

# Woes of a Kwatriot

## **Beloved Let Us Laugh**

Kwesi Yankah

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Cartoons by Ike Essel. Layout and Design by Kweku Opoku / IDEYAS DESIGN AGENCY

Published in Ghana by Anansesem Publications Limited.

ISBN No:998-552-08 - 4

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## **FOREWORD**

Dear Reader,

Different from the novel, short story, poetry or drama, the essay is Kwesi Yankah's medium. And it needs to be said at once that an essay is not just what and columnist writes, but that it should have a character of its own.

Erudition, scholarship, precision with word, wit, humour, and elegance are some of the qualities to be looked for in an essay. All these qualities do not have to be there at once so long, however, that what is there adds up to a literary effort that makes felicitous reading – that is the character of an essay.

We first encountered Kwesi Yankah as an essayist in the Catholic Standard in 1977, writing under the name “Abonsam Fireman”. He continued writing under other guises throughout the succeeding regimes, military for the most part, to his reincarnation as “the Kwariot” some ten years ago.

Responding to our achievements and disappointments, our successes and failures, our joys and woes, Kwesi’s subject for each week during the past ten year from which the present volume derives touches us individually, as members of identifiable groups, and as Ghanaians.

Kwesi is not some outsider observing Ghanaians with clinical detachment, which many a foreign anthropologist does already. On the contrary, he is one of us, identifying with us, much of what we would want to say, but do not, because we know not how or dare not.

Kwesi knows how. After all, he is trained linguist, a training which nowadays also exposes the student to the study of folklore, including the art of story-telling; and for his research since joining the staff of the Department of Linguistics at Legon, as Dr. Kwesi Yankah, he has been going in and out of chief’s palaces around the country to observe linguists (*akyeame*) at work.

From his study of the *Okyeame* in our society Kwesi published last year a scholarly book. Immediately prior to the launching of the book, he had become Professor Kwesi Yankah, and is now Head of the Department of Linguistics, all of which attest eloquently to his mastery of his subject. Today, we celebrate the other dimension of Kwesi’s creative genius, the folklorist, storyteller, essayist.

We are not digressing, we hope, in telling a story of our own, the story of this rascally subject who was forever making irreverent remarks at court. Whenever the chief, through his linguist, said something that was not to his liking, he would shout to say

*Nana, erobo mayi,*

Meaning

Nana, you are running the chieftdom to ruins, aren’t you?

And if as a result of such intervention there was any show of physical threat to his person, he would quickly add words to change his meaning altogether

*Nana, erobo man yi*

*ho mbodzen papanara*

which is to say

Nana, you are doing very well

for the chieftdom, congratulations!

Often that is what it takes, and what Kwesi has, for surviving in an atmosphere not particularly congenial to free expression of oneself, being clever with words.

Kwesi dares, not exactly because he is fearless, only that as “Abonsam Fireman” or “Kwakriot” he is a good strategist in combat. It is noted, for instance, that is not hared fangs all the way with him, but that indeed he is able to call a truce and to proceed soothingly to lick many a bruised skin; far from blowing entirely hot or cold, a judicious blend of hot and cold is his way; and never serving the exclusively sweet or sour, h knows too well the culinary delights of the sweet and sour.

Kwesi treads where no vultures fly; he roams where the powerful romps and the mighty stomps; and against the roar of the bully he has only laughter and more than once has succeeded in humouring the intimidator of civility.

We recall Kwesi’s treatment of a rumour that was blown by the harmattan wind over from the Chief’s castle at Osu late in 1995, a rumour which nobody would confirm, for everybody who was at the scene shrugged off what was reported to have happened as a non-event, which was to be expected. After all, chiefs do no wrong, and none of the eyewitnesses had the know-how for telling the truth without giving the Chief away. Meanwhile, the police had received a complaint which they did not know how to handle; and there was a victim on the ground, helplessly wringing his hands for assistance. There were also many, partisan mostly, all to anxious to take sides with the victim, who for not being eyewitnesses lacked credibility. And torn by the conflicting accounts going, the non-partisan public did notknow what to believe.

Enter Kwatriot, who did not have any handicaps which seemed to have incapacitated others, whose credibility was intact, who by humorously piecing up what everybody had to say, reunited a divided nation around the more plausible story that there had indeed been a lot more than a non-event between Chief and Vice-Chief and that the Vice had been left the worse for it, torn jacket and all!

Whether Kwatriot’s account had anything to do with subsequent developments is hard to say, but the whole country was relieved when at the very first oppourtunity of a public appearance in the new year, the Chief spoke words which approximated to an apology for a “regrettable incident”, Alleluia!

Now we begin to digress, no more.

The account so far provided illustrate how over the years Kwesi has, through humour, sought to lay bare the truth \_at we find uncomfortable. They also serve their country who do not walk the corridors of power, who only teach through their writings. Kwesi teaches Linguistics for his living. But for no consideration at all he also teaches the rest of us how to laugh together at our foibles, of which there are many. Above all, he teaches us how to be civil to each other even in disagreement.

We should be grateful for the likes of Teacher Kwesi; in particular, we are most grateful for **Beloved Let us Laugh.**

Go on, then, laugh, dear Reader, laugh while laughter remains tax-exempt.

Yours sincerely,

Ebow Daniel

15 Lower Hill

Legon, May 1996

Funerals are expensive these days. But never mind the expense if your boss will give you a loan, if the deceased had enough foresight to bequeath unto you a funeral imprest, or rather, funeral petty cash.

In any case, you would be sufficiently assured that whatever expenses incurred would be final. That is, of course what is meant by final *funeral rites*, or what the professional mourners would say, *final funeral rice*. It is assumed that the departed is up to no tricks, and that he will quietly rest, in order to spare the mourners the trouble of trekking twice to far-off burial grounds.

I sometimes wish it were possible to go to Ghana Airways, or say British Airways, and request to buy a ticket to go to your ancestors. The dialogue at the ticket counter could be chilling:

‘One way or two way ticket?’

‘One way.’

‘How many are you travelling?’

‘The entire family.’

A one way ticket to the ancestors would be cheaper, and pose less problems to chief mourners and the bereaved. In that case, they see you off at the departure lounge, shed a few tears and wave you goodbye.

So then, since it was a one way ticket you bought, the *Abusuapanyin* would have to go only to the GBC Commercial Office or Pioneer page 3 and make a fitting announcement.

The *Asona Abusuapanyin* of *Nyame Bekyere*, and chief mourners *Kwame Nsiah*, *Opanyin Kwasi Baah*, *Nana Adubofuor*, *Yaw Konduah*, and *Safo Ababio*, announce with deep regret the departure of so-so and so, by Ancestor Airways. He departed with a one-way ticket.

In all such arrangements, even though the untimely departure was shocking, every effort is made to put the departed to rest once and for all. It is even sometimes a secret to wish that for all trouble mourners have gone through organising such a nice funeral, the departed does not change his mind and return.

In a few cases, of course, having organised a send-off party for a dear one in anticipation of departure, you later find the departed still hanging around. Apparently he announced his plans and engineered a send-off long before he applied for a visa; and now that his visa application has been turned down.....

If, on the other hand, the departure was a successful one on a one-way ticket, it would then be possible for sympathisers to organise a thanksgiving service, to thank God for your departure, or organise a first or second anniversary ‘celebration,’ implying that your death was after all, heaven sent.

If an announcement is sent in memory of so-and-so, the wording is contrived to sound flattering, just in case he is listening.

*It has been two years (today) since your unwelcome departure hit us. After two years, we still struggling to fill the vacuum you left....Your leadership charisma cannot be replaced.....the electricity you lit in our hearts, the roads you built in our paths, and the price of cocoa you increased. For all the new hope you instilled in us, the awareness you created....we shall never forget you. You are gone but not forgotten; we still cherish good memories of the oppressed you defended....*

*But please, rest in peace, for this is the final funeral rite.....Thank you.*

*Yours truly, bereaved orphans of the revolution.*

I could not believe it when I heard the elaborate programme for the final funeral rites. Almost a month-long festival of shows, talks, parades, wining, dining. It has not been possible to announce ahead of time the anticipated funeral bill, such that donations would begin to pour in; but it all looks like the 10-year gains are going to be wiped out in the final funeral rice.

Preparations going on throughout the entire hamlet frighten my cowardice, and that is why a quick plea should instantly be sent to Christainborg: watch your funeral expenses and remember the orphans you are leaving behind.

But I like the final funeral tour His Jerryship has embarked upon the north. We missed each other by inches, for I was hoping that my trip up-north last week would bring us face-to-face somewhere at Sawla, or Tumu, or Bolga, or Bawku, or Tamale.

I was on my way to Nandom when I smelled his presence around Tumu. But I am sorry I missed the natural anthem episode at Bawku. For once, I didn't know John Ndebugre was a Jehovah's witness. Since the latter sect was only recently unbanned, its members will do well to meet the national anthem half-way.

I am glad, however, in the words of his Jerryship himself, Ndebugre "did stand up at a point" to the national anthem. It all means that when the anthem started Nde thought I was Amakye Dede. Wasn't the national anthem so badly played? But the Chairman's remarks also mean wherever he was standing he was watching his adversary too closely.

The northern-upper trip must have paid off. I saw smiles in the happy faces of those assembled, on TV. It was a trip full of good news to the people---- electricity, water, roads, television. But I was disappointed in the drama, or lack of it. His Jerryship's message should have been simple:

"Dear Tumu Kuoro Alhaji Yakubu Luriwie Kakon III, or Bawku Naba Asigri Abugaro Azoka II and his people, I pay you this visit in tears, because of the impending final funeral rites....if after all this and you see me no more....do not say I did not bid you farewell...."

This would have thrown the entire region (or regions) into mourning and cola chewing. To which the Big Man would have replied thus:

“Well, since the announcement of my departure has eveoked such misery and chill, and has thrown all the northern kingdoms into a state of sorrow and orphanage....I shall revise the funeral rites...”

But such a speech would have been ill-advised; for what would happen if after announcing the final funeral rites, the messgae was received with deafening applause?

“Huraaaay...you have done well...goodbye....rest in peace....”

But even if that speech was not forthcoming, I did see on television screen a bold gentleman, holding a bold placard, with a bold inscription, **Hand over to whom?** Similar messages had been heard in other places of visit such as Berekum, where an elder unilaterally lifted the ban on the **P** game, and said his people would cast their vote for his Jerryship.

I sometimes overhear big words from the Big Man, and reminders, and words of wisdom, and warnings that the corrupt old politicians are coming back, so run for cover.

Corrupt old politicians? But as far as the eruption of corruption, it took a queenmother in the Central Province to say, “the thing is not a thing of the past...it is still happening with impunity.”

As for the term, ‘old politician,’ it shall soon be told that 10 years is long enough to turn all young politicians into old. The oldest politicians are those who stayed the longest.

So therefore, why should there not be a final funeral rites?

My only fear is, not everyone believes in funeral rites. Occasionally, Pioneer page 3 does not say so-and-so had died or even departed. The caption is sometimes **Transition**. The person under discussion had not died as such to deserve a funreal; he is in transit.

If he were a Ghana Airways passenger, he would be given a transit ticket. Elsewhere, the passenger would be qualified to form a transitional government.

In this case, as soon as Pioneer announces arrangements for the final funeral rites, the Ghanaian Times will send a funeral rejoinder: **He is in transit, he is in transit.**

**HE** was not in his prison cells when I talked to him. That would have meant a trip to the Upper East; for it was into a cell at Bawku he was bundled on the orders of Chairman Rawlings, on December 10, 1991.

Thank God, it was not a cell or prison visit, where you could very easily be mistaken for an inmate yourself if you have a low cut or where the guard could decide to shut the hell gate after you, telling you how nice it was on your part to turn yourself in, voluntarily.

“You have been on our **agenda** in the past two months; thanks for coming – by the way, did you bring the chamber pot?”

Thanks, it was not one of those. John Akparibo Ndebugre was released on December 18, having spent nine days in a Bawku cellar for his indifference to the national anthem of Ghana, at a durbar of chiefs.

That charge would be ironical for anybody who knows Ndebugre’s political past. 1982, PNDC Secretary for Northern Region. Same year, appointed Upper Regional Secretary; 1984, Secretary for Agriculture, and later posted to PNDC Secretariat. He resigned in October 1985, and in 1987 and was detained for a period of eight months by security forces.

Certainly a man you want to talk to. At least you would want to know the secret behind his non-responsiveness to anthems so you could borrow his “we no go stand up” when the need arises. And is it surprising for somebody who has resigned from a “we no go sit down” government to adopt a “we no go stand up” attitude.

As for national anthems, I am glad our obligation to them stops at standing up when they are being played, and does not extend to singing also. There would have been mass arrests. To date, it is not clear how many anthems Ghana has, how many versions of each, and what the words exactly are.

Watch closely the lips of players at the Africa cup tournament in Senegal when their national anthem is being played. Many pretend they are singing the silent version.

But Ndebugre’s arrest on the issue of the anthem can hardly be seen in isolation. Against a background of his current political leanings, the strong anti-PNDC sentiments he advocates either on his own or as part of the stance of the Movement for Freedom and Justice, the issue may assume deeper significance.

I asked Nde if differences between him and the PNDC Government were such that he had to swing to movements opposed to PNDC. But Ndebugre is not sure he is in a completely opposite camp.

“I won’t say they are opposite camps; because when I left in 1985, and even before then I was already working with elements within Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guard. We were working long before the 31<sup>st</sup> December Revolution; and while I was Secretary, I was still in contact with them, and we were discussing problems confronting the Government and the way the PNDC

regime was unable to ultimately address them. It was just that when I resigned, I was free now to join whatever group espousing principles I shared,” he said in earnest, frowning.

But I sensed it might be significant to touch on the kind of rapport he had with the man who ordered his arrest in Bawku. Was he close to the Chairman while he served in the PNDC?

Not as close as others thought.

“I am not too sure I will describe him as a friend; I just worked with him, and in working with him we worked closely together. He respected my opinion, and there were lots of things that he wanted to discuss with me before he did them. Because we worked so closely it created the impression that we were very good friends; but I will not describe him as a friend, for ‘I never, for instance, shared a bottle of beer with him in his office. Of course, in the early days, anytime we worked so hard we got tired, he ordered some kenkey or some *yoke gari* and we ate together, but I won’t say he was my pal.”

Even if it is not a question of love turned sour, the fact remained that the two are currently not the best of friends – political adversaries if you like.

But under what circumstances would political rivals clash on the same durbar grounds? Did Ndebugre anticipate Rawlings’ visit to Bawku, and plan a fitting confrontation that weekend?

A coincidence, he said. “The Kusasi people in the Bawku area where I come from, were celebrating what they call the Samanpiid Festival, a harvest festival. I am very closely associated with that festival. The festival used to be celebrated in households, but when I was the Regional Secretary, I thought we should try and upgrade it, so we now have one that is performed by the paramount chief on behalf of the whole area.

“Because of that I have been monitoring the progress of the festival. We started it in 1983. I have not been attending it for financial reasons, but this time I thought of attending it. Indeed, I did not know the Chairman was going to be there. It was when I got to Tamale that I heard he will be at the festival. That was the night before the festival, and I had to get there on time to be at the festival”

What went on in your mind when you heard the Chairman was coming to the festival?

“What struck me was eh.... ‘there is likely to be a problem’.”

“The problem I envisaged was different. The paramount chief happens to have some respect for me, and has some respect for the Chairman also. I knew the chief would want to promote some peace between me and Rawlings. But I was not sure the Chairman or I were in the right frame of mind to engage in peace talks....especially me, since I have no personal grudge against him, but I belong to organisations that have principled positions against the Government’s policies. So I was uneasy, for I thought I would find myself being compelled to take a position that may contradict the position of my groups. For if he had said I should have a chat with him, I don’t think I would have refused.”

Had the paramount chief tried this earlier? “Yes when I was released after my first arrest in 1988, and I travelled home, he was very desirous that the Chairman and I should meet and patch our differences. But I explained to him I have no personal differences; the point is there are policies I don’t agree with; and you don’t need to love or hate somebody before you disagree with him.”

Whether the two liked it or not, opportunities prevailed for them to meet eyeball to eyeball. The Chairman was a guest of honour at the Bawku festival and Ndebugre was sitting in close proximity with the chief. But was John Ndebugre part of the official entourage to the Bawku chief to justify such proximity?

“I was not a part of the entourage. The whole thing arose out of the seating arrangement. The chief was sitting almost directly opposite the official canopy where the Chairman sat, and we formed a large circle. The chief was sitting there with his elders and people, including those considered of standing in the area; so they gave me a seat in the front row.”

This conspicuous position Ndebugre occupied was to play a part in the unfolding drama.

“Shortly after that, the Chairman arrived, and everybody got up on his feet – including myself. The Chairman walked straight to the Paramount Chief, the Bawku Naba; and he shook his hand. He started shaking people anticlockwise around the circle. When he came to me, he did not shake my hand; he did not shake about three or four others to my right, but then continued. He then proceeded to sit down”.

Did this omission prepare the ground for what was to follow? In any case, was Ndebugre aware that the Head of State sometimes does not shake every singly outstretched hand, for reasons of sheer practicality? I asked.

“No, that was not the case in this one.”

Nde looked convinced from the withdrawn smile originally playing on one side of his lips. “In that kind of situation, there is often a stampede but there was no such stampede not where I was standing. We were standing in a neat line and he just passed me”.

But was Nde disappointed in the handshake that never came? Was he anxious for it?

“No, I am normally not anxious to shake hands with anybody.”

Were you disturbed?

“No, except that it showed. The manner in which he ignored me showed that there was likely to be trouble”.

Do you think he probably did not want to create an incident?

“I don’t see how he could have created an incident by shaking hands with me”.

Later everybody was seated. Then came the national anthem to which everybody was supposed to stand.

Did Ndebugre get up too?

“Yes, we all got up”, he said, denying previous allegations. “In fact there was an old man, about a hundred years old, sitting to my right. He did not rise, because when the Chairman came round to shake hands, we stood up; and as he shook people and passed, people sat down. When the national anthem started we all got up again, and I thought it was too much for this old man, so he didn’t get up when the national anthem was being played. Otherwise everybody was up, including myself”.

I was puzzled. At what point during the Ndebugre rise?

“I stood up as soon as I realised the national anthem was being played”.

From the very beginning, and simultaneously with everybody?

“I will not say so, because it is not even possible that everyone will get up at the same time. This was not a band. It was played on an old Ministry of Information tape recorder....and there were many people I saw sitting down, while I was up; and I remember reminding some people the anthem was being played before they got up. The music was on a record and the crowd was large, and there was a lot of noise, so you might not even know that the national anthem was being played.”

Would you rather say because you did not recognise it you did not get up immediately?

“It is possible I was not the first to get up,” a relaxed smile registered and exploded into momentary laughter. “I have never realised that everybody in a large crowd gets up at the same time when an anthem is being played. It’s practically impossible.”

But are you aware that you were sitting at a conspicuous spot which made you the cynosure of all eyes, and that one cannot easily get away with things others standing elsewhere would?

“If you are there and they start playing the anthem, and you think you are tired so you are relaxing for a while...

“But I got up for the national anthem, because there would be no reason at all. This is what I told the press when they came to the cells to talk to me.”

The Head of State ordered your arrest, on realising you did not get up. I am sure the Chairman’s judgement is quite respectable. Remember he even came to your defence in the newspapers said you wanted to hang a bad case around your neck?

“I think so, because he was compelled to make that correction, when he realised that independent information was creating a different situation, for example the picture that was published in the **Voice**, with me standing up, creates a problem for the media, and for whoever ordered my arrest.”

Nde, I don’t think people doubt the fact that you stood up; the question is the promptness with which you reacted to the anthem.

“Yes, but I am not a military man; so I don’t think if I don’t get up promptly for a national anthem it is an offence. It is only morally reprehensible,” the lawyer in Ndebugre started glowing.

“If, for instance, the person was absent-minded, and absent-mindedness is not something you can blame a person for...”

Would you say you were absent-minded?

“I will not say I was absent-minded. I am insisting I got up in good time.”

“The best way the media and the Chairman could prove that I didn’t get up promptly, or not at all, would have been to show me on television sitting down, when others were standing up...”

The national anthem episode appeared unnoticed, but it was brought up by the Chairman in his speech three hours later, and that was where he ordered Ndebugre’s arrest.

And how did he react when his arrest was ordered?

According to Ndebugre, the crowd appeared confused by the order either because they had noticed no provocation, or they did not understand the language – English – in which the order was given.

“At that point of the order, policemen and the Chairman ‘s bodyguards started rushing towards me, and I decided to stand up and meet them. So I got up and in the local language I told them an order had been made for my arrest....I then told gthe Chairman that I was being arrest...I said he should rather have me killed because it was not the national anthem. But the guards wouldn’t allow me to go further so they just pushed me into the cell, just next to the durbar grounds.”

You don’t think your statement could provokehim further?

“No. He couldn’t have been provoked because he had given the order already.”

Ndebugre was later to appear in court in Bolgatanga charged with insulting the national flag, even though a flag was not the issue.

“The magistrate just felt he had no jurisdiction, because there is a substantive magistrate at Bawku; then also he was personally present at the scene and saw what happened. I need to make the correction because the Ghanaian Times said he said he was there and saw the insulting behaviour, which he couldn’t have said because that amounted to passing a judgement on me....

“They discharged me and I was rearrested and taken back into the cells, to be taken to the Circuit Court the following day, but I was never taken to court.”

Instead of being taken to court, orders came from Ndebugre to be put through a drill. The national anthem should be played to him every 6am. and 6pm. and he should learn how to rise to it.

Another order came for Ndebugre to recite the pledge. So every 6 am. he would get up and recite the pledge, and also at 6pm.

But Nde must have heaved a sigh of relief when on the 18th at 7.30pm. the Assistant Commissioner gave him a letter saying he had decided to discontinue the case.

An arch opponent of PNDC; but would John Ndebugre admit he is a dissident?"

"I don't know who is a dissident because there was two meanings to dissident in this country. If you take the dictionary, it would only say, 'somebody who disagrees'. In that sense, yes I dissent. I dissented quite a lot even when I was in Government....I stated my position clearly and strongly against certain things.

"In Ghana they have given dissent a technical meaning, which implies you want to overthrow the Government by force. In that respect I am not a dissident, I will not be too unhappy if this regime is forced out of office because it has overstayed it. So in that case I am not a dissident."

Are you worried about a possible stigma, because people will ask me and I will explain as we are doing now. In any case, the reaction of the population where the incident took place convinced me that if it was anybody's aim to stigmatise me, it failed completely."

At this point, the meeting was adjourned until another national anthem.

## PRESIDENTIAL FOREHEADS

**IT'S** hard to tell who started the process of numbering our republics – First, Second, Third Republic. But it's such a smart idea if you come to think of it.

To primary school pupils, it's perhaps the easiest way to tell which presidential or republican phase lasted longest on television.

As for the First Republic nobody ever called it by that name. It was a numberless republic. Then as soon as an accident happened to that republic, somebody stepped in to voluntarily number it, arguing that since the accident would happen several more times, there would be considerable confusion at the republican funerals, if they were not identified by lotto numbers.

This way, it helps mourners and sympathisers to shed their tears in accordance with the republic they are mourning – first republican solo, second republic tenor etc. Considering the average life span of our recent republics – two years or so – a mourner could as well be singing the eighth republican dirge by the year 2000 (assuming that the intermissions would be unusually brief).

Those intermissions that separate our republics. They are now so many one would easily lose count. The First Republic suffered a three year intermission, and gave birth willingly to the second. The Second Republic went on a break after celebrating only two Christmases.

The break following this Second Republic outlasted the republic itself – it lasted over seven Christmases. It is like playing soccer for 45 minutes and going on a three hour 'half time'. Then came a short recess-within-the-recess during which we were led through a home cleaning therapy that worsened our plight. The Third Republic followed and like its predecessor, lasted a little over two Decembers.

The intermission following this republic celebrated its tenth birthday only recently. Normally, all the republican players would go to sleep, whether out of frustration or fatigue. But here we go again. We are going to attempt another republic. What name to give to it, one can never be sure.

Some say it shall be called the Fourth Republic. Preparations have already begun. The Consultative people are cracking brains, spending billions of our scarce resources on constitution that may not last. As soon as it is overthrown by another dawn broadcast, another handsome warrior will emerge and tell us to prepare another constitution that would take into consideration all the past constitutions.

Preparations outside the Assembly are even more frantic. Suddenly almost everybody I meet these days has started wearing political suit. Tailors without skills for political suit are going to lose out heavily. Then also is the stampede for northern smocks. It is as if, that is the only way to be taken seriously.

Any politician without a northern smock is a tribalist.

Then are the several colleagues who have assured their mothers they will be **MPs** before they die. Other older men who were recently laid off now radiate with a smile when you see them. Some have said they vacated their posts to enter a lucrative profession – like police or politics.

Indeed, the government need not worry about the social effects of the S.A.P. All the unemployed and retired now have a future. The Fourth Republic then is going to be one big **PAMSCAD**, whereby sitting in parliament will become a big programme even more the faces of presidential candidates emerging. It all looks as if a few prior appearances on the television screen are enough – a matter of arranging with TV cameramen so your face is spotlighted in a crowd scene a few times.

Viewers will then begin saying how lucky you are to have a presidential forehead. In which case, all you need is a political suit. In cases where your forehead does not sufficiently protrude, simply see a barber and tell him you are a presidential candidate.

I saw a flash last week The Mirror's version of presidential candidates. Over a dozen of them – some smiling, others brooding and the rest frowning.

All of them boring.

Of all the portraits, the most presidential was Kwame Nyanteh's. He may have seen a barber the day before – smooth, round face, a full mustache and a lively chin. Johnny Hansen's grey beard may be full of wisdom, scare our kids. Imoru Ayarna looks ghastly in the picture and is likely to attract ghostbusters.

Kojo Botsio's baldness has gone rather far, he would need a wig during TV appearances. Then also his age makes him a grandfather to many of the other candidates. **B.B.D.** Asamoah is smiling too broadly. A good political smile normally should not reveal your pre-molars.

If Alex Quaison-Sackey wants to stand, he should be careful, we shall remind him of past statements. Hilla Limann may seek to complete his term of office and will be interesting candidature, should Chairman **R** decide to stand.

General Erskine in the portrait displays a gaping mouth; presidential mouths, however, are often narrowed. What of Nana Otuo Serebuo? Nana would mistake the Castle for the palace if he should go there, in which case he would to be there until death do us part.

Dr. Delle's picture reduced him to a lifeless statue. Presidents smile. Lt.Gen Okine looks really like a veteran but who is he? My Big friend, P.A.V. Ansah will deny being an aspirant. If he is serious he will find himself competing with his good friend, Limann.

J.H. Frimpong Ansah has greyed too soon. His picture displays a pensive mood. What was he thinking about? The economy? Evans Anfof's portrait does injustice to his mouth. He looks like getting ready to spit.

The Mirror has done a great disservice to its readers. As soon as you open the page of presidential faces, you may mistake them all for wanted men. These days that cocaine barons are being hunted down the world over, who knows?

Looking through the faces and foreheads so far, I wonder what Jerry R would be thinking. “If the Fourth Republican seat will be occupied by a wanted man, then hand over to?”

Dear Readers, do you want recommendation for the next President? Instead of a wanted man, check the TV weatherman. Vote for his forehead.

#### 4

#### **The Situation Can Be BUTUBUTUBUTU**

**IT’S** often not clear why workers go on transfer, even though I quite remember my Old Man vehemently protesting from Winneba to Old Tafo. After sending spies to Old Tafo and learning that the town was true to its name, the Old Man decided that the only thing that could move him from Winneba was a crane.

It was all the fault of the new District Education Officer (DEO) who, it was said, was not on good terms with Old Man. So then why should Old Man not be transferred? But the old man stuck to his guns. “I am not going today or tomorrow.” I overheard him telling the old lady.

We celebrated the Old Man’s stubbornness; after all, a transfer would have meant losing friends like Ato Kwamena, Abeka, Jojo, all of Abasraba. But our joy was short lived. An order came from somewhere above that we must move, and imagine how surprised I was when the Old Man obeyed the order.

But we were spared Old Tafo. Akyem Achiase sounded better and we chose it.

Transfers and reshuffles were tricky – not clear whether to read them as penalty or a **PAMSCAD**. A headteacher, for instance, decides that his new station is a penalty because all his office chairs are three-legged. Or a catechist delights in his new station because the congregation has a past record of good silver collection.

Sometimes, however, I wonder why during transfers we decide this school or that school deserves a bad teacher as this one. If a teacher or pastor is that bad, does he have to be inflicted on a new station; and if so and so is that good, does he have to be lost to the people he serves?

If you have also been watching closely events nearer home, you must be puzzled by cabinet or secretarial reshuffles. Not easy to tell whether a transfer from say Mobilisation to Interior is a demotion or a **PAMSCAD**; or whether it is not a secret prayer of all comrades that they made secretary of Finance or Foreign Affairs. These last two positions have significantly never changed hands, and their occupants must either be the happiest or the most bored.

The most interesting of all are the appointment where a new person is named for a position, and the former occupant quietly fades away. No new person is announced for the latter, and neither does he ask questions such as “what is my new appointment?”

During this last leg, there have not been that many reshuffles, silent omissions. It is such a fluid period I wonder how it will feel hearing your name is the new Secretary for 31<sup>st</sup> December Parades; - or seeing your secretarial position advertised.

But there have been a few such. There is a new Secretary for Roads and Highways. Colonel Attivor is his name. I wonder how he feels being employed as casual labour. It all happened when a major motor-quake shook the Ministry of Roads and Highways. It is still not clear, but it looks like Jerry’s famous visit to the motorway has changed the addresses of a few personalities; the chief executive, his deputy, chief legal officer, and the Secretary himself. All have been retired, except for the Secretary who goes back to barracks.

The cause of the quake? Not until the facts are made known, it shall only be assumed as follows.

January 7, soon after the cock crow, Chairman R goes on a road tour of Accra-Tema motorway, and criticises the rehabilitation work going on. His audience are the pressmen.

Next day, the Chief Executive of Highways is in the press explaining the situation. His explanation unfortunately sounds quite convincing such that whereas it could be said the Chairman spoke, it could also be said the Chief's manner of critique sounded uncouth.

In a society where spokesmen at the palace do a linguistic merry-go-round before contesting the royal word, the Chief Executive spoke but to everybody's surprise, did not barefaced. He should have learnt from Nana Otuo Siribuo's round-about response after the Big Boss had lashed at the Assembly for wining and dining rather than speeding up work. Nana referred to other sittings in the past where the duration had been longer. No names were mentioned; but wisemen know whose remarks he was alluding to.

Indeed, not until the Highways shake-up is fully explained it will be inferred that the highway Boss's retirement stems from his uncouth practice – 'he did not speak well'.

If new appointments are unusual, so are resignations. Resigning from the Castle retinue at this eleventh hour? No Sir/Madam. Your resignation will be 'disaccepted'. It should mean you have had problems in your seat up to his eleventh hour? So therefore if you are worried, why should the people be happy?

Goodbye Joyce Aryee. Until it happened, vacation of posts was very secretarial.

But I should, perhaps, have guessed. In November last year we invited Joyce to an official function at Legon. We received no reply. The event transpired without her. Late January 1992, two months after the event, a reply came from her secretary saying she is out of the country. Her secretary was clever enough to back-date the reply to November.

I understand Joyce. Moving from Information to Education to a special assistant, etc. is like being transferred to Old Tafo. Being a Secretary is probably not as enviable.

Ask the district secretaries. Some are suffering as well; but none has vacated yet. Some have already enriched themselves; others started so late I doubt if they would have made it by November. To make it by November, you should have started early. Ten years is long enough; if you haven't made it, too bad.

But I like the way some people have dealt with their District Secretaries. You see here is a situation where the people wake up one morning only to find new District Secretary sitting at their doorstep. The Government says I am your new boss."

Not surprised what is happening to them of late. In the Awutu-Effutu-Senya district, the assembly passed a vote of no confidence in him, and disallowed him at sittings. They asked the financial officer not to advance moneys to him towards developmental projects. I never knew Effuts were so revolutionary.

At Yilo Krobo the District Assembly also passed a vote of no confidence in the Acting District Secretary. After one session, the assembly members marched to his office and locked it up, taking

the keys away. They also seized his car keys, and drove his car to the police station. Wasn't he lucky? Next time, it will not be his car taken to the police station - it will be himself.

In one part of the Central Region one District Secretary was simply beaten up by his people. They were fed up with him.

I was amused reading the recent shake-up of district secretaries. Some have been dismissed; others have been newly appointed. But if the previous secretary had his keys seized, the new one is sure to have his leg in a P.O.P. If it's a place where the previous one was beaten, the new one - let's call him casual labourer because he has only few months - is likely to be eaten up casually. A casual secretary in a casualty ward.

It's a tricky situation. At this eleventh hour, what do you do if you are, for instance, given the gift of the Castle Boss or the Boss of Ghana? It's a situation where you could plead with your donors to postdate the appointment to November, simply because the period between now and November could be quite **butubutu**. Regardless of whether you are national, regional or district boss.

At Tepa, the situation could even be more **butubutu** with the district boss. This is a case I have been following for over one-and-a-half-years. I was struck by the people's protest march against their D.S. in disturbances that saw the district boss moving out of town.

His residence was attacked, militiamen on duty assaulted, and their weapons seized by demonstrators. The demonstrators also barricaded the secretary's offices.

To date he lives in Kumasi and commutes daily to Tepa. But Tepa is a sorry sight if you have been there - a sprawling capital of the Ahafo Ano district with no basic amenities - KVIP, potable water, electricity. The people are urging that the situation be further probed, and the D.S. has not been relieved of his seat because he knows somebody in the Castle?

You see, the situation can be quite slippery and one of these days, District Secretaries should consider asking for demonstration allowance - and the bigger bosses too; for between now and November, the situation in Ghana is likely to be **butubutu**. The consultative people have started in-door discussions on transitional provisions. A topic which can itself be very **butubutubutubutu**.

THE thing has started, and come May 18, the post office will be busy changing people's addresses. Many will be the missing letters on which the postmaster will write: Return to Sender, Try Gondar Barracks, or Current Address Unknown until November.

Even as post offices are busy, so are barbers and face surgeons – busily changing people's faces. At the outskirts of towns and villages, farmers and children will run helter skelter seeing apparitions of ancient statesmen and exconvicts, all scrambling to get castle addresses.

Elsewhere, secretaries, scribes, drivers and *aplankes* of the process will find themselves face to face with their former bosses in the Civil Service who will ask them to tell their *amanee*. Others will be eyeball to eyeball with their former landlords and creditors who will remind them of unsettled bills since the 31st.

Yet others will line up at the labour office looking for their labour card and lamenting 'Master, Master, unto whose hands did you leave us?' Whereupon Master will reply, "Each one for himself, God the Indemnipient for us all..."

I realise the Parliament House is going to be painted and refurbished. Apparently it became the consultative habitat for rats, cockroaches and lizards, as soon as the constitution was banned over a decade ago. After all, it was the home of the constitution of the Third Republic; so then if occupant and constitution had been demobilised, why should rodents not apply for a twelve-year tenancy?

It is time for the landlord to tell the rodents, 'even though the tenancy has not yet lapsed, my son-in-law is coming from overseas with a pre-financed democracy.' Parliamentary rats and mice would then need to look for a temporary address, and pray hard for dawn broadcast one of these days, to demobilise the constitution and restore their former address.

But I am also worried about chieftaincy litigations. May 18 will bring disputes over succession. Various Nananom may consider giving the stool back to the king makers and changing their addresses temporarily. Doing so, however, every Nana will make sure to tell the kingmakers not to rush for a successor until the final green light in November. For if it comes to the worst, and November results are unfavourable, Nana will return and beg the gods for his uncustomary leave of absence, during which he was trying his luck for the village.

Unsure of their fate will also be the Gondar people at Christiansburg. If they are interested in May 18, they will have to de-robe, de-cap and de-belt themselves. And how dare you ask Your Highness what he would do if the November news is not good? In a situation where you cannot re-robe, re-cap and re-belt, for the second time, it is not unthinkable to have on our and the problem of royal unemployment and all its dawn consequences!

I also think of the plight of other defenders and offenders. Take for instance *the Committee for the Offence of the Revolution*, as my friend Firemen calls them, offensive cadre boys, offensive militia, and their several offenders. If the Castle tenants are too busy to disemploy them before Monday, I volunteer my voice.

By midnight Sunday, all offenders should lay down their arms and report to the Electoral Commissioner who will instruct them on the use of the ballot box.

Which is not to say I have never benefited from the CDR. Last year, they severely dealt with a plantain thief who encroached on the old lady's farm and had a good dinner at my expense. But I fell out quickly with them when I heard of the martial law imposed by the CDR in Brofoyedur. Soon after his election its chairman announced a court that would oversee the following regulations:

Anyone caught quarrelling was liable to a fine; boys and girls under 18 years should not ride a bicycle, or else they pay a fine of ₦500; no woman should bleach her face or wear trousers - the fine was ₦1,000. Anyone who bought a goat, sheep or pig would pay a ₦500 tax, or else risk going to court to pay ₦3,000.

As for those armed boys one cannot recount the number of human beings they have transformed into ghosts in their normal operations. If they are not disarmed by common sense on May 18? The number of political parties coming is no secret. Their shadow clubs are no secret either, except that some were disqualified before the law was published. The flying eagle must be looking for a new name now. Its symbol encroaches on our national sovereignty: and whether or not they insist on using it from Monday onwards, the suspicion remains that the national eagle will dip its wings in the national coffers; and who can stop a national bird on national duties? It's just as well they are desperately looking for a new name.

How about the Vultures' Club? In that case the party shall be called NAV - National Alliance of Vultures, after all, a vulture can also fly and be Flight-General, Flight-Sergeant, Flight-Warrant Officer, and other flighters.

As for the Champion of the Eagle Association, we are all looking forward to his emergence, but one can bet that only a pilot can land with the perfection of an eagle. So as for all that delay tactics by their leader it is only **wuluwulu**, meant to test the people's urine endurance.

Very soon there will be eagle demonstrations all over the animal kingdom, clamouring for that pilot bird, so then he will shake his plumes, clear his throat and say, "well since it is by popular request, I have no alternative."

The eagle has been a trickster from time immemorial, and that is why I prefer the National Alliance of Vultures, come May 18.

## WATCHING THE EAGLE'S MOUTH

Do you realise the importance of the lips of the lotto announcer at 5 pm every Saturday? So has it been with the big boss. So then, as soon as announced that he was going to broadcast to the people, everybody pulled his chair closer, "What is going to fall out of his mouth?"

Check the motion of your dog's head when you are cutting a bone. It follows with academic interest every direction of the bone, from hand to mouth, to jaws, praying to God that it should slip from your careless fingers and fall.

Whereupon, it would make every attempt to save the bone mid-air, and take it to the operation theatre. If the dog were trained as a doctor, it would specialise in bone surgery; and if it registered as a voter, it would specialise in voting for the bone.

Suddenly then, we forgot it was close to independence day parade, wherefore it is the customary practice to make boring speeches unto the people. Sometimes I realise how impatient you are when Kwesi B is reading the budget-that long introduction that sounds so familiar and predictable! whereas all you are anxious for is whether the tro tro fare from Kotobabi to Circle has been increased. Isn't it Dr Rokoto who says, the essence of soccer is *at once*?

I normally avoid the first five minutes of revolutionary speeches. There I will be reference to ERP, and how that has caused the rains to fall, and how without the ERP, there would have been no rains....etc. Then comes the period when reference has to be made to the redemption of the people's self-respect. All that part of the speech is part of a keep fit warm-up, whereas in this already hot weather, he could simply have said, "Countrymen, as far as we are concerned, life will be so hard this year you will be sorry, but all that this means is that without us, you would have been sorrier."

Somehow, the speech writer changed his style that day. The first five minutes of the speech I missed is where he said something interesting, and the last part of the speech I sat through is where he read the chorus. His teacher probably taught him to change his style, and make all his good points in the first paragraph of the exam paper, so that in case he falls asleep later....

Even so, the people still said, the expected lotto word did not fall from his mouth. Then came the next day when he was speaking to school children on the parade grounds. Did you see the speed with which grammarians and soothsayers interpreted his opening and closing words? And what were these! He said it was probably the last time he was talking to them. Was he there after going to be unemployed? Or would he reappear next year, saying he returned because he was lonesome, may be... gunsome?

## IMAGE OF NDC FLAG WITH RAWLINGS HEAD AS THE IMAGE OF THE EAGLE

As the magic word, you probably have no idea how many people are awaiting that. Newspaper vendors groundnut sellers, lawyers, meat pie bakers, poki riders, fan milk, butchers. For many of these the whole future depends on the magic word. Then also his disciples. Some confess they are fed up, and would like to change their profession from daily player to weekly spectator, but can do so comfortably only if he keeps them company at the touchline. Others feel, like Azumah, they are now warming up, getting ready for another provisional marathon.

Among these, I am more fond of E. T. Mensah and his Tempos Band recalled from a restless leave to feed the eagle. In the good old days, whenever you were the subject of a committee investigation, you were not promoted (no matter how brilliant you were) until the investigation was over, and the verdict announced. As it is, the gentleman has set a record: being disciplined, sent on leave, under investigation, promoted, all at the same time. It is just as well his new office is no where near Makola. He would have scattered all Makola votes.

Even while all are watching for a fall-out from the horse's own mouth, others are watching the beak of the eagle. Very soon, the name of our national soccer team will change to the Black Eagles, in which case we may clash with our neighbours. The bird is real and co-operative, except that some of its followers are letting the cat out of the bag too soon. "It is His Majesty's party," the eagles in Madina have confessed, in the attempt to persuade you to register instantly. And you keep wondering if these eagles are not hawks!

But can I forget the traditional opponents of the eagle? These are not eagles or hawks. They parade under the extinguished auspices of very important ghosts (VIG's) -- the late *Apae Dankwa* group, the late Efi Mosea group, the late Appollo 568 group, the late preventive detention group, and other latests. These appear to have specialised in ancestral worship, giving a hint that the forthcoming elections would be a joint enterprise between the living and the dead.

Only recently the shadow of another group has emerged. They call themselves Concerned Citizens, Unconcerned Disciples, or some other *huhudious* name (with some apologies to Carl Mutt). They consist of high sounding book-long magicians and professors. This group is asking for an eight-year transition period, during which the eagles, hawks, and all the very important ghosts would come together and party before our very eyes. According to this group, they were on a leave of absence throughout the period we were debating the country's future. And now that they have come..... It would mean we should forget all the cash spent on the Consultative people. If they are advocating for an interim period of eight years, they only need to add the current eleven year provisional period, and a class three pupil will do the addition for them and say-19 years of provisional entertainment. This country would then be a permanent provisional state, or probably

an interim super market. And we shall all be interim citizens, perpetually squatting in transit quarters.

As all this happens, we appear to be heading towards a very long word-**referendum**, a type of political perfume, intended to convey one of two impressions: either the *Consor people have done nothing wrong, or the Consor people have done everything wrong*.

Just in case we say no to the Consor people. What then happens? The Concerned Citizens would have a field day, and begin their interim supermarket. The eagles, hawks, crows and vultures, would fly back to the formation, and all the very important ghosts and apparitions would withdraw to an interim cemetery.

## 7

### AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES

I always believe every once in a while, man should go to church, even if for no reason at all, for the pastor to be familiar with him. There may come a time you really need somebody on good terms with the Old Man upstairs...to convey your EMS, in the shortest possible time.

If not, the pastor may have a hard time recollecting if it was at an Okwawu United match you met, or at the Challenge Bookshop. All the better if he remembers that it was you who came to church sometime last year, and the entire congregation turned to look at you in disbelief. That must have been landmark for you. Never mind if the one sitting next to you kept reminding you to say Amen (rather than thank you) after each prayer.

Where you and the pastor have never crossed paths, it is often easier if you have at least been seen from the pulpit dancing your way to give collection.

In the past few weeks, I have overheard conversations in which church people recount how, for instance, 'Hilla Limann occasionally worships with us in Tema.' It is, of course, for a good reason he abdicated his royal seat in the Upper West. In the church, at least, he could, with the guidance of the pastor, ask the Old Man above to abide with him during his Heritage troubles.

Not to talk of several other men and women of the ongoing process who suddenly saw the Light, as soon as the transitional whistle sounded. One could as well do a population census of provisional born againers in recent times-----certainly enough to fill a provisional synagogue. So then one could, after all, have asked members of the process not to worry too much about the recent political party laws. When it came to assets declaration, they could have been asked to quietly declare to the Indemnipotent God.

Last Sunday, the Union of Pentecostal Churches in Accra missed a golden opportunity when they received the Outgoing Royal Highness in their temple. They could have taken advantage not just to check on the date of his last pentecostal visitation, but also to ask for clarification about the Religious Bodies Decree. "Sir, is that decree going with us to November?"

If that question was not asked, it was probably because a bigger agenda was on hand— the matter of Your Highness' request for a Religious Pamskad.

We here take church going and politics so much for granted. Kamuzu Banda, the Life Owner of Malawi, was only last week disowned by the Church of Scotland for his human rights abuse in Malawi. Not until it was announced, one wasn't sure the old man ever stepped in a church. In truth, though, he was an elder of the Church of Scotland.

Would have wished it were possible for all dawn broadcasters, before their dawn broadcasts, to wake the nearest pentecostal priest at dawn, and ask whether they should do it or not. Or rather, they could be required by the Constitution, to make sure they broadcast to the nation from a pentecostal broadcasting studio. If that happened, the situation would be different. In a situation where bush fires are already a problem, we could at least desist from such pronouncements as 'West Africa will burn,' and make pentecostal overtures such as, 'West Africa will cool.' Instead of 'The following ministers should report at Gonda without fail, it would rather be, "They should report at the synagogue without fear."

As it were, all this did not happen, and the pentecostal congregation had on their hands, an unprecedented plea for forgiveness by the Castle Boss. It was a moving spectacle-Your Highness, or "Junior Jesus", as devotees call him, among a solemn procession of choristers, officiants, church elders, pastors, worshippers, etc. this time without his advisers and misadvisers, but with his Press Secretary beside him. His mission was simple.

*"During some periods of 1979, and the advent of the PNDC from December 31st 1981 to date, some mistakes were committed in the name of the revolution, that has caused pain and suffering to some families... I apologise to such families whose relations suffered in one way or the other... I will wish for us to pray for no more misguided actions in future. "*

Once again, the congregation missed a golden opportunity to seek further clarification, such as "Sir, we don't recollect there were any misguided actions, but..... what examples do you have in mind?"

Or, "Sir, your plea is acknowledged with pentecostal thanks; but kindly check your wrist watch, your supplication is at least ten years late. It should have come 10 years BC, not six months BC...." Whereupon another elder could shout from behind, "We shall always forgive our enemies, but we shall never forget their parties." AMEN.

There was no doubt at the end of the day that the forgiveness plea coming as it did on the eve of May 18th, was either contrived to pave the way for a triumphant entry into the Race, or it was a Programme of Action to Mitigate Potential Butubutu (PAMSBUT).

But even before the pentecostal pastor had rushed the Pamsbut to the Old Man upstairs, the premises of an Accra High Court were already vibrating with chaos aplenty. The political parties law had landed the new electoral boss and his employers in court - before he could finish counting the referendum votes. In all appearances, the law forbids ancient names and totems, in a manner that requires a fresh naming ceremony for all contesting concert parties. So then, if your party was once called, OPP, you needed a new appellation such as POP; and if your past identity symbol was a mouse, since the mouse had been prohibited from the 4th Republic, you needed a rat, or other rodent such as grasscutter, or squirrel. To the Opposition Groups then, our several past republics had exhausted all the admirable symbols in the plant and animal kingdoms, leaving them with no other symbols than the pig, lizard, frog, and their likes. The only party names left were probably names like, Lizard People's Party, Progress People's Pig, or Heritage People's Frog. And with such names, how could one win an election?

But lest I forget, the latest info received says, the Eagle people are in the process of changing their name or symbol. They ignored my vulture offer, are going for the elephant.....with all the implications of elephantiasis.

Even before then, they have been sufficiently busy of late. Last Wednesday, the scene at the Accra High Court deliberating on the political parties law, was not promising. The court room itself was choked to the roof. Breathing might have been a problem for the judge, plaintiffs, and defendants, and they may have been drunk from fuse blowers only. No standing room. The crowd outside thrice bigger than inside.

But the unusual happened. Intimidating processions and chanting outside the court by a group calling itself Bukom Youth, and sporting the symbol of hurriedly carved eagle. Their T-shirts read, No Curve, No Bend; No Monkey Business; High Court No. 1, etc. Many of them were not from Bukom. They were cadres, and CDRs, mobilised to intimidate justice and political opponents? Their banners read, Bukom Youth Supports Electoral Law. One could have created further chaos asking them what the law says. One such man in blue shirt apparently fell in the soup. Having been identified as an 'against man, he had to flee among the thick crowd in his own interest. Those guys were serious, and some were holding clubs, and truncheons.

Unprecedented in our legal history, part of the mob found themselves in the congested court room, boldly and fearlessly displaying their banner in the direction of the judge, as if to say, "Let your verdict be favourable or else we shall meet you outside." But where were the police? Nowhere.

Outside, opposition supporters were in red bands, neither singing, drumming nor chanting. They stood in clusters, and whispered in groups, some of their hungry women eating from the 'boot' of Benz cars. Some quietly whispering the slogan, *Eye Kukurudu*. One woman did a quick adowa dance past me, singing *Asem Beba Dabi; Asem Beba Dabi*, and disappeared in the crowd. Two others zoomed past me, intoning the melody, "J.J. *yede nyansa na ebetu no*."

Peeping through the thick crowd at the entrance of the court room, I did have a glimpse of most of the political heavyweights. Safo Adu was late, and could not shove his way through the crowd. But in attendance were J.A. Kufuor, Kojo Botsio, Johnny Hansen, wife of Gbedemah, etc. I overheard a shoe shine boy burst in joy, on seeing Limann. 'Shieeee, I have not seen him in years.' Another asked, 'Which of them is Adu Boahen?' Yet another was enquiring why JJ was not present.

Some two or so miles away from the scene, your Forgiven Highness was probably rehearsing another hymn, for next Sunday:

Abide with me

Fast falls the eventide

The darkness deepens

Lord with me abide

When all the helpers

Fail and comfort flees

God, the **INDE-M-N-I-P-O-T-E-N-T**

Abide with me.

I don't know how you feel if the *tro tro* on which you are perched, drops you off at the wrong point- for instance takes you to Akoko Foto, instead of Asoredanho, or vice versa. That would be on your way to Dansoman. In any case, the son of man would have to do considerable leg work, either forwards or backwards, to balance the distance towards his destination.

If the journey is between villages or towns, where a few cassava farms mark boundaries, the lost passenger may pick his way home rubbing shoulders with grasscutters and squirrels. If he is lucky, he will take home a rat, to demonstrate how a lost passenger may eventually triumph over rodents. But losing your way to your destination is common enough. You may be the victim of an afternoon nap over the shoulders of your *tro tro* seat mate, such that when he woke you up, it was too late. But it is all too common, if you are checking out a spot or village for the first time, for example, if you have been transferred as a policeman from Techiman to Lawra.

On a stretch of rocky laterite road from say Wa, through Kaleo, Sombo, Seripkere, Nadawli, Babile, where most of the village signboards have been knocked down by fighting goats, why wouldn't you lose your way?

But it is sometimes an advantage if your final destination also happens to be the last stop for the vehicle. In that case, the driver may decide to pack your baggage at the bottom or farthest end of the 'boot.' This could set your heart at ease, except that you are not sure your baggage is safe, particularly when they are unloading the bags of the transitional passengers. Your bag may find itself among the fourth republican baggage, kind of lost in transit. In many cases, though, it might be safe. As for the last stop passenger himself, he is made to sit somewhere on the last row. Among other things, this gives him a commanding vision of all head sizes and shapes on display. If you are a sleeper, don't worry, for even if you are a Kojo-just-come, you can afford to doze off on the shoulders of your seat mate. As soon as the driver hits the final stop, you will be woken up by an elbow, a yawn, or a knock on your head! The driver or mate decided on a head-knock because you probably appeared to be in a coma.

Long distances have a way of intoxicating passengers. If you have been on the state transport from Accra to Bolga, you discover half way through that the entire population is asleep, oftentimes including the driver and his companion. Under those circumstances, you begin understanding the vehicle sticker that says, God is in Control-a kind of divine vehicle management.

But I like passengers who are in perpetual transition. These do not necessarily have a destination. Whereas Mummy and Daddy are on a serious mission somewhere, you decide to join them, just for a ride.....anywhere goes, anyhow, so long as you are on board. If the vehicle is a *tro tro*, you will find yourself asking the driver to take you back to Atonsu, from Kejetia; for you would like to while away the time. In that case, being a transitional passenger becomes your hobby.

Many are the transitional passengers these days. Visit the Consultative Hospital one of these days and see. The entire august hall now looks like a waiting reception for labour pains- patients in suspense, comparing symptoms and urines, checking who is listening, groaning, avoiding surgery, but by all means expecting to be called into the 4th Republican theatre, The Consultative

Hospital is about to wind up business any moment from now. But throughout the sittings over six or so months, it was easy to see what type of hand attracted the Speaker the most. Some consultative patients may have applied to the Speaker backstage: Dear speaker, please invite me to speak even if I have nothing to say. Such that it was often easy to tell whose face would be present in your television home during dinner. As of now, if children in my home were asked to vote for the next president, they would very likely vote for a man with a round face, never mind whether or not he is an aspirant.

As for Nananom, I began getting suspicious of their transitional motives when they had a group picture published on the front page of the Times at the initial stages of the sittings. This was to remind us not to forget them at the 4th republican parliamentary clinic: Nananom and ancestors would be in full attendance. But all along, you could tell the burden imposed on them by the sittings. I did a cloth census, and realised some may have come from their kingdoms with about three headloads of elegant cloths, to be changed from sitting to sitting, and from one republic to the other. Beyond all this, I was wondering if some of them were on a leave of absence from their stools.

It is probably the debate on chiefs in partisan politics that affirmed your suspicions. The outcome, of course, was foregone; and they have been denied entry to the next parliament. Some have decided to go to court on the matter; and this tells you it was a matter of life and death.

But I was also closely watching royal indifference when it came to discussions on unspeakable issues, like citizenship of the president, and the like. In most such cases, the safest thing to do was either to sneak out during proceedings, or decide to visit your kingdom on the day of deliberations. The indiscreet royal would have realised during the 4th republic that his imprudent tongue is responsible for the rough stretch of rocky laterite from Wa to Tumu.

What I dread most is the imminent discussion on the transitional provisions. I would be watching for contributors, what they avoid saying, and who they avoid hurting. Already, the untouchable topic has really proved itself. The subcommittee dealing with it had it around the neck for over four weeks, unsure what to do with it, who to touch it, how to touch it, and with what consequence. At a certain stage when the going was tough, they decided to invite a Christianborg guest for a quick interview. Then came a time when they decided to touch the matter only with a lo-o-o-o-ng spoon. In their own interest, they thought it wise to invite suggestions from Christianborg, but they were turned down with the words: "No interference." Then came another moment when they worked on a set of alternatives, and decided to show it to Teacher before they continued, and so on and so on. As of the time of writing, one is not too sure the unspeakable matter will be discussed in open air. If it is, all speakers will be looking over their shoulders. It will most likely be promoted to the chambers. Remember, issues to be discussed are really unspeakable: who should occupy the throne during the period of *butubutu*; will players be allowed to blow the whistle; etc. Then also comes the issue of forgiveness (and 'forgetness'), who should forgive who, for what sins, and how. That would probably be the mother of all *butubutus*. But it would all depend on which quotations would be adopted; *Forgive and forget, for tomorrow we die*; *God forgive them, for they know not what they did*; or *God do not forgive them, for they know what they did*; or *God forgive them some, but pull their ears small*.

It will be decided if it was legal for one to slap his wife in the name of the revolution; or for a disciple to bite his neighbour in the interest of ERP.

Can the neighbour now take the disciple's teeth to court, and tender the scars in evidence?

All these questions may not, of course, be relevant; for one wants to believe that the past ten years have been a smooth stretch, with no scrambling for bread and butter.

The other issue has to do with what to do with all the orphan groups the ongoing something will leave behind. Do we carry into the 4th Republic the red cap of the women's brigade, or do they doff the cap in reverence? What do we do with the gun toting civilians, replace their instrument with a cutlass, or march them to the Afram plains. Then of course the people's defenders in the villages and towns. In their absence, who will defend the people? Aren't we going to miss them?

Those I would miss most are my best friends at Brofoyedur, in the Amoakofuwa-Mpeasem constituency. Not long after the CDR Chairman had been elected as an assembly man, he announced the establishment of a special court that would specialise in certain cases. The following laws were immediately instituted:

*Any woman who did not wear Kaba (traditional blouse) would be fined C500. Any person caught quarreling or fighting would pay a similar fine. Anyone below 18 years must not ride a bicycle. The offender would be flogged and fined. No female would henceforth bleach her face; that attracted a fine of C1000. No female should wear slacks or trousers; the fine was C1000. Anyone who purchased a goat, pig, or sheep, would pay C500 tax.*

I sometimes feel like visiting the hospital, if only to check on the faces of outpatients, and then return. Mondays are the best days to go on an excursion to the hospital. Somehow, the weekend always manages to secure enough patients for the doctor to the following Monday. Topping the roll call are diarrhoea patients, who invariably must have returned from a funeral at Akim Swedru, where palm soup is served during wake keeping.

Mondays are nurses day too. The best part of their job is when they are distributing patients to doctors, through a roll call. This role is responsible for the popularity of nurses. Let them fetch the cards, and they are instantly besieged by patients, some of whom are sick of *Ihaveneverwashedmyclothiasis*. Anytime you hear a nurse sneeze in the midst of patients, that is the reason. Her freedom to breathe has been hospitably impounded. In a fourth republic, where we are going to insist on our rights, I foresee several more strikes by nurses demanding Nose Allowance.

As for the doctors, somebody has advised them to wait till all patients are seated before they march past. On Monday mornings, most doctors stroll past their patients with a handkerchief in hand. They blow their noses hospitably to welcome their patients. "Prrrrrrr. Welcome to my Fourth Republic, where life will be full of catarrh."

In the waiting room would be over twenty patients, all waiting for Doctor. And how many doctors do not like being called Doc when they are passing! A few times, they are probably not aware, but the title they respond to is often not Doc, but Dog. "Hi Dooooog!" to which they unknowingly reply, "Yeees".

"I have been waiting for you all this while. As for me, I had decided that I was not going to see any doctor but you. It does not matter how long it takes for you to arrive. If you decide never to come, I shall boycott my health and boycott Ofori Boateng. But I am not alone. I have brought with me the entire village. They are all waiting for you before they decide. All this for the sake of hospitable continuity, road continuity, and electricity continuity."

The continuity speaker would be from places like Bibiani, where the bad roads have been improved, such that you can even enjoy a ride from a tractor. Others were from Sunyani and other places that were previously 'overseas'.

But there were other patients in the waiting room.

"Next."

"I am Bob Santo, the Regional Secretary for South Achiase Province. In the past eleven years, the standard of living in my household has risen above pamskad level. My wife is now a cement distributor, and my brother the district contractor of roads. I and my entire family nearly got a heart attack when we heard rumours that you would sin here no more. *Chaaarman, hwe se wonni ho a ebeha me paaaaa. Manka a na meboa*. Please Chaaarman, make your continuity face to shine upon us, and protect our cement.

"Next."

"I am the Under Secretary for Picnic Affairs. Before December 31st, I was a patient at the Ohia Clinic at Legon. Now, thanks to the process, I am also somebody. But let your red face shine upon my golden necklace, my wife's store, and my two Pajeros".

"Next."

"I am also the Secretary for Funeral Affairs. For the continuity of my stomach, stay on. The other day when you were not looking, I acquired shares and directorship in two funeral companies. Many of the companies under divestiture, my hand is quietly behind them, that is why we never advertise divestiture vacancies. I normally put my hand on them, and my brothers-in-law come quietly to buy them. We need your continuity face. In your absence, Kukrudu will probe beneath the eyes of the corpse, and see my ghost. If you leave, the companies we have put together, Kukrudu will put asunder; and what we have indemnified, Kukrudu will come and demnify."

"Last patient, please!"

"Good morning, my name is Isaac Moses; I come from Gomora Azabajan, which is part of Gomua C.I.S. Plain talk is not a thief. I hear your close friends are afraid to talk true, or else you will take them to be against people. You have done very well all these years; but please discontinue your face, for *seba sebe*, we are just bored with a single face for ten long years, even though you are handsome. My people and I just need variety of handsomeness. Let's try other wise men and reject them if they fail us."

Recently, Sassou Ngucso of Congo was added to the casualty list of continuity aspirants. A man of charisma. He was another success story of IMF, but had been hovering around since 1979. His people gave him only 17% of the votes. Obibini Blackman Kaunda is still recovering at the convalescence ward. He has not yet forgotten his 20% votes, and has lately decided to console himself by setting up a Kaunda Foundation for Peace and Democracy. A man of vision. No need to mention Kerekou of Benin, in power since 1972. His people said enough is enough. Musa Traore of Mali was resisted too. He had been squatting on the throne since 1968, then the people saw Toure, and told Musa "Go and sin here no more." Daniel Ortega gave democrakye a chance after five years or so of the process, and ended up in the zongo of parliamentary opposition.

But the continuity story deserves hearing too, for Obibini Blackman has formed the habit of ensuring that what my predecessors have put together, let me put asunder. The problem is that if the continuity song is sung for too long, villages, hamlets, and Kwatrikwites, still suffering, shall interpret continuity to mean, continuity of woes, for this world in which we live in (it), *ebi te yie, ebi nso te famu*.

Hear also my friend Judas, who says continuity need not mean continuity of same face. Good works can be continued by other faces similarly inspired.

Then of course is the mother of all gossip, which says that the Consultative Assembly butchers and lawyers, who represented all shades and spectacles of opinion ensured that certain sacred institutions introduced by the process, would remain intact in the constitution, to be continued by whoever whenever.

Meanwhile, the Castle Boss still keeps his patients waiting and guessing, even where his answer is obvious. But why shouldn't he keep his patients waiting? He is testing their urine endurance, even while signaling yes with a wink of his right eye. He did not protest when he saw his picture illegally pasted under the umbrella design. Currently, the picture is openly spreading across the country in disrespect of electoral laws that have been signed by the boss himself.

The problem probably is two-fold: a) that of de-Castling yourself before sitting underneath the umbrella. What happens if having dethroned yourself voluntarily, a fast rabbit hiding inside your cloth jumps into the seat, and starts a ten-year development programme? b) If you should decide to sit under the umbrella, what does one do with refrains you have sung throughout the decade? At a workers rally in Bolgatanga, he said the ballot box has failed both the nation and the people, and called on Ghanaians "to discard from their minds any notion of going to the polls." (Ghanaian Times of March 16, 1982.) Ten years after, he was still consistent. Last year, he spoke to a Graphic reporter, soon after the Expert Committee on the Constitution had submitted its report, saying he still did not believe in multi-party democracy, but was bound by the collective decision of his colleagues.

The problem is that of returning to say, "Fellow countrymen, I spoke those words, and even more; but don't take my words seriously."

Or "Forget my past statements. I am now a multi-party born again."

## 10

### JESUS CHRIST AND THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

This Easter did not help to solve the current problem of Funeral Fridays. whereby every such day, all bosses in the Ministries stand by to receive obituary announcements from workers. "Dear Boss, The late Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour, will be entombed this Friday, and.....I have to attend the funeral It struck me, though, that the Ministry of Interior was clever enough to in Jerusalem."

It struck me, though the Ministry of Interior was clever enough to spare us the holiday the day before. One would have envisaged the Jerusalem Airways feverishly shuttling Ghanaian passengers back and forth for a wake- keeping the day before Good Friday. It's just as well the burial took place on the same day as the sad event-no wake keeping.

Looking at the church pews filled to capacity by mourners in dark clothes, it was tempting to interrupt one such service in Ashaiman, with the announcement that "Refreshments will follow burial at the deceased's second residence at Plot Number 5Blk at East Legon-All are cordially invited." None such happened, of course, because this particular deceased had no assets to declare. The following day, Joseph would perhaps sit in state and accept funeral donations, making sure that the higher you offered, the more attention you received from the servers. As for the Lazaruses, and their fellow paupers, the frequency of drink service to them would be low and far between. An emptied glass in front of a Lazarus would sit unattended for hours, until he and Zaccheus sneak out Nicodemously.

The next day would of course be the memorial and thanksgiving service, to which the Ahinsan Gospel Singers would be invited. Their bass singer wouldn't be left out; he would issue forth a throaty grunt that could easily awaken all dozing worshippers. As for the treble singers, they must have been specially trained to intone their soprano melodies with a nasal timbre, a kind of Ananse gospel melody.

Collection time would be the highlights. The deceased had spent all his life preaching the word of God to the rich and poor, in the streets, and in all the synagogues, and had even promised buying an organ for the choir. So why shouldn't the mourning congregation do as he had wished, and contribute enough to purchase a Yamaha organ with a built-in rhythm box. Collection time would then begin, and the congregation, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Peter, and all would dance their way round and round, looking for the longest route between their seat and the collection bowl. The longer the distance, the better. The preacher and chapel elders would often be the last to have their dancing turn. They would solemnly progress with un-Jesus steps, ending up either forgetting to drop in their contribution, or approaching the bowl with suspiciously clenched fists.

But then, as all this happened and the congregation was getting ready round off the thanksgiving, and thereafter go (their somewhere) for funeral refreshments, then came the news from one responding to nature's call at the cemetery that He had dramatically resurrected. Whereupon the chief mourners, choristers, revellers, epicureans, dirge singers, Ahinsan, and all quickly abandoned the highlife in progress, and took to their heels, leaving behind them a trail of perfume, high heels, and copies of the Draft Constitution. The collection bowl was gone too.

Not too surprising then, the recent Easter sermons were full of constitutional matters. It was all as if the Consultative Assembly members had been deliberately distributed among the various congregations to explain the transitional provisions to God.

The whole cue had been given by Kojo T, who in a (pre-Easter) pontification to the Muslim community to round off the annual Ramadan, had sermonised on the theme of tolerance. "It is one of the essential ingredients of democracy," he said with his grey beard. Nobody replied. It was as if that word had been newly coined to coincide with the recent provisions.

But it was an ancient word, kept in the Old Man's archives, and sparingly and selectively deployed only when the accountability people were in danger. A little tolerance ten or so years ago would have rendered his plea unnecessary. Only last week, the grey bearded man missed another golden opportunity to sermonise on tolerance. He must have heard of the demonstration in Accra

organised by forces against the Transitional Provisions, and the way an intolerant squad of armed policemen *intolerantly* dispersed the demonstrators. The tolerance sermon should perhaps be preached next Sunday at the Police Church.

Even so, an account given me by one of the demonstrators gives a few plusses to IGP and his anti-riot squad: *We started the demonstration at about 3 o'clock from Orion Cinema and headed for Kwame Nkrumah Avenue. Armed policemen followed us, but around Adabraka Police Station, when they saw that our number was increasing, they blocked us from going to Accra Central. But I must say that for the first time in 11 years of PNDC, our friends the police conducted themselves well by not beating us. They just seized our placards.*

So then we Ghanaians are so charitable we are thanking the police for not beating us. Next time there is any such demonstration (and I hear there is another coming on in Makola by the same organisers), let the IGP with a little help from Kojo T address the police as follows:

My dear hungry in-laws and nephews and nephews-in-law, how is the road side? As from today, we are going to begin rehearsing the coming democracy and ... the tolerance of opposing dental formulae. For we do not want to be taken by democratic surprise, as was told of the virgins, who were not ready when the bride was at hand. Henceforth, even if you see a demonstration against your father in law, clap for the demonstrator so long as he is not holding a catapult.

But do you blame Ghanaian for his avowed recalcitrance in the face of all pleas for reconciliation?

I recently found a friend in the Accra Metropolitan Authority. At the Madina old road junction, their bus stop displays an inscription which is rather scary. At the left hand corner is a small booth, apparently for revenue collection. On top of this is a clearly written message, ACCOUNTABILITY. That is, of course, their way of saying 'this booth is for revenue collection, or accounts rendering.' Very soon, I am going to organise an excursion for all indemnified "aponkyees" to go on a pilgrimage to Madina Bus Stop. This spot will very soon be a tourist attraction.

It was the Easter Sunday itself that betrayed the politician in the preacher, and the preacher in the politician. Front page headlines after the Easter Holidays were a good example of evangelical journalism----- a course the Ghana Institute of Journalism should seriously consider offering, in the light of the transitional provisions. I will help to teach it, with a little help from George Naykene's Christian Chronicle. One newspaper was completely converted into the holy Book-reports of preachers and their flock quoting the holy Book in their political sermon and praying for peace during the forthcoming referendum, elections, and all. It was as if the transitional provisions had been firmly entrenched in the Book of Exodus.

Next Tuesday, we shall know the outcome of the sermon, and decide if the Old Ladies understood what it was all about. We took chances during the Easter break, and spoke to senior citizens in one holy hamlet in the East Akim district. It was in Akim Akropong, and this particular dialogue was with a 65-year-old woman. The question was whether she knew of the impending referendum.

"My grandchild, it is not the Government that feeds me. If I have nothing to do that day, I will visit my farm and look for cocoyams. Ever since I started voting during the Nkrumah regime, there hasn't been any change in my life."

But this one is not for any person or party. We are voting to decide whether or not the laws for the next government are good. You only need to vote yes or no. We pleaded.

"Then which is which?" the old lady was getting more and more furious, "Is it yes for Rawlings or no against him. Well, I don't have time for it, but if I should vote, it will be yes for Rawlings."

One other man was not that charitable. "I will vote No, and others should do the same. If you vote yes, you have said yes to the indemnity clauses. He who delights in cutting heads is afraid to lie on his back. If we vote yes, we are encouraging Rawlings to stand, and he will win by fair or foul means. You know he has started the Eagles Club, and a Rawlings Fan Club has already started in this village. If we say yes, he will assume we are in support of the constitution and so there is no need forming a parliamentary committee to change the indemnity clause."

But God Sleeps Not, and Ghanaman sleeps not either. This coming Fourth Republic, the entire congregation will sing merrily and sacrifice sleep, with the help of a little cola from Limann. The Catechist will shake off all signs of slumber and speak one Gospel after the other. St Luke will be the national consultant, and the congregation will hear one parable after the other.

*The Master of that servant will come on a day he does not expect him.... That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment shall be beaten with few blows.*

.....

*And Jesus said to the people, Make every effort to enter through the narrow door because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us, ' but he will answer, I know*

*thee not, ye evildoers (Go way you!).*

This coming Fourth Republic, we shall make St Luke, the Electoral Commissioner.

## 11

### YOUR VOTE IS YOUR NOSE

I am looking forward to the day when democratic practice will be so advanced here that the announcement on voting will add a footnote:" Voting starts 7 am; breakfast will be provided to

early voters." Whereupon the polling stations will be so carefully sites that, as soon as you have dropped the ballot paper in the ballot box, you walk directly into a chop bar.

Or may be, voters could opt to eat before voting. The turn out would not be bad after all. The aim here would be to catch the vote of all who deliberately stayed out of the recent Yes/No affair, and also to provide succour to the famished voter. How meaningful is democracy after all, if the voter has to suffer to vote?

The long queues reminded one of scenes at the American Consulate, or a morning spectacle at Accra New Town, where my friend I. V. tells me, queues start forming at dawn, for vote casting into the KVIP. I wonder if the electoral office for Accra new Town is listening. 'Next time, advise yourself in positioning the ballot box.' I have always argued that the shape of the ballot box we use here could tempt either those responding to nature's order, or conservancy officers looking for the bucket to unload. Either way, I would be advised electoral officers not to carry the ballot box on their head under any circumstances. All they would need to balance the equation, is a thick head pad, and broom in the left hand.

Which is not to say, those who refused to vote were justified in their uncertainty as to where their vote would eventually land---- at the office of the electoral commissioner, in the sea, or the outskirts of the town. A Yes Vote was indeed the best way towards May 18th. All along, I was expecting the electoral boss, to remove his tie one day, and venture the announcement, that 'The only route to May 18th is Yes. If you decide to vote No, May 18 you shall see, but shall never reach.'

He would be right. Somebody had decided to trick the entire votedom---- deciding that no provision shall be made on the democratic calendar for a No vote. If No wins, we are not prepared for it.

But I am glad all things went the other way. Or else arguments would start afresh, as to whether *wansams* should be represented this time, shoe shine boys, groundnut sellers, etc., and as to whether chiefs should bring their *akyeame* to the consultative assembly. In that case, the Bar Association would change their mind and decide to rub shoulders with the Chop Bar Keepers Association. We would then have a new set of constitution makers, who would not be sure 'what went wrong.'

This referendum is the only one in which political opponents were not sure whether they were enemies after all. In the good old days, the idea was to make sure the stand you took on any issue contradicted your enemy's position. But then we were in a situation where allies and opponents alike sang the same chorus, except that the ballot paper forgot to ask the voter to explain his Yes vote. Whereas the Government people would say Yes because we want to continue chopping, the Against people would say Yes because we in a hurry to also come and chop." No would have been a disaster for both parties.

For all you know, the electoral boss could look for a fitting April 1<sup>st</sup> one of these days and announce on TV and Radio that we got it all wrong and that the Yes vote which was overwhelming,

was rather the answer to the question, 'Do you reject the Draft Constitution?' In which case, the yes shall be no and the no shall be yes.

Tuesday's episode should be embarrassing to whoever is the electoral boss and all his disciples. If it were Kwabena Nkrumah Middle School in Akim Achiase, they would all have been caned. It would just be a matter of inviting four big boys, and asking them to lay the electoral team and all those they succeeded. Four lashes on their bare buttocks. The cane would be applied by Mrs Mary Grant, Headmistress of the Achiase school. The big lady (plus Mr Grant) couldn't exercise her Yes vote... her name was missing in the register. Then of course the question of the wrong polling stations.

The electoral team could just have announced on the eve of the voting that, "Registered voters should vote at polling stations where they did not register. If you registered at Station A, avoid it on the voting day. If you have not been able to trace your name by 3 pm, begin singing:

Referendum time....referendum time,

You have to sacrifice your vote

With your energy,

With all bitterness

*For your vote is your sorrow*

For your vote is your Woes.'

I was lucky my name was found at long last. It was not at its normal address. After its disappearance had been announced in the Lost and Found column, I was lucky to find it stuck in between two Kwesis. 'You are lucky,' threatened the polling assistant. He made the sign of a cross on the nail of my right thumb, pressed my left thumb on what looked like a Quink ink pad, then gave me a ballot paper. I looked over my shoulder to see if my privacy was assured, and sneaked into confinement. The problem was with the proximity of the two symbols, and also the traces of palm soup on my right thumb. I had taken a referendum palm soup at the Shell Station on the Circle -Caprice Road. Thus between the referendum ink and the palm soup exhibit, one could very well determine which was constitutional; for while my referendum thumb registered in one direction, my souped thumb print registered elsewhere.

*Nowhere in sight were the foreign electoral spies who had come all the way to ensure that we did not fight during the voting. For whatever reason we decided to invite them, their presence flatters me not. It means for all these years, the White Nosed still has to come and supervise, to make sure we have put his money to good use. Sorry, but please let them stay away in November, for the short nosed is capable of managing his own affairs..... hurrraaaaaay!*

Those gentlemen must have burst out into a prolonged ha-ha-ha on the return trip, *The short-nosed is capable of mismanaging democracy*. If this is a foreshadow of November, then let the polling

officers be prepared to put on a thick headpad, carry the ballot box with a broom in the left hand, then head towards the outskirts of Akim Achiase.

## The Ballot Box Image

12

### MAY GREETINGS

If you are not sure what item is in season, travel along the Accra-Winneba or Aflao road. At Mendskrom, you don't need to be chief executive at Mangola, to realise that mangoes are in season. That only means all drivers will stop there, and make sure that passengers have sufficiently mangoed their lips, dresses and all.

Similarly, you only need to eat at Onyame Bekyere Chop Bar at Nsawam, to realise that this is the housefly season, the season where you apply division of labour in your eating habits. You use the right hand to cut the fufu morsel, while the left stands by to clear fly intruders-in other words, the left becomes your provisional defence organ.

Yam is out of season, but sugarcane is around to strengthen your jaws in your provisional defence organ. preparation for May 18. Grasscutter appears to be off season, but it has arranged with snails to take temporary control of your bowl---leaving behind the note, 'will be back soon.' The problem with snails, of course, is that when they are in season, all school boys and girls in the Ashanti-Akim district realise that snailhunting could be more lucrative than politics. They stand by the wayside, not to wave at a passing politician, but to wave a bunch of snails at the palm Soup addict.

Also a season for bad roads. The rains have conspired with bad contractors to give the impression that but for nature's tears, all would be well. Visit Agona Swedru one of these days on your way to my holy hamlet to buy coconut. One bad contractor called Sefa, or something of that sort, was given a contract several years ago, to pave parts of the main road and reconstruct the drainage---one part near the Chapel Square, and the other close to the UAC. He decided to use his children and other school girls as his labour force, and has transformed those portions into the most

prickly backyards ever. Drivers labour through those stretches in pain, break their axles, lose their wheel caps, and deplete their precious tyres, all for a callous contractor. That man has to be instantly arrested if he still has the contract!

Also a season for greetings. I do not, of course, refer to your type of greetings, whereby you greet Kwadwo Maame every morning because you live nextdoor. It is a season where people travel, travel and greet, and come back to sit in their palaces to await return greetings.

It is probably the way our culture made it, and that is why custodians of our culture-nananom-are showing the way.

In the past week, nananom have temporarily vacated their stools, and started their seasonal pilgrimage to the Castle. I have so far counted three successive visits, all receiving front page honours. First were Kete Krachi chiefs. They said they were returning a recent visit of the Your Highness, during which he had commissioned their power station. For this, they had felt concerned enough to come a-a-a-a-all the way to say thank you. Apparently, nananom did get the opportunity to say a quick thank you immediately after the event. Their guest was probably in a hurry to return. Tradition then requires a royal delegation, and a long journey, and a linguist's staff, before a befitting thank you is conveyed.

That was not all. Just as nananom had reached the Castle gates after the thank you, they remembered an important message, for which an instant retreat was crucial. This addendum was a long shopping list for which they needed help from Your Highness: accommodation for those displaced by the Volta Lake, ferrying of yam across the Lake, cold store for fish, scholarships for school children, etc.

Next day, a visit by Northern Volta region chiefs. They did not come under false pretences. They went straight to the point: the conspicuous and total neglect of their part of the region, lack of motorable roads, potable water, etc. The third royal visitors came in mourning regalia, and had no time for shopping.

If the rate of royal visits is not slowed down by the traffic police at the Castle-Osu intersection, there is the danger of a royal traffic jam at the Castle. come May 18. A delegation from Trede is likely to follow, and another from Pankrono, and Suhum-Kraboia-Coaltar. The strategy is two-fold. First, to beat the mid-May deadline, after which Your Highness will be too busy on the wings of a swallow. Secondly, if you want a favour from your boss, ask him at a time he cannot say no.

“Sir, the chiefs and people of my traditional area send you their greetings. They say this coming May 18, and thereafter, the right hand will wash the left, and the left will wash the right; so I should tell you to come and supply them with mangoes and repair their leaking KVIP. They say if you come, it's good, if you don't come too, hmmm.”

Or. "Greetings to Your Highness. The chiefs and people of my village, who last week voted for your yes face, say they greet you from the bottom of their.... their.... bottom. They say how is your leg? My people are praying, fasting, and cola-chewing, until Mid-May....but it all depends on the condition of their roads by then. If you come and do it, it's good; if you don't come and do it too, they say hmmmm.”

So it was then that by the time the royal visits were over, wedding promises had been made, and nananom and their retinue returned home, congratulating themselves on their good sense of timing.

So then, why don't I follow nananom's ahenema steps, and quickly put a plea across to Your Highness before the door is shut and it is said, I hear thee not. Incidentally, I come from a place where the population has determined a number of things for a considerable while.

"Sir, Greetings, how is your leg and how was the May Day? Do you realise how open and critical the workers were during last Friday's parade, speaking their minds openly on their placards even in Wa, where the regional boss has since been fired? Hmmm. In certain capitals, they refused to show up. In other places, they walked out on regional secretaries for the first time.....

"But sir, greetings again, as for the KVIP in y holy hamlet, it has not started leaking yet, and as soon as it starts, I will come on a pilgrimage with Nana Amoakwa-Boadu and his Okyeame Teacher Essel. The matter on my mind today, is what I heard on my visit to a police cell just a few days ago. That day, anti-riot police had visited there earlier hoping students would go on demonstration so they could talk to them with their clubs. I saw a pile of truncheons there, and straw shields. But we shall come to this topic at a future date.

"I visited this gentleman who has been detained for two years now without charge! With a Fourth Republic coming, I am sure you will be interested in how many such people are in Ghana today. Amnesty on Kwashiga and Friends means nothing, if non-political prisoners have languished in cells for twenty four months without trial." Here are his own words:

*I was at accountant at the Agric Development Bank in Cape Coast. I was arrested on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1990 in a case involving a C38.6 million loan my Bank gave to a customer. I am in cell here with my Manager. We were arrested together with the customer, but the latter has since been freed. I was first detained at BNI for three weeks, then taken to the Police Information Bureau for days. I have been in Legon cells here since June 25<sup>th</sup> 1990.*

*The BNI eventually charged me with the 'intent to sabotage the economy of Ghana. 'That was as recent as last month, soon after the BBC and one newspaper had given a hint of my story. Even so, I have been asked by the BNI to provide a security in the form of a building in Accra or Kumasi, valued at C20 million, before I could be granted bail.*

"Sir. greetings again, but it means this gentleman who has a wife and four children, has been deprived of his human rights for two good years. He is possibly one out of several... and I thought I should let you know before you get too busy. Can you please give your Interior Secretary a call, and ask him to check what is happening. When he goes to Legon Police Station, he will see a middle-aged gentleman with sideburns... he has lost considerable weight, and may be seen chatting with the policemen, or probably playing draught. When your Secretary goes there, let him shout 'Mr. Joseph Addai Tonto!' and he will respond. He comes from Kodie in Ashanti. By the way, the name of his hometown means Eagle...

"Sir, that day I visited the police also had a case on their hands, which we were discussing together. A fifty-five year old woman visited the police station, asking for accommodation for the

night. She had gone to look for her husband's friend, a security guard at Presec, and could not trace him, then had walked to Trinity College, to no avail, and was planning to go and look for her husband at GNTC Bottling Department the next day... Meanwhile, it was eight in the evening. She had nowhere else to lay her head, and had come to plead for police custody. Sir if this had happened to her close to Osu, I am sure she would have brought a delegation of chiefs to say, 'GREETINGS. I have no where to lay my head, and I need transitional housing. If you give me, it's good, if you don't give me too, I say Hmmmmmmmmmm."

### 13

#### **ELIZABETH ASANTEWA: KWAME'S HERITAGE**

Whoever made the announcement on the air inviting the public to attend at 7 am the official opening of the Kwame Nkrumah gardens and the reinterment of Nkrumah's remains, ignored to add: Eat breakfast before coming.

But perhaps, the omission was intended..... After all, it was going to be a kind of funeral, and knowing that serious mourners often abstain from food.... to demonstrate their anguish, why not? It was not an occasion where food sellers were expected to be hovering around. If there were any hawkers, perhaps sellers of cola nut or ginger, the kind of food that would enhance your grief.

Yet I was expecting another group to be in full attendance, singing dirges: all of Nkrumah's appendages and 'heritagers,' welfarers, youngsters, octos, 'comrades,' political children, and ideological grand nephews who are all currently claiming rights to succession and custody of his legacy. Even so, the few 'heritagers' and 'orphans' I saw around, did not appear to me to be fasting. They grinned in satisfaction and belched from time to time, a sign that they had had early morning kenkey.

Unforewarned that mourners could eat a little something before coming, I left home at 8 am on an empty stomach, hoping it would be a short ceremony. At 8.30, the entire High Street was jammed, hard to penetrate except for VIPs, diplomatic corps and invited guests. These only had to show their invitation cards, and that was it. And who was I to have one? I joined the people's queue, which was about half a kilometer long, and crawled along, step by step until the line stopped forever.

What eventually earned me entry through the gates was a trick I played. Close to the gate, I saw a group of eight or so tourists, who were being allowed in from outside the queue. "Allow the white people to come in," I overheard soldier. So then, as they trooped in, I hid among them posing as a white man, and entered.

The mmoborowa, verandah boys, bare footed, and *kelewele* eaters, even though these were the true heirs of Nkrumah's heritage, were left behind the gates, several hundreds of them, and it was not surprising some forced their way in, and others started booing at us. We deserved it.

The attendance was extraordinary; the mood, pomp and pageantry, beyond compare. Musketry, wailing flutes and horns, dirges, appellations, the throb of fontomfrom-no small business. The world was there: diplomatic corps, members of PNDC, Secretaries-of-State, Sam Nujoma, Oliver Tambo, wife of Malcolm X, Nkrumah's family. In their midst stood a magnificent statue of Kwame pointing into the future, designed by Don Arthur, a splendidpiece of art. Then also was the monument, a half tree.... thanks to the explanation of Attuquaye Okai, representing Nkrumah's unfinished business, interrupted when it had barely started.

The 'interrupters,' of course, were in full attendance, but thanks to Dr. Francis Nkrumah (Kwame's eldest son) when he delivered his tribute. "t's time for reconciliation," he said. But for this call, a small funeral drama wouldn't have been bad at all for this transition period.

What, for instance, would have happened, if during the ceremony a booming voice with a nasal twang, had interrupted proceedings with a short memo through the microphone: "Will all those transitional masqueraders hiding behind my face and others who denounced me, please stand up and shiver..... Today July 1st, I am going to lay my icy hands on all of you, so that tomorrow too...."

That would have resulted in a mass burial event in Awudome, upon which mass tomb would be inscribed: CPP, Together We Fall. Forward Never, Quarrel Ever.

A few days before, I had attended a symposium in Legon by one of the several competing factions, the People's Heritage Party, and I overheard one contributor referring to the impending reinterment ceremony as an event which should have been truly theirs, but for which the Government was taking undue credit, because the Nkrumah front was divided. But the division hurts them a lot, and in a chat with General Erskine, a leading member of Heritage, after that symposium, he passionately repeated what he had earlier said on stage: "We shall consider teaming up with the Danquah-Busia group, if the need arises."

But as I sat amongst the teeming mourners, that was not exactly what I had on my mind. Perhaps, I was too busy listening to people's comments here and there. "Where is Limann?" Somebody asked. It was hard to tell since the crowd was thick. Later, somebody said he saw Botsio.

Who is Malcolm X?" A lady asked behind me when wife of the late Malcolm X, black American civil rights leader, was invited to convey her tribute. Her tribute was brief and to the point, but she drew uncharitable comments from around when she goofed at the beginning of her

address. She referred to our Head of State as 'Major-Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings.' I quickly cross checked from my American guest if that was the American equivalent of Flt-Lt, and she said no.

Then when PNDC members were walking behind the pall bearers towards the crypt into which the coffin was lowered, a comment on Mrs. Mary Grant from someone behind: "*Aberewa no oye adze paa (That old lady is very good)*". Very soon, I heard a commotion at the extreme end of our row. The security men appeared to be having a hard time, trying to restrain what looked like an intruder. It was a lady in her mid-forties, weeping, and surrounded by the military police. "Allow me, I want to go and meet Rawlings, I want to see Rawlings," she rattled in Twi as Jerry gave his address. She was disallowed. The solemn ceremony over (after 4 or so hungry hours), I had the chance to talk to the woman.

Before then, however, I overheard another woman in hefty verbal exchanges with the police. She was cursing in Ewe. She had attempted to confront Kojo Tsikata, and had been restrained by the security, so then the police bore the brunt of her anger. It was not easy to tell who among the attempted assailants needed psychiatric help, but this woman appeared to have a story. She had some documents in her hands.

Her story? She had an axe to grind with the PNDC member because he had authorised certain withdrawals from her bank account at Hohoe. It was not clear which Tsikata she was aiming at. For, whereas it was Kojo T she pointed at, it was Tsatsu T whose name had been written by hand behind one of the documents. The woman appeared to have defaulted payment on a loan she took, and was being penalised with deductions from her account. This she could not take, and blamed Kojo T for her plight. It was, of course, hard to tell if she wasn't a patient who could do with some help, but for all you know she could be very normal, and was pouring her frustrations, rightly or wrongly on the PNDC member.

During such public events, many such incidents occur, and for a government which has been around for eleven years, their fanatics may be many, and so may be those anxious to settle scores.

But I went back to the other woman, who by this time had been besieged by a crowd. That woman's dream was to meet Rawlings.

"I have attempted entering the Castle several times to see him, but I have been disallowed each time," her face was soaked in tears. But she appeared to have a story to tell, or so it looked. She had difficulty in walking, and appeared to be supported on the left by a plastic leg. One health worker at Korle Bu, called Asante, helped her as she hobbled along in tears.

"On 8th February 1963, I was a Young Pioneer marching with my colleagues at the Accra Sports Stadium, when Nkrumah arrived and I was asked to present him with a bouquet. Just as I turned to leave after presenting it, there was an explosion. A sudden force lifted me up and smashed me against the floor. I felt my leg in flames; my hand was also set ablaze. I was rushed to the 37 Military Hospital, by which time my left leg was gone up to the knee. My right leg wasn't safe

either. A bullet was lodged in it. It destroyed my bone, and a metal support was inserted in it. I was in 37 for a year, and was sent to London for treatment at Queen Mary's Hospital."

Miss Asantewa said when she returned from London, she learned to sew up to a point, and then stopped.

"Nkrumah then invited me to the Castle and promised me housing, a job, everything I needed. It was soon after that Nkrumah went to Hanoi and never returned. Later, the problem started again, and my leg started to rot. One Dr Accorley at 37 recommended I be sent again to London, and I was. I was there this time for 5 months. The Acheampong Government also sent me again to London. Let me say, General Acheampong did a lot for me, and arranged for a house to be built for me at Akwapim Mampong, where I come from. The foundation was started, but I heard someone collected the money and spent it.

"I have attempted to enter the Castle several times and report the matter to Rawlings, but in vain. As I speak now, I am jobless and almost homeless. My roof is leaking, my electricity is disconnected... thieves broke into my room at Dansoman and made away with all I have. "So, I thought this was the best opportunity I had, to tell the story to Rawlings, since after all, it is Nkrumah's remains being reinterred today."

Asantewa wept and tottered her way towards the Tema Station.

She was hobbling towards the 4th Republic.

To those fighting over Nkrumah's heritage: Asantewa's plight is something to be scrambled for.

## 14

### CHAT WITH A FIFTY-GENARIAN

Since that grey bearded man, living next to the Castle composed those famous words, the dictionary in my house has disappeared. "Daddy wo is an octogenarian?" Kojo T may not have intended it, but he has composed a phrase that attracts the label, "Not for Children."

The word octogenarian is now a political vocabulary, and so is any word with that ending. So therefore if I say I had a chat with a teenagenarian, you must be referring to a teenage politician.

In a single breath, Captain T had sought to tell politicians that if you are 80 and above, and you have been recycled, 'go and sin here no more.' He did not say a word on octogenarians who have not been recycled, nor on recycled politicians who are not octogenarians. But as soon as he had spoken those words, all politicians started looking for their birth certificates, just in case the

Electoral Commissioner would ask a few questions about the First World War. Just as well the speech was made away from Keta. If Kojo T had spoken those words in his holy hamlet, he would probably have been chased away with an octo-walking stick: Bad boy.

Until those words were spoken, the practice of recycling was considered one of the most effective means of economising on scarce resources. Apart from the well-known recycled products (paper, plastic, bottle, etc), I sometimes appreciate the attempt at recycling made by domestic goats, and other ruminants, in their attempt to save the environment. At their leisure hours, even when at rest, they are suddenly seen chewing the cud (brought back from first stomach into the mouth); and that would be several hours after the grass lunch. Whenever goats go on a hunger strike, think twice before you join them. If you do, never ask them 'what are you chewing.' or 'is there a kitchen in your stomach?'

To date, if we decide to poke our noses into the affairs of some of neighbours, we will realise that we have the two extremes on this west coast: an octogenarian 'monarch' next door, and a twenty-genarian one, who recently visited us. If young Capt. Strasser decides to visit Yamoussoukro one of these days, he'd better not think he is visiting another colleague, for he is likely to be sent on errands by his grandpagenarian, who will also cane him or warn him to be of un-coup behaviour

I have realised of late that it has become a fashion for all newly announced political parties, to make sure that during their press conferences, wisegenarian is lurking somewhere around the table, or else the party would be taken as a serious one. And vice versa. Any party press conference that sports only the octos on the high table, could well be asked whether they are planning towards 2000 B.C.

## ;IIMAGE - RECYCLED OCTOGENARIANS

Recently, there have been so many political cock fights you probably have lost track. One party has decided among themselves to quietly fight indoors, so that in case of any injuries, the victims are quietly treated at the Safo Adu Clinic. Not so with Nkrumah's grandchildren. T Those people are show boys and must therefore stage open fights, where the victims with show mouths are rushed to Korle Bu in the midst of a nurses' strike. To date, there are so many Nkrumah groups you could easily find yourself at the wrong inauguration: "which Nkrumah group are you..... the one with a red cock, peacock, or cocktail." The latest political pet is probably the hen. This domestic animal has been so politicised that, to enter the poultry business now is to enter the political race.

It was first the red cock, and when it was banned, the mother hen and its chickens. Then the chickens began fighting. One chicken called Limann, broke away and formed his party, PNC, and as soon as he had broken away was sacked by his grandfathers, who have formed the NIP. Then

of course are the various other Nkrumahs---People's Heritage, the NCCN people, and several others. Nkrumah indeed walks in multiple ways. The confusion is so great, I recently met two Nkrumaists from Adeiso, Kwadwo Baah and one other, who have asked me to tell the world how the several fragments of Nkrumah are confusing their eyes.

A few days ago, I picked on a fifty-genarian, breakaway Hilla Limann, and visited his home at Nungua. He had previously explained his breakaway at a press conference, where he had accused Afro Gbede of dictatorship. The former president of Ghana was returning to national politics after an eleven year break. During the period he was out, he had been enskinned as chief in his holy hamlet, Gwollu, in the Upper West region. I was puzzled about Limman's return, and my first question was to the point.

When did the idea occur to you to return to national politics?

"The idea never occurred to me at any particular time; I have never stopped thinking of it. Having been Head of Government, Head of State, Leader of a party, you can never at anytime say you are no more going into politics. There has never been anytime I have decided not to do politics. I have been available all the time. The only restricting factor was the ban on party politics, which has been lifted."

My puzzlement did not end.

You recently abdicated your chiefship in Gwollu, Upper West; can you comment on this?

"The Consultative Assembly decided to include chieftaincy among the list of offices, from which the occupant should resign if he wants to contest elections for parliament. Parliament is the basic requirement for other things, and since I am interested in entering the presidential race, I had to give up the chiefship. So I went home at Easter to make the arrangements. Even when I accepted the chiefship, I pointed out to them that I would not leave national politics. I don't think I should leave the national scene and come and stay in a village as a chief."

Is Limann's chiefship position completely relinquished? I asked this question, to find out if he was aware of the ritual dangers in the political game.....just in case.... His reply demonstrated an awareness.

"In areas where there is competition, it is completely relinquished, but where there is no competition, it would still be waiting."

You recently came out to form your own party. People wonder whether you believe you can do it and with without the 'family.'

I have never said I can go it alone, or I would like to go it alone. I know rather that certain associations can lose votes for you. Those associations are the things I wanted to shed off. Those who now claim they have sacked me are vote losers. They themselves know it very well. There are a number of people who have formed parties now who would have formed parties with me, if had come out earlier. But because of my association with those other people, they couldn't come to me. They were wondering why I had associated with old politicians. You see, I didn't go back to them. It's some chiefs who came persuade me, in an attempt to bring about unity; what the

underlying plans were, they didn't tell me. I found out gradually, I have always been open minded, but I also study and piece things together. If I am convinced of any particular line of approach, I take it, no matter the consequences. So I know that the family will never be united. But the family is shedding vote losers, that is them.

"I told them that virtually teenagers have ruled this country for eleven years. They would like to continue to rule the country with Rawlings, so if there is no viable alternative, the youth do not know anything about 1949, they know younger politicians."

Are you convinced those Octogenarians were going to offer themselves? "Well, one of them never hid his ambitions. But even if they didn't want to offer themselves, they had people they wanted to promote. They wanted to use me as a vote catcher, and then later discard me, and use somebody else. This is very immoral, to say the least. Why should I offer myself, use my energy, my name, my record, to pave the way, and you discard me at Congress?"

Have there been further developments since your breakway?

"They were taken by surprise, and in that mood, they have made utterances, which make any coming back together impossible. Making those utterances has forced me to make similar utterances. They said they had dismissed me, but I was not in their employment. I was spending on them; they were not spending a penny on me."

You are clearly the leader of PNC, do you hope to become the President of Ghana the second time"

"Why not? Rawlings is in his second time. Why should people always think a civilian coming the second time is anything different from Rawlings coming the second time? But even for civilians, Milton Obote was back the second time, so why not?

Does it also mean that since you have been Head of State and President, it makes it virtually impossible for you to serve in any subordinate position? "That is true," said Hilla Limann. "It is not just me; it is the normal thing in life. For eleven years now, I have not been working, and the problem is a moral issue. I have become head of state, and I have done no private business by myself; I have no competence in that, so how do I get employment? I cannot work under anybody. It's not possible.

PNC - EYE KUBE

## SOUSSOUDICIOUS AFFAIRS

You were probably wondering why you didn't hear kwatriotic news last week, and were probably alarmed by a possible discovery of a cache of catapults, stones, scissors, pen knives, and other ammunitions in my kitchen cabinet.

I can assure you, dear reader, that if whoever was sent to locate the house of Michael Soussoudis had mistakenly entered my kitchen, he would have realised that the nearest ammunition for a coup d'état in my house is not a pistol, but a pestle, occasionally brandished by the 31st December woman if you come home late.

But I blame Michael Soussoudis. He too soon wanted to celebrate the tenth anniversary of his James Bond adventures, that turned him into a romance hero of international repute. But a revolution is not a tea party, it is an eagle party. So then, in the final analysis, it will be realised that the light skinned man they arrested will after all not be put before court for harbouring arms. He will probably be referred to his grandmother to advise him. *Hei Mike, Kpo nyuie loo; kpo nyuie.* If he is put before court, Quarshiegah will visit the court room, and proclaim, "Petition please, point of order. In this country in which we live in it, some people are triable, others are untriable."

You see, if the authorities decide to try Efo Mike, the congestion at the courtroom will put to shame the May 15th trial, for the man will talk, the man will really talk, and the judge if he is wise, will decide that since this transition is a tricky one, hearing will continue in chambers, or rather in chamber pots, just as in 1979 the rest of the Unigov ballots were counted in chambers, or rather in chamber pots.

So then, here comes Michael face to face with a law he has probably not broken. The arms in his possession were not a secret, according to observers. They were brought *fiidi fiidi* into his chambers, and legally put under his care, usable whenable. Times are so rough that the tortoise sometimes does not want to reveal its vulnerable points, so why shouldn't arms be hidden by authorities, soussoudiciously? So why do you arrest him for keeping guns on your behalf?

The whole event may be a good April Fool in the month of July, and the

police have already given a clue. They have given bail to Michael and Co.----- men arrested in possession of heavy armoury. From reliable sources, the arms seized under Mike's roof, would have been enough for a three hour intensive operation; and if he had known of the dawn swoop, he could easily have wiped out the entire arresting contingent. In a country where preventive detention disallows bails and trials for some people, here we are with such a dangerous man having been let loose on the Castle, by a bail. This bail then, should have been announced alongside a curfew.

*All children should go to bed at 6pm, for Michael and Co. are on bail.* Children would then scamper helter skelter, closing at twelve noon at school, and running for their dear lives. For all you know, however, Michael may be a lover of children. He is probably a member of the National Commission on Children.

But such is politics, and such is Kweku Ananse.

One day, Kweku Ananse went to steal yam from the farm of his father-in-law, but was caught by a trap laid by his father-in-law. Caught in the snares, Ananse began singing a tune, telling the world that he who would release him from the trap would be rewarded. A hunter overheard Ananse, and went to his aid, but Clever Kweku turned the problem around, and the benevolent hunter found his legs in the trap, while Kweku Ananse walked home a free man. So children, this my anansesem I have told; if it is sweet, if it is not sweet, take a bit away, and bring the rest.

You see, as soon as the National Democratic Congress (NDC) was officially inaugurated at the Centre for National Culture in Accra last month, I knew palavaaa i go come. Here was a party that was using the name of our sacred Castle in vain, without permission, and under false pretences. That inauguration was like a meeting of the committee of secretaries, and all it needed would have been a P.V. to say, "May somebody move that the minutes be accepted." Okaija Adamafo would have moved, and Huudu Yahaya would have seconded the motion.

But who are you to say the Electoral Law had been violated? Huudu and Okaija would have replied that the law does not forbid secretaries from being among a large political congregation and keeping quiet; and that so long as they were not seen applauding, smiling, chanting a slogan, or singing like an eagle, all was well. That inauguration mentioned Issifu Ali as Interim Chairman of NDC (I nearly said Chairman of PNDC), and listed a number of groups as having united to form the NDC. The groups included the Eagle Club, but excluded the eagle brothers who, like the Lumba Brothers, derive their harmony from their numbers.

Michael was a very visible eagle, who was not there; Capt. Okai was another, and several others.

These decided that they, with their bird, were not part of the NDC. They were forming the Eagle Party independently. In any case, they needed Rawlings as their leader, and not the entire PNDC, and that some PNDC secretaries were corrupt, and would be a liability in the Eagle's Party. PNDC secretaries could join the Eagle Party only when they have declared their assets.

A few days after, something unusual happened. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs, rather than prepare for the arrival of Sam Nujoma and Oliver Tambo, 'posed' as an NDC secretary for offence, led the police to storm the headquarters of the Eagles, evicted them in the process, and took over the premises.

Some arrests were made.

Since all this while, no voice of authority has hollered to denounce Obed, I on behalf of the masses, cry FOUL! **Obed Asamoah is still a secretary of state engaging in party politics against the electoral law. Or the Government and law enforcement agencies will not**

**discipline him, Justice Ofori Boateng please 'catch' Obed Asamoah. If the rules allow, put him in the place of Soussoudis.**

And as I was saying, As I was saying.....NDC and the Eagles Party are at each other's throat. Efo Michael, meanwhile, has a few dangerous playthings, given to him before the fight. So now that a fight has been declared, how dare you ask Efo to peacefully surrender these playthings in his custody? The chances are that he will say, "Over my dead body." Alternatively, those dangerous toys could land in the hands of an enemy, who could decide that, all that Ghana needs is a transitional dawn broadcast. *So then, fellow countrymen, I have come to the studio this transitional morning, to say that as for January Seven you will see, but will never reach.*

To avoid this, and to clip the Eagle's wings, why don't we pretend Efo Mike is illegally holding dangerous toys? Let's catch him and his rebellious eagles. That is the only way we can sleep at dawn, that is the only way the NDC can sleep and snore, and that is the only way to put the fear of God into the Eagle. The next day, for all you know, the bird out of fright and insecurity will come and perch on the shoulders of NDC, and it shall be said, welcome home

prodigal bird.

But I better speak in whispers, lest I be accused of writing soussoudiciously, in other words harbouring dangerous words in my pen, with the intent of causing injury to my eagles-in-law.

O what a soussocoudicious world!

## 16

### AKONTA'S DEPARTURE

Within the past week that I have been window-shopping for party symbols, I have been wondering how many oldmen and oldwomen would like to vote for a roasted corn they cannot chew. Kwaku Boateng's NCP forgot to add the INEC warning: OUR CORN CAN BE DANGEROUS TO THE TOOTHLESS.

TRY PORRIDGE.

Similarly, the National Democratic Congress umbrella has already scared off several nonsmokers. They say the multi coloured umbrella remind them Rothmans and Embassy umbrella displays at beer bars, whereupon the necessary caution should have been added: *The Ministry of Health has determined that this cigarette umbrella can be dangerous to your health.*

Then comes Harry Sawyer's NGA, with the symbol of a map of Ghana. with two people lifting it or what? It's not too clear, but from a distance it looks like two diarrhoea patients squatting under the map. The elephant symbol of NPP needs salvation too; already, the cheap red colour in it has

faded, But no symbol has been disgraced like the eagle. It dropped dead from a single earth tremor----- kukrudu. The eaglecide was committed last weekend, the result of the Kukrudu congress.

That single fraudulent act by the Eagles is the beginning of their end. Their T-shirts with the Eagle bird on it, have found their way to Tema station by now. The bird they are going to display now is called coof, an obscure bird of prey, while their party is Eagle. This latter word in Anlo language, my brother Wahala tells me, refers to a poisonous snake that lives in trees. The party then could as well change their symbol to a poisonous snake! From the way the Eagles have already started rigging words, spellings, and birds, the INEC should watch our ballot papers!

But I shouldn't probably blame the Eagle poachers. The Kukrudu congress at Legon last weekend could have prevented any smuggled bird from safelanding. The crowd was simply scary, almost a carnival. The Legon campus has not seen anything like that for some time now. If anybody had hovered around with a helicopter, he would have mistaken it for the beginning of NAFAC in Kumasi. And what would have happened, if in the midst of all that euphoria, Mr Da Rocha in the chair had announced that the whole congress was one big April fool.

"Ladies, gentlemen, presidential aspirants, perspirants, deodorants, and other KVIPs, uh, uh, uh, it seems there is an error here, and I must apologise for that. Sorry, but this congress is really not an NPP congress, as previously announced. Indeed, ladies, gentlemen, and KVIPs, get ready; for in the next minute, we are going to be addressed by, by, by, by ..... the sole presidential aspirant or perspirant of the National Democratic Congress. Please give him a standing ovation."

Whereupon the crowd instead of a standing ovation, would most probably have attempted a squatting ovation.

But if he had ventured there, he would have been most welcome, I guess.

After all, General Quainoo was there and would most likely have shared his seat with them. But I would probably have invited him to join us bystanders and listen to a message that was being sent through me, by a Kukrudu wornan.

"Please, write it in your column when you go. *Ma ink nkomu*. Tell him that these words are from me. My name is Efua Tekyiwa of Tema, Alias Danger, No smoking, Highly Inflammable. I want you to tell him that No matter how big the testes, it cannot be the equal of hernia.' We have planted a seedling from the neck of the tree, can it bear any fruits? Tell him also that if he has finished paying fifteen cedis to the *yoke gari* woman, for which reason he came, he better leave now,. after all, he came because of the *yoke gari*."

"Kukrudu," chanted a passer-by.

"*Akonta beko*" Tekyiwa responded.

But the war of words was more intra-party than anything else. Adu Boahen's supporters were waiting in the forecourt with placards, and when he stepped out of the Hall, at about 11.30 am on Friday with his wife besides him, (on the first day of the Congress) you realised instantly that this is the kind of moment all wives are waiting for. It was clear he was going to win. The crowd in the yard went wild with joy, and I noted some of the chanted comments.

"Where was Safo Adu in those days? It is too late. Adu Boahen has loosened the tongue of the dumb, now the dumb can also speak. Adu, you have done well."

"After hot soup has cooled off, the half lipped also drinks," said another.

Then a group of young men chanting at the gate. "The whole thing is Professor to Professor. How can a professor hand over to a mister or doctor. It is from mister to mister, doctor to doctor, professor to professor. From Professor Busia to Professor Adu Boahen; it's very simple."

In the centre of the courtyard stood Safo Adu's notice board-garnished with portraits from his album.... as a medical doctor, as a minister, with his wife, etc. In one of the weekly tabloids also was Adu Boahen with his wife, receiving their marriage certificate, to denote that contrary to popular speculation, they are not mere concubines to each other.

The whole politics of presidential marriage is as if to suggest that a president without a wife has no experience in problem management. In 1979, one presidential 'perspirant' was apparently stampeded into a hurried: "I hereby pronounce you temporary wife and concubine."

In our next constitution, towards the fifth republic, I won't be surprised to find a clause inserted to the effect that, the President of Ghana shall be a man with at least ten years experience in wife management.

But the joy of the Congress was the healthy rivalry displayed among supporters of the various perspirants. It was nice to hear the supporting speeches of the losers, when the verdict was announced. No hard feelings, even though it was clear, each of them was going home to cry constitutionally.

My only worry was what happened the day after. During the thanksgiving service the next day, two of the defeated perspirants were nowhere to be found in the pews. Safo Adu did not respond to God's Kukrudu call, and so did Dzane Selby. The two were mourning democratically somewhere.

In the next few years, it may take a little more cement bagging by Addison, and prescription filling by Safo Adu, to even up. For the latter, I am very sure the Law will make his face to shine upon him, and spare him a Government appeal. In the final analysis, he will probably learn his lessons. When you win a court case over Government, take to your heels and celebrate quietly in your clinic, for it is said he who has *been pronounced innocent does not overstay in the palace*.

But it's hard to tell who exactly caused the sensation at the Kukrudu congress. When the news was broken, there was near confusion. That was Friday night. It was probably false, but it's hard to tell who started the rumour. A JSS school boy who was asked to write the message must have mixed it up. Instead of writing, **Akonta Reigns**, he mistakenly inserted an 's' between the letters and 'i'. So the message instead read: **Akonta Resigns**.

At the Congress, the news spread through the closed doors to the delegates, and I could imagine the confusion written in the faces of the Kukrudu presidential perspirants, unsure whether to celebrate or mourn. For people were apparently unsure whether the resignation was in preparation for a contest or it was in response to the Kukrudu slogan, *Akonta beko*.

Had the great Kukrudu congress succeeded in persuading him to fold up ahead of time? In the light of all this then, what would have happened if the Chairman of Kukrudu, had stood up once again, cleared his throat, and greeted the delegates with the following:

"Ladies and gentlemen, aspirants, perspirants, deodorants, and KVIPS, I have just got the information that the great leader at the Castle, Akonta.....has resigned.

"Akonta indeed has been impressed by our Congress. He has therefore resigned to contest on the ticket of Kukruduuuuuuu."

17

### REJOINDERS TO KWATRIOT

I read with keen interest last two week's edition of Woes of a Kwatriot. To say the least, the language and style of the popular columnist in (sic) beginning to sound and look more of the tabloid type than something for the Mirror, an otherwise respected national paper.

To my mind Dr Kwesi Yankah attacks on the present Head of State has become too monotonous. Maybe the new idea behind the column is to give dog a bad name just to hang it. And like Professor Adu Boahen who publicly stated that he had named his dog after Fit-Lt Rawlings, Dr Yankah too has abandoned social decency. Such is the nature of freedom of expression. Otherwise what is the meaning

By the way is the NPP an Ashanti Party? Otherwise what is the meaning of the references to the husband of the first lady as *Akonta*? I am afraid I am beginning to see the re-emergence of the politics that characterised the NLM and *Matemeho* days.

But rest assured that in the long run, *Asew Besu*

Evelyn Anthony (Mrs.)

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I am disappointed by the latest anti-NDC slogan coined by the NPP. I am a Non-Ashanti and believe in what the NPP stands for, but the slogan *Akonta besi fam*, as reported by Kwatriot in his column last two weeks seems to imply that the NPP has no place for the non-Ashantis.

What I understand by the slogan is that Ashantis have a quarrel with their in-law, Chairman Rawlings and that is why his Government must go.

Well, I am not an Ashanti and I don't have any quarrel with Chairman Rawlings. However, I do believe in the market economy, human rights and all the other things the NPP claims to espouse. Maybe now is the time for people like me who believe in the same things but who are being excluded from the NPP by virtue of the tribalism now inherent in the party to reconsider our stand.

Jessie Amewowor

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Mrs Evelyn Anthony and Mr Jesse Amewowor in your (last) issue would like the world to believe that the NPP is a tribal party because a columnist and a section of the NPP have used the word, 'akonta.'

It is logical to say that the mere use of an Akan word does not make a political party a tribal one. Akan as a language enjoys geographical spread. This is attested to by the fact that almost all the parties have their songs and slogans in Akan. NDC '*kyiniye*,' NIP '*akoko baatan*,' PNC '*kube*' '*aburow*.' Do these make them tribal parties? Besides, the NPP Congress was attended by representatives from all the country.

To avoid rancour and bitterness, it must be stressed that all those wishing to enter politics and their followers must have the temperament for it, for it is a matter of sheer impracticality to tell all party supporters what to say or do.

Dr Busia had his fair share of the taunts and insults from the Ga Makola women and incidentally his wife was a Ga. Neither he nor his followers accused the Gas of tribalism. In the law suit against the Government, forces of the opposition had to endure the threats and teasing of the apparently pro-government forces-'Woke Rawlings baaya' group. The opposition forces remained composed.

I would like to urge the Chairman of the PNDC to continue to be thick skinned and bear all the insults, taunts, insinuations, etc. calmly, for they come from little minds. Mr Amewowor, let us preserve national unity by avoiding references to tribe. It does no one any good.

Anthony Kwaku Osei

Ghana Institute of Journalism.

In this era of weekly congresses and conventions, lotto forecasters have added to the concerns of their profession: how to forecast the winning lotto candidate. One lotto candidate these days appears to fall every Saturday at 5.

Last Saturday, Kwabena Darko and his chickens dropped-Sure Banker--- in Congress that added more chickens to the NIP symbol. His victory was a surprise considering the number of chickens that were sacrificed in the process. I was at the Congress as usual, and was struck by the pervasive presence of Darko and his chickens, whether on congress folders, T-shirts, banners, or in delegates pockets. NIP could not afford the consequences of his defeat in Congress he had heavily funded. So he won, and demonstrated the power of wallet over ballot The congress itself was a dull funeral-a gathering of mourners, orphans and bereaved descendants singing dirges, and awaiting a resurrection miracle. It was miserably organised, and it was all too clear that somebody somewhere was quietly propelling the CPP casket to Awudome. Conspicuously missing were two young suspects: Kojo B and Afro Gbede. At a time a word of joy was expected from their camp site, the two were busily sowing further confusion - proclaiming the Congress as illegal. To date, it is still not clear, but many believe the two young men are the greatest confusionists Nkrumah ever be bequeathed.

NIP knew this, and got rid of Kojo B. They dropped him at Congress, and gave the Chair to Imoru Ayarna. They say Kojo B had been planted by his prison classmate Kojo T, as Chief auctioneer-to auction the CPP heritage for a percentage.

Afro Gbede is not too happy about his new credentials as disunity foreman. His home, which has been meeting grounds for some time now, has slowly but surely acquired the reputation of being a confusion brewery. But I like the legend of the famous trees in his courtyard, where he sentences unwanted visitors. Whenever he tells you 'wait for me under the trees', that is a PDA declaration. It is at this spot Limann was asked to wait for three hours, and from where he walked out on the Nkrumah family. One of these days, Gbede's garden is going to be a tourist attraction.

Considered by some as the only hope for unity, others see Afro Gbede's personal ambition as the greatest stumbling block in the CPP camp. At a time all was clear they were vote scatterers, the two made sure it was their faces (and not any of younger ones) that were visible when NIP was receiving its registration certificate. That was a poor show The NIP youth are planning dawn broadcast one of these days: to quietly fade away the two. With Imoru Ayarna as the new Chair, PHP would be less scared in coming to join hands; Limann may come along too, with a little cola.

There is a group known as PPDD, considered as part of the Nkrumah funeral merger, which presented itself to NIP and said, "Swallow me." Will somebody give me their full address. I am looking desperately for their office to have a word with Kwesi Pratt.

So then, it is Kwabena Darko, who may eventually emerge he the president over the funeral merger after all. Gen. Erskine of Heritage, I hear is fast losing enthusiasm, but it all depends on what happens this weekend the Heritage Congress in Legon. After the Congress, you can trust the beginning of a new round of confusion within the CPP. To many observers, the CPP will do well forgetting about this coming event and start preparing for 1996. Thanks to Kojo T. He has won my

Man of the Year award, ahead of time. The man hinted he was going to hang his gloves, got everybody to think he had died, then ranged the obituary of CPP, by remote control.

Kwaku Boateng, another creature of Kojo T, is at Congress too this weekend, a party that has mentioned no presidential candidates so far, apparently because there is none. INEC has made sure there are no rules that compel party to show the face of its president. Boateng himself knows he is unlikely to be president of Ghana, but is merely blowing for somebody to bite. He has made sure a merger with the Nkrumah mourning family is impossible. What his Party hates to hear is any criticism of PNDC. If you want to merge with him, praise Government. He has refused to join the Alliance of Democratic Forces, and was not one of the famous 29 who took INEC to court. He is court fearing. Count him out of any merger with Nkrumaists. His congress will shout JJ. JJ,JJ, JJ! They will declare the latter their presidential candidate. Kwaku Boateng is a Made-by-Kojo T product, in a free market economy. "Create an Nkrumaist party that is not confrontational to Govt. The result would be more confusion in the Nkrumah camp, and a bridge over Nkrumah and Government. Don't tell anybody, but you and Eagle, and NDC, and NGA, are siblings."

It is not for nothing Tetegah is here. He is giving a helping hand.

That's not all. Ato Austin was an initial accomplice. "Infiltrate the NCP and make sure it is friendly; go with Totobi. You two are great organisers," was probably the instruction. Ato joined with all enthusiasm, and later fell out with Govt over award of contracts in the Central region. Some key pro-Government contractors had been ignored in a manner that left Government unsure of Ato's motives. His boss has been furious with him ever since, and this has led to a conspicuous hide-and-seek game between them in the media, during official events in the Central region, where it is announced His Jerryship will be in attendance. For this reason, Ato's deputy is always on a standby, in case of any miraculous disappearance.

Ato's first conspicuous disappearance: 23rd November, 1991, Panafest in Cape Coast. Nowhere to be found. Next stop, 11th July, 1992 at Elmina Bakatue durbar. He made sure he attended the Boat race, and disappeared on the day his boss was coming. Next miracle. 3rd August, 1992, at the Apostolic Youth Convention at Victoria Park, Cape Coast. Because his boss was coming. Finally, at the Cape Coast Fetu Afahye festival, 5<sup>th</sup> September 1992. It was his deputy that danced along with His Jerryship.

Outside the Cape Coast – Elmina area, two examples can be cited. He was not around to take his boss on the Musama Disco anniversary last month, and during Big J's recent trip to Agona, Gomoa, etc. Ato had vanished.

Early in the year, the Govt did not feel too easy when a vehicle belonging to CEDECOM was involved in an accident at Kintampo, on its way to the North. Its passengers, according to newspaper reports, were Heritage executives. The driver, Agya Kum, died and was buried on 29<sup>th</sup> February. Government set up investigations into that, arguing it was a Government vehicle being used for all activity. Did Ato have a hand in it?

Only recently, another probe was set up to investigate the award of contracts at the Central Regional Administration and CEDECOM. With all this happenings, was the hide-and-seek game not in order?

But Ato will make up his mind this weekend. Fact is, whereas he was thought to be an advocate of no-need-for continuity, he is an NCP thick skin with an eye on something good. Will he be shocked to hear JJ. JJ at the NCP congress?

I partly visited the Egle congress too. They called it a convention, because it was not a complicated process. J.J, JJ, was the unanimous decision. They have vowed never to be swallowed by NDC, even though some of their top men, including Soussoudis, have quietly crossed carpet. While they will not merge, they will enter into a gentleman's agreement with NDC when it comes to parliamentary candidates. The two will present one candidate in many areas. Their top executives put up at Paramount Hotel, in Accra for several weeks before the convention, and have left a huge unpaid bill.

This weekend, all eyes point to Cape Coast. The NDC will try to beat the Kukru du fanfare, in a show that has been planned to shake the region. The diplomatic corps and PNDC Secretaries have been invited, and they will surely vacate their offices and proceed. And while enthusiasm begins to sag at the congress, there will be a carnival explosion when their presidential candidate dramatically appears to say the magic word. The celebration will go on throughout the country into Saturday night. Sunday, a mammoth rally is likely to happen in Accra, that is likely to shake Kukru du.

In the final analysis, the Castle will change hands. The Old Man Justice Annan is likely to puzzle observers. He has never cherished staying in the Castle, and has always kept his office at the State House, but he will try hard. If it happens, he will not be acting Chairman. He will be called Chairman, for he will not be acting for anybody. He will preside over affairs in the next four months or so. Chairman Annan will be his name. In this heated political era, people will wonder where he stands, and whether he will keep quiet over the use of state machinery for political campaigns. He is not likely to say much, but if you care to know about his political history, he was born into the UP tradition, and has voted the Danquah-Busia way throughout his voting life. But he will assure everyone he is not a Kukru du suspect.

Will the NDC be disappointed if their expected candidate turns out to say, "I am an independent candidate?" In that case, Justice Ofori Boateng will help him find a separate symbol- perhaps a pick axe, which is very much like an umbrella. If that happens, there will be a number of Drobo cases at Cape Coast this weekend, and Kukru du will smile.

As for the latter group, a few developments have taken place in the last few days. They have removed their dull commercial which sees the Professor prophesying from his library. They slotted an interesting ten minute substitute which sees grassroots people talking. Good advert, but not enough.

This weekend, the entire campaign starts afresh, even while there are alterations at the Gbedemah gardens.

## BUILDING CASTLES IN THE CHURCH

Traffic to church these days can be very heavy, particularly if you are a late riser. That is why I prefer the church in my holy hamlet, where the chapel keeper wakes you up with the first bell, then follows up with the second bell, and sometimes the third. More often than not, the second bell finds you in the bathroom, and if your bathroom wall is only chest high, you may even church goers stream past your house, as you bathe your armpit.

Oftentimes, it is safer to dodge below wall level under those circumstances until you have finished wiping yourself, for you never know who is passing. It may be your in-law. If you are not a chorister, I guess you can relax and afford to be a little late, knowing that if you rush, you will most likely forget your hymn book, Bible, Koran, or the worshipper next to you may whisper a reminder, "Sir, you have turned your coat inside out," or "Madam, there is soap in your ears." To which you may reply, "Praise the Lord," or "Fear not."

Not so in recent times. Latecomers in certain churches now have to worship outside. The pews fill up in no time, and you often wonder what is happening, until you are told that the church, during this transition, has become Parliament. The national anthem will be sung accompanied on piano, copies of the constitution will be distributed; and the newly married will be surprised to learn that what is in front of them to sign, is not the marriage register, but the voters' register. As for the preacher, his competence will henceforth be measured in terms of how versed he is in the Fourth Republican Bible.

Suddenly it has been realised that the shortest route to the Castle is the church; and so therefore, presidential perspirants (and doubtfuls) are building castles in the church, even when they are coming to embezzle funds. The whole trick has been to hold the Bible in one hand, the Constitution in the other, get the votes, and throw the Bible away. They of course know the psychology of the electorate.

So therefore, why shouldn't all presidential perspirants show us how good they will be in the Castle, by demonstrating how good they are in the temple. Kwaku Boateng knew it. Knowing there is nothing in the electoral laws forbidding the use of certain titles, he anointed himself a reverend minister without reverential ordination. Church goers of Church of Pentecost will whisper in your ears, "He is only a church elder, but circumstances require the use of Reverend."

Grey-beard Mr. Ward Brew formed his Democratic People's Party, based in Madina, surrounded himself with a sparse God-fearing congregation, and adopted for the party the slogan, 'God is Great.' An electoral miracle is still being awaited.

Prof. Abdallah Botchway sought to enter the Castle via Medina, Mecca was humbled. He landed in Madina (Accra). All this because of single slip of the Muslim tongue.

Koduah, the NPP presidential perspirant looked for an evangelical shortcut. He failed, but attended his party's thanksgiving service a day after their Congress. The Kukrudu presidential candidate, Prof. Adu Kontopiaat did not only attend the thanksgiving service. Soon after Congress, he worshipped Ridge Church in Accra, where an appropriate reading from the Bible was done from Isaiah Chapter 61. Let's hear the word of God:

*The spirit of the sovereign Lord is on me, because the Land has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion--- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and garment of praise instead of despair....they will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. Aliens will shepherd your flocks, foreigners will work your fields and vineyards, etc etc.*

From the opposition ears prevailing in churches these days, you could very easily have raised a "point of order pleaaaaase", and said you were not too sure if you heard terms like *vengeance and aliens compliance order* in the passage. If the word vengeance was heard, it better be the Lord's vengeance only. For these days, congregations are so November-sensitive that any presidential perspirant hoping to say a word in church better see the Minister ahead of sermon, and whisper in his ears, "Rev, what is the meaning of the message on the tro-tro vehicle: *Fear Woman and Play with Snake?*

Darko Farms must be seriously preparing for the NIP congress this weekend, praying with his chickens. Made easier by the fact that the hen raises its head to thank the Lord after drinking, this thanksgiving ritual naturally instills the fear of the Lord in all chickens. NIP's choice of a hen and its chickens as its symbol, favours Darko, except that the presidency is not the same as chicken management. Kwabena Darko may rely heavily on his leadership role in Full Business Gospel, his general Christian appeal, plus ready cash. But observers are scared stiff of his claims to a heavenly vision to mount the Castle throne. Many people in fact took Darko and his chickens seriously until he said that. We are yet to recover from Clara Prophet's false prophecy about Unigov some thirteen years ago. God had sent her to urge Ghana to adopt the Union Government, so she said. We rejected her.

It is tempting to think we are joking with the race to the castle. The other candidates in NIP, George Hagan, J.S.P. Jantuah, etc. have not been able to match the poultry rich man and his chickens in publicity, but they are worth listening to. Jantuah has made sure to stress his church-going inclination in his publicity package. Among others, he attended St Theresa's seminary, then

proceeded to the major seminary. Jantuah has a rich political experience, and is a seventygenerian. He will be the oldest presidential candidate if chosen by NIP. Hagan is a fiftygenarian, and is less known, but he is a graceful and charismatic aspirant, who could surprise the delegates if given fair hearing. A good scholar and Christian, he is articulate and persuasive.

The question NIP will have to ask itself is which of these could survive the battle of words with the other candidate. But NIP, NCP, and PHP, may be saved by an alliance of CPP forces, whose motto is now: Divided we Cry.

The NDC umbrella has made significant gains in the interior. Children like their radio and TV commercials very much. Their commercials are the best so far; my little girl always sings along. Their presidential candidate, they say, will declare his stand next week. I don't think the special declaration is very necessary now, except to satisfy INEC, for what he has to say is a forgone conclusion. To the question *should he*, the answer is He *will*. I missed him last weekend; he whisked past my holy village to Agona Nsaba when I was in my mother's kitchen drinking soup. In Nsaba, the elders told me what he told them. In Nyakrom too, they told me what he told them; and this compelled one of the chiefs to reply in the media that, "Because of these developments in your area, and the abundance of commodities on the market, we will think twice in anything we do." He did not mention voting. The chief decided to speak in parables, mindful of electoral laws.

I was at Cape Coast Afahye too, and listened to his speech live, even though I missed dancing along with him in the brass band procession. But the afahye did not impress me. The drumming, dancing, and merry making lacked festive intensity. The Oguaa youth compelled me to buy an appeal badge for C100. against my will, towards the development of Cape Coast. I asked them what development projects have you done in the past year?

I met the NDC candidate too in Kumasi at NAFAC—the grand durbar. NAFAC was excellent, and I salute the cultural vision of Muhammed Abdallah. He has tremendously enriched Ghanaian arts as a whole during his tenure. Knowing how sparing Kwatriot normally is with encomiums, he must smile. All he needs to explain is why the two Abibigrommas, and he will be okay. The NAFAC grand durbar surpasses anything I have seen, in splendour.

The event itself was incident free, but I don't know why the security decided to undermine the culture of Central region at the Kumasi durbar. As soon as an asafo company in the Central region procession, fired the first musketry at the stadium, which is part of their act, the police confiscated all their guns. Who told the security *asafo* guns pose a security problem more than Soussoudicious ammunitions?

I heard the presidential speech too, and was struck by the commotion as soon as the speech had started. All eyes turned in the direction of the west entrance of Kumasi stadium. The security was on full alert, and there was momentary consternation at the official dais. It was no security matter after all, but the arrival of Kyeremateng (Ajaws), one of the popular actors on Sunday Akan TV drama. He was virtually mobbed by Kumasi crowds. He was apparently their concept of a hero. He probably should consider a presidential candidacy. Jerry saved the situation when he invited him to join the big men on stage.

And when it was the turn of the Chair of the Queen Mothers Association to speak, I heard the prolonged applause when she complained about unemployment in Kumasi, leading to pickpocketing. The Jute factory had been closed down, she made bold to say, amidst applause *Bo ho biem, bo ho biem*, said a pickpocket boy behind me. The entire day was very fulfilling. Two days before the durbar, the Kukrudu 'president' had turned the Kumasi city upside down, on his way to Wenchi. The carnival atmosphere was frightening, even before the durbar the following Sunday. But after a few weeks of campaigning, the Kukrudu elephants must start taking stock. The professor's popularity is beyond doubt, but he has so far been unable to rouse his large audiences.

Critics still point to the stage presence of Dsane Selby, even though they are convinced the party's choice was not a mistake.

*Hmmmm.*

Next weekend, the whole battle begins afresh when the eagle finally speaks. His yes decision will be no news. Here is the News: He will move out of the Castle, and invite the good old Justice to step in, then become an ordinary man. In his new position, you will probably meet him at KorleBu Polyclinic, or Makola stopping a taxi, or at Kejetia, mending his shoe.

When the Castle is temporarily vacated, one is not sure whether it will be filled by a God fearer or a God unfearer. Sometimes, I wonder where I belong myself. But I have not gotten over the scar on my right leg, from a dog bite when I was five. I will never forget the experience; it was at Eshiamu in the Eastern region, when dogs chased me and sank their teeth in my right calf. The scar is still there for the records. Since then I have been allergic to pets. I don't know if I qualify for the Castle, for I fear dogs. Indeed, I am a dog-fearing man.

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### REJOINER

I refer to the article "Building Castles in the Church" under your regular column, Woes of a Kwatriot. In that article the writer states inter alia, "Soon after Congress, he (i.e. Prof Adu Boahen) worshipped at Ridge Church in Accra, did not. Isaiah Chapter 61."

The article gave the impression that Professor Adu Boahen, the presidential candidate of the NPP read a lesson at a Sunday service at Accra Ridge Church as in Accra did he decided. To correct this wrong impression, we state categorically that Prof Adu Bonhen did not, repeat, did not read a lesson at the Accra Ridge Church as implied by the article in question. It was an officiant who read Isaiah 61:1, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty

to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound" as part of the intercession prayer requested by Prof Adu Boahen's thanks offering.

We have been greatly embarrassed by this publication and request you to immediately correct this wrong statement appropriately. We pray that the Lord will guide you in your effort to present the truth.

Comfort Engmann (Mrs)

Chairman of Council

Accra Ridge Church

**Note Kwatriot's exact words.**

Nowhere did he say Prof Adu Boahen himself did a reading:

*The Kukrudu presidential candidate, Prof. Adu Kontopiaat did not only attend the thanksgiving service. Soon after Congress, he worshipped at Ridge Church in Accra, where an appropriate reading from the Bible was done from Isaiah Chapter 61.*

**UNDER THE UMBRELLA**

These day, you feel rather unsure talking politics to your neighbour in a tro-tro line. He may appear attentive at first, but if he suddenly turns indifferent after listening to all your praise of the big rally in Cape Coast, begin moving away: you have landed in the enemy territory.

“Sorry, Sir, but I thought you were Akatamanso.”

But the situation is even more disturbing. Suddenly, people see mindset their choice of cover when it is raining, and would rather be soaked in torrential rains than accept an umbrella ride. More so if the umbrella is colourful, a for a free ride at the back of the elephant at the Kumasi zoo, I bet children of umbrella parents would be warned against that; so would they be cautioned against coconut habits on sunny afternoons. It would all look as if our daily lives now speak the

language of political metaphor. Accepts coconut gift, or visit Coco Beach and Hilla Limann will say he was converted you

As all this happens, isn't it ironical that after deserting the revolution, Akata.... Akatapore is not here today to denounce Akata..... Akatamanso, and Dr. Mohammed Umbrella stayed out of the Umbrella rally in Cape Coast? I was quietly watching, and I saw the design in the shirt of Ato Dadzie that day: two elephants taking shelter under an umbrella.

At the Danquah Circle in Accra, a peculiar spectacle caused a traffic jam for a considerable while, last Tuesday. Some clever chaps in NDC decided on a prank, and drew all attention to their ploy. They had, in an act of charity, installed an NDC umbrella on the statue of J.B. Danquah that sunny afternoon. The umbrella disappeared the next day. J.B. probably took it down at midnight after looking up. What of festival durbars? At a time the Fourth Republican constitution forbids chiefs from taking part in partisan politics, here they are gleefully dancing under umbrellas, violating the constitution.

But they have a case. The constitution takes effect from January '93.

At the Victoria Park in Cape Coast, I was amazed at the variety of umbrellas on parade-black, green, multicoloured, scant-covering, shredded, tattered, patched-certainly grassroots umbrellas etc. So long as it had a handle and an arch frame, it served both a functional and political purpose.

But the picture was glaring long before you arrived in Cape Coast. Right from the police barrier in Accra, the controversial picture of the Candidate under umbrella had saturated the entire landscape from Accra to Cape Coast- on rocks, poles, vehicles, etc. The distribution of this picture by NDC over a period of four weeks before the national rally, had been publicly denied by the NDC press officer, Vincent Asiseh-the guy who during his Contemplation programme on TV, was prayerfully contemplating a political appointment. In telling the world NDC knew nothing about the posters, Vincent Asiseh was joking.

At the Congress itself, the Umbrella welcomed you at the entrance of Cape Coast University. The Congress crowd was a spectacle in itself-a mini festival of revolutionary organs, 31<sup>st</sup> women without their unusual red cap, secretaries, and the guru members themselves. The entire Government was on a campaign trail having left the Government job for the civil service. But they were without the Castle guru, and the state watchman, Kojo T who had been sent to create problems elsewhere.

Here is part of the roll call: Mahama Iddrisu, P. V. Obeng, Obed Asamoah, were Totobi Quakyi, Huudu Yahaya, Kwabena Adjei, Osei Wusu, Ohene Agyekum, Kofi Portuphy etc. etc. We counted over 40 of them. Some were merrily dancing, having vacated their posts in Accra and shedding off the provisional P in PNDC. There was nobody to fear, for their boss himself was on a campaign trail, on his way there. All it probably needed at that point was a Giwa voice, and both party and Government would have run towards their offices in Accra.

But they were not only stealing the people's time; the people's vehicles were in attendance. Will the following state vehicles report to INEC on Saturday morning at 9 am without fail: GVC

9477, a PAMSCAD truck belonging to the World Food Programme, being used illegally for political party activity; that was used to convey food and equipment. Pamskad is a charitable name, and we hope it did not extend its charitable wing to pamscadise the entire umbrella event. GVC 2526, GVC 2998, GVB 7220, GVC 2694.

Niva roll call: CRA 3200, VR 5528, ASA 8198, NRA 4206, AFB 5587, AFA 6801, ARA 4215, TRA 581. VR 2169, BA 4964, AFA 6366, AFR 4 If Justice Ofori Boateng needed evidence before recommending action, he has it now.

If he does not act, hmmmmm! The Congress election itself was quite predictable with the presidential perspirant: J.J. J.J. J.J. J J J. J.J. was the chant, when he was nominated, and when the crowd yelled for him, they believed he was there with them. "There he is!" a lady in front pointed at him, and the crowd went wild with joy. His lookalike had fooled many. He is one of the Sinari brothers, light skinned, in a Muslim flowing gown, side bums, dark goggles like him. Later in the day when somebody told us J.J. was in Tantre distributing his own posters, we knew what he was talking about. Sinari was brought centre-stage to work the crowd. The truth of course was that the real thing was going to give an acceptance speech at a monster rally the next day.

When names of the national executive members were announced, with names like Prof Yaw Twumasi, Munufie, Cecelia Johnson, Huudu Yahaya, etc. you knew trouble was imminent. The Prof Yaw Twumasi they mentioned had never been in Ghana since 1981. When his wife, Evelyn, in Accra saw his name in the media associated with NDC, she rushed to Graphic and GNA, swearing it could possibly not be Prof Yaw Twumasi, her husband.

The names Huudu Yahaya, Cecelia Johnson, etc. surprised no one. They are Secretaries of State, and you need to go and look for them in their offices during the week, and you will be told: Sorry, they have gone on party campaign. But the next day was the real thing- the candidate was coming to

## IMAGE - NO THANKS

accept his nomination at a monster rally in Cape Coast. The Ghana Film and Television crew was in full attendance, even though I hardly see them at Limann's rallies. Meanwhile, more and more Government vehicles were coming. Buses were pouring in from all parts of Ghana-at least buses from Takoradi alone, alone, thirty from Accra, ten from Winneba, and more and more and more from all parts of Ghana. It was really an Almoravid invasion of Cape Coast, for a national rally, the first ever by any political party. Cape Coast people themselves appeared unmoved; they looked on from their half open windows, eating a Saturday morning breakfast of fried eggs, bread and 'better.'

A sunny day it was, very suitable for umbrella, but the NDC presidential candidate was long in coming. The thick, carnival crowd, most of them without umbrellas grew impatient, and bitterly

complained about the searing heat inflicted on them by the organisers, who had quietly recoiled under the cool shade of canopy, and we the press under the cool shade of a giant umbrella. The crowd started gathering at 6 am. Their presidential candidate arrived at 1.15 pm. Meanwhile, there was one speech after another, following the introduction of the national executives to the teeming crowd.

After many had spoken came the former D.C. of Oda, Kwame Kwakye, who came to throw a word of support behind J.J.

"Many people thought I was dead, but I am here today because of J.J. Those days, people put words in my mouth I never said, but it's good because that made me popular. Today... I stand here on the leg of J.J. Rawlings..." The crowd responded in a prolonged uproar and, in a minute, the verandah old man was gone.

On J.J.'s arrival, the crowd was thrown into a frenzy. The security had a real tough time, and it took the candidate nearly fifteen minutes to plough through the crowd to the podium. Most people came just for him. Others were undecided spectators waiting to test NDC, and yet a few were there because free transport was provided from their home towns, plus a T shirt, and lunch allowance. All these, however, thought it was worth the spectacle.

Watching Jerry on the podium, I could see excitement all over him, the crowds yelling for him, and in accepting the nomination, I thought I heard him refer not only to NDC's popularity, but also the *high level of integrity of its members*.

That statement was a loaded one, on which one would expect further comments from the Auditor General, for behind him were PNDC members and Secretaries at whom PNDC Assets Declaration Law was staring, and not until the Auditor General has pronounced on their fate, one would normally reserve references to integrity. Listen to the law:

*Assets declared shall be published by the Auditor General within fourteen days of submission.*

We wish to assume nothing has been submitted in the past 14 days, for no publication has been seen. But note how nice the Law is: *Any person who fails to declare his assets.... commits an offence and is liable to conviction to a fine not exceeding one million cedis, or to imprisonment not exceeding 2 year or to both*. Who wouldn't want to pay a million cedis fine, and have peace of mind?

In Ghana's history, any time the question of assets declaration has been raised, foot dragging has set in. In 1971 when the NUGS raised the matter, they were dragged to parliament and embarrassed by the Busia Government. Today, we shall ask again and again, and not until questions have been answered, let's reserve the application of the word integrity.

For all you know, beneath the umbrella might be a little *unintegrity*. People of integrity, I hear, sometimes fear the use of state machinery for party campaigns.

## GOD BLESS NOVEMBER

Crowds are so important these last days, and presidential candidates so desperate that family planning experts must have begun revising their slogans for Ghana. **This is the moment for crowds. The moment for large families. Ghanaians plan your family and lose the elections.**

"Sir, I have come to borrow your large family for a rally. My boss has warned that if he comes to this village and speaks to an empty field, I will lose my position in the shadow cabinet, as the shadow minister for shadow population."

But the crowd thing has worked at the seven o'clock TV news, depending on whether you are a coconut, an elephant, a handshake, a chicken, or an umbrella. If you are an elephant, the mammoth umbrella crowd at the Kumasi Jackson park, may have sent you to bed prematurely. "Early to bed, early to rise," you probably pretended. If you are an umbrella fanatic, the elephant multitude at Sunyani, was probably not the best appetiser for dinner. You probably left your food there for the children. "Daddy didn't feel like eating today."

They would be glad to say.

"And did you see Erskine at Sekondi?"

"Limann in Kumasi?"

"Chicken D at Kumasi?"

The race suddenly becomes hotter than you thought, for whereas you probably thought umbrella or elephant was winning, there you were reckoning with the coconut, or the handshake, and realising how false a prophet you were. In the final analysis, you probably concluded that it would be safer not to pick an overall winner ahead of time. The winner, like your appetite, changes from one dinner to another. But it also depends on the TV cameraman. He is today more powerful than INEC. He has often decided which party should lose its appetite only today, and which party should lose its appetite forever. Of course, this is his cocoa season- a season which comes but once in eleven years. If he misses this chance, the next available elections could be somewhere in the twenty-first century.

But don't forget that this is the cocoa season for the journalist too. God has given him the talent of opinion polling, such that he can decide to opinion-pull you down today, and opinion-pull you up the next day. So then we have had opinion polls today, and rejoinder polls the next day, each announcing a different president. One *saying hail the king*, and the other *jail the king*. Depending on which poll you have read, you would then spend the rest of the day either celebrating, or singing dirges in your office. You may, on the other hand, spend the morning of each day desperately looking for newspapers which are likely to announce polls that are favourable.

The advice then is, if the TV news was disappointing, cheer yourself up the next morning with the suitable newspaper. Your party will win.

The presidential candidates are now so common you are likely to find one at your backyard one of these days. Invite Limann to your father's funeral, JJ to outdoor, and Professor Kontopiat to your son's birthday party, and they will all come running and pose for a picture with the deceased, or the foetus. From their rounds, it is easy to see who is a stage professional. Limann, now vindicated, is ever cool and self-assured; he seems to have support much more than he fathomed. One of his best rhetorical moments was at the launching of his Twenty-Seven Months of PNP in Accra. The man still grieves over his overthrow, and takes credit for PNDC's achievements. Mark his sharp words:

*While the PNP approached the IMF negotiations on a clean slate and therefore with some moral and psychological strength, by the time the IMF we approached by PNDC, this latter had spent the best part of 18 months denouncing the IMF and the International Finance Capital. Those were the heady days of the revolution marked by infantile romantic rhetoric, apparently hoping that some godfather who had instigated them in their coup bid would bankroll their so-called revolutionary experiment. When this expectation was not fulfilled, the PNDC had its back to the wall and was therefore compelled to go to the IMF as a last resort. They therefore started the negotiations from a position of weakness.*

Unfortunately, Vincent Asisseh, even though has specialised in rejoinder journalism, is not likely to reply to Limann. His recent caustic reference to "intellectuals," particularly Uncle Paul, reached the lion in his sick bed, and as I left his convalescence "ward" last Sunday, I overheard Paul rehearsing his rejoinder, while brandishing his fists.

But Asisseh's boss, the NDC candidate, seems to be having good moments with crowds. Deep in his heart, however, he knows the going is not easy at all. He has the incumbency advantage, and ever smooth rhetoric, but the opposition to his regime is greater than his close aides can afford to tell him. Professor Kukrudu is his biggest problem. The Prof, longer in years but shorter in size, has as big a following as his rival, even though he does not have his stamina and stage presence. The two have never met face to face, but they quietly fear each other.

In the past few days, some lawyers have decided that what we were going to do on November 3rd, better be decided in court, such that rather than have ballot boxes at polling stations into which we would throw pieces of paper, the High Court in Accra would constitute one big ballot box into which one Judge would cast the decisive vote for us all. I pity the Judge. If his judgment is unwise, the crowd will be waiting for him outside, and probably change the shape of his face. Indeed, he may regret he was born. In the final analysis, it will be realised the whole court action was well calculated (or miscalculated) to win sympathy for the NDC candidate. Judgment in this case could be delayed till the eve of voting, such that he whosoever wins the court case, wins the ballot case. This appears to be a much better resolution, since the waiting period has caused considerable uneasiness. The suspense is so great people are saying November 3rd is too far away. The election should have been this coming Tuesday, they say. But at least there is something to do while waiting. Make a date with the presidential interviews as from this coming

Monday. Those interviews could instantly change your vote, as happened in 1979, but isn't it regrettable these would be recorded interviews. Even as you read this column, many of the recordings are over, and as the GBC is working hard deciding which aspects of the candidates' traits should be kept a secret from you. In 1979, some of the interviews were recorded over and over again, to save votes for some candidates.

Today, aren't we entitled to unedited interviews, where all five are lined up, so they could test their opponents' emotional stability, and tolerance? I missed the interviewing panel, dear reader. I would have asked for you all the questions you needed asked. But here is an opportunity. Find below a sample of the questions, I would have asked for you.

Yes, Kwabena Darko. Let's start with you....excuse me, but can you tell us a little about your educational background.....

*Kwabena, what would you tell critics who have suggested that your background is perhaps not rich enough for a presidential position?*

*If you have finished, Sir, can you please elaborate on a statement you once made on the platform, to the effect that, you will re-introduce fee free education in the Universities? What percentage of the national budget will you devote to education? Please be precise. Etc., etc.*

*And you Dr Hilla Limann, how are you? It has been suggested that you are perhaps the weakest president this nation ever had, and that Rawlings' coup d'état in 1981, saved you from a greater disaster from within your own party. How would you react to that?*

*.....Next question. Having gone through months of campaigning, do you regret deciding to run?*

Wouldn't you still be enjoying the benefit of the doubt if you had not stood at all?

You recently said, most of PNDC's achievements were started by your Government. Are you assuming that IMF/World Bank prescriptions could be effectively implemented by any leader?..... etc.

And General Erskine, fine fine, soldier. Why did you enter this race when you had earlier said politics could undermine all your fine achievements in the military?

...Then also, the Chairman of your party, Dr Frimpong Ansah, left the country soon after your Congress elected him. Do you feel betrayed?

I have a few more questions, but get this first. Many Ghanaians seem to be fed up with the face of soldiers or ex-soldiers in politics. You people scare us to death. Do you think this could affect your chances? Etc.

Professor Adu Boahen, are you ready? Can you tell us what precisely qualifies you to be president, beyond your successful Danquah Memorial Lectures?

## YES GOLIATH..... DAVID KNEW THAT

If you have finished answering. You have been inconsistent in your utterances about what to do with the PNDC, if you are elected. Do you plan to probe the PNDC?

Next. Your critics associate your party with Vengeance and ethnic consciousness. If these are misconceptions, what do you think may have led to that?

Assume you are president. How would you react, if people begin advocating a re-trial on the massacre of the judges?

.....Sir, if you are not tired, please add this one. Your party proudly claims provenance from the Busia /Danquah tradition. Yet the Busia tradition, as we know it, was not a perfect democracy. It dismissed editors, said No Court to the Constitution, and embarrassed students who enquired about assets declaration. How do you feel associating yourself with these.

.....Sir, what has been your sources of finance during this campaign. How do you react to the suggestion that you are being funded from outside the country?

It has been suggested, Prof, that no matter how fair the elections are, your party will not accept any outcome. If this is true, is your party (by default) ne threat to peace?

And now Jerry. Your presence here today is one of the greatest contradictions in history. You are an avowed opponent of party politics. You have said harsh words about the ballot box: this you have done consistently for twelve years. Now here you are .. a presidential candidate. Sir, why should Ghanaians take you serious?

..... You are the longest reigning Ghanaian Head of State, and at a time many believed you should be considered an elder statesman, giving advice from behind the scenes, here you are asking for possibly eight more years. Sir, what fears, do you entertain living the scene?

.....What of this Sir? It has been observed that the rhetoric of accountability your Government started eleven years ago, appears to have diminished, with time. Can you comment on this?

.....The Amnesty International and other critics have accused your Government of considerable human rights abuses. How high on your agenda would be the issue of human rights in the Fourth Republic?

..... Considering the tension currently prevailing in the country, have you thought of possibly forming a Government of national unity, should you win the elections?

- Sir, can you give us your recipe for peace in the coming months.

For it's been suggested that your commandos will be let loose, should you lose in the presidential race?

*I have more questions, Sir But let me pause here.*

Thank you candidates for this live interview.

MAY GOD BLESS NOVEMBER

## 23

### **THE MASSACRE UP NORTH Will Wipe out the Gonjas"**

**"We Will Wipe out the Gonjas"**

He looks determined as he sat in front of me recounting all that happened. Some ten days or so before, he had joined teeming youths of this ethnic group. the Nawuris, in their attempt "to wipe out the Gonjas." A breath-taking tale many of us in Southern Ghana know very little about, except for muted head- lines here and there.

According to eye-witness reports, the death toll estimated in daily news pers as 63, is only a tip of the iceberg. The number runs in the hundreds. "At least 20 were killed in the house of PNDC Secretary, John Bawa's fatheralone.... 79 were wiped out in Kitoë: we killed about 43 in Kpandai, several were butchered in the bush..." And on and on the tale went. One, of course, recollects the wailing of the PNDC Secretary on TV, when he saw the carnage in his father's house, and the solid mass of refugees congregating at Tamale.

As the narrator moved from one gruesome scenario to the other, his colleagues listened with rapt attention-two of them: one a teacher, the other a transport owner. These two lost the opportunity to take part in the fighting, but added bits and pieces to complete the grisly picture.

I listened transferring my gaze from one teller to the other, and my thoughts from the local to the national scene.

As we in the South were keeping vigil towards the lifting of the ban on party politics, 18th May, vigils were being kept among the Gonjas and Nawuris in the Gonja East district of the Northern Region, as a prelude to a foreboding carnage.

The evolution of the conflict between the Gonjas and Nawuris is too complicated to recount here. But it has to do with claims to land ownership by the Gonjas, who control the land from Bole to Kpandai.

Apart from the Nawuris, others inhabiting Gonjaland include the Konkommās, Basaris, and Nchumurus. All these groups harbour one type of resentment or the other against the Gonjas, who are socio-politically powerful but outnumbered.

In April last year, war broke out, and the Gonjas destroyed several villages occupied by the above groups: Kitere, Kabouwele, parts of Katijeli, Bali, Bladjai, etc. It was this that led to the setting up of the Justice Ampiah Committee of Inquiry, later in the year. The Committee submitted its report to Government in February this year. To date, no word has been heard from Government on the report. Meanwhile, police barriers mounted after last year's disturbances to stave off further violence were removed after six months.

So then, why wouldn't a fresh outbreak take the police by surprise?

On 20th May, 'A.B.' the transport owner who is a Nawuri from Kpunt went to Tamale for a meeting, and at 4 pm, was struck by a large group of Gonjas waiting at the State Transport yard. This group, he later learned, from Damongo, and it was suspected they were on their way to Kpandai to launch an early morning attack on the Nawuris.

But how distinctive are the Gonjas; how can you tell one is a Gonja? A.B. knew some of them personally. Besides this, the Gonjas typically have three long, vertical marks on their cheeks, and there is no mistaking them by the Nawaris.

"I was surprised to hear they were going to attack Kpandai because, we were all waiting for the Ampiah report submitted early this year on the previous ethnic clash. The next day, I heard Gonjas had taken over Kpandai and were shooting indiscriminately. I went to the Tamale Police to seek confirmation, and it was confirmed."

Closer to Kpandai, the scene of action, was 'J.K.' a teacher who lives in a village nextdoor. He heard on the 22nd that Gonjas were proceeding to attack Kpandai, from Salaga, 45 miles away. "At 5 in the morning, I heard a rattle of guns, and friends advised that I should go to Bali to report the matter. I was surprised to hear later that the Gonjas were heading towards Kpandai police station, and asking the Nawuris to come so they could smoke the peace pipe. But I knew it was a trick. They were rather jubilating because they had successfully occupied Kpandai, and were maltreating people. They, for instance, went to butchers in the market to demand free meat, and to yam sellers to seize yams. They went from house to house searching for Nawuris to kill."

All this while, according to the account, a good number of the Nawuris had fled to the bush: women and children out of fear, but for the young men a tactical retreat for a surprise onslaught on the occupying Gonja forces.

One of the fugitives was 'M. M.' He was one of the young Nawuri warriors, who had laid ambush, scheming with hordes of angry accomplices to launch a surprise attack and wipe out the Gonjas.

"On the night of the 20th, we were asleep in Kpandai, when word came from Balai that the Gonjas were coming, and that the people of Balai had fled to the outskirts," recounted M.M. panting with agitation. "Soon, we heard gun shots coming towards us in Kpandai, so we rallied together and also replied with gun shots, but their guns were superior."

How did their guns look like?

"They had rifles, the type used by soldiers and policemen. They started shooting our legs, so we had no alternative but to flee to the bush. You see we don't know where the Gonjas get their ammunition from. They often have a sophisticated armoury, but we use only the local guns."

Were you armed yourself?

"Yes, I held the local hunters' gun; my colleagues held the same type as mine, but others held clubs and truncheons."

What happened next?

"Meanwhile, they had occupied Kpandai, our town and were the shooting and jubilating to celebrate their victory. All this while, we were planning in the bush, we saw them moving towards the police station. At one point, they congregated under a big tree, installed their own chief, and jubilating. We saw them grab one Nawuri woman, and maltreat her.....they asked her to fan their chief, and she complied in tears.

"In the bush, we were joined by villagers from Balai, women of who were Nawuris and the others Konkommass. They narrated to us the killing of Kokomoma by the Gonjas. That incensed us the more, and we launched a threepronged attack on them, from various directions The Gonjas were overwhelmed, and they started fleeing towards the Kpandai police station.

"But before they reached the police station, we had killed many of them. Some of them also fled to the bush, and we chased them and wiped them out. We then went to the police station, where most of them had gone to seek refuge. We threatened the police we would raze the police station to the ground, if they didn't allow us access to the Gonjas in there. But from our angry exchanges with the police, the Gonjas in there could guess the mood in which we were, so some of them attempted to escape through the window, but we chased them and killed them. Their leader also emerged, holding a spear. He is called Alhaji Musa Gyawura. We instantly wiped him out. Some of them also ran towards the kitchen of the police quarters, but we chased them and killed them. Others escaped to the mission, and we pursued and finished them all. At about three o'clock in the afternoon, the town was quite-a sign that we had massacred them all.

"We then got word that three truckloads of Gonjas were coming from the Salaga road. They started firing, and we replied. They then got off the vehicle and started fleeing. We pursued and slaughtered them, one after another. As soon as we had killed them, we would collect their guns and bullets to replenish our stock, and inflict further damage. We then pursued them more than

40 miles away to Kpembe, and burned all the houses in that village.” MM quivered with excitement, his eyes completely shot with blood.

"At nightfall, we returned to our village. Next day, we laid ambush again, and this time decided to walk to Salaga, where most of the Gonjas come from. When we reached there, we realised it had been occupied by soldiers. They shot and we shot back, and they arrested some of our men. They prevented us from entering Salaga, and we returned home to Kpandai, where we realised that a reinforcement of about 30 policemen had also occupied the place. They had sealed off their identification numbers for reasons that are not clear.... We know the Gonjas will plan to retaliate, but they shouldn't forget we outnumber them. We shall wipe them out...."

Meanwhile, let the Castle visit the scene of the disaster.

## 24

### **MASSACRE UP NORTH- CASTLE REJOINDER**

Half-digested and sensational accounts of the recent resurgence of the violence between the Nawuris, Konkombas and others in the Kpandai-Salaga area are both mischievous and irresponsible.

At a time when the national and regional authorities and the security forces are doing everything possible to calm emotions and restore an atmosphere in which the root causes of the conflict can be addressed, articles such as Kwesi Yankah's "The Massacre Up North" don't help. Especially reprehensible in his chiding remark: "Meanwhile let the Castle visit the scene of the disaster," which seems to imply that the Castle, whatever or whoever he may mean by this could not care less.

The first news which most people living in Southern Ghana had of the conflict came down from a coverage from a plane piloted by the Head of State himself. But this was not his first visit to the trouble zone. The previous evening May 23, 1992 the PNDC Chairman first had reports of the clashes... he was determined to go to the area to diffuse the violence, before the arrival of the security personnel who had already been despatched to the area.

The fastest means would have been a fighter plane, but these lack the necessary instrumentation for such a task. Furthermore, the airport runway was closed due to rehabilitation work, and was blocked by construction equipment. So at 9. 47 pm, the Presidential Jet made a dangerous take-off without clearance from the Civil Aviation Authority, using the taxi-way lights and makeshift lights, and with the PNDC Chairman squeezed between the two pilots.

Nearly an hour was spent circling in the dark over the area of the conflict at a very low altitude, guided by the light of burning settlements. The landing lights were flashed on and off in an effort to deter the fighting by the presence of an aircraft although the lights also dazzled the pilots and added to the risk of the operation.

On returning to Accra at 11.18 pm that night, the aircraft had to make a dangerous landing, stopping short of the construction works on the runway. The next morning, May 24, 1992 another visit was made, using a Defender light aircraft piloted by the PNDC Chairman. This flight which took off at 9.22 am carried pressmen and TV cameramen. In addition, a fighter plane was sent to circle over the conflict area. The low-flying of the Defender aircraft over the zone of the conflict, including some efforts to land which had to be abandoned at the last moment when the wheels touched the uneven ground, so frightened some of the pressmen that one of them vomited and had to borrow the PNDC Chairman's towel to clean himself.

From this flight which circled areas from Salaga to Kpandai and towards Bimbilla over a period of more than two hours, it could be seen that the security forces on the ground had reached the area and were bringing the conflict under control. This flight landed in Accra at about 1.50 pm. For the PNDC Chairman to risk his life as soon as he was informed of the new outbreak of violence in the area, makes Mr Yankah's insinuations of indifference at the Castle look rather shameful.

Since then, there have been several meetings in Mr Yankah's immovable "Castle", including the National Security Council. A programme has been put in place to ensure security, and to get those who fled the area to go home and resume their disrupted farming activities under military guard. Relief supplies are also being organised. As at now, military personnel have been stationed at vantage points in the affected areas, and a programme for helping in the provision of shelter, food aid, and so on, is underway.

Mr. Yankah also appears to blame the Government for delaying action on the report of the Ampiah Committee of Inquiry into last year's Gonja Nawuri disturbances, implying that the recent violence was a consequence of the delay. It is sadly ironic that the White Paper on the Ampiah Report was ready only days before the recent outbreak of violence, for presentation to the PNDC at its next scheduled meeting. Consideration of the recommendations of the report will now necessarily have to take into account the recent events. In the meantime, it is important to avoid anything which may whip up the emotions of the parties to the conflict.

Although last month's event may tempt some journalists into lurid accounts of undeniably gruesome occurrences, a person of Mr Kwesi Yankah's academic standing might reasonably be expected to exercise more restraint and responsibility especially to avoid insinuations of insensitivity on the part of Government when the facts which he has not bothered to check, are quite contrary. Though no doubt a talented writer, Mr Kwesi Yankah has a habit of making unfounded remarks designed to embarrass the Government. About a year ago, he was reported asking why, if relations with Burkina Faso are not too cordial, the Ghana Armed Forces were undertaking joint exercises with their Burkinabe counterparts, when in fact no such joint have taken place ever since the present regime in Burkina Faso came to power.

He should attempt to inform himself thoroughly before he misinforms the public.

C. N. Nyewolema

Legal Officer

Castle Information Bureau

25

### THE NEW CASTLE INFORMATION ORDER

I don't remember the last time I visited a Power House, and for what reason. It was probably the day I was despatching an official letter, or when I was attempting to get in touch with a colleague there, who has risen so high he often cannot recognise me from the dizzy heights.

You see, you sometimes have to strive hard to be recognised as a school mate, particularly these days when some of your former colleague have shed off the *charlie wote* and open-neck shirts, and have earned the title, The Honourable. This latter title has dramatically emerged these last days, with reference to district and other secretaries, probably a way of saying the goat must be king before he dies. I wonder if any of the Honourables are any longer in a position to talk to mortals in *charlie wote*.

So the world be, as they say; and how many times have you not heard statements like, *Ei, today you pretend you don't know me?* You know what am talking about, if you have ever attempted to visit an Almighty. It is sometimes as if his secretary has been trained to recognise unwanted persons.

"Please, he is busy.... he has a meeting."

"And what is the best time to see him?"

"I am not sure, because he has another meeting at the Castle."

It is believed that as soon as you hear the latter word, you will give up....because that is a place people do not go *basabasa*. The few times I have attempted, I have woken up the next

morning with nightmares on my mind. Those two sharp shooters at the entrance with their guns forever pointing at your face. They are dead serious.

The closest shave I have had was an encounter at Arakan Barracks, where I ventured several years ago, in search of the daughter of my father-in-law, who was there on official business. I had entered the almighty gate without ceremonies, and all I heard was a voice of thunder: "H-A-L-T.!!!" The sentinel was under cover in the entrance booth. Dear reader, but for the restraint my bladder exercised, I would have done it in broad daylight.

It was thus not surprising when I got a record number of visitors this past week, all coming to check on the safety of my neck since the Mirror came out last week. "Are you sure you are okay?" To all intents and purposes, there is no way you can win in any 'war' with the Castle, they said. "You are in trouble," they looked at me with pity.

But I should probably count myself lucky that the situation is changing. Thanks to my stars. It is now possible for the Castle Information Bureau to read from the newspapers, and send an official reply on an item, with their office acknowledged underneath. This is certainly an information revolution... a new castle information order. In the past years, all one would read was a rejoinder from a reader in Dansoman, or East Cantonment, or a CDR official hitting hard on a 'culprit.' The latter might have written an article misinforming or inciting the public, or rather 'embarrassing' the Government. A reply would then be published, exposing all the skeletons in the writer's cupboard.....all the exams he failed in school, how he coveted his neighbour's wife, and how he messed up a state appointment and was given the sack.

In several cases, readers would read, and whisper. "That reply is from the Castle Information Bureau, or Ministry of Information. The name signed is false." The message behind the rejoinder would, of course, be that the 'culprit' should forever hold his peace, since he has finally been embarrassed in public.

Other times, culprits did not go scot free with mere rejoinders. In January 1991, one Agyeman Duah, doing his national service at Obuasi, wrote to the Mirror recounting how his arrest was ordered (allegedly by Mr Adjei Marfo), after he had written a letter to the Pioneer of October 24, 1990 criticising the kilo kilo deduction by the COCOBOD. In his letter to the Mirror, he had stated as follows, in reference to his earlier letter in the Pioneer: *"I had no personal interest in the matter whatsoever. Neither did I do so to please anybody. My sole aim was to caution against the apparent unilateral decision of the COCOBOD.... which threatens the industry."*

In that letter to the Mirror, the writer was thanking the Weekly for raising the same issue in its Forum column. That was after he had been released after five days of detention in the Castle, during which his hair was shaved with a blade. It took relations and people who know other people, to get him released.

In my case, I thank God there is a new castle information order, and my hair has been spared, even though I myself keep saying I need a Paul Ansah haircut one of these days.... a haircut of my choice, though.

In his 'love letter' on my piece, The Massacre Up North, my information teacher, one C. N. Nyewolema (goodness I had never heard his name before!), signing as Legal Officer at the Castle Information Bureau, unleashed blows below my empty stomach, that are supposed to have humiliated me- "a person of my academic standing," otherwise expected to exercise restraint and responsibility, etc. Then also, I am supposed to have specialised in making unfounded remarks DESIGNED to embarrass the Government.

Instantly then, Nyewolema refers to 'unfounded' remarks I made about a year ago' on joint military exercises with Burkina Faso. On this I would invite the legal officer to produce more facts about my 'unfounded remarks,' for I do not know what the hell he is talking about. I have never written that anywhere; and if he does not produce the full facts, I will assume it is a deliberate attempt to incite the military against me.

As for my supposed habit of 'embarrassing' the Government, it is another of those vicious clichés, meant to give a dog a bad name, and you know what follows next. I am indeed waiting for the day when people with against tongues' will be considered as part of the nation building team. That way, there will be enemies of the revolution, but mere critics, as in all free societies, including our traditional ones. More often than not, a few people have been unkind to my intelligence by wondering if am not being used by dissident politicians against the Government. I am sure the country's intelligence network knows better. A Few times, too I have been flattered with the compliments of being Government agent, in sheep's clothing. Never a simple Ghanaian who has spoken (or written) his mind since the seventies-years before the PNDC. I, of course, leave the ordinary man to judge; for I respect his views on me more than those of legal officer in the Castle.

Now, the Massacre up North. My duty was purely to inform and perhaps even to frighten the reader to the realities of what has happened up north; for it is real. I would have expected corrections from the Castle man on errors I may have made in presenting the facts on the gruesome war. On any possible errors on the war, I would have conceded to correction, and even apologized. The problem the legal officer had about my piece, appeared to have been more with ten words I used, than the over eight thousand other word., "Meanwhile, let the Castle visit the scene of the disaster." Dear reader, let's assume for the sake of argument, that it was the only thing I said in the paragraph, and that my full words had not been heavily edited by my editor.

So he spent his lengthy piece explaining how I have embarrassed the Government with insinuations of inaction, whereas several things were happening behind the scenes. By so doing the gentleman gave himself away. He knew so much about all that was happening behind the scenes in the Castle, and had neglected his duty to inform the public! The next day, the Castle Information Bureau should have been closed down, and its officers dismissed for embarrassing the Government! If it takes 'misinformation' to pierce the iron curtain, and prick a whole information bureau to educate the public about what is happening, I am glad I have done my misinformation duty. That information bureau, I repeat, is an embarrassment! The public has the right to know hazardous attempts by their head of state to save situations. These are heroic acts by a leader who cares, and efficient information bureau would tell the public the next day.

My other sin of having referred to the delay in presenting the Ampiah report needs no further comment. The legal officer says a White Paper on the report was ready only days before the recent war. Has this information, if true, been made public; and is this columnist the only one lamenting the delay in the White Paper? Graphic reporters had said the same thing several times before.

I can assure my readers that last week's crucifixion call by the Castle Misinformer did not succeed in shutting me up. Even now, I will continue my humble duties, and keep looking for sources, that can throw even more light on the situation up north.

I asked Hilla Limann in my chat with him, why the political parties have kept mute over the carnage up north, when these are the very problems they will be called upon to solve, if they come to power.

Dr Limann said if he, for instance, had called a press conference and commented on it, Government would have accused him of doing p with serious national tragedy.

"The root causes of that war are deeper than anybody can solve at the moment. You know I handled the Konkomba-Nanumba conflict during my days, I know such issues are very old. They go far into history, when they flare up, and you simplify things, you are only going to worsen the situation in ten years time. When I set up the Justice Lamptey Commission on the Nanumba Issue, I had already settled the issues locally, but only for the moment."

Limann said he then asked them to go back and examine the root causes, based on the recommendations in the Commission's report. "That is a long term solution. If the problem has been there for 50 years, you cannot solve it overnight. We had a similar problem in the Bimbila area. We first had in in Tuna. Much earlier during the AFRC time, it happened in Tsito and Peki. Later, people were saying my Government was weak, and could not solve the problems.

"It's just like the nurses strike. Innocent people suffer, and one could only appeal to them all to let peace prevail."

Mr Castleman, that was not the end. I chased up Mr. John Bawa in his office. He is the Secretary for Trade and Tourism, and used to be Secretary for the Northern region. He is Gonja himself. You remember he lost several relatives during the war, and broke down in front of TV cameras seeing the mass grave in which they had been buried. I knew it was a horror story, but the masses had the right to know. He gave a historical account, using a map to demonstrate his description of what happened.

But I couldn't help asking what others would have asked, given the chance. As a Gonja yourself, while you were in the North as Secretary, how challenging was the situation there for you?

"When I was there, I was not handling the situation alone, but working with a team in the regional administration. I was carrying out my duties objectively. That is why at the time, my own people were accusing me of not doing enough to help them. They said I was rather using my

position against them. At the same time, the Nawuris were blaming me, saying I was biased for my people." What was going through your head, when you gave up in front of the TV cameras?

"When I was there on Friday, I was told my people had died, and that they were killed by Konkommas from somewhere, not from the same locality. After going round the whole place, we got to the grave in which they had been buried. Imagine 16 dead bodies in one grave. You know, even if they were dogs, you wouldn't put them in one hole. Not only that. The bodies had been lying there for five or six days before they were buried. These are your own people and relations whom you will never see again, and you do not even know the last words they spoke," he spoke with fortitude, half choking.

But does the incident make him angry with the Konkommas? No. John Bawa said he has several Konkomma friends, and even speaks their language, and that as far he was concerned, the issue was over. He then called on the people to learn to live together amicably, since no Government would recommend a solution in which the ethnic groups were separated from one another through a resettlement.

I finally took advantage of the situation and asked a question about which rumours had circulated for a long time: the allegation last year that a national serviceman, a Nawuri, had been killed in his father's house.

"It's not correct. The boy was caught in Salaga, and beaten elsewhere. When they were passing through Kbembe to Kpandai, they just threw his body out of the vehicle.....the police has facts about the vehicle number, and everything. My father, by his position as chief, cannot even see a dead body. It's a taboo. Even if I die today, he cannot see my dead body."

So Mr Castleman, you see I will end here, having finished misinforming the people. I have done your work for you; and if you don't take care, I will sneak to the Castle this month ending, and collect your salary.

Come again one of these days or rather, Go way you!

## **REJOINDERS**

The Press Corps at the Castle are paid to report to Ghanaians on presidential activities unless they deem such information unimportant or a threat to national security.

If the Castle Press Corps or Castle Information Bureau failed to report to Ghanaians the concern expressed by our Head of State by flying to the North under dangerous conditions, where on earth do they expect Kwatriot and other people like myself to get such information? Does Mr Nyewolema expect Kwatriot to go to the Castle to ask the PNDC or its Chairman what it is doing about the Conflict?

Kwasi Boadi

Korle Bu, Accra

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I refer to a rejoinder on the above subject by one C.N. Nyewolema of the Castle Information Bureau in response to an earlier article written by Kwesi Yankah... I must say that for the predominant use of foul language in the said rejoinder, the principle and effort of informing a "misinformed" public is commendable especially when it is on a pertinent national issue like this.

We must praise Chairman Rawlings for his concern and prompt action, but Mr Nyewolema's reaction was in bad taste. I was surprised at his reaction to Kwesi Yankah's observation on the delay of action on the Justice Ampiah Committee report because earlier reports on the issue in the national dailies have alluded to that. Besides, Mr Nyewolema's explanation that "the White Paper on the Ampiah report was ready only days before the recent outbreak" does not nullify the delay argument.

Again, I believe the whole exercise is laudable but please let us have reactions in a conciliatory and mature tone, for especially in these times, we feverishly pray for and desire that.

Isaac Intsiful

Koforidua

## 26

### KOFI BROKEMAN

The topics often debated at palm wine bars, namely military in politics, church in politics, chiefs in politics, women in politics, etc. are all being put to rest now. The latest issue now appears to be brokemen in politics.

I really wish it had been possible for the Constitution to be a little more rest now specific about the issue of Brokemen in politics. That way, Koo Brokeman would know ahead of time whether to check his name in the voter's register or, as they say, go his somewhere. I suppose, it should have been possible for members of the Consultative Assembly to decide that whereas brokemen are as they say, o eligible to vote, they are not eligible to be president. That way, there would be division of labour, whereby the poor would specialise in voting, and the rich would specialise in being voted for.

It is hard to tell how broke Air Vice Marshall Ashley Larsen (Rtd) is. The name doesn't sound like a brokeman's, but the retired officer recently made a statement that nearly drove a nail in the coffin of my favourite party: Brokeman People's Party-the party with the largest following. He recently said in The Chronicle newspaper that brokemen should be disqualified from entering the presidential race. The next president should be, "someone who has made it in life. We must avoid choosing a candidate who is poor or not so well off. His first objective when in power will be to get rich quick and get lost without attending to our problems."

He did not end there. His disqualification list included Ashantis, Ewes, and the military. "These tribes have since independence been bitter rivals for power. We don't want to carry this into the Fourth Republic."

If the gentleman had been at the Consultative Assembly, he would probably have distinguished himself when the topic of disqualification was on the floor, in which case, he needn't have sat near the butchers' representative.

But he is not alone in the conspiracy. The political parties law has made sure that the presidential candidate with the largest following will never register. He would have to go a-borrowing to pay his registration fee.

If the brokeman aspirant were also in the military, he would of course be in double trouble, for the Castle he will see but will never step there. The only way he could ever come to power then would be through a dawn broadcast. The Constitution somehow foresaw this, and did not add Kofi Brokeman to the disqualification list.

From time immemorial, this matter has been on people's minds, even though they have refused to say it aloud. A society or club is looking for a treasurer, and they shall quietly look for a woman; it is she who will handle the cash with care. As soon as a man is nominated, members begin assessing his pocket. Will he 'borrow' the society's dues to pay his children's school fees, or to pay his own his own dues?

It is more interesting when they are looking for someone to chair a church harvest. Never the bricklayer, or a trotro driver, or palm wine tapper regular at church....but the Managing Director of Social Security Bank, supported by his accountant. If it comes to the worst, they will open the safe and pump workers social security contributions into a new building for the church, of choristers' robes. The palm wine tapper, even if he is a church elder, should probably wait and chair a palm wine drinking event. No palm wine talk in church harvest.

This has gone on and on. Until recently, the notice board in front of de Accra Centre for National Culture (Arts Centre) carried a strong warning beneath the Week's notice: No *Charlie Wote* Allowed.

Recently when butchers were allowed entry into the Consultative Assembly, the protest sounded like; "this is a place for thinking, no butcher business". So then woe unto you if your credentials include poverty. The village counsellors leave you out when they consult to take a decision; for your mind is as poor as your pocket.

As for the rich, he needn't even be in the line of royal succession. He will buy the title. He can be chief, never a thief. Never a chief thief. If necessary, the elders convene and create a stool for him, a stool such as *Nkosuohene*.

I thought eleven years of a We-No-Go-Sit Down governance has changed our attitudes. It is perhaps one significant legacy left this Government: an effort to remove the ordinary man's stigma. One needn't have gone to school to be in the district assembly, consultative assembly, parliament, The Castle. It was indeed thrilling seeing the translation efforts in the cubicles of the Consultative Assembly, the effort to translate the rich man's English into the poor man's "vernacular" so the butcher would also understand. And now that the way has been paved for the brokeman, here comes the Air Vice Marshall attempting to negate the few amenities. If he had time, he would perhaps have supported his argument with examples of past poor presidents of Ghana, who abused their office, or rich appointees of Government who have donated their riches to the National Trust Fund.

What is going on currently is probably his best choice. Presidential aspirants in several parties doling out millions to power brokers, to get their party's nominations. Some are renovating party headquarters, for a serious candidate is one seen to be spending on the party. Very often he has threatened that if the party does not nominate him, he will withdraw his sponsorship. In one such party, all attempts to satisfy the rich sponsor with the post of party treasurer have failed- he wants the big apple, where he can steal money and save it in Switzerland. Why because he is not a statesman, but a politician. Whereas a statesman thinks he belongs to the state, the politician thinks the state belongs to him.

As for Arshley Larsen's theory, I hope he will come around and explain it some more....the presidential embargo on some ethnic groups. May be, the next president of Ghana should be a Nawuri, in which case we should send scouts up north to look for heroes in the Nawuri-Gonja war.

As for the issue of brokemen in politics, it very easily disqualifies my good friend of the Ashanti Pioneer. And how about the Brokeman Amissah's?

*Truly truly, ohia ye ya.*

I was wondering if you have also noticed the free art exhibition going on throughout the country, by the streetside. I sometimes stop to look and compare. Who knows if at the end of the day, your choice of party will depend on its, symbol, slogan, colours, or how widespread its posters.

Sometimes, your choice is made easier by consideration of which party's art work could attract school children, and which would attract dog barks and houseflies.

My best symbol so far is the maize, half stripped and ready to go. The choice was imaginative...this is the maize season, and mouth organs are being blown by many passengers on the Accra-Kumasi road. Great art design, but I am afraid NIP's hen with its three chickens might be looking for just that for their morning feed. The Heritage symbol of a man and woman could backfire- it has the trappings of an Aids campaign poster. The umbrella? It must be a fretful bird that sticks its neck out of an umbrella. The yellow eagle design would need a few more strokes of the brush.... the artist was probably in a hurry to collect his fee. And by the way, did INEC gloss over the law that forbids partisan use of state symbols? That bird is an eagle.

A little over a month ago, I had a brief chat with Justice Ofori Boateng, who said some parties consulted him in advance if they were not sure a symbol was acceptable. I asked how he would respond to a situation where a party would call itself Eagle Party.

"I would want to know their symbol. If it is eagle, I would have to call an emergency meeting of INEC and take a decision on it. If the name or symbol could create a problem, or lead to riot, we would advise against it."

But besides art work, I realise that a party could win votes by sheer quantities of party posters. The more pervasive, the better. That way, you have an advantage particularly if Justice Ofori Boateng eventually decides that party posters, according to a new electoral law, shall be converted into ballot papers.

But it matters even more, if you consider the psychological impression created by quantities. Parties with more fliers are richer. Knowing this, the trick is to outdo your opponent on the wall either by outnumbering, superimposing, or simply destroying. So far a few fights have been recorded here and there based on the competition for wall space. In the villages, the best spot for inter-party rivalry has been the wall of the KVIP, knowing very well that you will pay a daily visit.

At Abetifi (Kwahu) last weekend, I was struck by a store keeper's strategy of making sure he does not offend customers by the symbol he has chosen. He has displayed on his door, fliers of all parties so far represented in town: the multi coloured umbrella with a bird intruder, red hen with three chickens, half stripped maize, the elephant, and the coconut.

But whoever is imaginative could have composed symbol for the Kwahu area this season. That symbol would simply be tiger nut. This is the season where, every Kwahu keeps his jaws

busy with *atadwe*. On my recent visit to Pepease for a funeral, I counted over fifty sellers of tiger nuts at the funeral.

*By the way, which party is leading in the Kwahu area so far?* I asked.

“Here, it is mostly the umbrella and elephant....the hen is also picking up.”

*What of the Eagle and Heritage?*

“We don't know of them yet.”

Villages, of course, reckon with symbols rather than party names. It's not clear, but somehow the rural people know that one of the parties is the Government party. It is the party with the umbrella symbol, that is what their district secretaries have told them. After all, it is in his office and residence that meetings are held. But the story is even more scary. Government contracts in several localities in Ghana today are being awarded on the basis of one's association with the NDC umbrella. Join NDC, or you get no contract? Jerry should weep hearing this, considering that this party has been associated with the PNDC. Moreover part of the reason he objects to party politics is simply the winner takes-all attitude.

In my chat with the INEC boss, I asked him how tricky the situation would be if the Government directly or indirectly supported a party.

"I have not heard it officially; neither is there concrete evidence. If they should decide to stand, this would be unusual, and I would have to adjust myself to the situation. If they come to register a party, I will point out to them that they cannot register. If I hear that there has been a violation of the Law anywhere, I can draw the attention of the Attorney General. We are not a law enforcing agency, we cannot arrest, neither can we prosecute.”

I am not sure whether Justice Boateng is still at post and observing which and which appointees are openly politicking.

I also keep wondering if he has no say whatsoever on aspects of the electoral law he does not agree with.

"The decision is not mine, I am only implementing; that is my mandate. I have no right to push; that is none of my business. I implement whatever Government says that is in the law. When you go outside your mandate, your head can be chopped off."

But don't you have the power to make suggestions, for instance on the fixing of election dates, whether the presidential and parliamentary elections should be held together or separately?

"As far as I am concerned, the fixing of dates is based on several factors, farming season, rainy season, harvest time, etc."

What is your own opinion about the need for separate dates for the elections?

"I would have complained if it had been awful to implement.... if for instance it made it difficult for certain people to vote. In the absence of a solid proof that the Government's decision on two dates is wrong, I will proceed to implement."

Would the elections be cheaper if held together?

"I got my accountants to check this out, and we realised it would not be cheaper...I would need double ballot boxes, double staff. Held separately, the materials can be reused. Money wise, I have no reason to object.

"Besides this, there could be confusion in the rural areas if they see an array of ten faces, five presidential candidates and five parliamentary. If we give the doses separately, they could cope."

But in 1979, there was no confusion when the two were held on the same day.

"Well, I was out of the country in '79. I wasn't around to observe the situation; I can't tell, I don't know."

I kept wondering how difficult it would be implementing unfair decisions you don't personally agree with. I thus asked Justice Boateng if he is sometimes haunted by the plight of Justice Abban (the 1979 Unigov electoral boss who took to his heels under threat from the Acheampong Government). This question is particularly pertinent, considering the PNDC's overt interest in the forthcoming elections.

"No, I have never thought of that," he smiled. "You know, during the recent referendum, I told people to show me the wall Abban scaled, so I could practice." He made a good joke of it all.

## 28

### YOUR THUMB WILL TELL

Tuesday has been so slow in coming, you keep wondering if it is interested in multi-party elections. But come it will; and it is likely to leave a mark on your thumb. If you are not careful, your thumb will be so busy these coming weeks, you will realise it is perhaps the most democratic part of your body.

If Tuesday does not tell us the full story, your other thumb will be invited for the second ballot, such that by the time of the parliamentary elections in December you would probably have run out of thumbs. Out of thumb, out of vote. But that also means you will spare yourself the agony of a voter in labour pains, awaiting the outcome of his thumbprint. Ever seen a hen in labour? She paces up and down the corridors of the hen coop, singing her anxieties until the owner conducts a pregnancy test with the last finger. If this test is positive, the hen is then sentenced to confinement with hard labour, underneath the basket.

But the eventual outcome depends on what exactly you did in that small room, to that small paper. Tempting to do other things with it, if you are fed up with voting, isn't it? Our mothers and fathers have voted all their lives and are still suffering. We will be lucky if having entered the small room with the paper, they do exactly as instructed. Looking at the five symbols, it is very tempting particularly if you belong to the catarrh constituency. Look closely at the symbols, check to see if the next person in the queue is not coming; then blow your nose with your least favourite symbol. That's the only way to demonstrate your disdain for this democracy. Talk to polling agents one of these days, and ask them the nature of ballot papers that are normally rejected during counting. You realise that the ballot paper has suddenly become a very important medium for free expression.

While waiting for your turn, you sometimes wonder why the voter ahead took so long in coming. Sometimes, he is confused as to where exactly to thumb print, whether the most favoured, or the least favoured symbol? After all is the thumb not an instrument for gesture insult? Sometimes, the voter needs more time to write an abuse, or a letter to the Times or Chronicle editor. Many things happen in that small booth, the most important is, your free and fair decision. It is a moment nobody is watching you, not even God (*Kokuroko*).

Fortunately, our system of voting cleverly avoids the open method in a sister country, where voters openly line up behind pictures of favourite candidates. That method would have produced casualties here, particularly if you know the false promises going on behind the scenes. And how dare you avoid lining up behind the picture of the candidate you have promised. The problem, of course, would be with the double agents. To date, most wise contractors for instance belong to 'both' parties, for you never know which your saviour will be. All you need to do is to make sure the two candidates don't clash on your premises. If in this case our system were open ballot, most contractors would take to their heels this Tuesday. And for many of the candidates who assess their chances only by counting heads at their 'super monster' rallies, they would suddenly realise that they have been *Gbedemised*.

Afro Gbede started it all and introduced *Gbedemisation* in Ghanaian politics, in 1969-the art of losing big, with big rally crowds. To be Gbedemised or not to be Gbedemised, that is the question.

But I equally dread the INEC directive of prohibiting umbrellas in the vicinity of the polling station. Rain or shine? The INEC boss seems to be confusing real umbrellas with umbrella pictographs. And if it should rain that day, why shouldn't NDC boast that *Onyame ye akatamanso*? But that electoral bye-law is more autocratic than you thought. The INEC boss is probably also saying, there should be no man-woman handshakes in the polling queues, or else Heritage would have an unfair advantage. In that case, polling stations should stay clear of coconut trees, and coconut sellers, or else Limann would have a field day. But we are lucky the season for fresh corn is over. One would very easily have been arrested for anti-electoral corn habits in the queue. What chickens? *All stray hen and their chickens shall be prosecuted that day*. Poultry is an electoral hazard. The safest animal is probably the elephant, that could possibly stray into a polling booth in Brong Ahafo, and pick up the ballot box at 5 p.m. for counting in the bush. And how dare you arrest the elephant?

That day, let there be no earthquake (kukrudu), as happened in Cairo two weeks ago, or else it would be said, *Onyame ye kukrudu*.

As the D day advances, I keep getting disappointed, though. You can sometimes determine one's party affiliation by the language he speaks alone, as to whether he says *Leke*, or *Ete sen*? As soon as you hear those syllables in your ears, the speaker most likely belongs to this or that party. In several cases, your guess is right. Shame on us. The situation was not the same five months or so ago.

But many are those who dread the consequences of Tuesday; and partly because we don't trust our arithmetic, we have brought in several Commonwealth observers to pretend they are watching us. That is the only way they can get us to behave. In truth, however, they have come to visit the crafts market at the Arts Centre. Since their arrival, I believe they have heard a lot, and seen a lot too. They are probably giggling at the interesting way we declare assets in this part of the world. "You accountability people are interesting," they should be saying.

But I also see how optimistic all the candidates are, both presidential and parliamentary. Nobody says he is losing, including that parliamentary candidate somewhere in the Central region (party affiliation withheld), who is often seen begging for cigarettes. All candidates have turned themselves into arithmeticians, able to tell what percentage of votes are already under their belt. I bet the NPP candidate in Keta is very hopeful too. I visited my umbrellas-in law last weekend, and was impressed by the overwhelming presence of the corn and umbrella. From Srogboe to Keta. And I remember in Keta, an umbrella-in-law disowning me-refusing to shake hands with me because of my writings. He was in effect telling me *eto nye dzozo ge (akonta beko)*. To which I replied, *akonta no go-go today, no go-go tomorrow. Akonta beka Keta*. Fortunately, the daughter of my father-in-law was there to proclaim cease-fire.

But I saw a hopeful sign at Anloga. Those people had been kind enough to allow NPP banners and buntings across their streets. Nice people. That day, an NPP rally was probably coming on. But I am sure the NDC candidate at Manhyia is also ready for victory. Isn't it rather interesting that the parliamentary candidates in Anloga are closely following what is happening in Angola?

You see, as soon as Ghanaians learnt something was going on in Angola, they suspended campaigning and followed Angola with keen interest, knowing that it was another bout between continuity and change. When news started spreading that MPLA had won over fifty percent, the Continuity parties in Ghana started celebrating. For supporters of Change, they were in mourning clothes until Savimbi announced that Dos Santos failed to hit the 50% mark after all. Suddenly then the Savimbi forces in Ghana began smiling, and Kukrudu and Company came back into the picture. Even so, the forces of change in Angola have gone back to the bush, to start another war. That is probably where we should part ways with Angola. NDC's prayer that Cameroon's Paul Biya should win, was answered. That is a good omen for Tuesday. For it all looks as if the Kaunda phenomenon is over. But come Tuesday, we shall tell our truth.

Our biggest problem is that history has not been kind to us. Anytime, your incumbent expresses interest, you are in trouble. It means you should do everything to avoid embarrassment

on Nana. If possible, make him happy by declaring him winner. In 1978, we disobeyed and bore the consequences.

If history will repeat itself, here are few reminders. Voting for the UNIGOV referendum was March 30. Player referee, General Kutu Acheampong. It was simply a YES-No vote for or against Kutu's Union Government. The consequences were a clear case of dancing statistics. Three days after the referendum, i.e. 2nd April, results declared were 56% for YES, 44% for NO. These figures were later improved, and the new results were 60% Yes, 40% No.

This was not surprising. A few days before the referendum, Justice Abban, the Electoral Commissioner escaped from his office, which was later besieged by soldiers. It was not very clear what was happening; but he was replaced by a new appointee, Justice A. M. Quaye. On 4th April, Justice Abban returned from his hideout and met the Head of State, in the company of the Catholic Arch-Bishop, His Grace, John Kwadwo Amissah. Acheampong's Government came out to refute allegations of harassment, saying Justice Abban had preferred to use a private security agency, SECURICOR, instead of those offered by the State. They also said if any soldiers had been sighted at Abban's office, they were only there to see a BBC reporter, who was said to be transmitting false information to BBC.

The consequences of Justice Abban's absence? Dancing statistics on the scoreboard. The first results were from Bawku East. 8765 for Yes, 2018 for No. These figures keep changing on the scoreboard at intervals of ten minutes, with the margin growing bigger and bigger. Three different results with different figures were finally released in the overall results. One was from Radio Ghana. Another was presented to the Head of State on 3rd April, by the new Electoral Commissioner. Yet a different set of figures was recorded in Ghana Gazette dated 21st April 1978, whose summary was published in the Daily Graphic on 26th April, 1978.

Consequences. The People's Movement for Freedom and Justice (Gbedemah, Afrifa, Adu Boahen, Amarteifio, Nana Akufo Addo, and co.,) challenged the results. Most of the PMFJ membership were arrested and 35 detained.

Acheampong referred to the results as 'victory in a grand style', but issued a directive against jubilation or acts of public celebration, to avoid antagonising other sections of the community. He then decreed during a television broadcast *that there should be no public or newspaper discussion on the results of the referendum*. Before all this, churches had sent a joint memorandum to the SMC Government urging impartiality and fairness in the referendum.

If these ever came to pass, why shouldn't we worry?

Already, I see colleagues quietly preparing for both victory and defeat-ironing white clothes, but also putting mourning clothes on standby, just in case.....In either case, though, there is room for booze. But it all depends on whether fewer crowds at rallies mean few supporters.

Among candidates, the most impressive of late has been Hilla Limann. While you were not watching, he was quietly working in the fields, and has massive support in the Western and Upper regions. The Northern region will be everybody's dining hall. Central looks more NDC to me, even though the two biggest towns, Cape Coast and Agona Swedru look like Kukrudu.

Erskine is strong in the Northern region because of his running mate and has a solid following in Sekondi-Takoradi. Volta region is mostly covered by the umbrella, except parts of the north, which are free for all, including Kwabena Darko. Chicken D has of late acquired a mass following in Ashanti. NDC is praying Darko splits the booty with the elephant. Yes OK. He will do quite well, but not enough to offset the thumping elephant. Eastern will be fierce between NDC and Kukrudu. Kukrudu has the urge. In Brong Ahafo, there will be another fierce banter between the big two. Toss a coin to declare the winner. NDC has an advantage here.

Each of the Big Two appears to be gunning for an outright 52%. If both are right, we have 104% already. Both are wrong. It will be a neck-to-neck fight, and could go either way, Don't expect the highest to get more than 45%.

By all means, reserve some energy for a second round, But this second round is the puzzle. I still don't know why INEC cannot come out with a date in advance. If we allow it to happen, some amount of *butubutu* is inevitable; but it all depends on the maturity of the candidates. If they love Ghana, what prevents them from holding hands and joining the peace walk? The one single candidate that joins the peace walk is likely to steal votes from all peace lovers.

So then, who is likely to smile on Tuesday? I see none. Wednesday will tell, but it all depends. He who is ahead in the first round will not necessarily have the last laugh. I put Hilla Lee in third position. As for the sequence of the two top positions, your thumb will tell. It all depends on what happens in that small room, between you and your ballot. Whether you will thumb-print two symbols, or you will use the ballot paper to write to Kwatriot.

Alternatively, if you don't believe in the ballot box, you can blow your nose with that piece of paper-----prrrrrr.

## 29

### LET'S WAGE PEACE

OF late, one section of the Ghanaian public has been infected by a virus: the November 3rd virus. This has left its victims the symptoms of absentmindedness, loss of appetite, and disinterest in electoral mathematics. For these announcement, *here are some more election results*, in enough to induce *electoral diarrhea*.

Others are smiling and would consider November 3rd another day of deliverance, in addition to May, June, and December. But the day also revealed the mathematician in the Ghanaian. Whether at the scoreboard, or by the radio-TV, each had a pen and paper in hand, seriously adding and subtracting. If this trend continues through December, there will be at least one positive outcome: the intake of mathematics students in the country's universities, is bound to improve in the coming years.

But the day also demonstrated how early the Ghanaian can wake up for work, if he is serious. Congratulations to all those who joined the voting queue at 4 am. If I had a prize, I would give these the early bird award. These were either very patriotic or..... something else. They say, *early to vote, early to impersonate*, such that by the time the original owner arrives, you are on your way for a second or third attempt.

It was after all very easy to cheat. The indelible black ink is not that indelible after all, if you are smart. Here's how to cheat and vote more than once. *Anoint your palm with vaseline before the indelible ink is applied. It will not stick. As soon as you finish voting, wipe it off; it's gone, and you are set for a second vote.* INEC forgot to equip polling agents with the technique of spotting potential offenders.

But it was not too hard to be an offender after all. Except for the generosity of a polling assistant, Kwatriot himself would have been added to the 'wanted' list, and the Voice Newspaper would scream with banner headlines, **Kwatriot in Double Registration (NDC Candidate not Alone).**

The line I joined in Legon was one of the shortest. After I had voted at one polling station, a smart gentleman approached and said playfully in my ears, "Sir, you are under arrest because your name also appears in the other polling station." My registration number at Point One, was 0577185. I rushed to the second point to verify the gentleman's allegation, and there was I again. This time, my number was 1042278. In truth, I registered only once, INEC may have decided to award me with two votes for my kwatriotism. But two vote are better than none.

Many of the polling stations I visited abounded with no-vote victims, some very angry with INEC, and cursing!

"I registered at this same spot....and voted here during the April referendum!" One gentleman tore his registration slip in pieces, cursing that it was a conspiracy. "I have spent the whole day moving from one polling station to the other," was a common refrain. "Each place I visited, I had to join the long queue at the tip end. I would spend one and half hours in each queue only to be told my name was not in-Nonsense."

The story was the same at the 31st Market in Accra, Dunia Cinema in Nima, Madina, Mamobi.

To many, it was a conspiracy by INEC to disenfranchise them, "But I suspect, it is also a conspiracy against certain ethnic groups," a Makola woman charged. "My colleagues and I voted in April at this same spot. They found their names; I didn't. What beats my mind is why those polling assistants quickly tell you your name is not in, as soon as you have mentioned it.

Sometimes, they refuse to allow you to help search for it.....the whole thing is a conspiracy," she cursed.

No-vote victims I talked to were, of course, not from any particular ethnic group. What struck me throughout my rounds was a constant suspicion on the part of many, that rigging might be in the offing. At Makola, Ka Bobo's song, *Onyame Ahu Wooooo*, was the refrain by several onlookers. They had apparently seen one polling agent moving back and forth suspiciously.

The moment of truth came after counting at the various locations. At one location at Burma Camp. (Arakan Barracks area), I was struck by the following results released; I was eager to find out what the soldiers were thinking of. NPP-97; PHP-27; NIP-10; PNC- -15; NDC -303. At the adjacent location: NPP-80; PHP-20; NIP-7; PNC 10; NDC— 219. The soldiers at these locations were probably making a point.

Mini processions and 'picnics' in all parts of the country, in anticipation of the final results. Close to midnight, the results started trickling in with simultaneous commentary and discussion on radio and television. The TV discussion was shortlived for reasons which were not convincing. In truth, the discussion appeared to be unfriendly to one party, so it had to be stopped.....tension was rising inside and outside the studio.

After a few results were declared, the trend became obvious. The umbrella was winning. Some considered it ridiculous; others took it as genuine. In any case, storms started gathering in various parts of the country. Riots started in Kumasi, and a curfew has been imposed. Dark clouds are gathering in Accra, and one death by shooting has been reported. But the scenario had been foreseen long before.

As of last weekend, the world was going to come to an end sometime this month. Stores and markets were full of election shoppers. Families stuffed their fridges, and bought extra stocks of rice, gari, yam, and Frytol. The commercial banks were even busier. Customers withdrew large amounts, whether in local or foreign exchange. The Ghana Airways offices were busy. Ghana Airways to London..... soon after voting on Tuesday.

November 3rd, Ghanaians were going to vote in order to die. The one single voting that was going to end life. Thereafter, there would be a curfew; a state of emergency would be imposed...Ghana would go the Liberian way. While all this happened, you would better be home ridden, listening to the latest developments from home.

The stampede was understandable. For the sake of the forthcoming elections, candidates were spitting fire. They saw one another as enemies, thieves liars, crooks. They swore and threatened. It was going to be an election without a loser. Handing over to So and So? Impossible, we will deal with them when we come, we will set Ghana aflame, *the elections will be rigged, we don't trust these people, etc.*

Weeklong prayers throughout the country, peace marches by school children, etc.

After November 3rd, Ghanaians have not been proved wrong. The reason? Suspected rigging. Some ballot boxes were stuffed before voting started.....a PNDC secretary was seen in a

Green Nissan Urvan, ASA 2936, collecting 40 ballot boxes and ballot papers from INEC head office on voting day. A woman has been arrested in Kumasi with a ballot box stuffed with ballot papers; the figures quoted from the Ketu and North Tongu, constituencies are ridiculously high, etc."

Pockets of demonstrations are being planned outside Kumasi; these are likely to be violent; the police and military are likely to clamp down on demonstrators; there are likely to be fatalities, and on and on the blaze will spread, S-C-A-R-E-D.

To date, there is one thing I don't understand. The Commonwealth Observer team undertook to sponsor two extra representatives for each party at each polling station, who would witness all transactions. Did the parties comply with this offer? Were these reps on duty? To INEC, could some of your staff have conspired with other parties; how does one explain the stuffed ballot box alleged in Kumasi?

From one point of view, the suspected cases need thorough investigation by the police and INEC. From another standpoint, violence is not the answer. Let's wage peace. Let's overhear the presidential candidates intervene and speak peace to their supporters. After all, one of them made an earlier pledge to abide by INEC's ruling. Genuine defeat may be genuinely painful, but let losers not completely rule out the possibility that the defeat is genuine.

This, of course, is not to say INEC should not be prevailed upon to investigate the alleged irregularities. Chunks of people who voted at one spot in April, but could not trace their names at the same place, have been fooled by INEC. They have been denied their civic rights. There were other allegations: of people celebrating victories in the villages, only to reach Accra to hear they lost. There are cases of suspected figure-switching in the operations rooms, where figures for X were 'wrongly' given to Y. Do the figures transmitted to INEC from operations rooms in the regions tally with the subtotals from polling stations etc.? These could be easily cross checked from party representatives. There are suspected cases of vote inflation in places suspected to be sparsely populated.

Was the voters' register INEC inherited from NCD not a big factor? Would the use of ID cards help out the problem in future?

Meanwhile, all is quiet in certain parts of Ghana. A kind of uneasy silence. Some are calculating their gains, and others the cost. These elections have certainly been the most expensive in our history, for to many, it was simply a question of life and death. If it's over, let not the losers go on a rampage to destroy, and let not winners go on a rampage to 'victimise' their 'enemies.'

## ROUND TWO IMAGE

### BELOVED LET US LAUGH

These times are so unusual I hardly see people making open comments unless they are sure the forces around are not from Charles Taylor's camp. Men speak in small clusters and disperse or change the topic as soon as they see in enemy coming.

The 'alien will spoil the conversation, since the topic had something to do with 'free and foul,' or kerosene, or petrol, or INEC. The most ideal chat these days is the one where nobody argues. Simply nod your head throughout the conversation, and sleep soundly thereafter. You can never be sure of the consequences of your dissenting voice. With the wind of change currently blowing, in-group dissent has become a bane. Similarly, you cannot easily celebrate a victory or mourn a defeat, among 'enemy' forces. Umbrella celebrations and elephant funerals have been declared illegal until further notice. All celebrants and mourners shall be prosecuted. Supporters of Hearts and Kotoko know how it feels when they mistakenly sit among 'enemy' crowds at the stadium. As a lone Kotokoman among Hearts supporters how dare you jump on your feet, and shout go-a-a-a-1! when a goal is scored or even attempted. In Accra, the Hearts commandos would shout on you, *tashi!* (sit down!). You would be allowed to celebrate that Kotoko goal (scored fifteen minutes ago) only after Hearts has equalized. Thereafter, the ban on your joy would be lifted. Not until then, *tashi!*

So then, my dear friend, do not celebrate. Who knows if a celebration or an argument you started could betray how you voted, who you voted for, and so on.

It often does not really matter who you voted for, unless it is one of the big two. To be on the safer side then, most people I have talked to 'confess' they neither voted for the umbrella nor the elephant. The best strategy has been to pretend you voted for the coconut; but be cautious in that case too. Hilla Lee could wake up next Tuesday, and decide to hold a coconut demonstration saying, 'I have been re-elected president by coconut acclamation... the election was oil rigged in the Tano basin by the GNPC.'

This would of course attract a rejoinder from the INEC which would say, there is a world of difference between an oil rig, and a ballot rig.

With the current spread of the November 3rd virus, I am looking forward to a Sunday service at Rig Church, where the Pastor would graciously urge the congregation to sing Hymn 1103: **Beloved let us laugh.**

Sharing the same seat in the front pew would be the five gentlemen next to each other, carefully arranged in the sequence of the symbols on the ballot paper -elephant, coconut, hen, umbrella, and

handshake. Directly behind these would be the first ladies of the gentlemen, all giggling in the direction of one another, after the hymn.

"In the spirit of today's sermon," the church elder would say, "all the first ladies, as from today, are going to share the same kitchen.....and cook the men in turns. Today Sunday, the gentlemen shall at the elegant diet, and so on and so forth, until Mrs Erskine comes on Thursday with a *cake handshake a la Sekondi*."

After each meal then, the women would sit at the feet of Fulera, one after the other, and Fulera would plait their hair, amidst campaign gossip.

"Three weeks ago, as soon as he landed with helicopter....he was so tired we couldn't even converse...hmmmmm."

"The same happened to me after the Circle rally....he fell asleep behind the cocoyam...." Hahahahaha.

"No, you all got it wrong... These days, things are breaking apart in my case... ....he seems to be more married to his manifesto... the manifesto is his first lady."

"But you are all lucky, after the Sekondi rally..... I overheard mine saluting in his sleep....." "Hahahahaha.....praise the Lord, *Beloved let us laugh*."

Love there certainly will be. It's all a question of time. In the midst of the current scare, I saw a hopeful sign.

I had, of course, heard of the various explosions, heard of the man set ablaze, molestations, and all the scary confrontations. Then was the front page scare about the University of Ghana-an explosion? That thing sounds scary- just like another bomb blast! Could it be meant to spread anxiety and fear among students? Probably, and probably not. If you read the front page headline in a daily paper recently, don't rush to fetch your son or daughter yet.

I stopped about three-quarter way through my class to investigate, and it was small trouble- at least for now. Not a bomb in Legon. No injuries, no damage to any structure.....just a small explosion at the School of Administration. But in the midst of a serious one at the airport, Ghana News Agency in Tema, etc., who wouldn't take it serious? A final police report will tell. But for how pointers are that it was from what looks like a plastic bottle, lined with cotton wool, and containing a substance.

A gentleman on a fraud spree had fooled a victim that for \$2000, he could give him a chemical that would make one thousand cedi notes out of nothingness. "Meet me at the University for the chemical." Meanwhile, time is running out, and before long, the chemical explodes in the container as it is held by the gentlemen at the School of Administration. The gentleman attempts to flee, but he is grabbed and handed over to the Legon police. Three under seat as of Tuesday afternoon, and a fourth awaited. None of them belongs to the University community.

A political design or coincidence? It's for the police to determine.

In the midst of all the security council meetings throughout the country, came the scary newsflash that members of certain parties had asked to be armed against any possible attack on them. That item was very luckily denied; and we pray there is no later denial of the denial.

Only for Wednesday, I saw a ray of hope. To my relief and yours, leaders of the losing parties, at a press conference, dissociated themselves from the going acts of violence, and called on their members to avoid breaches of the peace. In the midst of that, I visited Professor & Mrs Adu Boahen at their home in Airport Residential Area, Accra. The last time I had been there was an interview opportunity I got shortly before the NPP congress.

On this occasion, I had come to congratulate him for his impressive performance during the presidential. A thirty percentage plus points against such a political giant and the incumbent, was a great achievement, I thought.

The professor, donning an NPP flowing gown, was still as jovial as ever, and looked younger than sixty. The hectic campaign schedule did not appear to have left a heavy toll on him, except for a lingering laryngitis, the result of voice strain. But there was also a lingering let-down feeling from the "disappointing outcome of the elections.

"I did much much better than the INEC results...The whole results as presented by INEC were pre-programmed, and fed into the computer... I have no doubt about that. We are in the process of putting evidence together to prove that. We have lots and lots of evidence, and we have put together a team of lawyers to examine what there is so far. Facts keep pouring in.

"Apart from several inconsistencies we have discovered, there is also a second case of ballot papers discovered dumped in Kumasi, apart from the earlier case. These ballot booklets were discovered alongside INEC ink pad and stamp."

On and on we chatted. But I was disturbed by one thing, Prof. had not conceded defeat in the election; he had not accepted the outcome in spite of a pre-election declaration he made in the newspapers that he would abide by INEC's final word. Was this not a breach of his own pledge?

"No," he said. "People forget the full pledge I made. I said, I would accept the results provided the INEC, the international observers, AND the general public pronounce the elections to be free and fair. As far as I am concerned, the general public has not accepted the results."

*Prof, you still talk of the voters register, and insist that it be revised, or else your party and the others will not partake in the parliamentary. Some might not take this seriously since you had the option to boycott the presidential, in the first place, and you didn't Is it fair now to insist on the voters register?*

"That's true. But you see, we insisted on the revision of the voters register as well as the abolition of certain obnoxious laws several months ago. We suspected the figures might be manipulated from the bloated voters registration; but during our campaigns, we knew we had so much support that no amount of manipulation would affect our victory."

The house was as busy as it was the last time around, Life was going on as usual, and the family as cheerful to friends as ever. There was Mrs Mary Rawlings getting breakfast ready. More and more party members were pouring in to present reports of election irregularities.

Irene later came in and said hello. Her maiden name? Irene Rawlings. She faintly remembered me from Legon days, but knows my brother Kojo very well they were mates. Irene Rawlings, comfortably related in the home of Professor and Mrs Mary Adu Boahen.

In Irene's name, I saw signs of peace in Ghana. On the wall of an anteroom towards the kitchen, was the answer a portrait of Irene's father a white gentleman, posing with her mother, then Mrs Rawlings (and no Mrs Adu Boahen). The picture must have been taken in the sixties. At that time, Mrs Boahen was married to one Mr. Rawlings, an Englishman, who is no more.

In the professor's home then were Rawlingses and Adu Bonhen's happily cohabiting, eating, drinking, chatting, and smiling from the wall. I heaved a sigh of relief. There was no animosity after all; and one could imagine a chat between the two candidates playing draughts (dami), within the yard.

"Prof, you know I voted for you during the elections?"

"Impossible. Are you sure you voted at all?"

"Yes I did. I voted for you, and.....even pleaded with Nana Konadu to add her vote too.... but I later realised she gave it to Limann, apparently because Limann's wife is a 31st Woman...hahahaha."

"As for women. By the way, my wife Mary also said she voted for the umbrella. She said she mistook you for her former husband..."

"I am not surprised.... for I hear Erskine and his family also voted for the umbrella...." Hahahahaha.

"It's a long time you and I sang together.....If Hilla and Erskine, and Kwabena are around, call them all, and let's sing together.

Beloved let us laugh.....

"No, let's sing another. We sang that last Sunday; we don't want a one party song."

Peace perfect peace....

"By the way, did you say Peace Perfect Peace, or Peace perfect Piss."

**Peace Perfect Pisssssssss.**

PEACE PERFECT PISSS - IMAGE