was outspoken on these and caused so much discomfort to many members, that he earned the displeasure of many, the most powerful of whom was Nana Ofori Atta, whom he single-handedly took on in the debates over the enactment of the Native Administration Ordinance of 1927.⁴³

Indeed, no less a critic of his on the nomination issue than Casely Hayford was later to regret his refusal to accept his nomination and to commend the wisdom of Kojo Thompson who accepted his with the view of fighting from within. He was also highly impressed that Kojo Thompson's voice was the only one at the Legislative Council that boldly and courageously stood against all the odds and fought the Native Administration Bill of 1927. Casely Hayford quickly re-entered politics and was elected as the municipal member for Sekondi in 1926, and began fighting, just as Kojo Thompson had done, from within.⁴⁴

At any rate, Kojo Thompson was never forgiven by the western educated elite and members of the Congress in Accra. As we have seen, when the necessary amendments to the 1925 Constitution were effected to allow for the municipal elections in 1926, his supporters constituted themselves into The Manbii Party. Unfortunately, a majority of them did not satisfy the property qualification. The Congress in Accra formed The Ratepayers Association and its candidate, Mr. J. Glover Addo, a lawyer, was successfully elected. Although he was continuously elected to serve on the newly formed Accra Town Council between 1928 and 1936, the other three elected Africans on the Council were always members of the Ratepayers Association.

The role which he played with regard to the defeat of the Municipal Corporation Ordinance, and above all, the issue of the nomination resulted in his political isolation by members of the western educated elite, a class to which he properly belonged by virtue of birth, marriage and profession.⁴⁵ What this meant was that he could never look forward to establishing a political base, or to any form of advantageous association and support from

this quarter. In fact this was what happened throughout his political career from 1924 to 1944. Indeed it is not on record that he ever tried to do this, but rather, throughout this period, for better or for worse, he depended on and cultivated the support of the mass of the people. This policy turned out to be a shrewd one which paid off in the 1935 municipal elections, when the economic and political climate turned against the leaderships of the conservative nationalists.

Economically, low cocoa prices in the 1930's had led to hold-ups' by the farmers, who were refusing to sell their cocoa to European firms and boycotting their imported goods, until prices improved. The conservative political leadership of the educated elite was blamed for doing nothing to help.⁴⁶ Politically, it was the arrival and activities of two radical West Africans in Accra, namely I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson and Nnamdi Azikiwe.

I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, a Sierra Leonean, educated in the Soviet Union arrived in the Gold Coast in 1933, full of Communist and Pan-African ideas, with the ultimate aim of uprooting colonialism in Africa. The economic discontent of the farmers of the Gold Coast gave him the opportunity he wanted and in 1934, with Bankole Renner formed the radical West African Youth League, in his words *to give political organisation to the conservative Gold Coast forces ... under the common bond of brotherhood and comradeship*.⁴⁷ The WAYL joined forces with Kojo Thompson and his Manbii Party. With superb organisational ability and tireless energy, Wallace-Johnson helped in the mobilisation of the masses in Accra behind Kojo Thompson and his party, and helped to restructure and to give it a new radical identity.

Nnamdi Azikiwe came to settle in Accra in 1934 after his education in the United States of America. He was appointed the editor of *The African Morning Post*, which he in no time made the best-selling daily, not only in the Gold Coast but also in the whole of West Africa,⁴⁸ by his romantic and brilliant style of journalism. He expressed his motivation to enter the Gold Coast political arena thus:

*If constitutional reforms must come in dribs and drabs at the pleasure of the colonial ruler and not be regarded as a logical sequence in the historic evolution of any people towards statehood, then such people must agitate militantly within the law to bring about a rapid change in their status, to enable them to formulate and implement policies that would reflect the reforms desired by them and their forefathers. Hence my conviction that only dominion status would enable the Gold Coast to discover its national soul.*⁴⁹

'Zik', - as he came to be known - and Wallace-Johnson by using the columns of the newspaper and by public lectures, launched an all out attack on the colonial system and the conservative nationalist forces of the Gold Coast. Their support for Kojo Thompson and his Manbii Party was very crucial.

The political agenda of the radical forces that helped to bring Kojo Thompson out of the political doldrums and championed by him, Zik, Wallace-Johnson and Kobina Sekyi, were aimed firstly at the overthrow of the unconstitutional powers that the chiefs were assuming under indirect rule. This, in their view, was undermining the true traditional set-up of this institution. The chiefs in their view, had not only become mere mouth pieces of the colonial system but were also enjoying considerable powers and privileges contrary to custom and so bringing the institution into disrepute. Secondly, they attacked the intelligentsia for their conservative and selfish interests, and misleadership.⁵⁰ Thirdly they attacked the colonial system and sought its overthrow because it was inimical to the social, economic and political well-being of the people.

In the 1935 municipal elections, largely due to the influence, activities and support of

his radical allies, Kojo Thompson won, beating Dr. F.W. Nanka-Bruce of the Ratepayers Association. Legal objections by the Ratepayers Association resulted in fresh elections which were again won by Kojo Thompson and his Manbii Party. The ascendancy of the radical nationalist forces in Accra as a result of the victory of Kojo Thompson shifted the political pendulum, as it were, from hitherto, collaboration and accommodation with, and the desire for the reform of the colonial structure, to its total rejection. Furthermore, fresh awareness on social political and economic issues affecting their lives began to be awakened in the people. Thus a foundation of radical nationalism was laid, not only in Accra, but in the whole of the Gold Coast colony.

The activities of the radicals, naturally, began to worry the colonial administration. Not only was there a call for its overthrow, but racial and cultural pride, as a result of the activities of Garvey and Du Bois⁵¹ was beginning to affect the thinking of many people. Furthermore, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia began to drive home a Pan-African aspect to the nationalist struggle. But perhaps more worrying to the colonial administration was the dissemination of radical and socialist literature in the Gold Coast. In 1936, an article, *Has the African a God?* by Wallace-Johnson in *The African Morning Post* criticising the colonial system was all the authorities needed to charge Azikiwe and Wallace-Johnson with sedition. Although Azikiwe was freed, he soon left for his native Nigeria, while Wallace-Johnson was found guilty and deported to his native Sierra Leone. With their departure the leadership of the radical wing of the nationalist movement fell on Kojo Thompson, G.E. Moore and Kobina Sekyi;⁵² their bold and fearless stand making them more and more unpopular with the colonial administration and the conservative forces of the nationalist movement.

In Accra, from 1936 to 1944, Kojo Thompson became a popular political leader and worked hard at the Legislative Council to justify the trust that the people had in him. This is attested by the fact that in 1940, by a general agreement of all the political parties, he was returned unopposed for another term of office, as part of a measure of bringing unity within the local body politic.⁵³

In 1943, Kojo Thompson's political career, came to a dramatic end; he was convicted of the charge of demanding a bribe of 25,000.00 from one Mr. Barrow of the Association of West African Merchants (AWAM),⁵⁴ so that he would not expose their activities at the Legislative Council. It indeed was an unfortunate end to what was otherwise, a brilliant political career.

Summary and Conclusion

It is very clear from the foregoing that, although not definitely articulated, the politics of A.W. Kojo Thompson was strongly influenced by the original ideals of the ARPS as espoused by such men as John Mensah Sarbah, Rev. Attoh Ahuma and more particularly by Kobina Sekyi. Primarily, these were: the protection and upholding of traditional values, laws and customs; promotion of close co-operation and of unity of purpose not only among the chiefs, but also between the chiefs and the educated elite; opposition to elitist politics such as the Provincial Council concept of Head Chiefs and the leadership aspirations of the intelligentsia of the National Congress of British West Africa, and an uncompromising defence and advancement of the social, economic and political aspirations of the aboriginal people of the Gold Coast.

In methods of approach, however, he sometimes differed sharply and controversially, even with such close collaborators as Kobina Sekyi, such as the issue of accepting the nomination to the Legislative Council in 1926. Although this was to cost him dearly

politically, at least for some time, it shows an aspect of his character; that he was his own man. Although isolated and rejected by the chiefs and the educated elite, he became popular with the mass of the people and with their support he won a decisive victory in the 1935 municipal elections.

He was a thorn in the flesh of the colonial administration. It was said of him that he got into politics on the slogan *oppose the government*.⁵⁵ Again, he had been described as *an outstanding critic of the British government*⁵⁶ and that his greatest asset was his willingness to insult the colonial regime and being *in the forefront of any agitation against the government*.⁵⁷

Whatever impression one gathers of him, there is no doubt that A.W. Kojo Thompson was fired by lofty ideals of patriotism and Pan-Africanism. In 1941, he, together with Dr. J.B. Danquah and K.A. Korsah drafted a new constitution on behalf of the chiefs and the intelligentsia.⁵⁸ Although it was not accepted by the government, this move culminated in the introduction of the 1946 Burns Constitution. As a Pan-Africanist, he co-operated closely with the Pan-African ideals of Nnamdi Azikiwe and I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson; he was a member of the West African Youth League; he was instrumental in organising a protest movement in Accra against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 and was a patron of the local Ethiopian Defence Committee.

Perhaps the abiding legacy of A.W. Kojo Thompson to his successors, was not only his brand of radical nationalism, patriotism and Pan-Africanism; over and above these, it is the idea of a political party that drew its strength not from elitism with its narrow and parochial interests, but from the masses and their effective mobilisation. A legacy, which needless to say, was inherited by Kwame Nkrumah in the formation of the Convention Peoples' Party in 1949.

FOOTNOTES

- 1) See Wight, Martin, *The Gold Coast Legislative Council* (Faber and Faber, London, 1946), p. 72.
- 2) Nana Ofori Atta, quoted in Wight, Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 181.
- 3) Nelson, Padu E., *African Morning Post*, April 8, 1936.
- 4) Sawyer, Akilakpa, *Gold Coast Independent*, p. 1074.
- 5) Azikiwe, Nnamdi (ed.) *The African Morning Post*, August 21, 1935.
- 6) *Spectator Daily*, April 25, 1941.
- 7) *Ibid.*
- 8) *Ibid.*
- 9) Mr. Myers of Akamadze, *The African Morning Post*, September 17, 1935.
- 10) *Ibid.*
- 11) *Ibid.*
- 12) See Kimble, David, *Political History of Ghana 1850-1928* (O.U.P., 1963), p. 469 - 479.
- 13) It was Gazetted on 23rd September, 1924.
- 14) See the Gold Coast Colony (Legislative Council) Order in Council, 1925. Amended by the Gold Coast Colony (Legislative Council) Order in Council, 1927, and by the Gold Coast Colony (Legislative Council) Amendment Orders in Council of 1933, 1934, and 1939. First Gazetted on 10th December 1925.
- 15) See The Gold Coast Colony (Legislative Council) Order in Council, 1925 Section XVI(1).
- 16) Under the 1925 Constitution Provincial and Municipal unofficial African

- members were to be directly elected, not nominated, as hitherto was the practice. See Gold Coast Colony (Legislative Council) Order in Council 1925 Section XVIII and XX.
- 17) Enacted in April 1927 (G.U.P., 1971), p. 34 - 62.
 - 18) See Kimble, David, *A Political History of Ghana: 1850 - 1928* (O.U.P., 1963).
 - 19) For a study of the Congress see De la Ray, E. Denzer, *The National Congress of British West Africa: The Gold Coast Section*. (University of Ghana unpublished Ph.D. Thesis 1964).
 - 20) See 18, above. Also the Constitution of 1907, *Gold Coast Leader* 26th December 1908.
 - 21) See Kimble, David *op. cit.*, p. 355 and p. 359.
 - 22) John Mensah Sarbah (1864 - 1910) was born at Cape Coast, he was the first Gold Coast African to be called to the bar; he was unofficial member of the Legislative Council from 1901 - 1910. In his two books *Fanti Customary Laws* (1897) and *The Fanti National Constitution* (1906), he espoused the ideals of the ARPS. See Tenkorang, S. *John Mensah Sarbah: 1864 - 1910. T.H.S.G.* xix, 1973.
 - 23) See Smith, E.W. *Aggrey of Africa* (London, 1929) for the life and achievements of this remarkable man.
 - 24) He was made the first President of the ARPS and was a member of a three-man committee who went to London in 1898 to protest against the Land Bill on behalf of the ARPS.
 - 25) His book, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa* (London, 1929) explains the reason and ideals for which the ARPS was formed.
 - 26) An ordained Priest of the A.M.E. Zion Church. He changed his name from S.R.B. Solomon to Attah Ahuma to reflect his cultural nationalism. He was the editor of the *Gold Coast Methodist Times* and *The Gold Coast Aborigines*. He was a staunch supporter of the ARPS and an author e.g. *The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness* (Liverpool, 1911).
 - 27) *Gold Coast Aborigines*, 8 February, 1902. Quoted in Kimble, David *op. cit.*, p. 360.
 - 28) See Kimble, David *op. cit.*, p. 372.
 - 29) This was mainly due to the Pan-African activities of W.E.B. Du Bois and the Pan-Negro activities of Marcus Garvey. See Langley, J.A. *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa: 1900 - 1945* (O.U.P., 1975, p. 67 - 69).
 - 30) See note 19 above.
 - 31) Agbodeka, A.A. *Ghana in the 20th Century* (G.U.P., 1972), p. 65, quoting Appendix V in Guggisberg to Amery, G.C. Conf. 21 April 1927; CO 96.673.
 - 32) William Essuman Gwira Sekyi (1892 - 1956) has recently been an object of study and rehabilitation. To Langley he was a philosopher, nationalist, lawyer and traditionalist. A controversialist and prolific writer - Sekyi was one of the most interesting personalities in Gold Coast public affairs. See Langley, J.A. *op. cit.*, p. 98.
 - 33) Wight, Martin *op. cit.*, p. 75. See in particular Baku, D.K. *An Intellectual in Nationalist Politics: The Contribution of Kobina Sekyi in the evolution of Ghanaian National Consciousness* (unpublished D. Phil. Thesis, University of Sussex, 1987).
 - 34) The Asamankese Case was important politically and economically. Revenue

- from Diamond exploitation in Asamankese and Akwatia led the chiefs of these places to claim independence of the Akim Abuakwa stool. Kojo Thompson's involvement was to put him on a collision course with Nana Ofori Atta, throughout his political career. The secession is rooted in history. See Wilks, Ivor Twifo and Akwamu T.H.S.G. 33, 1958, pp. 215 - 217.
- 35) The rejection of the Ordinance was the outcome of a big conspiracy. The merits and the demerits of the Ordinance were not at issue. See Quarcoopome, S.S. *The Rejection of the Municipal Corporation Ordinance of 1924 in Accra: A Review of the Causes, Research Review (New Series) Vol. 3, No. 1 January 1987, p. 24 - 49.*
 - 36) See *Gold Coast Leader* 15 November 1924, p. 8.
 - 37) *Ibid* The defended Chiefs who opposed the Provincial Council System in the 1920s, with the demise of the NCBWA, the dispute was between the ARPS and the Supporters of the Provincial Council. Many thanks to Dr. D.K. Baku of the History Department, University of Ghana, Legon.
 - 38) See Gold Coast Colony (Legislative Council) Orders in Council, 1925 Sections XVIII and XX
 - 39) Casely Hayford, J.E. Speech at the Legislative Council, 18th March, 1926 in Metcalfe, G.E., *Great Britain and Ghana* (London, 1964).
 - 40) *Ibid.*
 - 41) See Kimble, David *op. cit.*, p. 445.
 - 42) Resolution of Mantsemei of Asere, Gbese etc. dated 28th August, 1926 ADM 11/925 N.A.G., Accra.
 - 43) See Legislative Council Debates 19 - 20 April 1927.
 - 44) See Kimble, David *op. cit.* 497.
 - 45) Kojo Thompson (1880 - 1950) was born to J.S. Thompson and Ellen Mills. He was educated at Collegiate and the Wesleyan Schools in Accra. Went to study law in Britain sponsored by his uncle, and called to the Bar in 1914. For brief Biography, see Ofofu-Appiah, L.H. (ed.) *Encyclopaedia Africana: Dictionary of African Biography* Vol. 1 (Ref. Publ. Inc. N.Y. 1977, p. 320 - 321).
 - 46) See Agbodeka, Francis *op. cit.*, p. 195
 - 47) See I.G.P. Vrs. I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson (I.A.S. Library), p. 12.
 - 48) See Azikiwe, Nnamdi My Odessey: *An Autobiography* (London, 1970), p. 259.
 - 49) Azikiwe, *op. cit.*, p. 279
 - 50) In the 10th October issue of *The African Morning Post*, Azikiwe said "We joined hands with the Manbii because we held that if ... tribal affiliation, and if the cultivation of inferiority complex were the determinant factors and criteria of leadership ... then it was a definite indication of misleadership.
 - 51) For example see Langley, J.A. *op. cit.*, pp. 69 - 70.
 - 52) See Wight, Martin *op. cit.*, p. 75.
 - 53) See *Resolution of Ratepayers Association and allied Parties, 7th February, 1940, C.S.O. 193/32, N A.G., Accra.*
 - 54) AWAM was hated by all the traders and farmers of the Colony because of its monopolistic activities. Kojo Thompson had given notice that on 23rd March, 1944, he was going to expose the activities of the Association. See Quarcoopome, S.S. *Party Political Activities in Accra: 1924 - 1945* (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, I.A.S., Legon, 1980), p. 155. Also see *Spectator Daily*, 13th May, 1944.

- 55) See Wight, Martin *op. cit.*, p. 73.
- 56) See Ofosu-Appiah, L.H. (ed.) *Ibid.*
- 57) *Ibid.*
- 58) *Ibid.*

GHANA TELEVISION DRAMA AS A REFLECTION OF GOVERNMENT OPINION

Samuel Amanor Dseagu

Abstract

Under the terms of its charter of incorporation, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation Television, popularly known as GBC-Television, is expected to reflect and propagate the views and ideology of the government. Thus, since its inception, GBC-Television has been used over the years by the various governments of the day as a medium for educating the nation on government policy. The CPP government of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah made an aggressive use of it in the sense that under it GBC-Television was turned into an arm of the party.

Since 1966, when the Nkrumah regime was overthrown, successive governments have been more discreet in their manipulation of GBC-Television. I shall concentrate in this paper on one such phenomenon of a discreet manipulation of the television by a government. I shall examine and discuss the use of supposedly fun-creating drama programmes on GBC-Television between 1983 and 1988, for political indoctrination about the aspirations of the PNDC government. I shall then conclude that in the absence of investigative broadcasting in many of our African nations to map out subtle changes in thinking and ideology in and among our political leaders, such programmes can be studied as codes of political behaviour.

Introduction

The popular impression in Ghana about news broadcast on radio and television is that such broadcasts are slanted to reflect the master's voice. As such people tend to be sceptical about the veracity and the reliability of the news and other supposedly serious broadcasts of the nation's media.

Ghana Broadcasting Corporation Television, despite the fact that it enjoys a monopoly situation in being the sole television system in the country, has not enjoyed the respect that it deserves on account of the popular perception that it is only there to 'sing its master's voice'. It however appears that the public is often critical about GBC-Television over the wrong issues. When one considers the set-up of the organization, it should become clear that the organization has in fact been carrying out to the letter its principles.

The principles of the organization were clearly spelt out by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in a speech marking the start of television service in Ghana.

Ghana Television will be used to supplement our educational programme ... Its paramount object will be education in the broadest and purest sense. Television must assist in the socialist transformation of Ghana ... It must reflect and promote the highest national and social ideas of our ideology and society.¹

With that goal in mind, the government of the Convention People's Party treated the television system purely and simply as an arm of the party. When the Nkrumah regime was

overthrown in 1966, one of the excesses of his government that the National Liberation Council under General Kotoka tried to correct was the heavy-handed use and manipulation of the communications media.

Following in the footsteps of the NLC, successive governments tried to adopt a hands-off policy towards the media in general and the television service in particular. Nonetheless, in this matter, the practice appears to have always fallen short of the intention. For instance, General I.K. Acheampong once made it clear to the representatives of the media that the government of the Supreme Military Council of which he was the Head expected them to adopt

*the responsibility of influencing the thinking and habits of our people.*²

Similarly, although Fl. Lt. J.J. Rawlings has on a number of occasions reprimanded the press for not airing opinion contrary to or different from the government, he himself made it sufficiently clear early in his 'revolution' that he expected the media

*to help carry the policies of the government to the people.*³

Besides, the organizational structure of the television system in particular and the media in general is such that it is mainly appointees of the government of the day who serve as policy makers and controllers. Under such circumstances, it is often risky for an organization such as the television system to openly court views contrary to the government line.

In spite of such constraints, GBC-Television has tried over the years to carry out its services in a highly professional and efficient manner. This it has done by following a certain procedure of broadcast. It would appear to even the most uninformed lay person that GBC-Television follows a well-defined structure of programming so as to balance news with entertainment.

A brief outline of a typical day's, or to be more accurate a night's broadcast - since the broadcast on most days is only at night, with only the week-ends having additional morning broadcasts - will serve to describe how *serious* programmes are balanced with *light* programmes. A typical night's broadcast is as follows: programme survey at 5:55; children's broadcast, 6 - 6:30; adult education in a Ghanaian language, 6:30 - 7; news and commentary, 7 - 7:30; current affairs discussion, 7:30 - 8; music or drama, 8 - 9; late news, 9 - 9:15; movie, 9:15 - close down.

Assuming that the government of the day holds a tight grip on the sort of news that is disseminated and thus maintains an overt control over the serious programmes of news and current discussions, one could still argue that GBC-Television could still offer certain programmes that can defy direct manipulation and control. In Ghana such programmes are likely to be the *lighter* programmes such as music and drama.

The music programmes, as is to be expected, take the form of a variety of songs sung by both leading and budding artistes. Some of the songs could have a heavy political slant; others might not be political at all. The point is that GBC-Television does not feature music artistes because of their political affiliation but rather on account of their popularity and for the *pure entertainment* which their songs and dancing afford.

It so happens that the music programmes and the drama programmes occur on alternate days: if today there is music, drama will not occur; if there is drama, music will not occur. By the principles of formalist and structuralist transformation,⁴ it is obvious that GBC-Television reckons both the music programmes and the drama programmes as *pure entertainment*; that is, as programmes intended to provide mainly fun and relaxation.

Intention

My aim is to describe how such pure entertainment dramas are often manipulated and slanted to project a political view and by so doing to highlight certain political issues as legitimate conclusions where they would otherwise be controversial and even politically divisive. I shall be restricting my discussion to how the GBC-Television dramas from 1983 to 1988 were used to project as legitimate and popular certain pertinent issues of development which at the time were in fact controversial and even politically explosive and I shall then conclude that for that reason the dramas of the period can be seen as an index of the evolution of the PNDC government's political ideology.

A General Description of the GBC-Television Drama Programme

As has already been stated, the drama programme alternates with the music programme. The days set aside for drama are Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The time-period normally runs from about 8 to about 9; that is after the *Current Affairs* discussion programme and allowing for commercials, and before the *Late News* programme but again allowing for commercials.

The drama programme is divided into drama in English and drama in the Ghanaian languages of Akan, Ga and Ewe. Starting from Sunday, there is Akan drama on Sundays, Ga and Ewe drama on alternate Tuesdays, a repeat of the previous Sunday's Akan drama on Wednesdays,⁵ and drama in English on Thursdays.

The Akan drama was synonymous throughout the seventies with one theatre troupe: the *Osofo Dadzie* group. It is a troupe comprising about six regular male characters and about four regular female characters. One of the male characters is called Osofo (Akan: *Pastor*) Dadzie. He is conspicuous by his clerical collar and suit; sometimes, as if to add emphasis to his calling, he would be seen holding a Bible and either giving counsel to members of his congregation or praying. Opinion is divided on this issue, but it is claimed that his name has been given to the entire group on account of his popular appeal.

Another very popular character in the troupe is *Super O.D.* It is claimed that the initials *O.D.* stand for *Osofo Dadzie*. According to most accounts, in the early days of the troupe, many people thought he was Osofo Dadzie; but when the confusion was cleared he had already become associated with the name so he was given the name 'Super Osofo Dadzie' to distinguish him from his namesake.

He is cast as a foil to his namesake. Whereas Osofo Dadzie is a priest and is therefore decent and well-behaved, Super O.D. is a man-of-the-world: often seen cracking dirty jokes or having a good time or making fast money.

The members of the troupe are itinerant actors and singers belonging to the professional guild known in Ghana as *Concert Parties*. At the time of our concern, the troupe was absent from the country for a while but returned in 1986.

During the absence of the Osofo Dadzie troupe, several other troupes surfaced but most of them have since died out except the *Obra* (Akan: *life or stylish manners or modern life*) troupe which now performs on alternate Sundays with the Osofo Dadzie troupe.⁶

All those groups are essentially private performing groups whose main source of income is the earning from their performances all over the country as they go on their regular touring circuits. Their mode of operation is that on the day of their performance in a town an advance party will drive in a car or truck round the town playing pop and highlife music and intermittently interrupting the music with the announcement of the play. At the scheduled start of the play the troupe will treat the audience to several performance of live music before the actual dramatic performance. The dramatic performance is often

interspersed with more musical performances. Hence, a play which would normally last for about forty minutes on television would go on in a town performance for about two hours from about 8 to about 10 at night.

Similarly the Ga and Ewe groups are made up of private performers. The Ga performing troupe has also since the seventies been synonymous with one group: the *Adabraka Drama Troupe* led by *Mr. Mensah*. Adabraka is the name of a quarter of Accra; and, Mr. Mensah is the name of the leading character in the troupe. The Ewe performing group is also synonymous with one particular troupe; that is *Agbedefu*, a troupe based at Ho, the capital of the Volta Region.

As is to be expected, the performances from these Ghanaian language-speaking groups are varied and without any discernible political bias. Indeed, since they are mainly professionals, they try to stay clear of controversial and political issues which might detract from their popularity and hence from their earnings.

Since the public has for the past twenty years been watching these performers in their varied roles, the impression has been created that their performances are free from political indoctrination. Thus, one could say that the expectation of the average television viewer is that such plays would be *pure fun*. Indeed, it is common for a viewer to keep himself busy somewhere else during newstime and the discussion programme, both of which deal with *serious* issues, only to come back when a play is about to begin.

Apart from the Ghanaian language plays, another important component of the drama programme is made up of the English plays. These are usually plays written and directed by Ghanaians; but sometimes plays written by Nigerians but directed by Ghanaians are also performed. The impression over the years is that the condition for the broadcast of the English plays is that it must be modern.⁷ Such plays are normally broadcast on Thursdays, after the news discussion programme. As in the case of the vernacular plays, the groups performing the English plays tend to be private; that is, they have no direct sponsorship from the government.

There is however this important difference. Whereas the groups that perform the Ghanaian language plays tend to be performers who learned their trade from the stage, most of the English play performers are graduates of the University of Ghana's School of Performing Arts. Such performers tend to look down upon their Ghanaian language performing colleagues as being unsophisticated. However, most viewers would rather give a preference for the Ghanaian language plays.

The themes of the plays, in the Ghanaian languages as well as in English, are varied. As there is very little advance publicity about the programmes of the television broadcasts most viewers listen anxiously on the day of the drama to the announcer as the detail of the plot for the day is announced. In a way, this expectancy about the drama also adds to its popularity.⁸

Another cause of the popularity of the drama appears to be that to most people the drama with its varied plot and performing group serves as a sharp contrast to the more predictable news programmes. For almost a decade the news programmes in the publicly-owned media, including the television system, have been heavily biased in favour of projecting the views of the government and also in projecting international radical views. As such, most people can predict what perspective will be adopted by GBC-Television in the presentation of the news and the other news programmes. In contrast, the drama programmes are always refreshing in the sense that they always bring up something totally new.⁹

One could even declare that one of the causes of the popularity of the television plays

is that they are free from political indoctrination. As most of the performing groups are private entertainers whose major aim is to make money from their performances, they try to avoid treading on the controversial grounds of polemics and politics; subjects which have been known to have brought on dangerous and sometimes devastating consequences for some people. Thus, one of the well-known characteristics of such plays is their freedom from heavy-handed propaganda.

The Plays of 1983 - 1985

The GBC-Television plays performed during the period of 1983 to 1985 appear to have broken away from almost all the well-established expectations. Both in the Ghanaian languages and in English, the plays were more clearly slanted to project certain broad ideological stands of the government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). One of the pervading themes of the plays was the need for a radical re-structuring of Ghanaian society to bring about social and economic equality. That theme was a direct reflection of the urgent task which the government had set for itself at the time.

The well-known drama groups were then not on the scene: the Osofo Dadzie group was rumoured to be in Germany; Mr. Mensah was not performing; and the newer groups which came on the scene did not make any profound and lasting impression on the viewers. The situation was therefore ideal for agents of the government to try to fill the vacuum. However, as the heavy-handed manipulation of the GBC-Television of the Nkrumah era had been discredited, the government could not therefore have resorted to a direct manipulation. As was to be expected, the government preferred a more subtle and discreet manipulation.

This took the form of administrative encouragement. Many new groups emerged at the time to perform plays with the theme of revolution for equality. Although many of those groups had very little or no prior experience either as entertainers or as students they received extensive programme time for their performances. For instance, in addition to performing on Thursdays, such groups were again featured during the Ghanaian language performance times and were then highlighted during the daily adult education news discussions in the various Ghanaian languages, an exceptional practice on the part of GBC-Television. Outside the field of GBC-Television, such groups gained regular access to the state-owned theatres where they performed to live audiences.¹⁰

The cumulative effect was that such newer groups felt encouraged to promote the ideological views of the PNDC. Although the plots varied, most of them revolved around the single theme of revolution for equality. Also, most, if not all, of the performing groups were introduced with a particular song that was sung at the gatherings of revolutionary activists in the country. If anything, the *revolutionary* song that prefaced such plays tended to present the plays as a reflection of the radical ideology at the time. Thirdly, the plays of the performers all had this single motto: *Get Involved*. Normally, as the revolutionary song was being broadcast, the motto of *Get Involved* would be splashed on the screen to be followed by the title of the particular play for the day.

What follows is a description of a play that was performed in 1984 first in English and was then reproduced in the Ghanaian languages for subsequent broadcast either as full-length plays or as sketches intended to highlight themes for discussion in the daily Ghanaian language *Adult Education* programmes.¹¹

Enter a middle-aged male in an office with a well polished table and chair and with curtains in the windows. The man sits behind the table, opens one or two files and appears to be deeply engrossed in them. Intense noise is heard from the outside. The

man out of curiosity peeps through an opening in one of the curtains and sees a group of people approaching his office with placards and singing.

Immediately afterwards, the door of the man's office is flung open and a group made up of a young woman, a young man, and a fairly middle-aged man rushes in. They seize the middle-aged man against the background of singing and shouting from a larger group outside and announce that they have seized control of the office and are throwing out "management". The middle-aged man is pushed out of the office and is heckled a few times by the larger group outside. After some time, peace is restored; the smaller group comprising the young woman, young man and the fairly middle-aged man gives brief speeches in turn against muted singing and dancing in the background. Finally, the young woman announces the formation of an interim management committee to run the office.

Discussion

That play has many elements of a model communist or socialist society. The middle-aged person who was sitting at a table in the office and was acting as a manager or administrator represents the *ancienne regime*. As in Ghana, the majority of the population is in the young to 55 age bracket and also since the retiring age is from 45 to 60,¹² the impression that is created by the middle-age appearance of the character is that he is out of keeping with the aspirations of the younger and majority opinion of the society.

The male gender of the character is equally important. It reflects that tendency in traditional societies to erect and emphasize male dominated structures of authority. Again, the demographic situation of Ghana suggests that since females outnumber males in the nation the male dominated institutions do not adequately reflect the reality and are therefore at variance with the 'democratic' aspirations of the society.

During 1982/83, there were intermittent power cuts as a result of the low level of the water in the dam at the hydro-electric power station at Akosombo. Persistent campaigns were made that people should shut off unnecessary power use so as to conserve power for only important uses. One of the uses deemed unnecessary in those days was power for room air-conditioning. Such functionaries of the government as *P.D.C's* (*People's Defence Committees* and *Workers Defence Committees*) were charged with the responsibility of ensuring that offices did not make such *unnecessary* uses of power for room air-conditioning. Thus, although it would have been expected that the middle-aged man's office would have air-conditioning to emphasize his luxury and decadence the display of the air-conditioner would have been counter-productive in the sense that it would have given the impression that there were people who still used air-conditioners in spite of the appeals to the contrary. Hence, in the furniture of the office an air-conditioner was conspicuous by its absence.

Similarly, one would have expected to find soft carpeting at the office. However, conditions of life in Ghana at the time being so stringent would have rendered the display of soft carpeting unrealistic. Also, one could interpret the curtains in the windows psychologically as a reflection of the middle-aged man's isolation from the society.

Throughout the opening scene, the focus was on the middle-aged person. He was the most important personality in the community; his importance stemmed from the senior position which he held at his place of work. The inference was that in the *ancienne regime* authority did not stem from the democratic will of the people but was imposed by an oligarchy. All of those interpretations are buttressed by the artistic feature of perspective.

In the opening scene the perspective or point of view was dominated by the middle-aged manager. As he went to the window to look out of the curtain, the public was expected to follow his perspective for the last time. That symbolized the coming to an end of his epoch.

The unceremonious opening of the man's door suggested violence. His seizure and subsequent ejection from his office suggested a violent overthrow (*a revolution*) of the *ancien régime*. The appearance of the young woman in the group of *leaders* was of immense significance. It signified the eradication of the male-dominated structures of society and the introduction of a *classless* society based on complete equality.

Similarly, the younger age of the leaders signified the eradication of the old structures of authority and the introduction of more *progressive* ones in society. The presence of the fairly middle-aged male was however significantly disturbing. Did it not signify the slogan: *two steps forward, one step backward*? In the light of the hindsight about the revisions and the modifications of radicalism in government that ensued in later years, this presence of the much older person in the ranks of the 'radical youth' which thus upset the neat balance of the sexes in favour of that same old condition of male domination signified a certain contradiction in the radicalism of the government.

The final section dealing with the establishment by force of a management committee signified the successful overthrow of the old order. It reflected the processes being encouraged by government at the time by which all dwellers in an area were to establish leadership committees (*People's Defence Committees*) and all workers in an institution were to establish similar leadership committees (*Workers' Defence Committees*) to gradually take over the functions of authority from the previous holders. However, there was considerable vagueness as to precisely who were the previous wielders of power.

As this type of play was given maximum air-time for broadcast by GBC-Television, one is inclined to suspect that the play enjoyed the support of the administrators of the television system and for that matter of the PNDC government. Similarly, the play reflected certain important policies and programmes of the PNDC government at that time: such as, the need for a re-structuring of institutions; the need for the establishment of *interim-management* committees to take over power immediately from the old guard without having to go through the normal democratic processes of change;¹³ and, the need for such committees to act as the vanguard of the drive towards a classless and egalitarian society.

As this series of plays so significantly reflected government thinking in the years 1983/85, their total disappearance by 1986 was therefore remarkable. By 1984/85, the PNDC government had embarked in conjunction with the World Bank and the IMF upon the policies of the *Economic Recovery Programme*. One is inclined to speculate that the disappearance of the radical plays from the GBC-Television repertoire in 1986 reflects the changing attitudes of the government toward many of its earlier radical actions. 1986 therefore serves as a convenient point for marking off the plays of 1983/85 from those of 1987/88.

The Plays of 1987/88

Unlike the plays of 1983/85 which promoted radicalism, the plays of 1987/88 promoted gradualism. Prior to the start of the electioneering campaigns by candidates for election into the district assemblies, a series of plays and sketches were performed on GBC-Television dealing with the message of mass participation in the *grassroot democratic* elections to ensure dedicated representation. That message was carried across in full-length plays performed by the well-known drama groups described earlier and also by new groups which appeared to have been composed specifically for the purpose.¹⁴ The dramas by such

ad-hoc bodies were mainly performed as sketches introducing topics for discussion in the Ghanaian language *Adult Education* programmes. Needless to say, the topics dealt with the message of the plays and sketches; namely, that all must vote in the district assembly elections so as to ensure an adequate *grassroot representation* in the assemblies.

The following is a summary of one of such drama broadcast. It was performed by the Adabraka Drama Troupe in Ga with *Mr. Mensah* as the lead actor:

Enter Mr. Mensah in uproarious laughter. When he calms down, he says (in a soliloquy) that the 'Government' has now given up 'the struggle' and is asking the old politicians to come forward for elections. He says he as an old politician will enter the fray and bring in all his old friends and they would use their old tactics once again.

He goes out to see one of the old friends, a (Makola-woman) who turns him down with the reason that he failed to pay for the consignment of provisions he collected at the last elections to distribute to prospective voters.

He goes from there to a bank manager who also turns him down with the reason that now there is 'accountability' in the land so the previous practice of massive loans are now discouraged. Finally, Mr. Mensah goes to an elder who advises him that the government is seriously bent on cleaning up politics so he and other 'discredited' politicians would be well advised to stay off the district assembly elections.

With that, Mr. Mensah announces his withdrawal from the contest to avoid embarrassment.

The following is a summary of a sketch performed as an introduction to an Ewe Adult Education broadcast also on the same theme:

Enter a richly attired chief with his retinue in council. The area 'District Commissioner' comes to seek advice from the chief on how the people can be mobilised for development. The chief recommends 'grassroot democracy'. The 'D.C.' then announces that everybody should vote when the time comes to ensure dedicated leadership.

Discussion

Significantly, both the Ga and the Ewe plays boldly featured traditional rulers (*an elder and a chief richly attired*) in a positive role as wise guardians of society. This demonstrates a spectacular contrast to the image of traditional rule that was carried across in the plays of the radical era. Secondly, in both plays the traditional leaders appeared to be giving support or validity to the policies of the government. The underlying notion was that the traditional leaders as wise guardians of traditional authority were experienced enough to tell which policies would be beneficial and which ones would be detrimental to the people. The thinking therefore appeared to be that since the traditional leadership was in support of their policies, the government was on the right pace with such policies. That thinking marks a spectacular shift from the approach of the previous radical era.

Thirdly, in contrast with the earlier recommendation in the plays for the establishment of *people's power* by force wherever necessary, the latter plays appeared to be seeking some amount of accommodation with the traditional rulers. Significantly, the Ga play suggested however that accommodation did not extend to the old-time politicians.

Conclusion

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the government of the PNDC placed an immense value on the use of drama for mass mobilisation. On numerous occasions, members of the government commented on such a significance. For instance, in the October 9, 1990 issue of the *People's Daily Graphic* the Upper West Regional Director of the Centre for National Culture was said to have

*suggested the use of community drama programmes to educate the rural population on the issues at stake in the country's search for a suitable future political system ... (He also) said community drama also known as "popular theatre" could be used to dramatise the nation's past and present political experience so that the people of the rural areas could be guided by these experiences in their choice of a future political system for the nation.*¹⁵

It is obvious therefore that drama in general, and GBC-Television drama in particular, was expected by the government to serve not just the purpose of entertainment but also as a tool in the drive for development. As such GBC-Television drama, like all other general broadcast items of the radio and television systems of the nation, would have come under the censor's close scrutiny to ensure that whatever was being done for the purposes of mobilisation for effective development was not subversive, antagonistic, or even contradictory to the views and priorities of the government.

The GBC-Television drama of the period clearly therefore serves as a reliable guide to the thinking of the PNDC government on pertinent issues of national development. As such one can conclude that the drama could be viewed as sign and also as an indicator of ideological shifts in the policies of the PNDC government. To what extent was the drama an avenue of deliberate leakage by the government itself of its shifts and reversals of policy?¹⁶ Although likely to be immensely interesting, the answers to that question would take us well beyond the scope of this essay. Suffice then to say that the GBC-Television drama from 1983 to 1988 can be used to track the evolution of ideas and policies of the PNDC government and for that matter can serve as an index of the radicalism of the government.

FOOTNOTES

- 1) Speech by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah on the inauguration of GBC-Television on July 31, 1965 (Accra: State Publishing Corporation, 1965), p. 3.
- 2) *Daily Graphic*, Monday July 1, 1974, pp. 5 - 7.
- 3) *Daily Graphic*, Tuesday January 5, 1982, p. 1.
- 4) Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1968); Claude Levi-Strauss, *L'analyse structurale des mythes*, *Anthropologie Structurale*, 1958; Alan Dundes, *The Morphology of North American Indian Folktales* (Helsinki: Folklore Fellows Communications, No. 19, 1964); Vladimir Propp *Transformations in Fairy Tales, Mythology* (ed.) Pierre Maranda (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Education, 1973), pp. 139 - 150.
- 5) However, in 1990 the Wednesday evening's repeat of the previous Sunday's play was consistently not done. The repeat has since been restored.
- 6) Since mid-1991 the Osofo Dadzie has not been appearing.
- 7) However, one should not see that as a hard and fast rule. In any case, it appears a conscious effort is made to screen out such old playwrights as Shakespeare, Moliere, etc. I have never seen any production of, say Shakespeare or Moliere,

- on GBC-Television for the past seven years.
- 8) The linguistic factor is likely to contribute to the relative popularity of the Ghanaian language plays. Ghana, like most African countries, has only about a third of its population literate and even of that figure a significant portion regresses into functional illiteracy after elementary education.
 - 9) In Ghana there is no such thing as *TV News* to publicise the television programmes in advance. At best the programmes can only be known one day in advance and that will be only in a summary form. What is much more common is that the programmes will be announced and explained in detail at the start of the television broadcast for the day during the afore-mentioned time-slot of *programme summary*. Hence there is often considerable psychological suspense attached to what will be forthcoming in the drama programme. That suspense no doubt adds to the appeal of the drama programme vis-a-vis the predictability of the slant of the more serious news programme.
 - 10) As in Ghana a licence is required from the Police, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Information, and the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as from the Arts Council **before** such an activity can be held, the ease with which the licences were granted for the performances is in itself an indication of the tacit government support behind the performing groups.
 - 11) I have tried unsuccessfully on many occasions to gain access to the GBC Archives to research the dates and titles of the specific plays discussed in the text.
 - 12) Since 1990 the retiring age bracket has been changed to 55 to 60.
 - 13) A clear illustration of that thinking can be found in the name of the present government: **Provisional National Defence Council**. In the manner of domino-effect all other institutions and organisations were expected to seize power immediately and set up interim (*provisional*) management committees (as workers' defence committees or peoples - community - defence committees). The parallel with the marxist-communist rallying cry, *Workers of the World, Unite!*, is instructive.
 - 14) The writer recalls that in one of such plays in Ewe one of the characters was the chairperson of the *Adult Education* programme in Ewe. Considering that the chairperson was likely to be a statutory employee of the GBC and was therefore a person in public office, it was clear that the person was not acting for the fun of it but rather was obeying orders from above.
 - 15) p. 3.
 - 16) It is possible that the whole paraphernalia was a tactical design by the government to test its controversial policies on the minds of the people and by so doing to familiarise and legitimize the policies even before their introduction in earnest.

RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Pat Williams

Introduction

A general misconception is that religion and development do not mix; that religion (must) have a negative repercussion on development.¹ This paper argues that religion and development can, and do go together. It submits that Nigeria's development had had the assistance of religion and still does; that without the close collaboration of religion and development in the past, Nigeria would have charted and therefore taken a different course, and maybe have a slower rate of development. The thesis here therefore is that religion through religious groups plays a vital role in the national development of Nigeria. Currently, Nigeria harbours many religions but the prominent ones are the indigenous religion otherwise known as the African Traditional Religion (ATR), Christianity and Islam.

The paper concentrates on the impact of religion on Nigeria's development. It highlights this politico-religious involvement with particular emphasis on the functional as well as the dysfunctional aspects of this interaction. This is done within the matrix of power, interest group, and pluralism² Suffices it therefore the restatement that Nigeria is heterogeneous and harbours within it several nationalities and groups whose interests are often at variance and consequently seek ways and means of attracting benefits to themselves. However, indulging these three typologies is power. Power is that instrument which propels activities in the public realm be it secular or spiritual. It is the desire to obtain, retain and wield power which compels individual(s) and groups to sometimes employ extra-political means, such as religion, in politics. Such unbridled desire, if successful, could be perceived as progressive to the recipient(s) but retrogressive to non-recipient(s) and thus detrimental to development in a pluralistic society as Nigeria. It is also pertinent to explain that the focus in this paper is on religious groups rather than on religion per se because it is through the former that the politics of national development would be better demonstrated and understood.

The paper based on library and archival findings as well as unstructured interviews, focuses on the post colonial period. Similarly, the paper takes into consideration those events which either enhanced or were detrimental to national development, hence, some interplay of politics and religion and the attendant consequences on national development. The point of departure however is the brief restatement of some important concepts employed in the paper. They are religion, groups, religious groups, politics and development. Of all this, only development necessitates a more extensive conceptualisation. Elsewhere³ we have dwelt at length on the others. Therefore, for this paper we shall see religion as *any system relating man to ultimate values, epitomized in God or the Supreme Being and embodying a creed, code and a mode of worship and communion.*⁴ Group is a number of persons or things gathered, placed together or associated⁵ Therefore, a religious group could be perceived as adherents of a particular belief or system of practices followed

by persons living in a community since every group has its interest(s), a religious group must have its own peculiar interest and therefore form a solidarity with its likes.⁶ Politics is that which

has to do with the forces, institutions and organisational reforms in any society, that are recognised as having the most inclusive and final authority existing in that society for the establishment and maintenance of order, the effectuation of other conjoint purposes of its members and reconciliation of their differences.⁷

Development is the act, process or result of developing. It is a fact or circumstance bringing about a new situation either through growth, evolution or/and expansion.⁸ The term *development* has been variously conceptualised from economic, political, social and national perspectives. All societies do experience development though it has always been uneven and different from one place to the other. The reason for the diversity lies in the ecology within which the people developed and the *super structure* of the society.⁹ For Rodney, development is *an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships*. Similarly, it means the ability to guard the independence of the social group and indeed to infringe upon the freedom of others...¹⁰

Development perceived from economic perspective means growth on per capita basis, the Gross National Product (GNP) and the simultaneous reduction in infant mortality rate, increased life expectancy, complex network of roads, gigantic buildings, etc. In short, there is an increase of the *good life* generally. This manner of thinking has generated controversy as to the method or path that had been taken and/or should have been taken: the capitalist and/or socialist paths.¹¹ Protagonists of both paths delineate succinctly the consequences of toeing one path rather than the other. According to Professor Nnoli, both paths promised *the good life*. However for the capitalist path,

its central determining feature is the transformation of labour power of man into a commodity to be bought and sold in the market for gain.¹²

In addition, the actual producers of products are separated from their means of production which is controlled by a few people.

For the socialist path, there is no separation of the actual producers (of products) from their means of production. This is concentrated in a social collectivity as a whole (i.e. the state). Values, when produced, are not commodities to be exchanged in the market but to meet the basic needs of the people. Nnoli stresses, that

the interest of labour is superior to, and dominant over those of capital in deciding what is produced, how it is produced and how the products are distributed.¹³

However, an over-concentration on economic development gives an erroneous impression that it constitutes the totality of development. There are also political,¹⁴ social and national developments.

Nigeria, at flag independence, accepted liberal democracy and had at different times attempted to practise both Westminster/Cabinet and Presidential Systems and all their paraphernalia without necessarily accepting the attendant tools. This has invariably led to the incessant political instability in the country. Social and national development could be gleaned from the state of both economic and political development. Both, for instance, impacted on the system of education, the health care delivery or the sensibilities of people to the nationality question in Nigeria. Walter Rodney however, explicates the situation aptly when he observes that development is not a purely economic affair but *an overall social process which is dependent upon the outcome of man's effort to deal with his natural environment.¹⁵*

In spite of the multi-faceted nature of development, our interest in this paper is centred on national development, and thus the role of religion and religious groups in the politics of national development is examined. The paper is structured thus: Introduction, Religious groups and the politics of education in national development in colonial and post-colonial period; Religious groups and health and social welfare development, and conclusion.

Religious Groups and the Politics of Education in National Development

It has been established that politics and education relate to each other in a *circular fashion*¹⁶ and hence religious groups are active participants. Prior to the advent of Christianity and Islam, there was African Traditional Religion (ATR). It existed in the numerous nationalities which are the collectivities which later made up the Nigerian state. The ATR had close collaborative relationship with virtually every aspect of communal living; economic, political and social. Thus, as Rodney observes, both the material base and the super-structure contributed to the development of a nation. It is the extent that the belief system interacted with the other elements of the superstructure that the society develops. Thus, socio-political and religious patterns affected each other and were often intertwined.¹⁷

It is in this light that it is recognized that prior to the contribution of Islam and Christianity, practitioners of ATR ensured the proper transmission of their religious tenets and traditions through the medium of informal education of their members from one generation to the other. However, an objective evaluation of this contribution of the ATR shows that despite the fact that it could be said that the ATR permeated every facet of the life of its adherents, it could only be considered limited - limited in terms of its area of jurisdiction and its varied nature, prior to the advent of the influence of the two other religions and since their introduction. The ATR ensures that their facilities were reserved only for or benefited its *bona fide* adherents or members within the narrow confinement of its communities.

Similarly, Islam has strong influence on its adherents and therefore controls their way of life. Thus, it assumes the role of impacting proper Islamic education and culture to its adherents. *The umma* (Islamic community) particularly if it is *Bilad al - Islam* (Land of Islam), must be based strictly on the *Quran, Hadith and Sharia*. Hence in such an *umma*, Islamic education is a must. In the *umma*, both rudimentary and advanced Islamic education are given. Millions of both levels of quranic schools are spread all over the areas where Islam has its influence in Nigeria. With modernisation, some of these schools have been combining western education with Islamic ones.¹⁸ It is therefore noteworthy that the education given includes science subjects such as Mathematics, Technology and Astronomy. These, according to an Islamic scholar, could be regarded as scientific contribution of Islam to development in Nigeria.¹⁹ For instance, a good knowledge of these subjects assists Muslims to know why and how to share or distribute equitably according to the Islamic tenets. Similarly the giving of zakat (alms) is better done with the proper knowledge of mathematics. Also, Astronomy, remains useful in terms of keeping strictly to the Islamic calendar which relies very strongly on the movement/position of moon and stars.

Though some Islamic scholars would like to point to these scientific aspects of Islamic education as developmental, there is no denying the fact that these are recent deviations from the usual concentration on purely Islamic and Arabic studies in Nigeria. Though, there are more Muslim owned schools currently than it was the case in the past, their concentration is still on Islamic and Arabic knowledge rather than putting an emphasis on Western education. Their existence could be seen more simply as expedient actions to bridge the gap between them and their Christian counterparts. Nonetheless, just as it was noted in the case

of the ATR, all the services given were for the benefit of Muslims as members of the *umma* and not necessarily for the development of Nigerians generally and thus made these contributions limited and myopic.

The *Gemeinschaft* situation observed in the case of ATR and Islam above was not absolutely the case with Christianity. Initially, when the Christian schools were established they were for the converts only. However, expediency forced the situation and they became opened to everyone within their reach and regardless of their faith. Of course, there is no denying the fact that proselytization was foremost in their minds. But harsh climate and diseases wrought such havoc among the early missionaries and depleted their numbers so rapidly that to replenish their numbers, the protestant missions accepted the suggestion that manpower for the missions should be raised autochthonously from the indigenes of the area in which they worked. Hence there was a rapid transformation from *Gemeinschaft* situation to a *Gesellschaft* one. Rudimentary or narrow education was no longer adequate. To meet the needs of catechists, interpreters, teachers, nurses and clerks, Teacher Training College and Secondary Schools were established from as far back as 1853. The existence of these higher institutions guaranteed for the missions a steady supply of personnel: teacher-evangelists or catechists as well as clerks for the various European/Government concerns which sprang up in the southern part of Nigeria.

With such concentration on educational services between 1842 and 1950, mission schools outnumbered government schools in southern Nigeria. Except for the case of the King's College, Lagos, founded in 1909 and Queen's College founded in 1927, Christian schools most often were better run than their government counterparts and parents scrambled to send their offspring to them regardless of their religious bias. Of course the mission schools were happy to have them since it would enable them to impact their faith on their pupils unmolested. However, a development of note was that these mission schools served as avenues where children from diverse places and background came to live, work and develop together first, as Nigerians and next, maybe, as Christians. To that extent, Christian educational institutions served as pivotal points where nationalistic tendencies developed.

Religious groups and politics of education in Colonial times

The colonial government was protective of the Muslim north and Islam and therefore insisted that northern Muslims for as long as it was possible to do so, must be shielded from *polluted christianizing* influences. Thus it attempted to westernize the northern Muslims without christianizing them. Therefore there were more government schools than mission schools by 1926 in the North.

Similarly the colonial government made political but limited overtures to the Muslims of the south-west areas. For instance, the first government schools in Lagos were built for Muslims in 1900. However, unlike the situation in the core Muslim north, the bulk of the educated Muslims in Western Nigeria could not escape the christianizing influence because the Christian educational institutions were more and readily available than government ones. Nonetheless, Islamic fervours were not lost sight of in the search for western education. This was clearly demonstrated when, in the period of Diarchy of the 1950s, enlightened Muslims demanded and obtained from the Western Regional Government the right to establish a number of Muslim schools where the Teaching of Islamic Knowledge and Arabic was guaranteed. It was politically expedient for the Action Group (AG) Government to make such concession since it claimed that region was secular and that religious groups had the right to own and run schools once they met the standards laid down

by government. It also insisted that in all non-denominational local government schools, western education was to be given without any Christian proselytizing influence. Thus, Muslims were further shielded from any Christian proselytization. Muslim groups were allocated part of the 40 percent given to the voluntary agencies and up to 10 percent of the 60 percent allocated to Native Authorities²⁰ Some of the Muslim organisations which took advantage of this dispensation and competed favourably with Christian ones were The *Ahmadiyya Movement*, the *Ansar-Ud-Deen* and the *Isabatudeen Society*.

Also in the 1950s, nationalists who came into position of partial power recognised the need to retain the missions involvement in the educational services of Nigeria. Generally this was much easier to achieve in this period as Nigerian Churchmen had come into position of authority in both churches and schools where hitherto white missionaries had dominated.²¹ In spite of this understanding, however, there was disparity in the way this cooperation between the State and Church was effected in the three regions. For instance, while Nigerian Churchmen as opinion leaders worked closely and successfully with the Western Regional Government, there were open rivalry and dissatisfaction between Eastern Regional Government and religious groups.²² In the Northern Region, there was a cautious though expedient cooperation between the government and the missions. The government accepted the assistance of the missions but with the provision that they would not use the opportunity to proselytize Muslim children. This disparity in educational services did not make for coordinated and even national development.

Politics and educational development in the Independent period

Perhaps it was this variety in the educational services as a result of the religious politics of 1950s and 1960s which hastened the government take-over of schools in the 1970s. Presumably, the take-over was precipitated by the infamous activities of the Christian groups particularly Catholics in the 30 month Civil War. Their lack of remorse for their activities in support of the *Biafran* cause, made the Federal Military Government (FMG) to take a number of actions that curtailed the free entry of aliens and their involvement in national matters. There was Decree No. 33 of 1969 on Immigration (Special Provisions) which ensured that all non-citizens must obtain Entry Permit to come into Nigeria. This decree was used to gradually depopulate the foreign missionary elements. One of the hardest hit missions was the Catholic Church which heavily depended on foreign missionaries. 75 Catholic priests and religious found in the Biafran enclave were arrested, tried and deported under this decree. In addition, government assumed ownership of all Christian schools in the former Biafran enclave. Later, the take-over of these institutions was extended to the whole country with the understanding that the religious groups (that is, the former owners) retained the right to decide who was posted as staff to these schools. This compromise was shortlived however. There were allegations, particularly by minority groups, that this right was denied them. In the Western states, Muslims complained that the public schools failed to give Islamic religious instruction to their children, while in some northern states, Christians complained that their children were denied Christian religious instructions in the state schools.²³

In the Eastern states where there were no sectarian complaints of the type mentioned above, voluntary agencies decried the injustice involved over their inability to use their former school premises for the development of religious teaching of their offspring.²⁴ Thus, despite the oil boom and the noises made by government about the secularization of education which guaranteed the freedom of religion in schools, no religious group was completely satisfied with the arrangement that the state should be totally responsible for

education and therefore, the state failed to get the necessary cooperation from them. This inevitably had adverse effects on educational development.

Yet, the charade of state responsibility for education and the secularity of activities in this avenue were loudly mouthed. For instance, within a space of three years, (1976 - 1979) government had devoted huge sums of money towards education and by 1979 they had fizzled away.

Very early in the life of the Second Republic, most of the schemes on education was no more viable because government either could not fund them or lacked political will to ensure its success. Thus, government involvement in educational services became even more politicized and therefore irregular. While at the Federal level, government rescinded the commitment to fund education at all levels as accepted by the previous administration, at the state level, five Unity Party of Nigeria states embarked on a free education programme at all levels within the precinct of their control.

These discrepancies in the state's delivery of educational services led to further discontentment among Nigerians. With the return to civilian rule in 1979, some people were hopeful that schools seized in the 1970s would be returned to their owners. There were people who believed that if schools were returned to their owners, the quality of education would be improved and that, the indiscipline which had pervaded the educational system would be controlled. Besides, since the military government did not compensate these voluntary agencies for taking over their institutions, they remained legitimately theirs.

Of course, there were also people who did not approve of these demands for various reasons among which included economic, sectarian and secular ones. Christians in Imo and Lagos States spearheaded the political protests for the return of schools to the voluntary agencies. The Lagos State Government and the Lagos Christians served as the litmus test case which was to have decided the action to be taken by other Christian/religious groups in Nigeria. The Lagos Christian body took the Lagos State Government to court for taking over schools and for preventing it from establishing private schools for the children of its adherents. The case dragged on for several years until it was finally decided in favour of the plaintiff in 1986. Meanwhile, the Christian body's demand in Imo State for the return of schools, met with stiff opposition from the 45,000 members strong state Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT).

Fortunately, in the Second Republic, most governments of the Federation did not make the existence of private primary schools an issue. These private institutions met the aspirations of those who felt that the services of the government primary schools were inadequate. It was thus only at the nursery and primary level that pupils/parents could escape the sledgehammer of government which compelled all post-primary institutions to come under the control of government.

It was at this post-primary level that political agitations were rife almost nation-wide over the unjust curtailment or biased promotion of certain religions through the injudicious acts/policies of government or government officials. Such discontentments were openly displayed over such policies as the teaching of Christian/Islamic Religious Knowledge/Doctrine in schools, allotted periods for praying during school hours, religious/secular assemblies at the opening and closing of a school day, the existence of religious organisations such as Scripture Union (SU) or Muslim Students' Society (MSS) in secular schools, etc. These issues, among others, remained problematic particularly in Oyo and Lagos states and were not adequately settled to the satisfaction of all concerned during the Second Republic.

An objective examination of the perennial problems identified above shows that they

were more political than religious. They were methods of showing displeasure with the system. It is however noteworthy that during the period under review, the population in educational institutions had grown astronomically so that the easy solution proffered that a return of schools to their owners would ease tension, might not be the answer. It is arguable whether voluntary agencies have the wherewithal to maintain schools in their present sizes if returned to them. Hence, the incessant calls for the return of schools to their erstwhile owners could be perceived as a stratagem to cause minor scares and also to serve as a reminder to government of *an opponent who is not very powerful but who appears strong*.²⁵ Nonetheless, some people had attributed the indiscipline among youngsters to the state control of educational institutions. The government, it was claimed, is not properly equipped to do this. These people opined that proper national development would take place only when those whose business is to instil discipline and mould good morals are involved.

With the military return to the political scene on December 31, 1983, came fees in educational institutions. There was the strong suggestion that since these services were no longer free, it was only fair that these institutions were returned to their owners. Cross River and Benue States had actually returned some of these institutions to their owners before the Federal Government gave a general dispensation in 1986 that private organizations could run primary schools. But the return of schools to their owners remains problematic in some states. It was simply politically expedient to not return them. For instance in Oyo State, it is said that Christians had more schools than any other religious groups,²⁶ while in Imo State, the powerful NUT was strongly against this move because it believed that the voluntary agencies would no longer be able to cope with the current population in schools.²⁷

However, it is pertinent to note the milieu within which these changes were occurring: Nigeria is a secular state where various religious groups made it their business to watch out for any lapses in their interests or infringement of their rights. Governments, particularly since the 1970s, vigorously asserted the secularity of the Nigeria state. Unfortunately, there was great disparity between this pronouncement and actual actions of state officials that feelings of insecurity were rife. Thus, accusations of religious repression, oppression and discrimination were freely expressed. The teaching of Arabic in Nigeria's public schools was one instance over which religious groups disagreed.

From the colonial period, the teaching of Arabic in schools had been ambiguously viewed by both the authorities and religious groups. For instance, Lugard was sceptical of its use in Northern Nigerian schools while his successors as governors actively promoted its teaching in line with the British officials' desire not to offend the sensibilities of the ruling class. In the 1950s, some influential Muslims in the Western Region saw the non-teaching of Arabic in the region's public schools as an effective way of stifling the growth of the Islamic faith in Muslim children.²⁸ Similar accusations were made of the governments of Oyo State between the 1970s and the 1980s.²⁹ Some Christian groups viewed the teaching of Arabic in Nigeria's secular schools either as a subtle tool of transforming secular Nigerian state into an Islamic one or at least, the promotion of Islam over and above other religions.

The authorities of the Ministry of Education endeavoured to explain these perceptions as misconceptions. They said that Arabic occupies the same status that any other language occupies in the school curriculum.

If however Arabic could be explained away as not necessarily a means of promoting Islam, the introduction of dual uniforms (duoform) in some federal and northern states' public schools certainly smacked of religious bigotry. The former uniform worn by school girls was perceived as *Christian* and the second set of uniform later introduced, viewed as

better becoming of Islamic school girls. Duoform was introduced, it was claimed, to assuage the religiously oppressive situation whereby Muslim girls were compelled to adopt Christian mode of dressing.³⁰

Another action of government which irked the sensibilities of Christian groups was the ban on prayers in all public institutions. The order was given in the wake of religious disturbances in Kaduna state in 1987. Christian groups perceived the order as attempts from high quarters to disorientate Christian youngsters about their faith and consequently stem the growth of Christianity in Nigeria. Investigations showed that government had made efforts to dereligionize public schools by deemphasizing religious ferventness. For instance, in one Federal College, assemblies were held only twice a week: Monday for Christians and Thursday for Muslims. The prayers said were devoid of *Offensive* names such as *Jesus and Mohamed*. In addition, religious activities were very severely monitored.³¹

Therefore, the Christian community made it a duty to ceaselessly decry the ban on religious activities in all educational institutions particularly at the primary and secondary school levels. They strongly insinuated that the prevalent laxity in the society, loose morals and general indiscipline among the youths were the result of government's ill prepared take-over of schools as well as the banning of the exposition of religious and moral instructions in schools. They insisted that the situation would worsen unless government immediately rescinded its unpopular action and promoted religious activities in schools.

Perhaps because of the pressure mounted by Christian groups or the fact that the crime rate has risen sharply recently with a high percentage of youngsters involved, government has graciously reintroduced the teaching of religious and moral instructions in all educational institutions. Government hoped this gesture would help to check crime, moral laxity and indiscipline among the youths.³²

Religious Groups and the Politics of Health and Social Welfare Development

Just as we attempted to show above, the ATR, prior to the advent of the other two religions, permeated the life of its adherents. Hence, it could be said that it took totally the control of their health and other social welfare services. Health, as an important phenomenon in the African context has to do with the preservation and restoration of human vitality in the community. The healing power depended on the right human relationships and harmony with the whole environment including the time-transcending spirit world.³³ Therefore, the practitioners of ATR practise magic and medicine in order to repair the damage to mind and body. In the same vein, chief priests as custodians of gods and goddesses were consulted in serious cases of misdemeanor and they decreed the actions to be taken to propitiate the gods and goddesses. Thus, under the control of ATR, the general well-being of the community was guaranteed.

Similarly, Islam took complete charge of the health and social welfare condition of its members in the *umma*. The Quran is a kind of armour against all evil influences and sickness. However in Nigeria, it was not unusual for unscrupulous *Alfas* and *Lemomus* to claim that certain passages of the Quran could be *written on scraps paper and wrapped up in leather and used as protective amulet*.³⁴ On social welfare services, Islam advocates how the community could take care of its less fortunate members through the system of ZAKAT (Almsgiving) and method of equitable sharing of inheritance. With modernisation and other influences, Muslims have established their own health institutions and social welfare centres for motherless babies and old people.

Christianity introduced orthodox methods of health care services in Nigeria. Early in

the life of the various Christian missions, health care services were given in cottage hospitals, maternity homes and dispensaries in very remote areas. They dispelled superstitious beliefs brought about through ignorance and taught simple hygiene. They were also involved in leprosy relief work and they built leprosaria. Their involvement in leprosy relief work throughout Nigeria helped to curtail the dreadful disease and earned several Christian missions financial support from the colonial authorities.³⁵ The collaboratory attitude which existed between state and church in this area continued throughout the colonial period and well into the 1970s when government took control of health services. Even then, the government allowed mission workers to continue to give services in the health institutions.

In 1986, when President Babangida gave his dispensation of returning social welfare institutions to their erstwhile owners, some of the missions claimed back their hospitals. Meanwhile some Muslim individuals/organisations took the opportunity to establish their own hospitals. That way, their religious sensibilities would no longer be offended.

It is however noteworthy that while the two foreign religions had to some extent been able to go into competition with each other in social and health services, the ATR had remained remote and generally open only to their members. However, of the three, the Christian missions remain liberal as their services are open to everyone in the society regardless of his creed or religion.

Some other social services which the government got itself involved in are Pilgrimages and Religious Broadcasts.

Pilgrimage,³⁶ a purely religious matter, has become highly politicized as government sees itself as necessarily responsible for the welfare of pilgrims, hence it continued to commit huge public funds towards the up-keep of 21,460 pilgrims annually. In addition, during the period of pilgrimage, the economy comes to a stand still. There is no wild fluctuation of the Naira as against popular currencies, air fares are fixed and there could be unnecessary disruption of air time table, etc. Many Nigerians who have no religious compulsion to go on pilgrimage resent strongly this state involvement particularly as one religion seemed to benefit more than others. They therefore opined that since religion is a private affair, pilgrimage should assume private status. After all, pilgrims in other countries do not constitute such problems to their governments.

The competition between Christian and Muslim groups is strongly demonstrated by the amount of air time consumed by each of these religious groups in order to out-do each other in the display of their religiosity, fellowship and hence the subtle power they are able to wield in the society. Yet, the media they employ - radio and television - are government owned, set up with the tax payers' money. Government playing safe, usually ignored the overt torture to which they subjected viewers by the endless tirade of religious programmes, unless it felt it was politically unsafe. Then it suddenly intervenes, banning religious broadcasts and suddenly rescinds its decision when the danger is over. This *fire-brigade* action is very unsettling and fraught with danger. The 1990 ban, for instance, came when the Christian groups felt government deliberately imposed the ban during the Passion Week of Easter to scale down their activities while it lifted the ban just before the end of the Ramadan to energise the Muslims' activities. Certainly, government's intervention in this manner was ill-advised as it came at critical periods of the religious calendar of both religions. Government should either not have imposed the ban or lifted it when it did.

Conclusion

This paper attempts to show that religion and development do mix and religion has impact on national development though in the process, politics has been at play. In the cursory survey of three areas, education, health and social welfare services in the period prior to colonial rule, through the colonial period and the post colonial period, the paper endeavours to highlight the contributions of each religion through its religious groups to national development. The paper shows how various governments attempted to stage a delicate balance between the various religious groups particularly the Muslim and Christian ones in the above identified areas without much success. From the issues raised in the paper, we have the following findings:

- i) that the three religions ATR, Islam and Christianity indeed influenced the educational, health and social welfare development in Nigeria and thus, they contributed to the current national development;
- ii) that of the three religious groups, however, the Christian groups were more functionally responsible for the framework of the current educational, health and some social welfare services in this country;
- iii) that the past contributions or positions of some religious groups necessarily propelled them into making impossible demands on the state;
- iv) that the government contributed to the current state of national development by firstly politicizing these educational, health and social welfare services and secondly, by taking full responsibility of these services without the necessary attendant planning, personnel and funding. The result is the poor services that are now prevalent in these institutions;
- v) that the inability of government to render efficient services had compelled it to appeal to voluntary agencies to set up similar institutions to complement the unsatisfactory efforts of government;
- vi) that government religious politicking would continue to offend the sensibilities of Nigerians particularly the unfavoured religious groups. Certain religious-political issues must be settled once and for all. Government should do away with fire-brigade gestures. Thus, Pilgrimages should be the responsibility of religious bodies and religious programmes should be stopped on the Radio and Television.

From the above findings, there is no gainsaying the fact that religion is intricately interwoven with politics in Nigeria. It is also a fact that for as long as religious groups are satisfied, they would positively have an impact on the Nigerian body politic. But when other factors such as favouritism, partiality, bigotry, creep in, negativity sets in. Contributions from the dissatisfied cannot be healthy, progressive, functional or positive.

Religion in itself is a good and useful tool for development because no ardent believer would be involved in any evil deed or actions which would be detrimental to healthy development of a state. Religion becomes dysfunctional in any political system when religious adherents as public officials misuse their exalted positions to ram down sectarian views on the general populace or to promote or assist fellow adherents at the expense of non-adherents. The consequence of such unpatriotic actions is usually unpleasant. Government should therefore not allow itself to be so negatively employed or perceived if it wants to enjoy the goodwill, support of every member of the society and to promote national development.

It is also important to point out the dysfunctional effect of religious over-zealousness on the cultural ethos of the Nigerian society. It is now usual to see religious women properly dressed in the puritan Christian or Muslim fundamentalistic fashion. Apart from the fact

that this is a blind adoption of another culture in the name of religion, it depicts a limited knowledge of the reason why those women from foreign cultures dress the way they do. It could be either because of the harsh Arabian weather or to meet the exigencies of their time. A blind adoption of Arabian culture, is detrimental to nation-building. Similarly, the uncritical adoption of any culture in all its totality stultifies psychological development since the mental psychic would be attuned to the pristine period rather than to Nigeria's present day needs. This inevitably would lead to a divergence in national development since the *ardent* Muslim fundamentalist or the *born again* Christian takes his cue only from the bible, quran, sharia, or hadith. Religion should not be accepted to the point that one's culture would be displaced. Overall however, religion, through the active participation of religious groups, has contributed tremendously to national development and will continue to do so.

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INFLUENCING A COUNTRY'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DECISION MAKING WITH FOOD: THE CASE OF GHANA

A. Essuman-Johnson

When a country has scarce resources which others need, the donor country seeks to gain as much advantage as possible from that resource. Ghana takes food aid from many sources, but the largest package comes from the U.S. PL480 programme and the need for Ghana to take such food aid from the U.S. has enabled the U.S. to exert quite an influence on aspects of the country's political and economic decision making. This paper seeks to examine how this influence has been exerted in Ghana's decision to accept an adjustment package with the IMF and her behaviour on the international scene where U.S. interests are concerned.

The US PL480 Programme

During World War 1, Herbert Hoover masterminded the use of U.S. food surpluses to gain considerable political advantage in war torn Europe. After the war, the dumping ground for surplus U.S. grain had to be enlarged from its European base and this led to the passage of PL480 in 1954 by the U.S. Congress. Since then, food aid from the U.S. has been shipped to and used by developing countries under the terms of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act 1954 as amended and usually referred to as Public Law (PL) 480. The goals and objectives of the Act as specified by Congress are as follows:

The Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to expand International trade; to develop and expand export markets for U.S. agricultural commodities; to use the abundant agricultural productivity of the U.S. to combat hunger and malnutrition and to encourage economic development in the developing countries, with particular assistance to those countries that are determined to improve their own agricultural productivity and to promote in other ways the foreign policy of the United States.¹

The realisation of these goals have been embodied in the various categories of the PL480 programme. There are three categories viz. Title I, Title II and Title III. Under Title I, needy countries take out long term loans from the U.S. government to purchase surplus U.S. agricultural commodities. The imported commodities are sold on the local market and proceeds paid into a counterpart fund in the Central Bank to be used for mutually agreed projects which would minimise or eliminate food shortages. Under Title II the U.S. government donates food which is distributed free of charge by the Catholic Relief Services in Ghana. The title III programme also operates under similar conditions as the Title I programme. The only difference however is that under title III, a loan can be converted into a grant. Ghana has not benefited under the title III programme and the title II programme is similar to the food for work programme of the WFP.

PL480 Title I in Ghana

Under the provisions of the PL480 title I Programme, the Ghana government has signed several agreements with the U.S. government for the supply of food aid to Ghana. The agreements usually follow the standard PL480 title I text only that the provisions are specific to Ghana. This paper will examine the 1980 agreement with a view to pointing out its effects on the economy in general and food production in particular. The burden here is to show that by the terms of the agreement, the U.S. sought to influence economic development along two main lines: (a) by its emphasis on the private sector of the economy and (b) by its efforts to link economic development to IMF adjustment measures.

In 1980, an agreement between the Ghana government and the U.S. government enjoined the U.S. government to supply the commodities in table I. Under the agreement² the value of the commodities supplied i.e. \$12.7 million became a loan to, the Ghana government repayable over a period of 40 years with 10 years moratorium at an initial interest of 2% for the first 10 years and 3% thereafter. In line with the PL480 programme of promoting U.S. private interests, the agreement stipulates that 50% of the Commodities should be carried in U.S. flag ships. This provision has often cost Ghana a lot in foreign exchange for demurrage charges because the U.S. flag ships are kept waiting at U.S. ports for weeks and at certain times months due to the fact that the Ghana government has been unable to transfer the foreign exchange to cover the 5% down payment the agreement requires, as the initial payment for the ships to start loading.

Table I

Commodities to be supplied to Ghana FY80

Commodity	Supply Period U.S. FY	Approximate Max Quantity (M/T)	Max Export Market Value
Wheat/Wheat Flour	1980	33,550	5.7
Corn/Sorghum	"	30,000	3.4
Rice	"	10,000	3.6
Total			\$12.7

Source: Agreement between the Government of Ghana and the Government of the U.S.A. for sale of agricultural Commodities 1980

To enable the U.S. to get a clear picture of Ghana's import trade in grains, the agreement enjoins the government to furnish the U.S. with a *Usual marketing table*. This table is a projection of the usual import needs of the recipient country. The aim of the provision being to ensure that the agricultural commodities to be sold under the agreement will not displace usual marketings of the exporting country in these commodities or unduly disrupt world prices of agricultural commodities or normal patterns of commercial trade with countries the U.S. considers friendly to it.³ Added to this is the provision that the Ghana government shall

*Take steps to assure that the exporting country obtains a fair share of any increase in commercial purchase of agricultural commodities by the importing country.*⁴

Further to this clause is another provision which goes to put further emphasis on the development of the private sector in the economy of Ghana. It states

*In carrying out the provisions of this agreement, the two governments shall seek to assure conditions of commerce permitting private traders to function effectively.*⁵

The implication of this provision in the agreement, among other things, is that the U.S. sought a promotion of the private sector in Ghana and this has been the very basis of neo-colonial strategy because the private sector in most third world countries is unable to develop independently of capitalist interests in the developed western economies and thus promotes dependence. U.S. aid to Ghana over the years has tried to ensure that the country follows a development strategy akin to her own.

U.S. Aid and Nkrumah

Prior to 1966, U.S. aid to Ghana was mainly in the form of technical assistance and the Catholic Relief Service programme under PL480 title II. For obvious political reasons i.e. the Socialist orientation of the regime, the U.S. kept her aid during the Nkrumah years to a minimum. Following the 1966 *Coup*, the country was virtually flooded with food aid from Western Countries led by the U.S. And yet similar requests for food aid from the Nkrumah government to stem a critical food situation had been refused. Nkrumah was to draw attention to this later

*Throughout 1965 and before then, the U.S. government exerted various forms of economic pressure on Ghana. It withheld investment and credit guarantees from potential investors, put pressure on existing providers of credit to Ghana and negated application for loans made by Ghana to the IMF. This pressure ended smartly after February 1966.*⁶

From February 1966 the NLC took power and because they set about putting things “in order” the USAID started to provide balance of payment support to the regime. This was primarily done through a commodity import programme under PL480 Title I which provided agricultural and transport equipment. Through the PL480 aid programme the US sought to de-emphasise the state sector of the economy set up under the Nkrumah regime.

Counterpart Funds and Self-help Measures

Under the PL480 Title I programme, the U.S. government grants the Ghana government a loan to be used to buy food from the U.S. Proceeds from the sale of the commodities are to be lodged in a counterpart Fund Account at the Bank of Ghana. The use of this counterpart Fund provides further evidence of the ways the U.S. have sought to exert influence on the sectoral development of the Ghanaian economy.

Table II
External Counterpart Balances as at 30th June 1981

Fund Title	Balance Available (Million €)
Canada Wheat Gift	4,208,657.82
U.K. EFR Programme	2,697,000.00
French EFR Programme	2,628,502.57
Australia EFR Programme	1,028,156.50
Italy EFR Programme	4,120,746.14
Soviet Union EFR Programme	508,049.20
Japan EFR Programme	3,537,649.21
EEC Normal Food Aid	20,928,051.20
PL480 (U.S.) 1979	16,191,398.31
PL480 (U.S.) 1980	34,407,981.05
PL480 (U.S.) 1981 - a	34,407,981.05
	124,654,185.05
Total PL480	€85,007,360.41

EFR - Emergency Food Relief

a - Estimated to be the same as in 1980 since the same amount of money \$12.7 million was loaned to Ghana.

Source: Brief on the Food Aid Programme. A statement on the Counterpart Fund Balances as at 30th June 1981. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning External Aid Division, Accra.

From Table II we note that the U.S. has the largest share of counterpart Fund Account. Out of a total of C124.7 million, the U.S. share of C85 million is 68% followed by the EEC with C20.9 million or 17% of the total. This means that the U.S. has a bigger leverage than any other donor country as far as influencing agricultural development in the country by the type of projects she agrees to be funded by the Counterpart Fund. In this connection the U.S. makes sure that the Counterpart Funds are specifically earmarked for what is called "self-help measures" which are embodied in the agreements. Under the 1980 agreement the *self-help measures* which the Ghana government was obliged to commit itself, were indicated as follows:

The government of Ghana agrees to undertake the following activities and in so doing to provide adequate financial, technical and managerial resources for their implementation:

- 1) Under take activities to adjust agricultural price policies and subsidies.
- 2) Implement programmes to increase the production of food crops by small-scale farmers. These efforts should include:
 - a) Improving the availability of agricultural inputs including improved seeds, tools, spare parts, fertilizer and pesticides.
 - b) Expanding and improving small scale irrigation schemes in the Northern and Upper regions.

3) Implement programmes to improve, marketing and distribution of agricultural production throughout Ghana.⁷

These provisions in the self-help measures sort of compels the Ghana government to undertake a predetermined range of agricultural projects. The measures are geared towards providing for small scale private agricultural enterprises which enables the U.S. to reinforce the private sector in Ghanaian agriculture. To ensure that the “self-help measures” would be undertaken, the agreement specifies that the counterpart funds be used for that purpose. The U.S. therefore imposes these self-help measures, because that part of the PL480 Title I agreement is not negotiable and further directs that the projects be funded by the counterpart funds which really is a loan which has to be repaid by Ghana. The U.S. through the use of the Counterpart Funds exert quite an influence on agricultural development along paths she prefers. The 1980 budget identified some of the projects to be funded by the Counterpart Funds as follows:

Projects to be financed from Counterpart Fund

Project	Amount ₵
Tono Irrigation Project	
Bontanga Irrigation Project	25,000,000.00
Culverts and Bridges (W.R.)	10,000,000.00
Seed Processing Plant (Winneba)	4,000,000.00
Fertilizer Depots (E/R, A/R, B/A & N/R)	920,000.00
Rehabilitation of Regional Cold Stores/Silos	2,000,000.00
Weija Irrigation Project	3,000,000.00
Payment of Butler Steel Silos	2,700,000.00
Twifo Oil Palm Plantation	5,000,000.00
Agric. Development Bank (Loans Scheme)	10,000,000.00
Rural Bank Scheme	500,000.00
Ashiaman Irrigation Project)	
Dawheanya Irrigation Project)	1,000,000.00
Avayime Cattle Ranch	1,000,000.00
	<hr/>
Total	65,120,000.00

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning International Aid Division.

An examination of these projects shows the extent the counterpart funds have been used to promote the African version of the green revolution.⁸ Most of them are irrigation and related projects. The experience in most third world countries and Ghana's own Dawheanya irrigation project is that even though such projects help in the efforts to increase food production, the irrigated land is mostly allocated to commercial farmers whose high cost of production often lead to their produce being priced so high that the ordinary man may not be able to buy.

This has also been borne out by the Weija irrigation project. The local farmers lost out of the project. Where they were given plots they were not given a free hand in choosing the crop to cultivate and the irrigation authorities accused the farmers of being lazy while the farmers accused the irrigation authorities of cheating them by the price they gave them for their produce. The project has therefore made very little impact.

PL480 and the MIDAS Project

The PL480 aid programme also aims at the development and expansion of export markets for US agricultural commodities. The problem has been how to achieve this goal. Part of the answer was provided in the concept of *development assistance* which was explained by Assistant Secretary of State W.L. Clayton as follows:

World Bank financing for capital goods from the industrial countries would certainly be very good for U.S. agricultural exports, because as you help develop them (underdeveloped countries) industrially, you will shift their economy to an industrial economy so that I think in the end you would create more markets for your agricultural products.⁹

The U.S. uses the PL480 agreement to realise aspects of this objective. When a country asks for food aid and the request is granted, the U.S. comes in with other assistance programmes aimed ostensibly at helping the recipient country to be self sufficient in food production. Such aid normally goes to farmers to help them increase their productivity and this fits well into the PL480 title I agreement under the self-help measures. A project which USAID financed in line with PL480 programme was the Managed Inputs Delivery and Agricultural Services (MIDAS) project.

MIDAS and linkages to the IMF

The MIDAS project was a Ghana Government-USAID project designed to develop an institutionalised co-ordinated system to provide improved agricultural inputs and services to small-scale farmers on a regular and timely basis to enable them increase their productivity and incomes. It was based at Atebubu in the Brong-Ahafo region. It also aimed at strengthening the capacity of the national institutions responsible for delivering inputs and services. A grant agreement to provide external financial support for the project was signed in December 1977. The project was to be supported by a \$30 million loan.

Phase I of the project aimed at strengthening and restructuring existing Ghanaian institutions to enable them deliver inputs and services required by a large number of small farmers. The MIDAS project emphasis on the small farmer was to become an essential element in the government's new agricultural development strategy. The significance of the MIDAS project is to be seen in the linkages the project had with IMF adjustment measures that were being advocated for the national economy. MIDAS officials¹⁰ point out that the project depended so much on the willingness of the government to effect a certain kind of economic changes. In the government's development budget that year it was stated:

The strategy for extension will be to concentrate on small farmers. Assistance will be provided especially in the selection, use and supply of new inputs to supplement traditional ones.¹¹

This strategy of economic development shifts from past policies, which called for agricultural modernisation through large scale mechanized state farms and private farms, to policies which placed a premium on providing inputs and services to small farmers. This ties in well with the sustained efforts on the part of the IMF since 1966 to get Ghana to de-emphasize state participation in the economy. Every country with a PL480 contract has to submit a twice yearly report on how well it is progressing in the implementation of the self-help measures. One such report on Ghana stated that:

an encouraging trend in Ghana is the government's emphasis on private enterprise in agriculture. Ghana has phased out some of its state farms and is encouraging private farming both large and small.¹²

The goal of MIDAS phase II was to increase production and income and improve the welfare of small farm facilities in the Brong Ahafo region. This was to be realised through six technical sub components viz (a) seed multiplication and distribution; (b) small farm credit expansion; (c) extension/demonstration; (d) small farm systems research; (e) fertilizer systems development; (f) small farm marketing. The Ghana Seed Company was to provide improved and proven varieties of seed to Ghanaian farmers. The Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) and the Rural Banks were to provide small farms credit. The ADB and the Bank of Ghana were to be assisted by the use of the counterpart funds, to establish more credit facilities in the Brong Ahafo region to meet the credit needs of the farmers. The ADB benefited positively from the MIDAS project: e.g. between 1976/79 the ADB got equipment worth \$650,000 in the form of vehicles, motorcycles, bullion trucks and training school equipment. The ADB also got consulting services in credit and training from USAID. ADB staff also had training courses in the US.

The fertilizer systems development component provides technical assistance and assist in designing and establishing the procurement and distribution of bagged and blended fertilizer and to design and establish the input delivery system. This component could not start because the proposed fertilizer blending plant was seen by Ghanaian officials as inappropriate because the technological base of the plant would have made Ghana too dependent on the US.

The small farms marketing component of the MIDAS project was implemented by the ADB and monitored by the Bureau of Integrated Rural Development (BIRD) of the UST in Kumasi. It was to identify, test and evaluate on a pilot basis, in the Atebubu district, approaches, inputs and incentives for increasing the efficiency of marketing food crops of the small scale farmers. Their findings are to be the basis for designing and executing more effective marketing systems based on private sector participation and competitive market forces.

The MIDAS project was supported by a loan of \$11.7 million and a grant of \$9.4 million for the first three years. The Ghana government was to contribute \$9.2 million toward the project. The loan carried an interest rate of 2% for the first ten years and 3% thereafter. The principal is to be repaid in 40 years. Notwithstanding the generous terms of the loan, it added to the debt burden of the country and to the extent that the project was going to create a market for some agricultural inputs that had to be imported, it deepened the balance of payment problems that faced the economy.

The IMF Linkage

One aspect of the MIDAS project that has a greater significance with regard to its broader effects on the Ghanaian economy was the obligation that the Ghana government should seek an economic package from the IMF. It stated:

*The GOG will address the macro-economic policy issues and will formulate, either on its own initiative or in agreement with the IMF, a series of stabilization measures*¹³

It is clear from this obligation that the USAID was using the MIDAS project to get Ghana to seek accommodation with the IMF because the success of the project was bound up with these changes in the economy. The agreement addressed itself to one of the major stabilisation measures that the IMF has always insisted upon. In its conditions and covenants the MIDAS agreement states:

The co-operating country will agree to make available fertilizer to the farmers in the Brong Ahafo Region at a selling price in line with its true market value; and to co-

operate with USAID by providing evidence of subsidy levels and a GOG time table of reducing subsidies.

Nothing could have been closer to elements of the IMF stabilisation measures than the clause above. The agreement goes on to state further that:

*The co-operating country will agree to continue developing its program of general economic stabilisation and conclude appropriate discussions and agreements (with IMF)*¹⁴

It is clear from these clauses that USAID was using MIDAS to push Ghana into concluding an economic stabilisation package with the IMF.

IMF-Ghana contracts

Following the PL480 and MIDAS agreements, there is evidence to suggest that USAID has been able to secure the implementation of IMF stabilisation package for Ghana. The IMF team was negotiating with the Akuffo SMC II regime in 1979 when the AFRC coup occurred, and the negotiations were apparently broken off. They were resumed with the PNP government and were at the threshold of an agreement but it seemed the PNP wanted to hold on until after the impending elections before striking a deal with the IMF. The PNP was overthrown by the PNDC on 31 December 1981. But despite the revolutionary slogans of the PNDC regime it signed a new PL480 Title I agreement with USAID in August 1982. In the negotiations towards the agreement, the US raised and insisted on the stabilisation measures it had been urging all along. It was noted that:

*The US team underscored the linkage between macro-economic policies of Ghana and agricultural sector performance. They also emphasised the need for Ghana to pay all outstanding PL480 Title I debts no later than September 30 1982*¹⁵

Even though the Ghana negotiating team agreed that macro-economic policies do affect agricultural sector performance, they stated that agriculture was only one of several issues affected by macro-economic policies. USAID was however informed of the principal goals of Ghana government economic policy for the short and medium term as reflected in the 1981/82 revised budget statement of 24 May 1982.¹⁶ These included:

- (i) Suspension of blank guarantees to state enterprises to enable them borrow from the banks.
- (ii) Efficient tax collection.
- (iii) Scrutiny of all payrolls to weed out ghost workers.
- (iv) Physical inspection of government projects to ensure that certificates presented by contractors reflect the cost of actual work done before payment is effected.
- (v) Scrutiny of the expenditures on running and maintenance of official vehicles and supplies and stores.
- (vi) Review of the basis for granting subvention to government institutions and some public boards.
- (vii) Suspension of all foreign travel lasting more than six months.

These policy measures were however not what the USAID was looking for and they indicated that:

*USAID will make periodic, probably semi-annual reports to Washington on efforts to reduce the budget deficit since USAID considers this a key element in improving the prospects for increased small farmer food production.*¹⁷

The USAID did not have to wait too long for the much awaited macro-economic reforms. On December 30 1982, the PNDC launched its 4-year economic recovery

programme (ERP). The programme noted:¹⁸

Concretely, the 1983 agenda entails the restructuring of the basic institutions of the economy and the establishment of a sound macro-economic framework covering fiscal and monetary policies, prices, incomes etc. which will rationalize the incentive system and thereby create the minimum condition for the success of the social and political mobilization effort.

One macro-economic policy which is so dear to the USAID and the IMF, the ERP first noted the differences in prices between imported and locally produced commodities. It stated:

*These differences in prices are no doubt in part attributable to excessive domestic costs of production, but equally certainly also the result of the over valuation of the cedi. The latter makes imports artificially cheap and leads to what amounts to dumping of foreign goods on the domestic market to the benefit of importers and the detriment of domestic producers.*¹⁹

The IMF quickly responded to the ERP of the PNDC with various agreements. The IMF agreed to support the ERP and agreed that Ghana can withdraw over \$300 million under the Fund's standby credit facility and the Compensating Financing Facility.²⁰ The World Bank also agreed to give \$30 million to rehabilitate the transport system and improve agriculture and also to grant \$80 million to appraise programmes in the timber, cocoa and mining sectors. The World Bank further agreed to sponsor a donors' conference in Paris on Ghana's medium term development plan (obviously in anticipation of further measures in the budget for 1983). The budget was released on April 21 1983 with all the ingredients of IMF measures to reduce inflation, remove subsidies, hold down wages and adjust the value of the cedi. Highlights of the budget were:

- a) Prices of rice, maize and sugar unchanged (but these had earlier been increased before the budget).
- b) Increases in the prices of the following goods and services: matchets, wax prints, baby foods, omo and lux, petroleum products, beer, guinness and cigarettes, tuition fees, medical care abroad and air tickets and hospital fees.
- c) A system of bonuses for exporters and surcharges for importers.
- d) Minimum wage increased from c12.00 to c21.19.²¹

Reaction to the budget was generally negative and workers called for its withdrawal. The TUC rejected the c21.19 wage and after negotiations they reluctantly accepted c25.00 daily wage. The government used the security agencies to stem most of the popular opposition to the budget. The IMF and the World Bank, apparently impressed at the government's ability to deal with the opposition to the budget, went ahead to organize the donors' conference in Paris on November 23 and 24 1983. Prior to this, in an apparent attempt to please the IMF/World Bank, the government had removed more of the subsidies and devalued the cedi. The World Bank lauded these measures. Briefing journalists in Washington prior to the donors' conference in Paris, a senior official of the Bank was quoted as saying:

*The sensible policy measures being introduced by the PNDC hold out good hope for Ghana's economic recovery. He referred to the measures taken by PNDC to deal with the country's economic problems namely the adjustment of the cedi, increase in cocoa producer prices, as well as increase in tariffs on water, power, railways and telecommunication sectors.*²²

Such a stabilisation programme with the IMF has its political implications, because to a certain extent the status of a country's relationship with the IMF is the most accurate guide to the fate of the country's aspirations to autonomous development.²³ The acceptance of these IMF stabilisation measures therefore means that the IMF and other Western capitalist institutions, will oversee the country's development and thus make sure that the development is influenced by Western economic doctrine. The measures did reflect on the agricultural sector as the prices of fertilizer indicated. The prices of the two most important fertilizers 15-15-15 and sulphate of ammonia rose sharply between 1981 and 1983. For 15-15-15, price rose from ₵30.00 in 1981 to ₵500.00 in 1983. The price of sulphate of ammonia rose from ₵25.00 in 1981 to ₵340.00 in 1983. The high fertilizer prices meant that most peasant farmers would find it difficult buying them and only commercial farmers would be able to mobilize the funds to buy fertilizer. The measures also affected seeds sold by the Ghana Seed Company.

TABLE III
SEED PRICE LIST (CEDIS)

CROP	1975	1976	1976	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Rice	26.00	50.00	56.00	76.00	175.00	500.00	700.00	700.00	1000.00
Maize	7.50	7.50	30.00	30.00	150.00	350.00	500.00	900.00	1500.00
Ground-nut	12.00	15.00	55.00	55.00	135.00	300.00	550.00	700.00	800.00

Source: Ghana Seed Company (GSC).

xx By the devaluation the GSC estimated that farmers will have to pay at least ₵3,000.00 for a bag of seed maize.

The price of seed rice rose from ₵700.00 in 1982 to ₵1000.00 while that of maize and groundnuts rose from ₵900.00 and ₵700.00 to ₵1,500 and ₵800.00 respectively. The increase in prices of seed meant that peasant farmers were mostly to cut back on the seeds they could buy. The budget also announced an increase in the price of machets - the main tool of the peasant farmer - from ₵15.66 to ₵50.00. What these price increases meant for the factors of food production was that the yield on peasant farms continued to be low because the farmers who produce the bulk of the food found it difficult to cope. For the commercial farmers and the peasant farmers who could afford the fertilizer and the seeds, their high cost of production would be passed on to consumers. The period thus witnessed high food prices. Herein lies the way the PL480 agreement has been used to link Ghana's development effort to IMF adjustment measures and whose broader impact has not helped the resolution of the food problem in Ghana.

Using food as political weapon

Apart from its economic implications, when a country is forced to ask for food aid, the country has to contend with certain political expectations from the donors. Most donors, in spite of their claims always insist that the resources they provide be used in a manner consistent with the interest of the recipient. But in many cases they have also used their aid as an effective instrument for supplementing their diplomacy and propaganda. The need to

use their resources as instruments to achieve an objective becomes more important when the objective lies outside the domestic domain of the donor. When the domain lies in the international plane, the state has to depend on the actions of other states to achieve that foreign policy objective.

Richly endowed states therefore use their resources to influence the behaviour of recipients. Given the dependence of many developing countries on foreign aid from the developed countries, they tend to be easily influenced by the donor countries. Most aid programmes are obviously not undertaken for humanitarian purposes because a vast portion of the aid go to a few countries and some of the countries may not be those with the most pressing needs. India, Pakistan and Egypt have received large amounts of aid because of their strategic and symbolic importance in world politics. On the other hand aid policies and commitment do not have an immediate or exclusive political or security objective. The aid programmes have often been designed to help secure certain of the donor's political objectives. It was not for humanitarian reasons or a sense of duty to the Latin American countries that the US pledged to provide \$20 million over ten years for the Alliance for Progress programme. The assumption behind this programme was that successful economic development in the Latin American countries will create political stability and reduce the threat of violent revolutions and unrest which revolutionary groups can exploit²⁴ and thereby make that region safe for private enterprise and therefore safe for US economic interests.

The US food weapon

The US has a history of using food aid to influence recipient countries. The PL480 Act itself is clear about the use of food as a tool to help attain various national goals. It states: *The congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to expand international trade; to develop and expand export markets for US agricultural commodities; to use the abundant agricultural productivity of the US to combat hunger and malnutrition and to encourage economic development in the developing countries ... and to promote in other ways the foreign policy of the US.*²⁵

Various groups and departments in the US have sought to achieve different goals using food as the tool. The Congressional Agricultural Committee saw the law as a means to develop and expand farm commodity export markets; church and non sectarian welfare organisations desired to use it to combat hunger and malnutrition and to attract people to their church; USAID was interested in PL480 as an instrument to encourage economic development in the developing countries along capitalist lines; the US Department of Commerce was concerned with the expansion of international trade; and the State Department was interested in the use of food aid for the promotion of what it considered to be the legitimate aims of US foreign policy. A concern with national security has also motivated certain congressional leaders to advocate the use of food as a political or economic weapon. In the wake of the oil price hikes by OPEC in the early 1970's President Ford threatened at the UN to embargo US grain sales to OPEC countries and when the Soviet Union sent troops to Afghanistan, the US embargoed grain sales to the Soviets. In all these instances, the US was hoping to use food to influence the behaviour of OPEC and the Soviets and thus achieve certain objectives. The use of food to influence the behaviour of third world countries by the US is not uncommon. The case of Bangladesh illustrates this. Writing on this issue, A. Sen noted:

The relief operations in the Bangladesh famine of 1974 were delayed because of the lowness of the stock of food grains in the public distribution system. That problem

was incidentally, vastly worsened by the decision of the US government to cut off food aid to Bangladesh just at the peak of the famine because of Bangladesh's temporary refusal to accept the US demand that exports of Bangladesh jute to Cuba be stopped. US food aid was resumed only when Bangladesh cancelled further export of jute to Cuba by which time the famine was over.²⁶

Ghana and the Moscow Olympics

The need for Ghana to take food aid from the US has been used to influence her behaviour towards the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games. In 1980 the US set about the achievement of a major foreign policy objective. The objective was to exert pressure on the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan and when that failed, the US wanted the world to show disapproval of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. This was to be achieved through a campaign to boycott the 1980 summer olympics games in Moscow. To achieve this goal, the US had to make use of the various resources at her disposal to influence other countries to boycott the Moscow games and in that campaign food and other economic aid were to feature prominently in the bag of tools at the disposal of the US.

To get African countries to join the boycott, President Carter appointed former world heavyweight champion Mohammed Ali as a special envoy to go round African countries to persuade them to boycott the Moscow Olympics. In Dar-es-Salaam, Ali had to apologise to the effect that if he had known that the US did not support Africa against apartheid South Africa, in their boycott of the 1976 Montreal olympics, he would not have accepted that special envoy role's.²⁷ Ali received a similar cold reception in Lagos. Even though Ali did not come to Ghana, it was known that pressure was being exerted by the US to get Ghana to boycott the games. When Ghana finally decided to boycott the games, the government was quick to point out that the decision was that of the *National Olympic Committee (NOC)*. This decision, however came two months to the start of the games, and the reasons given were the lack of adequate preparation on the part of the Ghanaian sportsmen due to the unstable political situation the country had gone through for the past three years.²⁸

To understand how Ghana was influenced, there is the need to go back to political developments in Ghana since June 4, 1979. That was when the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) came to power. The AFRC said its main aim was to conduct a *house cleaning* exercise under which action would be taken against those found guilty of corruption during the previous military regime. A special court was set up with powers to sentence people to death by firing squad and to confiscate to the state all improperly acquired assets. This culminated in the execution of three former Heads of State and other members of the ruling council. The AFRC intervention was in a way a class conflict in the armed forces. It represented a constellation of feelings of anger, resentment, fear, moral outrage and also hope on the part of the ranks and their junior officers who supported them. It was a class action on the part of the lower classes to assert themselves.²⁹ As Hansen has argued, it was the class character of the intervention and its revolutionary potential which aroused so much hostility from Western countries and from African countries which feared similar uprising from their own armies.³⁰ These two groups of countries therefore sought to influence the behaviour of Ghana and to forestall all spill over all what had happened in Ghana.

Nigeria led the West African protest. Soon after the executions, Nigeria expressed deep concern followed by a reduction in the period of credit for Ghana's oil imports from Nigeria from 90 to 30 days and when the executions continued, Nigerian oil shipments were suspended. Western protest was led by the *International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)* who

called on the AFRC to *uphold the tradition of the rule of law* in the conduct of trials of former leaders. Britain, the EEC, Canada and the US all made representations. Following the executions of June 26 1979, the British Prime Minister Mrs. Thatcher, said that it had been made *perfectly clear to the AFRC that if there were to be prosecutions, they should be in accordance with internationally accepted principles of justice and that the government again expressed abhorrence at the latest executions.*³¹

The AFRC era in Ghana politics raised a lot of anxious moments for Western political and economic interests. The regime put on trial prominent members and officials of former regimes and many senior civil servants and officials of state corporations and many were dismissed and their assets confiscated. For the private sector, the AFRC investigated various companies and heavy penalties were imposed on those found guilty. The AFRC era therefore represented a political development which the West was not happy about, due to its potential for a revolution and its spill over effects. It is against this background that we look at how the government of Dr. Hilla Limann was influenced to boycott the Moscow Olympics.

When the Limann government took over from the AFRC, it moved quickly to assure the West that the legacy of the AFRC would be laid to rest. When the president received the credentials of the new US ambassador to Ghana, he pledged to promote the rule of law and fundamental human rights. When he received the credentials of the Senegalese ambassador, the President said that Ghana could take inspiration from the road to stability and progress that had characterised the development of Senegal under President Senghor.³² On the other hand, when receiving the Soviet ambassador the President issued a warning. He warned that Ghanaians were sharply aware of the need to maintain peace and stability in the country. The success of his mission, the president said would depend on whether the ambassador fully appreciated this national mood.³³ From these meetings with the ambassadors, the Limann government was setting Western anxiety over Ghana at ease and making it clear that his government did not want any revolutions as he seemed to tell the Soviets.

The boycott decision.³⁴

As has been mentioned earlier, the Ghana National Olympic Committee (NOC) decided to boycott the Moscow olympics for the simple reason that the Ghana squad was inadequately prepared. Sports council officials defended the decision as based on technical considerations. Among their reasons was the assertion that since the African boycott of the Montreal Olympics the Ghana contingent was so peeved that when they got back to Ghana, most members of the squad showed little interest in training and so there was no athletic team worth sending to Moscow.

A close look at the circumstances reveals how untenable the official reasons given were. The fact was that Ghana had played in the soccer elimination and had qualified to play in the soccer division of the games. It is hard to believe that the soccer squad was not prepared for the games. The decision to boycott the games was itself opposed and condemned by the general captain of the athletic squad Mr. Ohene Karikari. He accused the NOC of using an undemocratic process to reach its decisions. He stated:

We the athletes know fully well that we are prepared to go to Moscow. Our standards are far better than most countries who are going to Moscow.

It was clear therefore that the boycott decision was not simply one of unpreparedness. It was clear that Ghana was influenced by the US to boycott the games and the main tool used by the US was food aid. Sports council officials admitted that there were pressures on the council and the Ministry of Youth and Sports on Ghana's participation in the games.

The pressures were from both the Soviets and the US. The true reasons for the boycott comes into sharper focus in the light of the petition by the *Ghana for Moscow Olympics Committee* to the parliamentary majority leader Mr. C.C. Fitihi calling for a fresh debate on the decision to boycott the Moscow Olympics. The Committee accused the NOC of hiding from the public the fact that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Soviet Union offered certain facilities including 90 free air tickets and free board and lodging to Ghanaian athletes.³⁵

From this it was clear that the boycott decision was political rather than technical. This also follows from what sports council officials say about Ghana's participation in the 1982 Commonwealth Games in Brisbane. They revealed that the council had no properly groomed athletes for the games and the technical men and the Secretary for Sports agreed that Ghana was not going to participate. In the final analysis, Ghana took part with an entirely new crop of athletes due to the fact that Ghana did not want to embarrass the Australian government.

How Ghana was influenced not to go to Moscow was not difficult to find. After taking over from the AFRC government, the Limann government was out to seek a restoration of credit lines that were cut by the West during the AFRC era. When the Limann government took over from the AFRC the supply situation in the country for many consumer goods was rather tight. The country faced food shortages. There was an acute shortage of bread which depended on wheat from the US and Canada. When Ghana decided against Moscow, the country was rewarded with increases in wheat and rice shipment under the PL480 programme for 1980 and 1981 fiscal years. In the wake of the boycott campaign, the U.S. announced in February 1980 that her aid to Ghana had been increased. Ghana was to receive \$35 million in aid in 1980, an increase of \$12 million, and given the fact that this was announced prior to Ghana's decision to boycott the games, it is not far fetched to argue that the U.S. used food aid to influence Ghana's decision to boycott the games.

From the discussions above two things have stood out as consequences of Ghana's poor food situation over the years. The poor food situation and the need for food assistance from the U.S, enabled the U.S. to gradually push the country into reaching an accommodation with the IMF which culminated in Ghana accepting an adjustment package from the IMF. Furthermore it allowed the U.S. to use food aid to influence the behaviour of Ghana which enabled the U.S. to achieve a foreign policy objective. Food aid therefore became an instrument of bilateral political and Economic leverage in Ghana-US relations. What this implies is that as long as a country is unable to pursue a food policy that ensures enough local food production at reasonable prices, her government would continue to be greatly influenced by those countries who have to provide her with food aid.

NOTES

- 1) Quoted in R.B. Talbot: *The World Food Problem and U.S. food politics and policies 1972-76*, Iowa State University Press, Ames 1977, p. 239.
- 2) Agreement between the U.S. Government and the Government of Ghana for the sale of Agricultural Commodities 1980 Part II U.S. AID Mission, Accra.
- 3) *Ibid.* Part II, Item II
- 4) *Ibid.* Part I, Article II (A) (2)
- 5) *Ibid.* Part I Article II (B).
- 6) Nkrumah, K. *Dark days in Ghana* - Panaf Books, London. 1973, p. 95 - 96.
- 7) Agreement between the Government of the U.S. and the Government of Ghana, *op. cit.*, Part II, Item V.

- 8) In Africa, the Green Revolution is generally used to refer to large scale mechanized agriculture with fertilizer and improved seeds and agro chemicals. These can be catergorised as follows:
- a) Private farms of Africans
 - b) Private farms of foreigners or in partnership with Africans.
 - c) Government owned farms with or without partnership with foreigners or Africans.

It is in this sense that the essay uses the term.

- 9) Quoted in Lappe, F.M. et al: *Aid as obstacle. Twenty Questions about our Foreign Aid and the Hungry*. Institute for Food and Development Policy, San Francisco, 1980, p. 98.
- 10) Interview with MIDAS project officials.
- 11) Government of Ghana: *Budget Statement 1975/76*, Ministry of Finance, Accra, p. 27.
- 12) Quoted in Susan George: *How the Other Half Dies*. Penguin, England, 1976, p. 204.
- 13) *Summary of MIDAS II Project*: Office of the Project Manager, Accra, p. 9.
- 14) *Ibid.*, p. 4
- 15) *Official Agreed Minutes of Negotiating Sessions of PL480 Title I Agreement between the Government of the United States and the Government of Ghana. August 1982, USAID Mission, Accra, p. 2.*
- 16) *Ibid.*, p. 4
- 17) *Ibid.*, p. 6
- 18) The PNDC's Programme for Reconstruction and Development. (Statement by the PNDC Secretary for Finance and Economic Planning, December 30, 1982). Information Services Department, Accra.
- 19) *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 20) *Daily Graphic*, February 25, 1983, p.5.
- 21) Summary of PNDC's budget statement and Economic Policy for 1983. Ghana Publishing Corporation, Accra-Tema, pp. 14 - 16.
- 22) *Daily Graphic*, November 22, 1983, p. 1.
- 23) Hayter, T. *Aid as Imperialism*, Penguin, 1971, p. 33 - 46.
- 24) This discussion has drawn on Holsti, K.J. *International Politics: A framework for analysis*, Printice-Hall Englewood Cliffs 1967, Chaps. 7 and 10 possim.
- 25) *Agricultural Trade and Development Act 1954*, USAID Mission, Accra.
- 26) Sen Amaryta, K.: *The Food Problem: Theory and Policy*: in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 3, July, 1982.
- 27) *Ghanaian Times*, February 6, 1980, p. 3.
- 28) *Daily Graphic*, May 24, 1980, p.1.
- 29) Hansen, E. *The Military and Revolution in Ghana* in *Journal of African Marxists*, No. 2, August 1982, p.19.
- 30) *Ibid.*, p. 20
- 31) *Keesings Contemporary Archives*, September 5, 1980, p.30,443
- 32) *Ibid.*

- 33) *Ibid.*
- 34) Much of the discussion here has been based on various interviews I had with officials of the Sports Council, Ministry of Youth and Sports and some members of the NOC
- 35) *West Africa*, July 21, 1980, p. 1359.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON GA SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Irene Odotei

Introduction

The territory of the Ga stretch from Lanma in the West to Tema in the east and from the foot of the Akwapim hills in the north to the Atlantic Ocean in the south. They share a common boundary with the Akwapim and Akyem (Akan), in the north, the Awutu (Guan) and Fante (Akan) in the west and in the east with the Adangbe to whom they are more closely related than any other ethnic group. The Ga are divided into six major traditional states which together presently constitute the modern city of Accra, the capital of Ghana. From west to east these states which are sometimes described as towns are Ga Mashie, (Central Accra), Osu (Christiansborg), La (Labadi), Teshie, Nungua and Tema. Each of these states has several villages under it. As an ethnic group the Ga are of mixed origin. These diverse origins notwithstanding, they have a common identity as evidenced not only by the use of a common language, that is, the Ga language, but also common social institutions such as their naming system and the annual Homowo festival etc.

From the 16th century, the Ga coast began to experience an influx of immigrants from the various non-Ga-speaking peoples and kingdoms who are neighbours, particularly the Akan, the Awutu and other Guan and the Ewe. Europeans of varied nationalities were also attracted to the Ga littoral. These people have contributed in no small way in shaping present day Ga society, history and culture. The aim of this paper is to examine some of their influences as a contribution to the understanding of the complex nature of Ga society and culture.

History

Oral traditions collected by the author indicate that most of the Ga trace their origins to the east of the Accra plains.¹ A section of Osu trace their origin to Osudoku in the Adanme area. Sections of Ga Mashie, La and Teshie trace their origins as far east as the southern part of modern Nigeria, though so far no confirmatory evidence has been established for this. According to oral traditions, the migrations of the various groups of Ga-speakers into the Accra plains took place at different times. Before the Ga speakers moved into the Accra plains, there were people living there in scattered farmsteads. These people were absorbed by the Ga-speaking people. The Kpeshi of Tema and other Guan groups are said to be among the earliest groups who lived in the Accra plains.¹ So far no definite date has been established for the first migration into the Accra plains. However, as early as 1557, Ga Mashie had already developed a well-organised trading system.²

Of the Ga group, Ga Mashie emerged as a powerful state. Its capital Ayawaso, or Great Accra,³ where the king resided, was situated eleven miles inland, whilst the coastal settlement of little Accra was a mere fishing village.

Ga Mashie's emergence as a powerful state was closely linked with trade with the Europeans, who started trading with the Ga from the middle of the sixteenth century. In 1557 the English trader, Towerson, obtained 50 lbs. of gold from Accra and Winneba between 13

May and 2 June.⁵ A few years later, the Portuguese built a lodge which was later attacked and razed to the ground by the Ga.⁶

Other groups of Europeans with whom the Ga traded were the Dutch, English, Swedes, Danes, French and a host of interlopers of all nationalities. By the closing decades of the seventeenth century, there were three forts: Crevecoeur (the present Ussher Fort), James Fort and Christiansborg belonging to the Dutch, English and Danes⁷ respectively. In addition to lump sums and presents to the king of Accra, when the agreements were signed for the building of the forts, each European company paid a rent of 2 oz of gold a month for each fort. They also paid customs duties on goods landed in Accra.

The European presence added new dimensions to the economic life of the Ga. Trade, especially in gold and slaves, boomed. From the beginning of the European contact they gave inland states freedom to trade with the Europeans on the Coast. This policy of free trade was changed to a protectionist system in the seventeenth century. The inland traders had to sell their goods in exchange for European manufactured goods at a market called Abonse (ABC) a few miles north of Great Accra or Ayawaso. There was strict control and supervision in this market.⁸

The change in economic policy from free trade to the protectionist policy brought the Ga into conflict with their neighbours. One of these neighbours were the Akwamu, vassals of the Ga. The Akwamu strengthened their position on the northern boundary of Accra by incorporating other states. In 1677 war finally broke out between the Ga and Akwamu and the Ga were defeated in 1680⁹ Some of the Ga with their king fled from Accra and founded another state with its capital Glidzi across the Volta in the modern republic of Togo. Among other towns founded by the Ga was Aneho. From 1680 onwards, it became the practice of the Ga to seek refuge with their kinsmen in this new state whenever they faced difficulties in Accra. Some of the Ga who left for Glidzi also returned to seek help from the Ga in Accra in the eighteenth century but ended up staying in Accra permanently.¹⁰

The Akwamu ruled the Ga till 1730 when they in turn were defeated by a combined force of the Ga, Adangbe and Akwapim with the help of the Akyem.¹¹ By this defeat, Akyem claimed suzerainty over the Ga till 1742 when Asante defeated the Akyem.¹² Asante also took over from the Akyem till 1826 when she was defeated by a coalition of the coastal states and British forces.

Development among the European nations trading on the Coast also had considerable influence on Ga history. After the defeat of Asante in 1826, the British began to consolidate their power on the Gold Coast in general. In 1850 they bought the Danish forts and possessions and in 1872 the Dutch possessions on the Gold Coast. This left the British in sole charge of the Ga littoral. In 1874 the Gold Coast was declared a British Colony and in 1877 the capital of the Colony was moved from Cape Coast to Accra thereby ushering the Ga into a new phase of development. The abolition of the slave trade by the Europeans in the nineteenth century also opened new opportunities in Accra. One of the results of the abolition was the settlement of Brazilian freed slaves in Accra. These are the Tarbon of Ga Mashie.¹³

The above historical outline of the Ga shows that the Accra plains have witnessed intensive commercial activities and political upheavals. These attracted migrants to the Ga littoral. They came for various reasons. For example, the Otublohum of Ga Mashie, originally settled in Accra as representatives of the Akwamu government.¹⁴ A section of the Alatas of Ga Mashie came as slaves and servants of the English company to help in the building and maintenance of James Fort. The Abese-Fante of La came from Moure on a

fishing expedition to La and stayed permanently. The Anehos of Osu and La came to seek the alliance of the Ga in a civil war in their town, Aneho. They decided to stay when they realised that the Ga were reluctant to help them.¹⁵

Composition of the Towns

The influx of immigrants belonging to different ethnic groups affected the composition of the Ga towns. In Ga traditional society the basic unit was, and still is, the *we*. A *we* is an ancestral house to which all those who trace descent through the male line of a common ancestor belong. Every *we* has its own set of personal names. It was in the *we* that a child was welcomed into the world through the custom of *Kpojiemo* (outdooing), marriage transactions are made in the *we* and it was in the *we* that a member was laid in state and the last rites performed for him when he dies. Every office among the Ga was, and still is, vested in the *we*, and it is members of the *we* who decided who should hold office, subject to the approval of the elders of the town.

As the people of the *we* increased, one member usually built an annex called *Plama* close to the original *we*. The *Plama* usually developed into another *we*. Eventually a cluster of related *wei* (plural of *we*) developed in one area and became known as an *akutso* (quarter) *akutsei* (plural). *Akutso* is derived from *we* (House) *ku* (group); *weku* - family; *tso* (tree) i.e. "family group (House group) tree." *Akutso* is seen as a tree with branches of *wei*. Each Ga state is therefore divided into *akutsei* (sing. *akutso*) consisting of *wei*. The number of *akutsei* differs from state to state. For example, Ga Mashie has seven *Akutsei*, Osu four; La seven; Teshie five; Nungua two, and Tema four.¹⁶

Immigrants were incorporated into the organisation of the *Wei* and *Akutsei*. Immigrants either formed separate *akutsei*, as in the cases of Otublohum and Alata of Ga Mashie and Aneho of Osu, or a section of an already existing *akutso*, as in the case of the Abese-Fante section of the Abese *akutso* of La. Individual immigrants who could not build their own *we* stayed with hosts and their children became members of the *we* of their hosts.

Conflict and Compromise

The immigrants with their different customs sometimes created problems for the Ga and the problem of inter-marriage between Ga women and Akan men was a source of conflict. The Ga are patrilineal whilst the Akan are matrilineal. This was confirmed by European traders in their records. Dapper wrote in the seventeenth century:

*In the inheritance of the crown the brother succeeds, for want of brothers, the eldest of the family, without any consideration of the children, so also private estate goes to the brothers or for want of brothers, to the sisters children, only at Accra the children inherit as well the father's as the mother's goods.*¹⁷

Bosman also observed in the eighteenth century that:

*The children they have by their wives are indeed legitimate, but all along the coast never inherit their parents' effects except at Accra only.*¹⁸

According to Barbot:

*The right of inheritance all over the Gold Coast, except at Accra is very strangely settled for the children born legitimate never inherit their parents effect. Accra is the only place where the children are the sole lawful heirs to the father's or mother's effects.*¹⁹

Naar nogen kabuseer eller en anden fri Neger doer paa Akra, daa arver den aeldste Son faderens Arve - slaver og alt hvad hand efterlader sig med Saadan vilkaar, at

*hand farsoger sine Soskende, indtil de nogenledes kand hjelpe sig self. Men i Aquambu følger de en langt anden maade i deres Arve-Ret, at den een Broder arver den anden.*²⁰

And Rask observed:

When a Caboceer or a free Negro dies in Accra, the eldest son inherits his father's slaves and all that he left with the responsibility of taking care of his brothers and sisters till they can fend for themselves, but the Akwamus have completely a different rule of succession whereby one brother succeeds the other.

The existence of matrilineal and patrilineal succession among the Akan and Ga, respectively, meant that children of Ga women and Akan men technically did not belong to the family of either parent. Fortunately for such children, the Ga had a system of adoption whereby children of disputed or unacceptable paternity were adopted into the *we* of their mothers. Such children were given a name of the *we* and could succeed to offices held by the *we*. This system of adoption was extended to children of Ga women and men of alien origin. As the immigrants increased, cases of matrilineal succession became more frequent. This gave rise to conflicts over the law of succession among the Ga. Sarbah, for example, wrote as follows:

*It will be doubtlessly noted that the so-called customary law of succession by children, said to be the rule at Accra and among the Ga tribe is of doubtful authenticity.*²¹

Quartey-Papafio, on the other hand, asserted that:

*among the Ga tribe proper, sons succeed in preference to nephews, or in other words, that succession among the Ga tribes proper is through the male line.*²²

The law courts added to the general confusion. Some courts gave judgements in favour of matrilineal succession though there were always witnesses to the contrary. They, however, conceded to the application of patrilineal succession in the Ga towns, such as La and Nungua, because, as Ollennu stated, *in cases which came before the judges, there was a mass of evidence uncontradicted that they were patrilineal and the judges were compelled to accept the custom, in some cases with great reluctance.*²³ Some Judgements of the courts gave rise to Ollennu's contention that the custom of succession in Accra Central (Ga Mashie) is the same as that of the Akan tribes, and different from that obtaining in all other Ga-Adangme towns and states.²⁴

Those who made pronouncements in favour of matrilineal succession did not realise that it was the exception rather than the rule. In cases of matrilineal succession among the Ga, either the families concerned were of Akan origin and had, unlike other immigrants, maintained their own system, or the family, even though Ga, had compromised in the past by allowing sons of female members of the *we* to succeed in special circumstances. Field made a profound, though exaggerated, statement on succession among the Ga when she stated that:

*there are no rigid laws. There are only certain very usual practices which the elders are at liberty to modify in any way they deem fit. They do not administer law, they administer what seems to them justice and wisdom.*²⁵

In the general arguments and confusion the writers forgot the key word - compromise. The Ga are indeed patrilineal but have shown a willingness to compromise and make concessions.

Through such concession in the law of succession, sons of female members of the *we* could succeed even when such a high office as chieftaincy (*mantse*) was involved. For example, in Nungua one Ajin, the son of a sister of *mantse* Kwei, succeeded to his uncle's

stool as a reward for going on a special mission for his uncle. A similar incident happened in La. In these instances, the *we* of the nephew was added to the old *wei* which supplied the *mantse*.²⁶ By this process, sons of immigrants could easily be incorporated into the ruling organ of the town.

Separation of Religious from Secular Power

The events of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries affected the nature of political authority among the Ga. The Ga towns were divided into lineage groups under the leadership of *wulomei* (sing. *wulomo* “priest”) who were in charge of the lineage god (*jemawong*). There was a principal god for the whole town and the *wulomo* of this god was the head of the administration. For example, La was under the leadership of the Lakpa *wulomo* and Nungua was under Gbobu *wulomo*. As the responsibility of the *wulomo* increased, it became necessary to separate his religious from his secular functions. This is what happened in La. La oral traditions indicate that the Lakpa grove used to be in the centre of the town in the Courtyard of the *mantse* who was also the Lakpa *wulomo*. In the time of *wulomo* Odoi Kpoti in the eighteenth century, the Lakpa god began to kill people because the *wulomo* was becoming increasingly involved in secular matters and therefore certain things to which the god objected were happening in the grove. Besides, the people felt the grove’s position in the centre of the town was not safe for human beings. The grove was therefore removed to the outskirts of the town and one Odoi from the *mantse*’s household was put in charge of the god. Thus the functions of the Lakpa *wulomo* and *mantse* were separated.²⁷

Separation between the religious and secular functions of the heads of the administration occurred in the various Ga towns at different times and in different ways. In some of the towns, the original holder of the office kept his priestly role and designated somebody else to act for him in other matters. This person became known as the *mantse* (chief) and was later treated as such by the British colonial government, when it took over the administration of the Gold Coast in 1874. In this instance, the *wulomo*, who was originally the head of his town, lost his position to the man he had chosen to act for him.²⁸ The original combination of religious and secular power in one person, the *wulomo* among the Ga is summed up in the kple song.

Atseo mi woyoo kronn
medi sofo
medi hene.

I am called a pure priestess
I rule as priest
I rule as King.

With the separation of the religious from the secular authority, the Ga began to adopt certain characteristics of Akan chieftaincy. The stool, which is the symbol of the *mantse*’s office, is said to have been copied from the Akan. State drums and horns were also copied from the Akan. This explains why, as Nketia stated, the speech mode of drumming associated with the Ga courts is invariably Akan (Twi Fante). There does not appear to be an established tradition of drum language based on Ga.²⁹ The horn language of the Ga chief is also, with a few exceptions, mostly Akan. For example, the horn of the Akanmaje *mantse* sounds:

Onipa nni aye
Onipa nni aye
Onipa to nsu mu a ma onko
Aboa to nsu mu a yino kodi

Man is ungrateful
Man is ungrateful
If a man falls into a river, let him drown
If an animal falls into a river take it out to eat.

Other aspects of the Akan administration were also adopted by the Ga. The *wei* from which the *mantse* is chosen is known as the *jaase* and the head is called *Jasetse*. This was based on the Akan, *Gyaase* whose function is to protect the King or Omanhene and perform menial tasks for him. A war captain among the Ga is known as *asafoiatse* derived from the Akan *asafo* (war company), and the *asafo* songs are mainly in Akan. The Akan military organisation was copied haphazardly by the Ga. This was probably a result of superimposing the Akan pattern on what the Ga already had. Crowther's commentary in his report of a Commission of Enquiry held into the constitution of the Ga in 1907 sums up the situation:

These (Ga) stools are arranged for military purposes in groups or wings and from the fact that Twi words are used to describe such divisions, there is strong presumptive evidence that this formation has been imitated if somewhat imperfectly from that common to the Akan race. Evidence of its application was conflicting and somewhat meagre, but this may be attributable to the fact that it does not affect the judicial system. The stools of Asere, Gbese and Otublohum form round the stool of the Ga mantse, the centre. Those of Alata, Sempe and Akumaji the left wing, those of Osu, La, Teshie, Nungua and Tema, the right wing.³⁰

Incorporation into the political structure

The Ga adopted a policy of incorporating immigrants into the governmental machinery. They made it a deliberate policy to give posts to immigrants. For example, the Anehos of La were given the post of *mankrado* and the Abese-Fante that of *Woleiatse* (chief fisherman).³¹ Immigrants could also attain certain positions through achievement. The Alatas provide a good example. As servants of the English company, they acquired wealth and certain skills which made them influential member of the society. In the mid-eighteenth century, on Cudjoe was referred to variously as English company slave and English company linguist. In his capacity as linguist of the English, his influence became tremendous, especially in the section of Accra under the English, i.e. James Town. Later on he was referred to as Caboceer Cudjoe. This is backed by oral tradition. Traditional accounts indicate that the first Alata *mantse* was called Wetse Kojo, who had a *mantse*'s stool carved for him by one Otublafo of Otublohum and adopted the Akan custom of *odwira*.³² Kojo eventually superseded the *mantse* of Sempe, the original rulers of James Town and owners of the land on which James Fort was built. He became the *mantse* of James town and claimed ownership of James town land acquired by the government. In a case D.P. Hammond Vrs. *Mantse* Ababio and others, the Alata *Mantse*, Kojo Ababio IV, declared: *My predecessors in title have been recongnised as Mantse and in going to war he always went in front of them.*³³ Kojo Ababio became so power-drunk that he refused to accept that Sempe had a right to elect a *mantse* for her own *akutso*. He claimed that the Sempe had never

had a mantse. The head of Sempe was the *mankralo* of the Alata or James Town *mantse*. This so infuriated the representative of the Sempe that at a Commission of Enquiry in 1907 he asked Ababio, *I am a Ga, did you come from Lagos and make me mankralo here? Can you who say you are a stranger make me mankralo?*³⁴ Kojo Ababio withdrew his claims, but after that the Sempes refused to accept the Alata *mantse* as the *mantse* for the whole of James Town, although the government continued to recognise him as such.

The policy of incorporation adopted by the Ga was aimed at giving the immigrants a sense of belonging to the state. With the defeat of the Ga by Akwamu in 1680, the power of the Ga rulers was shattered. Immigrants who displayed certain qualities and had the ability to help in protecting and defending the Ga were elevated. Since the immigrants, like everybody else in the state, had the responsibility of arming themselves, it was necessary, especially if they were wealthy and had a lot of followers, that they should be part of the power structure. By giving them a position in the government, they identified themselves with the stability of the government and the survival of the state. This was sound policy, especially in a period of incessant warfare.

Religious Organisation

The process of incorporation and adaptation was extended to Ga traditional religion. The immigrants were allowed to bring and worship their own gods. This has led to the existence of more than one cult among the Ga. Field has classified Ga gods into four categories. There are *Kple* and *Kpa* gods which are Ga and Obutu (Awutu) *Me* gods which are of Adangme origin; Otu gods which are Fante and Effutu and Akong gods which are Akuapem.³⁵ When the mediums of these gods are possessed, they speak the language of the original home of their god. Thus *Kple* mediums speak Ga, *Me* mediums speak Fante and Akong mediums speak Akuapem Twi.

In spite of the existence of these cults, there is cohesion in Ga religious worship. This is especially noticeable during the annual Homowo festival. Homowo, which marks the beginning of the Ga New Year, is celebrated by all the Ga-speaking people, but it is done on different days between July and September and in different ways. The common features are that the celebration is preceded by a period of silence, when the dead are not mourned and drums are not beaten. All the Ga living in the villages come to their hometown to participate in the celebration, during which a specially cooked meal of steamed corn meal (*kpokpoi*) and palmtree soup is eaten. The ancestors are remembered by the pouring of libation and the sprinkling of *kpokpoi* on the ground for them. The celebrations are highlighted by the performance of certain rituals for the principal gods of the town.

All the gods and the worshippers, including those of alien origin, participate in the worship of the principal gods of the town. In La, for example, all the priests and priestesses go to the courtyard of *Lakpa* on the Wednesday of the *Homowo* known as *Kpa Sho* (Kpa Wednesday) to dance and worship *Lakpa*. On these occasions one can hardly observe any difference in the enthusiasm of the possessed medium. The only difference is the language they speak when they are possessed by their gods. On occasions when the Akong, Otu or *Me* mediums perform rituals for their own god, they are also aided in their celebrations by all the mediums of the town and sometimes by mediums from the other Ga towns. Evidence that the Ga always leave room for reverence and incorporation of other gods is seen in the text of the libation of the *wulomei*. After offering drink and asking for blessing from their own gods they add:

Ga

*Milee nmaa kulibii Ayibo
Ni male nye yibo
Keje Lanma keyashi Ada Shwilao
Keje wuoyi keyashi namli
Bibii ke ewuji fee abanu eko
Nii nyeke joomo juro ajoo wo.*

English

*I do not know the number of grains of millet.
Therefore I do not know your number.
From Lanma to Ada Volta.
From the north to the south.
Come to drink both great and small.
And shower us with good blessings.*

Foreign influence on Ga traditional religion can also be seen even in the text of the religious anthem of the Ga. Akan words have been incorporated into it:

Ga

*Awo Awoo
Aagba ee
Bleku tsoo
Esu esu
Enam enam
Manye o manye a
Adebani kpotoo*

English

*Hail! Hail!
It is being prophesied
Abundant rain
Water, water
Fish, fish
Peace
Abundant food.*

The Akan words are Esu (water), Enam (fish) Adebani (food)

Foreign influence is noticeable even in Kple, which is a Ga cult. According to Field, the *kple* songs are in the forgotten Obutu dialect and are often mere gibberish to both singers and hearers.³⁶ Field's statement is an exaggeration. The author's collection of *kple* songs shows that *kple* is sung in Ga mixed with Obutu and Akan. Occasionally, one comes across a *kple* song completely sung in corrupted Akan. For example

*Obi nni Nyampong ase
Obi nni tente Woakong*

*No one knows God's origin
No one knows the origin of
Kple our ancient sacred dance*

Obi nni dada me wo aye

*No one knows the ancient
origin of what we do.*

Obi nni Nyampong ase da

No one knows God's origin ever

The explanation for this variety in *kple* text is provided by Nketia and Field. By comparing *kple* music with Adanme Klama music, Nketia found that they have sufficient similarity in style to suggest that *kple* is not as foreign to Ga tradition as the evidence of the multilingual basis of its texts suggests at first sight. He sees the possibility of *kple* being a Ga cult, which at some period absorbed Guan elements both in respect of gods and the use of language and later Akan as a stylistic element.³⁷ Field also states that *kple* gods could possibly be sub-divided again, for they doubtless represent intermingled cults, but there is

little to be gained by attempting this almost impossible task.³⁷

Language

Foreign influence on Ga linguistic culture is not limited to formal text associated with ritual but can be observed in the ordinary informal language spoken by the Ga. M. E. Kropp-Dakubu who has done extensive research on the Ga language states that "the Ga have had a long and intimate association with the Akan language, that has left an indelible mark on their language and linguistic culture."³⁸ Examples of Akan derived words are:

<i>Nyam</i>	Praise, glory, enhancement
<i>Nyankunton</i>	Rainbow
<i>Mkpai/mpae</i>	Libation
<i>Oboade</i>	Creation of the world, origin, tradition.
<i>Ohia</i>	Poverty, need.
<i>Onukpa/onipa</i>	An adult person - a title for a man, mister.

Other languages, such as Ewe and Hausa, have also contributed a few words, such as *Aboo garden* in Ewe and *Abotsi friend* in Hausa.

Foreign influence is readily recognisable in the use of personal names among the Ga. Although the Ga have their own unique sets of names, certain names borne by them can be traced to Akan, Ewe,³⁹ Yoruba or European origin.

The Europeans with whom the Ga came into contact also left traces of their interaction in the Ga language. While the influence of the English can easily be identified because of its long, uninterrupted and widespread use both as a commercial and colonial language, the other languages need to be studied before any identification of the borrowed words in Ga can be made. Examples of such words are:

Sakisi saks (Danish)	<i>scissors</i>
Klakun kalkun (Danish)	Kalkoen (Dutch) <i>Turkey</i>
Duku Doek (Dutch)	<i>Scarf</i>
Flonoo Forno (Portuguese)	<i>Oven</i>
Atrakpoi Trappe (Danish)	<i>Stairs</i>

Entertainment

Traditional entertainment has not escaped foreign influence. Nketia described Ga recreational music as a common ground of Akan and Ga forms.⁴⁰ Some song types such as *asoayere* and *adowa* are entirely in Akan, whilst others like *tuumatu*, *kaadiohefoosee*, *siolele*, *adaawe* and *kpanlogo* which are Ga, often include words or lines in Akan and occasionally other languages, such as Ewe and English. Whilst these are widespread among the Ga other musical and dance forms such as *gome* are a special to some *wei* or groups and the words are unintelligible to the audience.

Conclusion

The external factor is indeed a crucial element in the development of Ga society and culture. There is no doubt that this worked hand in hand with other factors which have not been discussed in this paper. The commercial attraction of the Ga littoral at least from the sixteenth century brought in its wake waves of migrations. These migrants were pulled in by several motives which were economic, political and social. Political subjection, redefinition of relationships and economic development characterised the history of the Ga from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Migrants naturally brought with them their culture. The reaction of the Ga went beyond mere tolerance. The Ga freely borrowed or were compelled

by circumstances to adopt aspects of the culture of the immigrants. The Ga became so accustomed to the presence of immigrants that they expressed the desire for more to join them. This is summed up in their libation prayer:

Ablekuma aba kuma wo

“May strangers come to settle among us”

When amplified the prayer means:

May strangers come to join us; may they come with their wealth, their might, their families, their experience, their ideas and above all, their gods.

And may we be enriched spiritually, physically and materially by their presence.

The Ga took what they needed from other people's culture and made it their own. Considering the external pressures and influences on the Ga-speaking people, it is remarkable that they have managed to maintain their identity as a group. It would appear that within their society are in-built shock absorbers which made this possible

Footnotes

- 1) The Oral Traditions were collected from the individual Ga States 1969 - 81. These are referred to as Field Notes.
- 2) Field Notes - E.A. Ammah, 1969.
- 3) Astley: *A New Collection of Voyages and Travels* Vol.II, London, 1745, p.173.
- 4) P. Ozanne, *The Early Historic Archaeology of Accra*, in *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* Vol. VI 1962. *Ghana Notes and Queries* Vol.9. Map of the Gold Coast done at Moure on 25 December 1629.
- 5) Richard Hakluyt: *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffique and Discoveries of the English Nation* Vol. XI (Edinburgh 1889, pp. 118 - 118.
- 6) J.W. Blake: *European beginnings in West Africa 1454 - 1578*, London, 1937, pp. 101 - 2, 177. Astley, op. cit., p. 174.
- 7) Furley Collections N3 1639 - 45, Agreement made in the name and on behalf of the Hon. Company by order of General Jacob Ruychayer with the king of Great Accra, 30 August 1642.
Ibid. N7 1656 - 1657, English Principal Lancelot Staveley to Director-General Valckerburgh, 30 November 1657.
George Norregard, *De Danske Establissementer Paa Guinea Kysten*. Translated by Sigurd Hammen. Boston 1966, p. 42 - 43.
- 8) O. Dapper, *Adaptation in English* in J. Ogilby, *Africa Being an Accurate Description of the Regions, Aegypt, Barbary, Lybia etc.*, London, 1670, p. 435.
- 9) E. Tilleman, *En Liden Enfolding Beretning om det Landskab Guinea og dets Beskaffenhed*, Copenhagen 1697, p. 103.
J. Barbot, *A description of the Coast of North and South Africa* in Churchill Collections of Voyages and Travels V., London 1732, p.
- 10) Field Notes.
- 11) Furley Collections N43 1727 - 30, *De la Planque, Accra to Elmina, Entry Akwamu*, 24 June 1729.
Vest-Indisk Guineisk Kompanie 122 Breve og dokumenter fra Guinea 1722 - 31, Waeroe, Christiansborg to Copenhagen, 24 December 1730.

- L.F. Romer, *Tilforladelig Efterretning om Kysten Guinea* Copenhagen, 1760, p. 158.
- 12) Furley Collections N45, 1740 - 46. Entry Akim, Kuj1, Accra to Elmina, 22 March, 1742.
 - 13) Field Notes.
 - 14) I. Wilks, *Akwamu and Otublohum: An Eighteenth Century Akwamu arrangement*. Africa Vol. No. XXIX, 1959.
 - 15) Field Notes.
 - 16) *Ibid.*
 - 17) Dapper, *op. cit.*, pp. 457 - 8.
 - 18) W. Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea* 2nd edition London, 1721, pp. 202 - 3.
 - 19) Borbot, *op. cit.*, p. 2348
 - 20) J. Rask, *En Sandferdig. Reise Beskrivelse till og fra Guinea*. Trondhjem. 1754, p. 207.
 - 21) J.M. Sarbah, *Maclean and the Gold Coast Judicial Assessors*, *Journal of the African Society* 1909 - 10, p. 355.
 - 22) A.B. Quartey-Papafio, *Law of Succession Among the Akras of the Ga tribes proper of the Gold Coast* *Journal of the African Society* 1910 - 1911, p. 6.
 - 23) N.A. Ollennu, *The Law of Testate and Intestate Succession in Ghana*. London, 1966, p. 190 - 191.
 - 24) *Ibid.*, p. 189.
 - 25) M.J. Field, *Social Organisation of the Ga people*, London, 1940, p. 43.
 - 26) Field Notes. 1969 Nii Anyetei Kwakwaranya II. Ex-Mantse of La (Labadi).
 - 27) *Ibid.*
 - 28) M.J. Field, *Religion and Medicine of the Ga People*. London, 1937, p. 3.
 - 29) J.K. Nketia, *Traditional Music of the Ga People*. Universitas Vol. III, No. 3, June 1958.
 - 30) National Archives of Ghana. ADM.5/11/1673. Crowther's Commission of Enquiry held in October 1907.
 - 31) Field Notes.
 - 32) National Archives of Ghana SCT 2/4/50, D.P. Hammond Vrs. Ababio IV and others.
 - 33) *Ibid.* ADM 5/11/1673. Crowther's Commission of Enquiry held in October 1907. Cross examination of Kojo Ababio by Moi of Sempe.
 - 34) M.J. Field, *Religion and Medicine of the Ga People*. *op. cit.*, pp. 5 - 6.
 - 35) *Ibid.*
 - 36) J.H.K. Nketia *Historical Evidence in Ga Religious Music* *Historian in Tropical Africa* edited by J. Vansina.
 - 37) M.J. Field. *Religion and Medicine*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
 - 38) M.E. Kropp-Dakubu, *One Voice - The Linguistic Culture of an Accra Lineage*. Leiden African Studies Centre, The Netherlands. 1981, p 64.
 - 39) I. Odotei, *What is in a name? Historical and Social Significance of Ga names*. *Research Review* NS Vol. 5, No. 2, 1989.
 - 40) J.H.K. Nketia, *Traditional Music of the Ga People*. Universitas, Vol. III, No. 3, June 1958.

MOBILITY IN PRE-COLONIAL ASANTE FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Akosua Perbi

The issue of mobility was one of the many facets of Asante political, social structure and institutions which reveals the intricate nature of Asante Government. Mobility studies in Africa have engaged the attention of both anthropologists and historians and in Ghana anthropologists have been the pioneers in this field.¹

Hagan and Wilks discussed mobility in Asante when they examined the nature of Asante bureaucracy in the 19th century.² This paper addresses the subject of mobility in Asante in greater detail with special emphasis on the involvement of slaves and people of servile origin in the process of political and social mobility in pre-colonial Asante. Mobility in this context refers to the movement of persons as individuals or in groups from one social position to another either horizontally or vertically.³ Pre-colonial Asante had numerous avenues for mobility. It was an open, not a closed society.

Mobility in political administration is traced in Asante tradition to Asantehene Osei Tutu (C1697-1717) and his able adviser Okomfo Anokye. Osei Tutu's experience as a captive in the Denkyira court must have influenced his ideas on mobility. On his return to Kumasi he brought back many Denkyiras some of whom were grafted into the Asante political machinery. He then institutionalised the proverb 'obi nkyere obi ase' (No one should disclose the origins of another) and some non-Asantes became citizens.

The Process of mobility reached a climax during the reigns of Asantehene Opoku Ware (1717-1750) and Osei Kwadwo (1764-1777) when succession to political office in Asante became based not only on birth but on merit and achievement. The precedent which had been set in the 17th century was carried on into the 18th century. By the 19th century, mobility had become an integral part of the Asante social and political structure.

The requirements of an efficient bureaucracy and an expanding and prospering economy based on agriculture, trade, industry and warfare created avenues for mobility.

In identifying an Asante two main questions were and still are asked: *Wo firi hen?* (Where do you come from?) This question sought to find out what Asante town one came from. The second question was: *Wo firi fie ben mu?* (What household do you belong to?) In other words, the questioner was interested in one's family, lineage and clan affiliation. Every Asante gained mobility through three main processes in pre-colonial times. The first was by birth. One was born a member of the royalty (*Odehye*) because one's maternal ancestors were the first and earliest settlers in the town.

The second was by assimilation. In pre-colonial Asante, all non-Asante resident free Akans were assimilated into the clan to which they belonged in their homeland. For example if one was a free Akwamuman and was a member of the Aduana clan one remained an Aduana in Asante. If one was an Aboradze from Fantiland, one remained an Aduana in Asante. Since members of a clan were regarded as belonging to the same family, such people were assimilated into the Asante society and identified with all the norms and privileges of the clan. The third process of becoming an Asante was through adoption. Asante society

welcomed all non-Akans, free and unfree by the Asante saying *Ananansaafoo kuro nye kese da* (Literally - The town of the people who are hostile to aliens never grows big). This process of adoption was backed by the Asantehene Osei Tutu's proverb *obi nkyere obi ase*. This third process was used by heads of various households in Asante to incorporate unfree men into the family. Therefore whether by birth, assimilation or adoption one could call himself an Asante.

The Family as a Unit of Mobility

Rattray postulates that the core of the Asante social system was the family. Scholars who have thoroughly examined the Asante social system all appear to agree with him.⁴ The family consisted of the head of the household (a male), his wife/wives and their children, the head of the household's mother, brothers and unmarried sisters as well as household pawns and slaves. The slaves included the newly acquired and descendants of household slaves. In a typical Asante household therefore one would find *blood* relations and *non-blood* relations. The latter were usually the pawns and the slaves. For three centuries Asante remained the largest slave trading state in pre-colonial Ghana, and slavery as an institution became embedded in Asante social and political life.

Every typical household in pre-colonial Asante had slaves. Asante therefore worked out a system of making them part of the household through incorporation into the clan of the head of the household. Within the individual families therefore, opportunity existed for a person of lowest stature to gain personal mobility without prejudice to his role as a performer of certain household chores. Marriage between freemen and slaves and free women and slaves was recognised by Asante law and this created another avenue for mobility. A male slave favoured by his master could marry his master's daughter or any free woman. The issue of such marriages became part of the woman's matrilineage. A female slave could marry her master, her master's son or nephew or any free man. The issue of these marriages became adopted members of the free man's matrilineage. In the case of marriages between a slave man and a slave woman, both the slave couple and their children became adopted members of their owner's family. Through such marriages, slaves and their descendants achieved the status of privileged inferiors. Once a slave had been absorbed into a lineage, further upward mobility depended on his own enterprise and unpredictable exigencies of life. Thus, if a family could not find a proper heir to nominate to occupy a stool a slave respected both in the lineage and society may be placed on the stool.

This was backed by the Asante proverbs *Wo kyere dupon mu a, wo kyere fafaterere* (If you spend a long time in a big tree you catch the insect whose habitat is in the tree); *Akoko fufuo kyere fie a ne ho bere* (a white fowl gets its feathers coloured when it stays in the house for a long time).

Norms Regarding the Treatment of Slaves

Asante had general norms regarding the treatment of slaves which gave a measure of the threshold of values that enabled the slave to rise in respectability.

Every Asante child was taught to be polite and respectful to everyone including the slaves. A slave was also entitled to food, clothing and shelter. Slave owners were enjoined to handle their slaves with care since they were indispensable members of the community. They provided labour in individual households, in agriculture, trade and industry. They performed political and military functions for the Asante state, though no first generation slaves were permitted to bear arms. Asantes believed that *Akoa te se twereboo, enni otuo anno a, enye yie* (A slave is like the flint on the striker of a gun, without it the gun is useless).

Slave owners were expected to train their slaves. This obligation was summed up in the adage: *Akoa ampow a, na efiri ne wura* (An uncouth slave is a reflection of his master's indiscipline). At the same time, a slave owner was required under Asante convention to be accessible. Hence the proverb *Wo nkoa suro wo anim asem a, woni nim mma wo* (If your servants fear to speak to you, they will not gain victories for you). In pre-colonial Asante therefore a slave owner needed wisdom and tact in dealing with a slave because while laxity would make the slave lose respect for his master, undue severity could make the slave obdurate: *Wofere wo afenaa, wudi nnuan fi* (When you fear to reprimand your slave you eat unclean food). Although slaves were sacrificed from time to time to meet the ritual requirements of the state, no one could kill a slave without permission from the Asantehene. Once a slave had acquired the status approximate to that of a citizen, it was an offence to refer to his slave origins.

Avenues for mobility within the family amazed several European visitors to Asante and most of them concluded that the position of a slave in Asante was that of a happy one. In the late nineteenth century, R.A. Freeman noted the privileges slaves in Asante enjoyed and concluded that the slave was not a mere chattel as in Europe or America. Klose also remarked that the position of a slave was often better than one might think.⁵

In the 1900's, the British Commissioners resident in Asante reiterated what others had observed in previous centuries. In December 1906 for example, the District Commissioner of Obuasi remarked:

*I must admit that the word slavery ... in Ashanti does not produce in me that horrified shudder with which it is associated in the minds of uninitiated Europeans who know nothing of the real condition of the people to whom they blindly offer their sympathy. The so-called slaves in Ashanti are well fed, housed and clothed, and in a word have everything they want at present to make them happy.*⁶

The Asante Social Structure

Previous writers have identified three classes of people in pre-colonial Asante. Bowdich observed in 1817 that Asante society was stratified into the higher classes. He referred to the lower classes as the slaves.⁷ Lystad divided pre-colonial Asante society into royalty, free commoner and the slave. To be a slave in Asante was not precisely to be free, but it was not a hopeless condition. The basis of the class distinction according to Lystad was the fact of one's birth. If one was born by a royal woman, one automatically became a member of the royalty. A free commoner was born by a free mother and a slave was born by a slave mother. Marriage by a person of royal birth to a commoner or slave did not confer royalty on the commoner or slave.⁸ Wilks divided pre-colonial Asante into three classes on the basis of labour obviously using a Marxist criterion. The *Abirempon* were the land-owning class who had large agricultural estates and who constituted the *adehye* (royal) class. The free settler cultivators were the *nkurasefo* or *akuafo* (villagers). The descendants of the unfree labourers constituted the *gyaasefo* (people of the household). Wilks asserts that the *Adehyee*, *Akuafo* (*nkurasefo*) and the *Gyaasefo* were the fundamental constituents of Akan society. Each had a specific and determinate relationship to the means of production.⁹ Kea distinguished between the nobles (*abirempon*), the free commoners and the retainers. The retainers consisted of two groups of people, the slaves and the bonded free people.¹⁰

Casely Hayford divided pre-colonial Ghanaian society into two classes - the freeman and the slave. The freeman he stated was he whose ancestors were aborigines of the country and who could trace the line of such ancestors up to a remote *mater familias*. He was a freeman in every sense of the word. He was eligible for any important office in the body politic and he could always hold up his head among his fellows however poor his condition. Casely Hayford contended that although a slave might be well treated by his master, made a member of the family and allowed to inherit property when the master's line of descent failed, the dividing line between the slave and the free was always clearly defined.¹¹ A.N. Klein contends that traditional Akan society was 'classless' in the sense that there was no group set apart from producers, such as rentiers or investors whose income depended on ownership of land or capital. In terms of personal wealth and influence however he distinguished two classes of people, the *sikafo* (the wealthy) who often became *Abirempon* (men of great political standing) and the *ahiafo* (the poor). Both classes of people comprised the free and the unfree.¹²

On the basis of oral traditions collected in Asante, it seems to me that traditional pre-colonial Asante society emphasised two groups of people - the freeman and the slave or the unfreeman. The freeman comprised two groups of people - members of the royalty (*Adehyee*) and the commoners. The basis of the distinction rested primarily upon the circumstances of one's birth. It was not based on the mode of production or on one's wealth.¹³ No matter the number of classes into which pre-colonial Asante society was divided, the slave was always the lowest on the social ladder.

Some of the characteristics of slavery spelt out by some scholars apply to the Asante institution, namely the slave as property or a commodity, slave status as an inherited phenomenon and the appropriation of the slave's labour by his master.¹⁴ Slavery in Asante could also be described as lineage slavery because slaves were incorporated into the owner's lineage. M. Klien describes *lineage slavery* as being of a more benign kind.¹⁵

A slave in Asante could not be redeemed but he could attain some personal and social mobility through the family unit and the Asante social structure by being incorporated into the family, lineage and clan. It is not surprising that in 1908, Armitage protested against the word *slave* in Asante and offered the word *domestic servant*. In 1913, Crowther described the slave as an adopted child.¹⁶

Political Mobility

Asante political structure was based on the family (*abusua*) system. Those entitled to political office were those of the royal family (*adehyee*). This was because the royalty claimed that their monopoly of power was justified by the fact that their maternal ancestors were the first to settle in the town or village.¹⁷ Yet throughout pre-colonial times, some commoners and slaves held political office in the state. The precedent for elevating commoners and slaves was set by the second Kumasihene Oti Akenten (1630 - 1660) and reached a climax during the reigns of Asantehene Opoku Ware (1717 - 1750) and Osei Kwadwo (1764 - 1777). Succession to political office became based not only on birth but also on merit and achievement.¹⁸

A study of the histories of 212 Asante stools shows that there were 36 royal stools which were occupied at one time or the other during pre-colonial times by non-royals.¹⁹ This constitutes about one fifth of the total number of Asante stools. There were 53 recorded instances when non-royals succeeded to the 36 royal stools. In all the 53 instances the reason given for the succession of the non-royals to the stools was that after the death of the reigning chief there was no mature member of royalty to succeed to the stools. Those chosen in all

the 53 instances were people who were connected with the day to day running of the palaces and who had proved themselves faithful, industrious, full of wisdom and sagacity.²⁰ It was not a matter of course that succession should pass to a non-royal if there was no mature member of royalty. The decision to appoint a successor or not depended on the will of the Asantehene, the Queenmother and elders of the stool in question. In the case of the *Ahubrafoo* stool for example, after the death of their first chief during the reign of Asantehene Osei Tutu, the stool became vacant for over 100 years until Prempeh II appointed a new chief to the stool. In the case of the *Kuntenase* stool, when the fifteenth chief was destooled, the queenmother administered the stool until 1924 when a new chief was appointed. After the death of the second chief of the *Mamesene* stool, the stool became vacant because there was no ripe successor to the stool, until 1922 when a new chief was enstooled.²¹ The stool elders of the above mentioned stools preferred leaving the stool vacant to allowing a person of non-royalty succeeding to the stools.

Though non-royal successors to stools achieved great political mobility their stools were not blackened after their death. In 50 out of 53 instances, the stools were not blackened. It was Asante custom to blacken stools of past chiefs as a sign of great honour. Asante religious view was that the spirit of the departed chief resided in the stool. If one died on the stool after serving his people faithfully his stool was blackened and kept in the stool house. Twice a week and on festive occasions libation would be poured to invoke the spirits of the departed chiefs. The Asante believed that if a person was not a true royal and he became fortunate to inherit a stool of which he was not a true descendant, his stool should not be blackened because the spirits of the real stool ancestor would not usually respond when they were called on sacred days through the pouring of libation. In the case of the *Akankade* linguist stool, the body of the seventh linguist Okyeame Kwaku was not even permitted to be buried in the royal Mausoleum (*Baamu*) because of his servile origin.²² There are only three instances on record of non-royals having had their stools blackened. The first instance was that of the second chief Kwasi Adom of the *Dadiesoaba* stool whose stool was blackened in addition to his descendants becoming annexed royals of the stool. As such they became eligible to contest the stool whenever it became vacant.²³ The second instance was that of the *Kona* stool whose eleventh occupant, Kwaku Banahene had his stool blackened subject to an agreement reached before his death that excluded his descendants permanently from occupancy of the stool. The third was the *Amoako* stool occupied by the third chief Oti Kwatia. The Asantehene appointed him to the stool in the midst of a serious family dispute among the members of the stool house.²⁴

The following royal stools provide us with examples of lineage stools in whose list of chiefly succession one finds non-royals. In the Asantehene's palace the *Mpaboahene*, *Gyebi* and *Banahene*, *Dua Kyeame*, *Fontomfrom*, and *Nsenie*. In Kumasi and the towns and villages within fourteen and forty-eight miles radius of Kumasi, *Adum*, *Ofiri* and *Manso*, *Akyawkrom*, *Dadiesoaba*, *Debooso*, *Obuokrom*, *Nkawie Kuma*, *Jachie*, *Boaman*, *Twafuo*, *Ekyi*, *Asuboa*, *Sekyedomase* and *Asamang*; the paramount stools of *Juaben* and *Ejisu*.

The sixth chiefs of the *Mpaboahene*, *Dua Kyeame*, *Fontomfrom*, and *Nsenie* stools, namely Kwadwo Frimpong, Kwadwo Apau II, Asamang and Appiagyeyi succeeded to the stools because there was no ripe royal to occupy the stool.²⁵ In the case of the *Gyebi* and *Banahene* linguist stools, the fourth in succession, Opanin Kwabena Kwaku, succeeded to the stool because the Asantehene honoured him for being a faithful and industrious servant.²⁶

The *Adum* stool was created by Asantehene Osei Tutu for sons and grandsons of the Golden stool as well as sons and servants of the stool. The thirteenth chief Akwasi Bafuor and the sixteenth chief Bafuor Asamoah Toto II are described in the traditions as 'sons of the stool'. In other words they were palace helpers.²⁷

The ninth chief of the Ofiri and Manso stool Kwasi Afriyie; the fourteenth chief of *Akyawkrom* Kwasi Adom; the second, fourth, eleventh and fifteenth chiefs of the Dadiesoaba stool namely Nti Kumah, Oti Awere, Nti Takoro and Kofi Nsiah and the ninth chief of *Abuokrom* Yaw Boakye were all appointed because there was no ripe royal to occupy the vacant stools.²⁸

The underlisted stools were also occupied by the following non-royals because there was no ripe royal. *Jachie*, the ninth in succession called Amofo; *Boaman*, the sixth, eighth, tenth and thirteenth chiefs; *Twafuo* the seventh chief Bafuor Ekyi and *Asuboa* the fifth chief Kwadwo Kwakye.²⁹ The same reason is given for the enstoolment of Asafo Adjei as the fifteenth chief of *Juaben* and Kwabena Agyeman as the tenth chief of Asamang.³⁰

The *Debooso* stool was occupied by Kwabena Asamoah because there was no suitable royal. This same reason caused the enstoolment of Mosi and Kofi Kyem as the eighth and tenth chiefs respectively.³¹

The *Nkawie Kuma* stool was succeeded by the second chief Marfo upon the Queenmother's consent while the *Ejisu* stool was occupied by the twenty-third chief Kwadwo Boateng because those who were eligible to rule were too young. Boateng was asked to rule until the young royals were old enough to rule.³²

The reason given for the appointment of the sixth chief Kwadwo Mensah to the *Sekyedomase* stool is that there was no qualified royal to occupy the stool.³³ The *Amoako* stool however was occupied by Oti Kwatia because after the death of the second chief Yankyira, there was a great family dispute among members of the stool house. The Asantehene appointed a non-royal who had no interest in the family dispute to occupy the stool.

Oti Kwatia seemed to have ruled so well that the Asantehene ordered his stool to be blackened as a mark of great honour.³⁴

The major reason for non-royal succession to the twenty stools listed above was the absence of ripe, qualified or suitable royals. Sixteen of the twenty stools examined gave these reasons.

It has already been stated that the succession of slaves and commoners to royal stools for any of the reasons outlined above was not a matter of course. Some families preferred leaving the stool vacant till a ripe successor was found to giving the stool to a non-royal and non-member of the family.

The Creation of Esom Dwa (Service Stools)

Kyerematen states that just as the chief emblem of royalty for British and Norwegian monarchs is the crown and for other Scandinavian rulers the bracelet, so the stool was the most important of the chief's regalia and the *sine qua non* of his high office.³⁵ As an act of great honour in the past, the Asantehene gave out special stools as presents to chiefs for their meritorious services and to faithful and hardworking slaves or servants of his court.

Thirty-one out of 212 Asante stools were service stools. This meant that about one sixth of the Asante stools were created solely for non-royals and dependants at the palaces. The total number of stools created and inherited by commoners and people of servile origins, formed about one-third of the total number of Asante stools. Slaves who had stools created for them attained the highest political mobility in Asante traditional circles and were

regarded as very privileged.

Asante stools were traditionally divided into two classes - matrilineal stools and patrilineal stools. Among the matrilineal stools were family stools, ancestral stools and created stools. The family stools were stools of a matrilineage. They were occupied by mother's sons, sister's sons and sister's daughter's sons. The royal stools of Kumasi, Mampong, Kokofu, Juaben, Bekwai, Kumawu, Oyoko, Essumeja, Kenyase, Mamponteng, Oyoko-Bremang etc. fall under this category. Ancestral stools were called Agodie. They were not created by any Asantehene. The above-mentioned stools as well as stools like the Atutue, Kaase, Atwima-Agogo and Obogu all fall under this category. Created matrilineal stools were known as *Abodie*; they included stools like *Kwaduo*, *Deboose*, *Asomfo* and *Gyenyaaase*.³⁶

The patrilineal stools were classified into groups - *Mmama Dwa* and *Esom Dwa*. The *Mmama Dwa* were created for the sons and grandsons of the Asantehene. The appointment to such stools was made by the Asantehene's own prerogative instrument. The *Akyempim*, *Kyidom*, *Hia* and *Asrampong* stools fell under this category. Appointment to stools like the Kronti, Akwamu and Adonten of Kumasi was made by the Queenmother and the stool elders.³⁷

The *Esom Dwa* had certain basic features. The stool was created for and occupied by free or unfree servants at the Asantehene's court. They were occupied by servants who had proved faithful and competent. Appointment to the stool was by the prerogative right of the Asantehene and therefore succession did not always have to pass from father to son. Any stool dependant at the court could be appointed to occupy the stool when it became vacant. All the occupants of these stools swore the oath of allegiance on taking office to the Asantehene with the *Ahwihwiba* sword. This was a sword of less significance compared to the Mponponsuo sword used by paramount chiefs and senior chiefs of the Asante union. These stools did not belong to any clan as was the case with all the other Asante stools but they belonged to the administrative and military divisions of the state. The occupants of the service stools had specific administrative duties to perform. Their stools were not blackened after their death.³⁸

The first of such service stools to be created in Asante was the *Kyeneyekyemfuo* stool. It was created by the second Kumasihene Oti Akenten (1630-1660) for a loyal slave. The occupant of the stool was and still is responsible for the safe keeping of the King's traditional umbrellas and for the administration of all umbrella holders of the King. The umbrella holders were part of the *Gyase* (household) division of the King.³⁹

Obiri Yeboa (1660-1697) the third Kumasihene created four service stools, the *Suma*, *Atomfuo*, *Enon* and *Soadora* stools.⁴⁰ The duties of the *Sumahene* were and still are first, to provide drink to the Asantehene when he is taking traditional meals in the afternoon at 2 o'clock and in the evening at 6 o'clock. Secondly, to provide water and to see to the cleaning of the Asantehene's hands after meals, and thirdly to provide the king with a *chewing stick* after meals. (The chewing stick is a traditional toothbrush). The *Atomfuo*hene, chief of the Asantehene's blacksmiths, was and still is responsible for all activities connected with this industry. The *Enonhene* was and still is one of the eight chiefs who serve at the king's mausoleum. He performs customary rites at the mausoleum on Mondays and Thursdays and after the celebration of the *Akwaside* and *Awukudae* festivals. He is responsible for all rituals connected with the skeleton of Opoku Fofie. The *Soadoro* stool was created for a hunter and servant of the *Oyoko* people called Kwadwo Tene. He was put in charge of the Asantehene's silver regalia, namely the silver stool, silver pipe, silver calabash and a pair of silver sandals.

Osei Tutu, fourth Kumasihene and first Asantehene of the Asante Union formed under the inspiring leadership of Okomfo Anokye (C1697-1717), created nine service stools. The *Asokwa*, *Nkonguasofo*, *Mmentia*, *Baamu*, *Abenase*, *Prempeh Drum*, *Pekyi No. 2*, *Ahensan* and *Akropong stools*⁴¹ *Asokwa* is a town five miles from Kumasi. It is under the Gyase administrative division. The occupant of the stool was put in charge of the Asantehene's horns. He also assisted the Batahene to trade for the Asantehene. He was made responsible for weeding, fencing of the palace and cutting of firewood. The *Nkonguasofohene* belonged to the Gyase division and was chief of all the Asantehene's stool carriers, The *Mmentiahene* belonged to the Gyase division and was responsible for the short horns. All short horn blowers who exhibited qualities of faithfulness and competence were entitled to occupy the stool. *Bampanase-Baamu* is the sacred place where the blackened stools of the heroic Asante kings are kept. In Asante tradition it was the first place of residence of Osei Tutu. The duty of the chief is to guard and keep this sacred place. The *Abenase* stool belongs to the Gyase division. The occupant was and still is in charge of the Asantehene's clothing, head of the kente weavers and dressing of the Asantehene's bed. The *Prempeh* drum was made for Osei Tutu, probably by Okomfo Anokye to head the King's procession. *Pekyi No. 2* is a village eleven miles from Kumasi. The stool is regarded as a military one because it was created for the gallant servants of the king. It falls under the *Kronti* military division. *Ahensan* is a village three miles from Kumasi. The stool was created for Ansere a faithful servant who had served Osei Tutu in Denkyira, Akwamu and Kumasi.

Opoku Ware, the fifth Kumasihene and second Asantehene of the Asante Union (1717-1750), created five stools. The *Ananta*, *Gyasewa*, *Nnibi*, *Bohyen* and *Derma* stools.⁴² The *Ananta* stool was created for Ofosu, a servant at the court, in recognition of the spirit of initiative and valour displayed when he repulsed an attack by Apotwe, the chief of Assin. The troops of Ofosu were made part of the King's personal guard. The *Anantahene* goes to the *Krafie* on ceremonial occasions to keep guard whilst the Asantehene worships his soul. He was made equal in status to the *Bantamahene* in military affairs. He can challenge the *Bantamahene* if he is trying to bring trouble or seize power in the state. He has seven chiefs under him including the chief of the medicine men. In the administrative division he belongs to the Gyase group. The *Ananta* stool achieved high political mobility. The *Nnibihene* belongs to the Gyase division and was and still is directly under the *Sanahene*. He therefore performed the role of assistant state treasurer. The *Bohyenhene* was and still is one of the traditional priests attached to the kings mausoleum at Bremang. He was made responsible for the pouring of libation to the ancestral gods on Mondays, Thursdays and after the celebration of the *Awu'udae* and *Akwasidae* festivals. He was also made responsible for the out dooring and indooing ceremonies of the skeleton of Asantehene Kwaku Dua I. The *Derma* stool was created for Ntiamoah a faithful servant and hunter. The *Dermahene* has to supply meat regularly to the Asantehene.

Asantehene Osei Kwadwo (1764-1777) created the *Nkonsong* and *Hiawu* military stools initially for two of his brothers who had rendered faithful service to him. After the Banda war however, he decided to educate the male captives to serve as his special bodyguard. The stools therefore acquired a new character.⁴³

Four stools were created during the reign of the famous nineteenth century Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame Asibey Bonsu (C1801-1824).⁴⁴ The *Atene Akuapong* stool was created after the Gyaman War (1820). The occupant was given the duty of guarding the Golden stool. All successors to the stool have been stool dependants at the courts. Asantehene Prempeh II changed the status of the stool into a hereditary stool of matrilineal descent. It now belongs to a group known as *Were huduoefo*. Only descendants of this group have

a legal claim to the stool. The *Danpoomu* stool was also created after the Gyaman war. The first chief Denim was a Gyaman captive. The chief of the stool was and still is responsible for the safekeeping of the valuable property of the king. This includes state swords, golden guns, golden bottles and fans. All the successors to this stool were servants at the court. The *Akyineyekyenfu* stool was captured from the Gyamans during the Gyaman war and made a service stool. The duties of the occupant are first to safe-guard the keys to the room where the various umbrellas of the Asantehene are kept and secondly to see to the day to day administration of the various umbrellas of the Asantehene. The Sepe Owusu Ansah stool was created after the Gyaman war. It belongs to the Ankobea division of the court. Sepe Owusu Ansah is a suburb about 3 miles from Kumasi. Traditionally this stool is known as the Gyedu stool. Gyedu a prominent citizen of Gyaman and his relatives were captured during the war. Osei Bonsu ruled that Gyedu should serve him through the Anaminakohene. The horns attached to the stool blow *Hwan na oye wo! Osei Bonsu na oye wo!* (Who created you? It is Osei Bonsu who created you).⁴⁵

Asantehene Osei Yaw Akoto (1824-1838) created the *Mmagyegyefuo* stool. The occupant of this stool is head of the nannies at the Asantehene's court and responsible for caring for and training the royal children. The stool was designed for the King's household servants who showed signs of distinction on the job in question.⁴⁶

Finally, the *Omanti* stool was created by Asantehene Prempeh I (1888-1931) for Kwaku Fi, a slave at the court. It became a stool for household servants who proved themselves industrious, energetic and faithful. The *Omantihene* belongs to the *Manwere* division. He is also a 'nanny' to the Asantehene and a chief of limited holding (*Osafohene*).⁴⁷

The *Abrepo* service stool is also worth mentioning. Traditions do not indicate who created the stool. Abrepo is a suburb 3 miles from Kumasi. The *Abrepo odikro* serves the Asantehene through the Apedehene and he is responsible for beating the Apede set of drums. These drums are attached to the Golden stool and always beaten when the stool is carried shoulder high by the king's chief stool carrier.⁴⁸

The Bantama and Gyasewa Stools

The Bantama stool is described as non-ancestral, non-royal and of patrilineal descent.⁴⁹ It was created by Asantehene Osei Tutu, for Amankwatia Panin, a stool carrier of Denkyirahene Boa Amponsem who had followed him to Kumasi. Amankwatia Panin was also elevated to the post of *Krontihene* (commander in chief of the Asante army). The position of the *Krontihene* meant that Amankwatia Panin was the highest official in the Asante military unit. He had under him the *Akwamuhene* (second in command) the *Benkum* and *Nifahene* (left and right wings), *Adontenhene* (head of the main body), *Ankobeahene* (head of the body guard), *Kyidomhene* (head of the rear-guard) and the *Gyasehene* (head of the palace household). He was the third important official so far as the Asante administrative hierarchy in the palace was concerned. The chief was the head of the administrative set up and he was assisted by the queenmother. The *Kronti* and *Akwamu* chiefs were the next in the hierarchy, followed by the *Abusuahene* (clan chief) and all the other military officials. So far as the whole Asante nation is concerned, the *Bantamahene* was the second in hierarchy according to Bowdich's account of the Asante government. Bowdich talked about three estates of government - The king, the Aristocracy and the Assembly of Captains. The Aristocracy dealt with foreign issues, supervised domestic affairs and exercised judicial authority.⁵⁰

When Amankwatia Panin died he was succeeded by his son Amankwatia. It was Amankwa Abinowa *alias* Amankwatia the sixth *Bantamahene* that Bowdich met on his visit to Kumasi in 1817. The aristocracy then consisted of four officials, the *Bantamahene* Amankwatia, *Asafohene* Kwaakye Kofi, *Gyasewahene* Opoku Frefre and *Adumhene* Adum Ata. Wilks refers to the aristocracy as the Privy or Inner Council and the assembly of Captains as the *Asantemanhyiamu*. Membership to the *Asantemanhyiamu* was on territorial basis. It comprised all the *Amanhene* (Paramount chiefs), some senior Kumasi chiefs and a few provincial rulers.⁵¹

The *Bantamahene* in pre-colonial days had seven warrior chiefs under him to strengthen the *Kronti* division. These were the *Bantama-Baamuhene*, the *Essuowinhene*, *Afarihene*, *Akwaboahene*, *Twaafuo Baah*, *Kurawumahene* and *Amakye Barihene*.⁵²

So far as the present structure of the Kumasi Traditional Council is concerned, whenever the Asantehene is indisposed or unable to attend the traditional council meeting, he appoints the *Bantamahene* to act on his behalf. He is therefore regarded as the Vice-President of the Council.

The *Gyasewa* stool was created by Asantehene Opoku Ware for his son Adusei Atwiniwa. When Adusei died, he was succeeded by his uncle Ntim Panin but he was soon destooled for mismanagement. Asantehene Osei Bonsu gave the stool to Opoku Frefre, a stool servant, for faithful and long service in the palace.⁵³

Opoku Frefre was a slave of Oyokohene Buapon and often accompanied his master to the Asantehene's court. Asantehene Osei Kwadwo was much impressed by Opoku's talents and nicknamed him *Frefre* (*Tia Frede-frede* - nimble). On the death of the Oyokohene, Opoku Frefre was taken as part of the death duties and placed in the Asantehene's treasury department for training. Frefre served under the *Sanahene* (State Treasurer) and the *Fotosanfohene* (Chief Cashier). He soon rose to become the *Fotosanfohene*. During the reign of Asantehene Osei Bonsu, he was appointed *Gyasewahene* (Head of the Exchequer). Frefre was therefore elevated to the highest political office so far as the Asante financial administration was concerned. Under him were the *Sanahene* (State treasurer), the *fotosanfo* (cashiers), *towgyefo* and *nsumgyefo* (collectors of tributes and taxes) and the *Batafo* (traders).

In the Asante national political hierarchy he was part of Bowdich's aristocracy or Wilks' Privy/Inner Council. The aristocracy played an important role in the central and provincial administration of the Asante Kingdom. Frefre was among three officials who were put in charge of the conquered provinces. He was put in charge of the provinces of Akyem and Akwamu. Kwakye Kofi was responsible for Assin, Wassa, Twifo, Sefwi and a greater part of the South-West. Frefre and these officials delegated officers of their own choice to take care of these provinces while they themselves concentrated on the affairs of the central administration.

Opoku Frefre was also a great warrior and he was much involved in Asante military affairs. One of the songs Dupuis heard being sung in honour of Opoku Frefre, during his mission to Kumasi in 1820 was:

*Where shall we find such a warrior as the strong and beautiful Apacoo Kudjo whose eyes are like the panther in fight? O great slave of the king, how you are beloved! Your victories delight his ears. Who fought the Germans and killed their caboceer Adonai? Apacoo Kudjo.*⁵⁴

In 1802, Opoku Frefre held a military command in the expeditionary force sent to the northwestern provinces. Five years later, he led the forces which invaded Fanteland and fought Anomabo. In 1811 he was appointed by the Asantehene to command an expedition against the people of Winneba and Bereku, to prevent their attacks upon Accra. He campaigned in Akyem, Akwapim, Shai, Ada, Krobo etc. He arrested Flindt, the Danish Governor of Ada fort but ultimately ransomed him for 100oz. of gold. Between 1818-1819 he held a senior military command in the Gyaman expeditionary force. In the early 1820s, he was regarded as the best and most powerful of the Asante generals after he had commanded another Asante force to the Eastern provinces. His ruthlessness in warfare earned him the title *obu abasa* (the breaker of arms). The *Gyasewa* stool also came to be known as *Obuabasa* stool and the stools under the *Gyasewa* division also came to be known by that name.

The *Gyasewa* stool became a special stool in Asante because in spite of its servile background, succession became vested in perpetuity in the sons of Opoku Frefre by the fiat of Asantehene Osei Bonsu. Asante traditions emphasize that the stool is a non-hereditary royal stool which belongs solely to the descendants of Opoku Frefre. The *Gyasewa* stool attained high political mobility but the occupant of the stool was and is by custom prohibited from using the title *Nana*. The approved title is *Opanin*. There is evidence of an in built mechanism of checks and balances in the political machinery perhaps to prevent those elevated from becoming too proud.

The fifth successor to the *Gyasewa* stool, Adu Bofo (C1867-1876) was the youngest son of Opoku Frefre. He also played a prominent role in Asante political and military life. Adu Bofo was not only the son of an elevated slave but his mother was also a slave. He is remembered in Asante traditions for undertaking the *Krepi* campaign of 1868. It was in this campaign that the missionaries at Anum, the Ramseys and Kuhne, and the trader at Ho, Bonnat, were taken captives to Kumasi. In June 1869, Adu Bofo faced the forces of Dompri, the leader of Akyem Kotoku's resistance to Asante. Around 1870, after fifteen engagements against Dompri, Dompri was finally killed in battle at Abutia. The following year, under the instructions of the Asantehene, Adu Bofo returned to Kumasi, where he was publicly honoured by Asantehene Kofi Karikari. He was presented with many gifts including slaves.

In 1872, Adu Bofo was sent on an invasion of the British protected territories. He was elevated to the commander of the army for the south-west while the actual commander of the Asante army, Bantamahene Amankwatia was appointed commander in chief for the invasion of the South. If one examines the structure and organisation of the Asante army, one realises that the *Gyasewahene* and his group were just supporting staff. They were not in charge of the main military positions. In fact structurally they were the last in the military organisation. The valour of Opoku Frefre and Adu Bofo elevated this stool in the Asante military set up.⁵⁵

Adu Bofo became a very powerful and wealthy man in Asante. Fuller records that Adu Bofo's success in the *Krepi* campaign and other campaigns raised him to a position of great importance. He became a large slave owner and acquired great wealth.⁵⁶

In 1883, Kofi Poku, son of his brother Adu Boahen, succeeded to the *Gyasewa* stool. As a sub-chief who had done so much for Asante, the Asantehene and his elders broke the normal rules for blackening of the stools of royal chiefs, and blackened Adu Bofo's stool. This was indeed a mark of great honour.⁵⁷

Conclusion

There were avenues for social, political and economic mobility vertically in pre-colonial Asante. The avenues for mobility depended on several factors. The first was the personal will of the master or owner of an unfree person. The head of a household could decide whether or not to incorporate the unfree person into the household. If he did, the unfree person attained personal mobility. The head of the household could also decide whether his female slave could marry him or a member of the household. Marriage was thus another means of mobility. The incorporation of the slave into the family either through adoption or marriage placed the slave in a privileged position because he became an automatic member of his owner's lineage and clan. Mobility within the family thus transcended the Asante social structure. The personal will of the owner was also applicable on the political level. A king or chief could incorporate his slave and allow him to attain a high political office.

The second factor on which mobility depended was the character of the unfree person. Some of the traits traditions emphasised were loyalty, obedience, humility, intelligence, selflessness, respectfulness, sincerity and faithfulness. These qualities were summed up in words like good behaviour, good character and good conduct. These qualities in character could enable a free commoner or a person of servile status to attain mobility both within the individual family unit, in the society at large and in the political administration of the state.

The third factor on which mobility depended was the nature of service rendered by the free commoner or the unfree person. Traditions emphasised that those who were hardworking, competent and serviceable rose to positions of authority.

Mobility in pre-colonial Asante was also circumstantial. A free commoner or a person of unfree status sometimes found himself rising vertically through the social and political ladder due to certain circumstances. The most common and often mentioned circumstance was a situation in which all the eligible heirs to a stool or political office were either too young to rule or extinct. In these circumstances the lowest member of the family rose to become the highest member.

Finally, mobility in Asante depended on the fact of one's birth. If you were born a royal (*odehyee*) you were already high on the social and political ladder. You were respected and had the right to rule when it came to your turn. One's birth made him a true royal, a true blooded relative and a full member of the family. It was not uncommon in pre-colonial days and even presently in Asante for one to beat on his chest and exclaim: *Meye odehyee paa* (I am a true royal).

The importance of one's birth was emphasised by Kwabena Dwemoh, the Mamponghene's horn blower, in a letter to the District Commissioner of Ejura on 27 July 1918. He stated, *my birth-right lays upon me no claim to the horn blowing. By birth I am a grandchild of the state, known by off and all.*⁵⁸

Although one could become an Asante by birth, through assimilation and through adoption, an Asante by birth was regarded as the most important.

It is against this background of factors for mobility that one appreciates the issues of inheritance, succession and creation of stools in pre-colonial Asante.

The creation of stools in pre-colonial Asante for people of low status at the king's court was therefore no casual gesture. It was a mark of great honour and the achievement of the highest mobility. It is significant that it was thought proper by the Asante kings to reward court servants who had proved themselves hardworking, faithful, and who had performed an act of valour for the state. In their new political offices, these elevated servants continued

to serve the king and the state faithfully. The process of status conversion in Asante was made possible by the Asante law attributed to Asantehene Osei Tutu: *Obi nkyere obi ase* (No one should disclose the origin of another).

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ALVIN AILEY

a revolutionary in dance

*A historical and biographical sketch
of his choreographic works.*

Francis Nii Yartey

Alvin Ailey (Jnr.) has been described as neither a modern dancer nor a Negro dancer but a Negro-Modern dancer.¹ Perhaps this can be explained in the way he blends the strong modern dance background he had with his black heritage, notably Jazz. So expertly does he do this that:

The more one sees of Ailey's choreography the more one admires it, the more it seems to grow on you... You watch Revelation and it appears to be such a natural extension of the music that hardly a sense of 'choreography stands between the natural-moving dancers and the music, but later watching it again and again' one begins to see the craft that has gone to gild nature.²

His approach to dance bore a close affinity with the African conception of dance as a many faceted entity. Alvin's dance programme presentations offered breadth and variety just as a music or concert conductor would present at a given musical concert. And this was at a time when dance audiences tended to favour, a Jose Simon, Weidman, Martha Graham or Katherine Dunham technique.

Like an African dancer he could relate to other forms and find inspiration, insight and excitement for study, enjoyment or experimentation.

Alvin Ailey was born in Rogers, Texas, on January 5, 1931. His labourer father, Alvin E. Cliff Ailey and his mother, Lula, separated when young Ailey was only a child. Living with his mother most of the time, Alvin Ailey was very much influenced by the rituals of the Baptist Church and the beauty of the Blues in the poverty-stricken area where they lived.

His love for dance did not manifest itself until he moved with his mother to Los Angeles, California, where he came into contact with the techniques of Lester Horton, one of the first modern dancers who captured the West Coast of America. Alvin Ailey enrolled in Lester's Technique class, only to quit after a short time even though he was being supported financially by Horton. He enrolled as a Spanish Language major at the University of California (U.C.L.A.) and after two years of college, decided dance was his language. He went back to Horton in 1949 to become a member of the company's chorus and stage-crew.

Alvin Ailey's debut as a dancer took place four years later when he performed in the revue *Bal Caribe*. 1953 may be considered the turning-point in Ailey's career as a dancer and choreographer. Four years after he had started his dance career with Horton, Ailey was entrusted with the fate of the company at the death of Horton in 1953; after justifying his ability to choreograph and handle people with two scenarios *St. Francis of Assisi* and

Morning Mourning. The company's invitation to perform at Jacobs Pillow the following year and the subsequent offers Ailey himself got from dance companies and movie makers to choreograph and dance were clear indications that, even though he was very young in the modern dance world, he was beginning to make an impact not only in the dance world but also in the related areas.

With the Horton Dance Theatre, Alvin Ailey taught and also directed the Horton's Children's Theatre. He was quite busy at this time. He choreographed and presented a group work on the **Creation of the World** by Milhaud with music by the San Diego Symphony Orchestra. This was around the same time he was having his first ever dancing role in the film **Carmen Jones**. In 1954, Ailey was invited to New York by Herbert Ross to appear together with Carmen de Lavallade, also a pupil of Horton, in the Broadway production of the musical **House of Flowers**. This opened the gate for him to enter into the dancing world of such celebrated modern dancers as Anna Sokolow, Doris Humphrey, Martha Graham, Charles Weidman. He also studied ballet with Karel Shook.

Before the end of 1957, Ailey had danced and appeared with Anna Sokolow, Sophia Maslow, Donald MacKayle, and Harry Belafonte. It got to a point when Alvin felt it was about time he formed his own dance company. So in the early part of 1958, the *Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre* was formed; in December that same year, the company gave its first full scale concert at the YMHA. The programme included **Cinco Latinos**, **Blues Suite**, and **Ariette Oubliee**. This programme was followed in the fall of 1960 by what was to be the beginning of what John Butler saw as *unusual for a modern dance company including the works of other choreographers in its repertoire*.³ This broke ... *the policy of one-man's company - an egocentric fault that has in the past marred many dance companies both modern and ballet*.⁴

On the programme for this historical performance were Lester Horton's **The Beloved**, **Portrait of Billie** by John Butler. Hitherto the company had performed works like **Rooms** by Anna Sokolow, **Lament** by Louis Johnson, **Oronzo Dedication** by Lester Horton, and works of Talley Beatty, Geoffrey Holder, and Paul Sansardo.

Alvin Ailey, well read and highly sophisticated, was usually always ready to learn something new and ready to share what he had with others. This influenced his company members. A London critic once wrote, *Ailey is the most generous of artists and his desire seems always to give, to share. Anything the company had with them they would show to people who cared; they wanted to share their technical skills as well and, in return eagerly learned what they could*.!!⁵

After seeing a performance by the Ghana Dance Ensemble in 1967, Mr. Ailey was very much impressed and wanted to express it in a more positive way than a staged performance. Characteristically, he offered to share his dance experience with this young African Dance Company. In the process of taking a two-hour class, he said afterwards, he had been highly impressed with the speed with which these young dancers adapted to fresh and new movement ideas and forms other than their own African experience. He tried some of the movements from the dancers of a traditional dance group to the surprise and delight of his newly found friends.

Alvin Ailey distinguished himself as a dancer, choreographer, and as a man of the people. As a dancer, he was in tune with his body, mind and soul. Doris Hering described him as ... *exceptional He reminds one of a caged lion full of lasting power that can be released at will*.⁶ This is so true; seeing Alvin Ailey dance, myself, I got the impression that the stage was his world and movement was his life and he had a firm control of the two. Arthur Todd has this to say about him: *Alvin Ailey has mastered all the techniques and*

*virtuosity one can wish. He moves with a personal magnificence that in breathtaking and, for many, is the greatest male dancer in his field today.*⁷ Alvin danced with his company until 1965, when he decided to devote his time to choreography and the direction of the company.

In February 1962, under the sponsorship and administration of the State Department and A.N.T.A., respectively, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre made a thirteen-week tour of the Far East. In Australia the company proved that dance was really an *international language*, for, as was reported, the company was so eloquent in the language of dance that it created a *tornado of clapping, stamping, and cheering. The audience, uninhibited as the dancers on stage, would not let go.*⁸ Just after this tour, Ailey choreographed *Feast of Ashes* for the *Harkness Ballet*. This piece which made Ailey the first choreographer to blend classical ballet with modern dance,⁹ was originally intended for the Robert Joffrey Ballet. The company toured the United States extensively until September, 1964, when it set off on its second international tour - its first in Europe. The outcome of this tour, mainly in Hamburg, London, and Paris, was *perhaps the greatest sensation on the continent since Jerome Robbins Ballet USA in 1956.*¹⁰

The company's second tour of Europe took place in February, 1966. In April of the same year, a wish was partly fulfilled for Alvin Ailey when he took his company to Dakar, Senegal to perform at the Negro Arts Festival at the Negritude Exposition. This wish was fully realised in 1967 when the company toured nine African countries including Ghana. Ailey considered this tour to Africa - source of his basic material Jazz - as a *cultural coup* because it was not only the most rewarding part of the tour to be among Africans but, as he put it, *I came home with a healthy respect for my African heritage. Just as Africans have distorted views of American life, we too - Negroes and Whites alike - have a distorted view of them.*¹¹

Having had first-hand experience with both the African life and the American life, Alvin Ailey stood as a unique choreographer *who took source materials and turned them into theatre work of extra-ordinary beauty and excitement.*¹² He believed in the combination of all dance forms - jazz, ballet, modern, etc. - with instrumental music, song and acting. He also expressed many dramatic themes and moods in the 'theatre' he was dreaming of - this is the African way. Ailey was able to achieve this aim by passing these elements through the furnace of modern dance.¹³ His extraordinary piece of all times, *Revelations*, clearly demonstrates this idea. *Revelations* is a dance in which a whole religious experience is enacted in three parts - *Pilgrim of Sorrow, Take me to the Water, and Move, members, Move*. Man has reached the summit of his sins and his cup is overflowing with misery. He tries desperately to be forgiven but forgetting the important fact that he has to be cleansed, as the Bible says, he has to *be born again*. Salvation finally comes when he hears of the holy words of God and he (the sinner) gives himself up to be baptized in the River Jordan. In his happiness and gratitude to God, he sings and dances to express that sentiment.

Alvin Ailey choreographically set the first part, *Pilgrim of Sorrow*, to show how man tries fruitlessly to run away from his sins by spinning his dancers to the four corners of the stage - the four cardinal points of the earth. To show the unbearable situation in which the sinner is, he has the dancers fan themselves while waiting to be saved. The second act, *Take me to the Water, River Jordan*, in which the ritual of forgiveness is performed, is created by simply waving long strands of white cloth and as the dancers move, the holy water - River Jordan - flows continuously into new life. The emancipation from the fires of Hell in the third act, *Move, Members, Move*, is celebrated with movements which seem more improvised¹⁴ than choreographed, yet so blended with the music of the spirituals that one can almost see

the music and hear the dance.

The Hermit Songs, Alvin Ailey's best solo piece, has the same approach, but unlike **Revelations**, he used more abstract movements in this piece. Another difference between the two works is the position of the main character. In **The Hermit Songs**, Ailey carves out not a sinner but a monk - a saint who goes through self-judgement and consequent self-flagellation for his sinful past, while in **Revelations**, the sinner, less concerned with the sins he has committed, waits for God to judge him. **The Hermit Songs** maybe said to be a reflection of Alvin Ailey's life. No wonder he created it for himself. The only dancer known to have performed this solo successfully and convincingly as Ailey was William Louthier, a member of Ailey's company and a former pupil of Lester Horton. The role, apart from being one of the most arduous solos in the company's repertoire then also demands a great deal of technical ability and a strong conviction of the performer.

Alvin Ailey might not have read Bertold Brecht at the time he was choreographing **The Hermit Songs**, but a London critic, Noel Goodwin, looked at the religious role the monk plays in the piece and wrote: *The manner in which Ailey makes us stand aside and watch his character comment, as it were, on his character, is almost Brechtian. He is not showing a man of God but a man in relation to God and the result is most intriguing ... The Hermit is possessed not by God but by His own vision of God.*¹⁵

The immensity of the communicative value and for that matter, the educative value of Alvin Ailey's works are unequalled. He related the history of an oppressed people of the world in **Been Here and Gone**, and **the Root of the Blues**, and explained the sharp militant and political reaction of the oppressed in **Masekela Language**. Though many people would naturally expect these works, particularly the latter, to deal directly with the American blacks, *characteristically for Mr. Ailey, however, its framework and message are universal rather than specific in a sectarian way. It may be about blacks. It maybe about whites. It is political in a non-political manner.*¹⁶ Perhaps this is why more people have seen Alvin Ailey Dance Company than any other American Dance Company.¹⁷

Another area in which Ailey worked was the idea of having a multi-racial dance company. Explaining his concept of multi-racism, Ailey said, *A multi-racial company that makes a connection with the American dance, past and future, and very strongly, with the Black past and future. But I am tired of the idea of segregated companies.*¹⁸

He did not express this idea theoretically. Time magazine observed this and wrote, *Ailey Company is perhaps the most thoroughly integrated ensemble in all the American performing arts - stylistically as well as racially.*¹⁹

Until February, 1974, Alvin Ailey's company had been facing financial problems - a disease which has been plaguing many dance companies especially modern dance companies. In what was termed *the bargain of the Century*, the company was awarded an amount of thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000) by the New York City Parks Administration to perform five concerts in five locations around the city during the 1974 summer session.²⁰ This amount was believed at the time to be the largest allocation ever to be given to a single dance company by the US Administration.

To many, nothing could be more appropriate to show the position held by this wonderful company in the dance world than the words expressed by Mr. Edwin L. Weisl, Jnr., of Parks Administration, that

*... for New York to lose Alvin Ailey would be a lot more serious than it would be for it to lose one of its treasured landmarks...*²¹

New York did lose Alvin Ailey when he passed away in 1989 and left a treasured landmark of dance innovations for New York and the world.

To Africans who knew him in America where he was struggling for recognition with performances at the "Y", he represented courage and faith in his ultimate success. During his tours in Ghana, he revealed a kinsmanship-relationship between the American Blacks and the Black Africans and strengthened the bonds of brotherhood rooted in a common heritage.

One work which is still remembered featured the great dancer Judith Jamison who incidentally is directing the company at the moment after Ailey's death in dances based on the Blues and Jazz, at once gay, colourful and captivating in which umbrellas and ribbons formed part of the creative effort and not just as props. Spiritually these dances found ready response in the audience who applauded and cheered the performers. One felt proud to share a common heritage with this great artist whose belief in the brotherhood of all mankind and a non-racial world was portrayed in his Dance creations, as an article of faith and a message to the world at large. He never forgot a face. He has left us a rich heritage of inspired and inspiring works by which we shall remember him.

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TWI ETYMOLOGY: A STUDY IN ETHNO-LINGUISTICS

Owusu Brempong

Language as an arbitrary system of vocal symbols is a device through which human beings interact in terms of the total culture.

The proposition for this paper is that Twi speaking peoples of Ghana have labels affixing to the behaviours which receive the names in that culture; that the lexemes assigned to concepts are linked to the cultural behaviour of the Akan Twi speaking peoples.

The method employed here is a functional analysis, a method of determining the semantic components of concepts for which a given term is a rubric; a sequence of phonemes that carries meaning and show the way of life of a people influences the particular language they speak.

The subject of Twi etymology several times was introduced in conversation and often, it generated a heated debate among friends who belong to various Akan ethnic groups i.e., Asante, Bono, Akwapim and Fante. This informal method of receiving comments on the subject and acting as participant observer aided me to determine various morphemes which are put together to form lexemes; cultural pattern which is determined by the cultural behaviour of various Akan groups.

The basic aim of "Twi Etymology" is to be used as a tool for teaching the Twi language to non-native speakers; aiding students to understand the links between Twi words and the cultural behaviour of the Akan peoples.

Twi Etymology can also be utilized as a research tool for studies in linguistic anthropology. The ideas presented in this paper, so to speak, are not in the minds of every Twi speaker. Words exist in a language but due to cultural change, people might have different interpretations. People who possess the requisite knowledge, either non-literate or Western educated, will be interested in the subject.

One important area of *Twi Etymology* which needs to be investigated is *place names*; how towns and villages in Ghana got their authentic names. Here again, the Twi names of these towns and villages, when etymologized could throw very much light on their historical and original discovery. For example, J.G. Christaller (1933:270) and W.E.F. Ward (1967:118) tell us that Kumasi (the capital of Ashanti), originated when the legendary priest, Okomfo Anokye, planted *Okum* trees, one at Kwaman which grew and became *Kumase*, *kum* meaning "the tree" and *ase* meaning *under*. Hence *Kumase* means *under the kum tree*. The other tree became *kumawu*, literally meaning *kum* = tree and *awu* = dead, hence the name designated for the Ashanti town Kumawu means *the dead kum tree*.

Another example is *Twimia* a name designated to a village in Techiman, Brong Ahafo region. Like farming, hunting expeditions have led to the creation of many villages in Techiman. *Twimia* village falls in the latter category. *Twimia* village as the name implies, was a place where a species of antelope (*otwe*, plural *atwe*) were always *pressed* by hunters (*otwe*, *antelope*; *mia*, *pressed*). *otwe* - *mia* became *Twimia*.

For several years I have been playing with Twi words or lexemes of the Akan peoples of Ghana, in reference to a number of interesting foundations in the language. I began to ask some epistemological questions. What is the foundation of certain words in the Twi language and how are they formed? In order to explore the origin of some lexemes in Twi in relation to their meanings and their usage, I decided to etymologize their morphemic content. My approach was analytical and I discovered that some of the words in Twi were made up of two or more morphemes, each morpheme having a distinct meaning which together with other morphemes compose one meaningful lexeme.

As Herbert Blumer writes:

Human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. Such things include everything that the human being may note in his world - physical objects, such as trees or chairs; other human beings, such as mother or a store clerk; categories of human beings, such as friends or enemies; institutions, as school or a government; guiding ideals, such as individual independence or honesty, activities of others, such as their commands or requests; and such situations as an individual encounters in his daily life.¹

I began to find out that the semantic content of some of the Twi lexemes has cognitive significance and is based on functional determinism. The names of many objectives reflect the functions which they have for the users, the Twi speaking people.

Further investigation revealed that there are some lexemes which result from processes of culture change, inter-cultural contacts growing out of particular historical situations. The contact of Twi-speaking people with Europeans dates back to the fifteenth century. The activities of the Portuguese, English, French and Danish traders had great historical impact on the West Coast of Africa.

On the whole I have dealt here systematically with specific lexemes, but I can say that the survey is incomplete since it was impossible to deal with all the Twi lexemes. Materials provided here are rather examples of ideas which merit further analytical consideration. The meanings which I have assigned to the morphemes in these lexemes are my own and therefore I would welcome any criticism which might help to advance and deepen our understanding of the semantic content of Twi words and the Akan culture.

THE AKAN KINSHIP SYSTEM

To start, I would like to deal with some of the basic terms designated for the family in the Akan world. Every Akan is born into an *abusua*, the blood family system or the clan. Each child inherits a spirit (totem) from his father but has his mother's blood. Therefore each child is related, through blood, to his mother's brother, to his mother's sister and her siblings; but not to the children of his mother's brother. The word *Abusua* when etymologized has two morphemes, *abu* literally meaning broken and *sua* meaning to learn. *Abusua*² in a sense therefore means part of the society which is broken or a segment of the society which can be uniquely identified. The lexeme *Sua* to learn, denotes the learning process within such an institution. This means that individuals within the *Abusua* learn to identify themselves with the group. The *Abusua* expects individuals to play important roles in perpetuating and enhancing the clan. Members have social and financial obligations to each other and to the clan; they produce children (especially the women) and pay for the schooling of nephews and nieces, for example.

The strength of the *Abusua* is illustrated by several Twi proverbs, *Abusua te se nhwiren, egugu akuw-akuw* meaning *The family is like flowers, it blossoms in clusters*, illustrate the nature of the *Abusua* and its relation to society. A similar proverb, *Abusua ye dom* meaning *The Abusua is an army* refers to the strength of the extended family as a social unit in the Akan society. The proverb *Abusua dua wontwa*. *The family tree is not cut* illustrates the relation of the individual to the extended family.

The Spouse: Mother and Father

I have isolated some of the lexemes for Akan Kinship terminology for both affinal and consanguineal groupings. The main aim here is to create understanding for mainly people who do not know anything about the system. It would be equally helpful to native Twi speakers.

We should not overlook the legal union of a man with a woman as a husband and a wife; the legal relation of spouses to each other - wedlock. Marriage in Twi is designated with the word *awadee*. This lexeme has two morphemes, *awa* from *ware* meaning *long* and *dee* from *adee*, meaning *something*. In a sense, the word *awadee* literally means something that lasts a long time i.e. a legal union of a man with a woman for life. Due to the concept of longevity assigned to marriage in the Akan world, the spouses are not only married to themselves but they are also married to both the extended family of the man and the woman; lifetime alliance between two extended families. Hence both extended families seek the longevity of such union.

Explaining, the nature of *marriage*, Nana Abrafi, the queenmother of Techiman, saido *nnemmafoo monnim nti, awadee dee ware paa!* meaning, *You modern people, you don't know (understand), as for marriage, it is very long.*³ Here we can see how Twi etymology gets into ethnography of speaking, how individual speakers assign meanings to words to communicate effectively about topics.

Now let us consider the lexemes designated for both the husband and wife relationships. The word *yere* is used for a wife; that is, a man's *yere* is the woman. The word *yere* literally means *to spread to stretch* i.e., to push it farther. In the Twi language one can say, *yere no pintin* meaning *to hold fast or stretch tight*. In a sense, when a woman is married to a man she is restricted or she restricts herself from indulging in activities considered by the society as immoral which could damage her marriage. Activities such as *going out with another man* or refusing to carry out domestic duties. Thus the marriage relationship makes the woman *stand fast*.

A husband's relationship to his wife is *kunu*, thus a man is a *kunu* (husband) to his *yere* (wife). The word *kunu* has two morphemes, *ku* literally means *to kill* and *nu* from *no*, meaning *him*.⁴ This controversial analysis stems from the fact that a husband is always at the mercy of his wife, i.e. a wife can easily kill a husband because she takes care of the man's domestic needs. Hence, the interpretation merits a further consideration.

The next important item to discuss is the basic terms designated for mother and father; the *begetting spouse* which forms the basis of the nuclear family. In Twi, the mother is called *maame* which might be a loan word (English: *mum* or *maam*), in place of *na* is used as a synonym. The lexeme *na* which has only one morpheme can be translated literally as *something precious or something difficult to get*. For example, the Akan have a saying: *Sika ye na* meaning *money is precious or difficult to get*. This also means that mother, a female parent is very precious in all societies but specially the Akan Twi-speaking peoples

of Ghana have great attachment to motherhood due to matrilineal inheritance. There is a proverb which states, *Nsamanpo mu Soduro, wo (e) na wu, a w'abusua asa*. Allegorically, the proverb means that *when a child loses its mother he has lost the root of the family*.

The Akan have a matrilineal Kinship system based mainly on inheritance. It is also the mother who perpetuates the family by giving birth to children to keep the matrilineal clan intact. The following proverbs substantiate the unique position of the *Ena* in Akan matrilineal kinship system.⁵ *Wo (e) na ba ne wo nua your mother's child is your kinsman. Wo na di hia a, wunnyaē no nkofa obi nye na, When your mother is poor, you do not leave her and go and make some one else your mother. Obaatan na onim deē ne ba bedie. It is the mother who knows what her child will eat.*⁵

From the content of these proverbs we can deduce that the lexeme *ena* might have originated both culturally and historically.

On the other side of the coin, *papa* which means father (in several societies in both western and African worlds) is a loan word. Other words for father are *se* and *agya*. The synonym *agya* is used traditionally for father. The lexeme *agya* which has one morpheme means literally *to leave behind*. One can say in Twi *W'agya ne sika h^o* literally meaning *he has left his or her money there*. The use of the word *agya*, I propose, might also have been based on the system of inheritance, since in Akan system children do not inherit from their father.

When a father dies he leaves behind his children and his inheritance goes to his nephews and nieces (his sister's male and female children) and not his own. Traditionally, the children have no entrance into the possession of the dead fathers' property. In order to substantiate this traditional norm there are two Twi words, *Agya m'awie*. *Agya mawie* literally translated *Father, I am finished* is a common Akan funeral dirge for the bereaved children of the deceased father.

Twi Agya e e e!
 Agya e e e!
 Agya m'awie o!
 Agya m'awie o!

English Father, e e e!
 Father, e e e!
 Father, I am finished o!
 Father, I am finished o!

We can deduce from the above that the children are indeed bereaved, they are *finished* because the father died and left behind nothing for them.

Another important lexeme which is derived from the matrilineal inheritance system is *wofa* meaning maternal *uncle* (Mo. Br., not Fa. Br.). This particular lexeme has two morphemes, *w_o* which means *to have* and *fa* meaning *to take*. Thus in the Akan system it is the mother's brother who has something for ego to *take* or inherit after his death. Hence, *wofa wu a me na medi adee*, meaning *when my uncle (mother's brother) dies I inherit*.

In the light of the same system of maternal inheritance, the heir apparent to ego's *agya* (father) is labeled *agya-kuma* (*Fa, Si, Son*), *agya*: father and *kuma(a)* meaning *small*. Thus ego's father's nephew is his *small father*. Traditionally, he can inherit ego's father and become *father replacement* for ego. Hence there is an Akan proverb, *Agya bi wu a, agya bi te ase*, meaning *when a father dies another father lives!* This *small father* becomes responsible for ego's needs; both financially and spiritually. He can also marry ego's mother (his uncle's wife).

To ego's father, the heir apparent is labeled *wofa ase* (nephew) and *wofa-ase-wa* (niece). I have already explained the meaning of *wofa*. The word *ase* is similar to that of the in-laws which will be discussed later. The nephew and the niece must respect their uncle who gives them their inheritance. On the side of the niece, the Twi suffix *wa* is designated for women. Another example is the word *Sewa* for an aunt (*Fa Si*). *Se* is another word which is a synonym for *agya* (father) and the morpheme *wa* means female. Thus father's sister, traditionally is ego's *female father*.

With regard to affinal relationship, the word *ase* in Twi means either mother, father, son or daughter-in-law. This particular lexeme is utilized for all the in-laws except brother and sister-in-law. The semantic content of the lexeme might have derived from the kind of respect in-laws have towards each other. The word *Ase* which has only one morpheme literally means *under*. For example, *dua ase* means *under the tree*. I am inclined to believe that all of the in-laws are under one another; i.e., each has great respect for the other, or stoop for one another. The respect that in-laws show for each other in Akan society is remarkable. For example, a son-in-law would not even sit at a table with a mother-in-law, nor would a daughter-in-law with her father-in-law. Traditionally, the respect is so unique that conversation among them requires polite formal language.

Another important lexemes is *akonta* meaning brother-in-law. The word *akonta* has two morphemes, *ako* and *nta*. The word *ko* literally means *to fight* and *ta* from *nta* means *twin*. Thus *akonta* is someone ego would join to fight an enemy. He is someone who would support ego in his fights. Both ego and his wife's brother are like twins and one's problem or difficulty affects the other. It is ego who helps to keep his brother-in-law's maternal family in existence since it is his children who inherit his brother-in-law. For the case in point, during the Akan marriage ceremony, the bride-groom has to offer a special amount of money to his brothers-in-law. The title for this money is *akonta-gye-sekan*. *Akonta* means *brother-in-law*, *gye* means *receive* or *accept* and *sekan* means *cutlass*. Literally, *akontagye sekan* means *brother-in-law receive a cutlass*. This *cutlass* goes to the brother-in-law to help him prepare a farm (especially cocoa farm) for his future nephews' and nieces' inheritance.

From the way I have treated these lexemes, I hope the reader can see how they might have originated in ways described by functional analysis; these vocabularies are developed to meet the objective needs of Twi-speaking peoples.

Lexemes with Human Body Parts

There are several idioms in the Twi language which deal with parts of the human body. Human body parts are essential in the formation of some unavoidable idioms; without them the language would be incomplete. These idioms, when etymologized and the morphemes translated literally, extend knowledge of Twi cosmology and the Akan worldview; how the human body can be used metaphorically to illustrate human behaviour. The following are some important examples:

Parts of the Body in Twi	Folk Etymology and Literal Translation	English Equivalent
A) <i>Ti</i> 1) Ne ti mu ka no	Ti - head, mu - inside ka - bite, no - him/her "Inside the head bites	Head He/she is mad insane crazy.

2) Ti mu <u>de</u>	him/her" Ti - head, mu - inside <u>de</u> - sweet. "Sweetness inside the head."	spoiled (person)
3) Ti mu sum	Ti - head, mu - inside sum - dark. "Darkness inside the head."	hardness of heart
4) Ti mu den <u>fo</u>	Ti - head, mu - inside, den - hard, <u>fo</u> - person "Inside the head is hard."	A cruel person
5) Ti <u>ye</u>	Ti - head, <u>ye</u> - good, "Good head."	Luck, Lucky, person
6) Ti <u>nye</u>	Ti - head, <u>nye</u> - not good."Bad/not good head"	Unlucky, bad luck
B) Ani*		Eyes
1) Ani abere	Ani - eyes, abere - ripened/red	desire, longing lust cupidity
2) Ani abue/atew	Ani - eyes, abue - open. "The eyes are open."	wise, intelligent prudent, shrewd.
3) Ani awu	Ani - eyes, awu - dead. "Dead eyes."	Ashamed.
4) Ani <u>so</u> <u>adee</u>	Ani - eyes, <u>so</u> - hold, <u>adee</u> - things/something "Eyes hold things/some- thing."	He/she res- pects. Has respect for others, appreciation
5) Anidaso	Ani - eyes, da - sleep, so - on. "Eyes sleep on" (something).	expectation

6) Anigyē	Ani - eyes, gye - catches/ takes/accept, receive. “Eyes catch/get/take/ glitter” (on things).	Happiness, gladness, rejoices in.
7) Aniso (ye) hye Anisohye	Ani - eyes, so - on, ye - ye - is, hye - hot. “On the eyes are hot.”	cantankerous ill-natured quarrelsome.
8) Anisodwo	Ani - eyes, so - on, dwo - cool. “On the eyes are cool.”	Calm person.
9) Anim-onyam	Anim - face, onyam - “Glittered face.”	glitters with personality.
10) Anim-hare	Anim - face, hare - “Slight face.”	without personality.
11) Anim (ye) duru	Anim - face, duru - heavy. “Heavy face.”	Charismatic, with aura.
12) Anidaho	Ani - eyes, da - sleep, ho - self. “Eyes sleep self.”	being aware/ conscious
13) Anidaho	Ani - eyes, da - sleep ho - there. “Eyes sleep there.”	modest/ decency/ temperance.
14) Ani-fa-so	Ani - eyes, fa so - go over it. “Eyes go over it.”	oversight, error, mistake.
C) Kōn		Neck
1) Kōn do	Kōn - neck, do - love. “Neck loves.”	appetite/ desire.
D) Bo		Chest/bosom
1) Bo ye duru	Bo - chest, ye - is, duru - heavy. “Heavy chest.”	boldness/ fearless (Person)
2) Bo afuw	Bo - chest, afuw - covered with hair/weed “Chest covered with hair/ weed.”	angry/ resentment

E) Nsa		Hand
1) Nsa ware	Nsa - hand, ware - long... “Long hand.”	a thief
2) Nsa ha no	Nsa - hand, ha -him/her troubles, no - he/she. “He or she has troubled hands.”	a thief kleptomaniac
3) Nsam ye	Nsa - hands, mu - inside ye - good. “Inside the ands (palms) are good.”	Wealthy/Rich
4) Nsam (ye) duru	Nsa - hands, ye - is, duru - heavy. “Inside the hands (palms are heavy) [He or she has something in the hands.]	Wealthy/Rich
F) Yam (Ya mu)	Inside stomach	Stomach
1) Yam-ye-fo <u>o</u>	Yam - inside the stomach, ye - good, fo <u>o</u> - person. “Inside stomach is good person.”	Kind person, benevolent, good, kind heartedness.
2) Yam-onwenefo <u>o</u>	Yam - inside the stomach, onwene - bitter, fo <u>o</u> , person. “Inside the stomach is bitter person.”	niggardliness stinginess
3) Yam-hye hye	Yam - inside the stomach hye - to burn. “Inside the stomach is burning.”	anxiety compassion, commiseration
4) Yam yi/Yi yam	Yam - inside the stomach, yi - to take out. “Taking out from the stomach”	Free-will/ Willingness

**Information on Ani. See Christaller, pp. 334 - 340.*

LOANED LEXEMES

Other lexemes of concern are loaned from the English language and their origins refer to historical events and resulting culture change. Although some of these lexemes have synonyms which are not borrowed from any other language, both are the result of functional determinism. I am inclined to say that, had it not been European contact the Akan might have had their own names for these objects. But a question arises, how would the Akan know these objects if they were not introduced by the Whiteman?. What I am concerned here with is that, a great number of names of objects in the Twi language are based on functional determinism; whether they are loan words or indigenous lexemes.

I have picked out a few lexemes for analysis, mainly words with their indigenous synonyms based on functional determinism. The word *tomato*. The synonym for *tomantese* is *afra* which literally means *mixture*, since tomato is mixed with other ingredients to prepare food such as soup, stew etc. in Akan world. Until recently, the Akan except the few who have travelled overseas, would never eat a raw tomato. It is often used in a mixture.

The word *basikee* is a loan word from the English, *bicycle*. The synonym is *dadeponko* which has two morphemes, *dade* meaning *iron* and *ponko* a horse. Thus *dadeponko* becomes an *iron horse* since a bicycle has the same function as a horse. The word *adupire* is also a loan word from the English aeroplane. The synonym for *adupire* is *Ewiemhyen* with two morphemes *Ewiem* meaning sky and *hyen* a ship. Thus an aeroplane becomes the *skyship*. Another example is the word *tawuro* derived from towel and with a synonym *mpopaho*. *Popa* mean *to rub off* and *ho* means *body*. A towel is used to rub water from the body, therefore the name is derived from its function.

There are other loan words such as *Sini* from Cinema, *Kaa* from car, and *wookye* from watch. Ghana for centuries was under British rule and the English language became the *lingua Franca*. Even those who have not been to Western schools are exposed to the English language and several English words are brought into their everyday conversation. K.A. Sey, in his book, Ghanaian English gives a list of English loan-words that uneducated Ghanaians incorporate in the vernacular languages. He writes that this is

*a sample of English words that may occur in the vocabulary of uneducated people - the number and frequency of these foreign words in the vernacular of the uneducated English speaker depending on the amount of his exposure to English Speakers. They are certainly very high indeed in the speech of educated people, some of whom cannot utter a single vernacular sentence without unconsciously using some English words and phrases, which come to them more easily than the vernacular equivalents - if there are any.*⁶

PLACE NAMES

It is important to discuss a few place names to show how Twi lexemes can be etymologized to reveal how these names originated. Here, I will only select place names of some towns and villages in the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti regions. I have selected these particular areas because my main research focuses on the two regions. This does not mean that the subject of *Twi Etymology* on towns and villages cannot be applied to other areas in Ghana.

Retrospectively, some names of places, towns and villages, are named after rivers or pools, historical incidents, hunting expedition, farming establishment, tree planting at particular places, names based on personal experience or life histories, names after already established towns or cities, personal names assigned to places and geographical location of particular places.

One particular important factor about *Twi Etymology* of place names is that, some Twi words are abridged and anglicized, yet their/original meanings are not lost when they are carefully etymologized.⁷ The following are few examples collected from oral tradition.

1) Etymology: Sunyani (The capital of Brong Ahafo region of Ghana). Sunyani is an anglicized lexeme from the Twi word *Asondwae*

- a) *Ason* - elephant
- b) *dwae* - to skin or to butcher an animal.

Sunyani was a place where the hunters butchered the elephants they killed in the early days. The town became the capital of Brong Ahafo region due to the settlement of the British, and *Asondwae* became Sunyani.

In support of the activities of hunters and the settlement of Sunyani, Kwamina Dickson wrote:

*Although compact nucleated settlements were the rule, there were also a few isolated hunters' camps which not infrequently became the basis for a future larger settlement. Hunters' camps could exist in isolation in those unsettled times because of the hunters' peculiar knowledge of the terrain and his skill in evading the enemy. The town Sunyani in Brong Ahafo, originally sited a few miles west of its present location, apparently began as a small camp for elephant hunters, to which the rich reward of hunting soon attracted large numbers of people. In support of the tradition is the name Sunyani itself which implies skinning of elephants.*⁸

2) Etymology: Bechem (Ashanti) is from the Twi word *Kye mu* meaning *to divide*. According to oral tradition, after the Gyama-Asante war, the Asante army took a lot of booty. The most precious things were sent to the Asantehene. The Asantehene gave an order that the small things should be shared among the lesser chiefs. The place where these things were shared was called *Bekyem* meaning a place where they divided the booty.⁹

- 3) Etymology: Nkoranza (Town in Brong Ahafo)
- a) Nkora from *nkokora* - old men
 - b) Nza from *mmiensa* - three.

There were three old men who settled at that place. The place was called *nkokora mmiensa* i.e. *three old men's town*. *Nkokora mmiensa* became *Nkoranza*.

There are other towns and villages which got their names through hunting expedition and farming. The following are examples:

- 1) Etymology: Akomadan.
- a) Akoma from Ankoma - personal name.
 - b) dan from Nnan (so) - a place where animals are smoked, hunting camp.

It is believed that Nana Ankoma from Techiman - Bamiri hunted at that area and built his *nnan*. Thus *Ankoma nnan* *Ankoma's nnan* became *Akomadan*.

- 2) Etymology: *Bredi* (village)
- a) *Bre* from *obre* - fatigue, weariness.
 - b) *di* - to eat.

The name of this farm village means that *one must work before one eats*.

- 3) Etymology: *Bowohommoden* (village)
- a) *mmo-den* [*bo*; *den*] - strong exertion, effort.
 - b) *bo mmo-den* - to be zealous; strenuous.
 - c) *wo-ho* - yourself (singular).

The name of the village means in order to enjoy life one must work very hard.

- 4) Etymology: *Bianhyew* (village)

- a) *Obiara* - anyone;
- b) *hye* - to compel, force.
nhye - does not compel, force.
- c) *wo* - you (singular).

Bianhyew means *No one forced you*; the founder of the village went to the land to farm on his own will.

5) Etymology: *Atrensu* (village)

- a) *Atre* from *Atromo* - a type of antelope
- b) *nsu* - water or river.

The village is called *Atrensu* because it was a river which *atromo*, a type of antelope used to drink. People called the river *atromo nsuo* meaning "the river for *atromo*. *Atromo nsuo* became *Atrensu*.

6) Etymology: *Mmaampehia* (village)

- a) *Mmaa* - women
- b) *mpɛ* - do not like
- c) *o-hia* - poverty

The founder of the village went there to farm when his wife jilted him because of poverty.

7) Etymology: *Nkrankrom* (village)

- a) *Nkran* - the Twi name for Accra (the capital of Ghana), *Ga* refers to the people and their language.
- b) *kuro* - town or village.
- c) *m'* from *emu* - inside.

The first people who settled there were *Gas*.

8) Etymology: *Mangoase*. (village)

- a) *Mango* - mango tree
- b) *ase* - under.

A mango tree was planted there during the settlement. Thus the name means "Under the mango tree."

9) Etymology: *Kofoso* (village).

- a) *Kofo* - curve (from the English *curve*)
- b) *so* - on

The village was built on a *curve*. Another name for the village is *Domeabra*. *Dɔ* = *love*, *mea* = *me*, *bra* = *come to me*. (come to my abode if you love me).

10) Etymology: *Faaman* (village).

- a) *Faa* from *Fa* - take
- b) *man* - town.

There was a dispute between the inhabitants of a village. Part of the family broke away and founded their own village and named it *Faaman* from *Fa wo man* meaning *take your town*, a rejection of the previous village where they once lived.

11) Etymology: *Techiman* (Town)

- a) *Techi* - anglicized personal name for *Takyi*.
- b) *man* - Town or nation.

The town was founded by Nana *Takyi Firi* after the first capital *Bonomanso* was destroyed by the Ashantis in a war.¹⁰ *Bono* means *first born*, *man* means *nation* and so means *on*. Literally *Bonomanso* means *on the nation of the first born people* of the Akan.

PERSONAL NAMES

One important tradition shared by the Akan of Ghana is the naming of a child; each child is given **Kradin**, a natal name according to the day of the week on which it is born. This Akan tradition is parallel to some names of other non-Akan ethnic groups in Ghana and today there are several people from Ewe, Ga and many other Ghanaian ethnic groups who have Kofi, Kwame or Yaw as their natal name. To date no research has dealt with such parallel names. We do not know whether it is through acculturation. However, these personal names also give a national flavor to the cultural integration of Ghana. The following are Akan natal names according to the day of the week.

English	Twi	Male	Female
Sunday	Kwasiada	Kwasi (Kwesi)*	Akosua (Esi)*
Monday	Dwoada	Kwadwo (Kodwo)	Adwoa
Tuesday	Benada	Kwabena(Kobena)	Abenaa (Araba)
Wednesday	Wukuada	Kwaku (Kweku)	Akua (Ekua)
Thursday	Yawoada	Yaw (Kwaw)	Yaa (Aba)
Friday	Fiada	Kofi	Afua (Efua)
Saturday	Memeneda	Kwame (Kwamena)	Amma (Amba)

**The parenthesis is the Fante version.*

Besides the natal names, there are some surnames which indicate the place which the person occupies among other children of the same mother. There are also names given to children from some superstitious motive, in dedication to some deity. There are names referring to bodily qualities, as tall, short, red, black, for example, *Tenten* meaning *tall* *Tiatia* meaning *short*, *tuntum* meaning *black* and *kokoo* meaning *red*. There are names indicating appurtenance to a possessor, and names taken from ancestors or other persons, town or countries, animals or other objects of nature or human manufacture.¹¹

A person of the same sex born on the same day with the same natal name, may be differentiated by junior (*Kumaa*) or senior (*panin*). The first twin to emerge from the womb is called *Kumaa*, junior, since it is believed that he was sent by the senior twin to check out the state of the world. The second twin is always the *panin*, meaning the *elder or senior*. Hence we have *Ata* or *Ataa Kumaa* and *Ata* or *Ataa panin*, *junior male and female twin and senior male and female twin*.¹²

Manu from the lexeme *mmienu* meaning *two* is the name for a second-born; the child who has the same sex as the first-born in succession. The first-born may be called *Piesie*. *Pie* meaning *to come out* and *Sie* meaning *to hide*. He or she is the first among all the children and ought to be reserved and prudent. Although *Piesie* is not a formal personal name, the concept is applied to every first born child in the Akan family.

The third-born child who is a male is called *Mensa* from the lexeme *mmiensa* meaning *three*. A female third-born is called *Mansa* based on the same Twi numerical *mmiensa* *three*.

The fourth child may also be called *Anane* from the Twi lexeme *nan* meaning *four*.. The following chart is the numerical Twi names.

English	Twi	Name
First	Piesie	Piesie
Second	mmienu	Manu
Third	mmiensa	Mensa/Mansa
Fourth	Nan	Anane
Fifth	Num	Num
Sixth	Nsia	Nsia
Seventh	Nson	Nsoa
Eighth	Nwotwe	Awotwe
Ninth	Nkron	Nkroma
Tenth	Edu	Badu (Ba = child Du = tenth)
Eleventh	Dubaako	Duko
Twelveth	Dummienu	
Thirteenth	Dummiensa	Adusa

In addition to the numerical naming, a child may be named after the Supreme deity, The Omnipotent God, *Nyame*, and the lesser deities. Many children are named *Nyame* thus we have Kwadwo Nyame, Abena Nyame etc. etc. Many children are also named Nyamekye, Nyame meaning God, and Kye meaning *gift*, a gift from God.

A child obtained through the assistance of a deity may be named after the deity. Thus we have children named after the Atano (river deities of the Akan). For example Kwadwo Tano, Kwasi Tano, Abenaa Tano etc. Deities such as Brakune, Dente, Afram are also personal names.

Children may also be named after the place where they are born. For example a child born by chance in the Techiman Sacred Forest Amanfomu, may be called Amanfo. A child born at Kumasi, may be called Kwadwo Kumase or Amma Kumase.

In addition to these names, a child born on a *dabone*, *da* = day, *bone* = bad, (a day in terms of the 42-day traditional calendar considered to be bad or evil), may be called *Dabone*. Specific names for the *dabone* may also be named after a child. Thus, we have names such as *Dapaa*, *Fokuo*, Nkyifie, Kurubena, Adae, Fodwo, etc.

Children born on important days in the life of the community are often given names to reflect the period. Some names are derived from the Julian calendar, e.g. Children may be named *Buronya*, meaning Christmas to indicate they were born during the Christmas period.

There are some names which depict a preoccupation with destiny and the inevitable. For example, *Nkrabea* meaning *destiny* and *Owuo* meaning *death*. Children who are born after the death of a parent are given names to reflect this misfortune. For example, *Anto* or *Antobam* meaning "never met" (a parent). Names such *Adiyaa*, *Adi* = to bear or suffer and *Yaa* from the Twi lexeme *eya* meaning *pain*, is given to a child who has suffered pain. The name *Afriyie*, *Afri* meaning *came out* and *yie* meaning *well or good* is given to a child born during good times.

There are names which reflect on material achievement. For example *Sika* meaning *gold or money* is a name given to recognize the significance of material wealth. Names such as *Agyeman* represent specific accomplishment recognized as socially useful. *Agye* meaning *taken or saved* and *man* meaning nation, a saviour of the nation. *Bediako* or *Bekoe* are names which mean *came to fight*.¹³

From the above, we can see that the Akan have some specific cultural objectives in naming their children.

MISCELLANEOUS LEXEMES

There are other lexemes which form the foundation of the Akan worldview; the knowledge of Twi cosmology. I have selected a few examples for analysis. The first word is *Onyankopon* which can be etymologized, *O - He Nya* means *to get*, *ko* from *koro* meaning *one, single or alone* and *pon* from the Akan suffix for *great*. This expression refers to omnipresent God.¹⁴

To the Akan, the world we live in is designated as *Ewiase*. *Ewi* from *Owia*, the *Sun* and *ase*, meaning *under*. Thus *ewiase* means *under the sun*. Is the world not under the sun but somewhere else? This analysis sounds like a Biblical interpretation of the *Ecclesiastes*,¹⁵ a book of the Old Testament traditionally ascribed to Solomon. But I believe this is a distinct interpretation from the Bible. (So far there is no evidence that the Twi language has any historical connection with the Hebrew Language.)

The next lexeme is *bayifoo* (a witch), when etymologized it has three morphemes: *ba* meaning *child*, *yi* meaning *to take* and *foo*, meaning a person of such characteristics. In a sense *bayifoo* therefore means a person with a supernatural power to take a child from its mother's womb or cause a stricture in a woman's womb - a witch or a wizard.

Another important lexeme to etymologize is *Kowensani*. This particular word has four important morphemes. *Ko* means *to go*, *we* means *to chew* *nsa* means *alcoholic drink* and *ni* (plural = *foo*), meaning a person. Thus *Kowensani* literally means *Go chew alcoholic drink person*, a person who has the habit of drinking liquor, a drunkard or a dipsomaniac. In Twi, the word *nom* means *to drink*, however *we* which literally means *to chew* is appropriately used in place of *nom*. Synonymically, one can say, *meko nom nsa* or *me ko we nsa*, meaning *I am going to drink liquor*. But to say someone is a drunkard, the morpheme *we* is used instead of *nom*; thus *kowensani* instead of *konomnsani*. Often non native Twi speakers make such a mistake of using the morpheme *nom* instead of *we* for a drunkard.

Another interesting lexeme is *apesenkonya*. *Ape* means *like*, *se* mean *that*, *nko* mean *alone* and *nya* means *get*. Thus *apesenkonya* literally means *liking that one alone gets (a thing)*. The English equivalent is *self-interest or selfishness*.

The lexeme *Akatasia* which means *a young girl or maid* can be etymologized as follows. *Wakata do esia* meaning *she has been covered or hidden*. In a sense, the girl has been kept for her husband, i.e. she should be a virgin.¹⁶

The last lexemes to analyse are *adwaman* and *adwamanfoo*. *Adwaman* with two morphemes, *dwa* meaning *to shake hands*, and *man* meaning *nation*. Thus *adwaman-foo* literally means a person who likes to *shake hands* with several people in the nation. The person is a flirt.

In sum, the analyses of these lexemes are only small examples to indicate a need for this study in ethno-linguistics and ethnography of speaking. There are more lexemes with similar characteristics which need to be investigated. From the analysis of these Twi lexemes, we can see that the Akan self-identity is to a significant extent wrapped up in his linguistic reality. Many other languages, perhaps most, compose lexemes in this same way as I have dealt with the Twi lexemes. However, what is most interesting is not only that Twi words are functionally determined, but also the specific morphemes which are chosen in Twi, under specific conditions or situations tell us something interesting about Akan culture and cognition.

There is hardly any doubt that some elements of the Twi language reflect its speakers' way of life.

NOTES

1) Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interaction in Culture and Cognition: Rules, Maps and Plans*, edited by James P. Spradley (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company 1972), p. 66.

2) For further information on the abusua see Owusu Brempong *Akan Highlife in Ghana: Songs of Cultural Transition* Ph.D. Dissertation, (Indiana University, 1984), pp. 217 - 223.

R.S. Rattray has an aetiological tale to explain how abusua came about. He writes:

There lived in former times a King of Adanse who had a linguist named Abu. This Abu incurred the King's anger and was heavily fined. Now, at that time children used to inherit from their father. Abu asked his children to assist him to pay the fine imposed by the King but they refused and all went off to their mother's relatives. But Abu's sister's children rendered him assistance to pay off his debt, and Abu therefore, when he died left all his belongings to them. Other people then copied him and willed their property to the sister's children (Abu - sua, lit. copying Abu)

Ashanti Proverbs (Oxford at Clarendon Press, 1914), p. 41. This interpretation is far fetched. First it must be realized that the personal name Abu is not Akan, it is rather a Muslim name. I believe the word abusua was in existence long before the penetration of Islamic religion with the Akan world. The word sua, meaning *to copy or to imitate is similar to my interpretation.*

3) This information was recorded at the queenmother's palace, July 9, 1987, Techiman. The words were cited as precedence in a marriage dispute between a husband and wife.

4) A husband's sister is called Akumaa: *Aku* from *kunu* and *maa* plural of *obaa* female. Thus a husband's sister to a wife is her *female husband*.

5) For proverbs concerning matrilineal and motherhood; See R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti Proverbs* (London: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1914), pp.

6) K.A. Sey, *Ghanaian English* (London: Macmillan Education Limited, 1973), p. 3.

7) Akwasi Boakye-Boaten acknowledged the problem of detecting the meaning of place names. He writes:

Unfortunately, place names can be misleading if their modern their original genuine one, especially as a result of changes in spelling. For example, the name Efidwaase, originally meant Efiada-dwa-ase, (which literally means Friday market); but with its contemporary spelling of Effiduase, the word dua-ase means 'under a tree' completely renders the original meaning obscure and incomprehensible. (1974:24)

8) See Kwamina Dickson, *A Historical Geography of Ghana*, Cambridge at University Press, (1969), p. 61.

9) Brempong, *Akan Highlife in Ghana: Songs of Cultural Transition*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, (1984), p. 47.

10) For information on the etymology of place names, See Warren and Brempong. *Techiman Histories: Towns and Villages, Part 3 and 4*, Institute of African Studies, Legon, 1979

11) For proper names of persons, See Christaller *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language* 1933 : pp. 601 - 603.

12) Determining seniority between twins is a subject which needs a serious investigation since not all Akans hold the same view. The view that the last born is the senior of the twins is peculiar to the Bono. The Asante and other Akans have different views; they assign seniority to the first born twin. Logically this view makes sense since twins are not naturally born at the same time; one must come before the other and ultimately, a child who comes first has, at least, spent some time on earth before the second child comes. As the interval between the birth of twins could be three days in some cases, it is valid to assign seniority to the first twin, a straightforward "chronological argument".

On the other side of the coin, the Bono have a sociological explanation which is a symbolic reversal of the Ashanti version. Nana Kwame Opoku, the Adontenhene of Techiman explains:

When we make a journey, it is the child who takes the lead carrying the senior's belongings while the senior follows. This is necessary for protection. Similarly when a chief travels he sends someone to announce his arrival before he reaches his destination. In the same vein, the senior twin sends the junior twin to check out the state of the world before he arrives.

Confirming the above explanation, Nana Owusu, the Akwamuhene of Techiman said: "If a woman bears even triplets, the first child to come out is the most junior, the second child is the *adantam* (lit. "sleeping in the middle"), and the last one is the senior because when an elder is travelling with children, he has to walk behind in order to protect the children from unexpected calamity."

Like the Bono, the Yoruba also hold a similar view of assigning seniority to the second born twin. (Asare Opoku 1978:107, Lucas 1948:107). To the Techiman Bono, twins are usually special people sent to society by the supreme deity, Onyankopon. Since twins are exceptional human beings, their welfare during infancy should be the responsibility of the state and the society. Hence, people give gifts to them so that they can remain in society. Twins are believed to be endowed with supernatural gifts therefore they are venerated like the deities and they also have their own shrine called *abammo*. One most important natural gift to twins is the ability to set bones, a very important function in our traditional medical practice. The bearers of twins are also greatly honoured in Bono society.

As symbols of fertility and fecundity, twins can also bring good luck to the society. Due to the religious beliefs surrounding twins in the society, it is the responsibility of the paramount chief to see to their welfare. Hence, every twin belongs to the Omanhene; male twins are his pages and court attendants and female twins are his potential wives; he can marry both of them at the same time. It is also believed that if twins are not treated well the deities will be angry and can bring ill luck to the society. Purity is associated with twins and therefore they have taboos against the eating of "dirty" animals such as rats and pigs.

(The information was recorded on February 10, 1993 when the two chiefs spent four days with me at my flat at Redco Legonman, Adanta, Accra.)

13) S.D. Asiana *Child-naming Among the Akan of Ghana*. Unpublished paper. Institute of African Studies.

14) For information about the etymology of Nyankopon; See J.B. Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God*, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1944), p. 43.

15) According to Rev. J.G. Christaller, *Ewia* is from *awia*, the sun concerning the sun he writes, *the apparent vacantly space encompassing the earth; air, atmosphere, firmament; the revolving, lucid air; the apparent arch or vault of heaven, the sky with its clouds*. See *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language* (Basel: Basel Missionary Society

1933), p. 575.

16) This information was given to me by Mullen-Essien of Agriculture Department, University of Ghana, Legon. September 18, 1992.

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UNEQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Title: A HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN NORTHERN GHANA 1907 - 1976

Author: R. Bagulo Bening

Publishers: Ghana Universities Press, Accra, 1990

Pages: XVIII, 284, Tables and Maps

Price: Not indicated.

N.J.K. Brukum

Of the books¹ written on the development of formal Western education in Ghana, Northern Region has only been mentioned in passing. Professor Bening's book to all intents and purposes is the first detailed account of the development of education in Northern Ghana, a book which would be of immense help to researchers on Northern Ghana.

"A History of Education in Northern Ghana" is divided into six parts of eleven chapters, each dealing with the development of education within a certain time limit.

In Part I, the author traces the development of formal western education from the *School* established by Amadu Sambo in 1908 to the establishment of the Krachi Roman Catholic (Trans-Volta) Mission Primary School seventeen years later. The problems encountered by both the Colonial government and the Missionary bodies in establishing the Schools are well treated.

Part II traces the evolution of Teacher Training College with the opening of the Achimota College to the establishment of a Training College at Pusiga instead of Wa *in view of the impending plebiscite to determine the future of the British trust territory of Togoland* (p. 128).

Parts III, IV and V which are the crust of the book deal with the emergence of British Education policy in Tropical Africa, the emergence of nationalistic activities and the eventual regaining of independence by Ghana. Here the author examines the failure of the Colonial government to establish many schools in Northern Ghana (pp. 175 - 184). Only a few talented children were to be encouraged to attain the level of Standard VII (what used to be Middle Form Four), *for to give these primitive children a more advanced education would be a doubtful blessing and make them discontented with their lot.*

In the final part titled Contemporary Scene, the author discusses issues such as the state of University education in Northern Ghana between 1949 and 1966 and more importantly the need for a University of the North.

Although divided into six parts, they have been neatly woven into each other. This makes the book readily understandable; moreover, the author uses simple and straightforward language. Yet another strength which commends the book to the reader is that the author adopts the periodic rather than the thematic approach and this enables the reader to follow the sequence of events which contributed to the development of education in Northern Ghana. Then again is the fact that the author uses Statistical data (26 tables) to illustrate the disparity between the development of education in Northern Ghana and the rest of the

country, a phenomenon which regrettably still persists. Professor Bening also relied on a variety of sources such as those in the National Archives of Ghana in Tamale and Accra, Navrongo Mission Records (NMR), the White Fathers' Mission Files and most importantly Colonial Office Records (unavailable in Ghana).

What is not very clear from the book is the overall impact of colonial education policy on nationalist politics in Northern Ghana during the 1950's. Again, while the author touches on the nature of the pressures mounted on the Convention People's Party government to open more schools, he does not dilate on them. Lastly, the author did not delve much into the overall influence western education has exerted on the culture of the people.

Notwithstanding these omissions, the book is highly recommended to all people interested in Ghana's educational development. If as the author says *education should develop the latent powers of the people and fit them for the task of living upright and useful economic productive lives*, then there is the need to know how this education started and how we can improve upon it. It is a book to be read, nay, made a compulsory textbook for all teachers in training because every chapter is prefaced with a discussion of what existed in the rest of the country.

Footnotes

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

Samuel S. Quarcoopome, Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

Pat Williams, Department of Political Science, Ogun State University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria.

A Essuman-Johnson, Lecturer, Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon.

Irene Odotei, Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

Akosua Perbi, Lecturer, History Department, University of Ghana, Legon.

Francis Nii-Yartey, Artistic Director, Ghana Dance Ensemble, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

Owusu Brempong, Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

N.J.K. Brukum, Lecturer, History Department, University of Ghana, Legon.



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