

DIARY OF A REVOLUTION "WHICH MIGHT
HAVE BEEN"
Part II: "... to Cut a Real Revolution
Right in the Middle"

by Barbara Harrell-Bond



The massive public support the Rawlings' led AFRC generated in the short span of its rule was available to the new Limann government. But today's leaders persist in the belief that the military, not poverty, is the real threat to stability, and thus undermine their own regime.

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Part II: "... to Cut a Real Revolution Right in the Middle"

This is the second part of a *Report* on events in Ghana following the spontaneous uprising within the lower ranks of the military on June 4, 1979. In Part I, I discussed the emergence of Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings as chairman of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, with the task of directing this "revolution." But the essence of his responsibility was, he believed "to cut a *real* revolution right in the middle." And, as he pointed out when asked in a recent interview if he had "enjoyed" being "in effect the head of state," "It wasn't easy at all."

As I said, it was very hot. Everyone had to be cooled down. It wasn't easy at all. I mean there were not enough people to have much influence over the boys, the soldiers. It wasn't just a question of the problems with the military, it was on the worker's front too. It called for a very good insight, you know, an emotional insight into your fellow human being, for you to mold his thoughts, to be able to assume as much anger as he had inside him, you know. To virtually crystallize his thoughts into words, to make him realize that you were as much part of his problems and his plight. And that you could see the solutions his way too, you know. Now having captured his thoughts, then you could mold him into seeing things this or that way, but it wasn't easy at all.

For the first few days after June 4, Accra was the scene of considerable violence and looting.

The looting in central Accra was done at first joyously. Some soldiers were seen to destroy in fury some of the luxurious imported goods on display at fantastic prices. Firearms

were said to have been sold and distributed in Nima. Soldiers went about in groups demanding money from Lebanese, an activity which some consider pure armed robbery while others as justified re-appropriation.¹

This undisciplined behavior by the ranks was soon brought under control and Rawlings broadcast a public apology, promising to take firm action against any soldier found guilty of committing such acts in the future.

Rawlings's determination to go ahead with the scheduled elections only two weeks after the June 4 coup was widely praised in the international press. Even those who had expressed the greatest outrage at the "barbarous" executions of the first two officers were reluctantly admitting there were some grounds for believing that Rawlings would indeed hand over power after the "house cleaning." And even before the final six executions took place, Nii K. Bentsi-Enchill, a Ghanaian journalist, could write "The Ghana revolution loses steam." In a perceptive analysis of the struggle that was taking place within the AFRC and within the society in general, he says:

There is now a strange situation in Ghana. The AFRC is caught in between two opposed forces, one being the other ranks whose power was at first concretised in the AFRC, and the other being the entrenched forces in Ghanaian society, those political and spiritual leaders whose representativity can often be usefully questioned. The conservative forces remain strong once they are not directly attacked, and this they have not been except in brief episodes by

small groups of soldiers extorting money.²

Bentsi-Enchill goes on to refer to the compromise which resulted in the elections. This "has taken some steam out of the 'revolution' of the other ranks and has conceded plenty of ground and initiative to conservative forces in Ghana."

Conservative forces, however, have preached moderation from the start. The compromise over the elections was a concession to stability and legality. The state itself invested over C20 million in the election. Now the AFRC, the expression of the revolutionary situation in terms of its composition, has given its full authority to the electoral process. It therefore joins the various wise men of Ghana who see the elections as the most desirable thing.

There were those, he notes, who asked: "Who would have minded if the elections had been postponed?" The answer is—the politicians who had invested millions of cedis in their campaigns.³

The coup itself was truly revolutionary, in the sense that the hierarchy of the armed forces was completely overturned. No one above the rank of captain retained authority; the other ranks continued to command all armed power. The initial rage was directed at the senior officers who had massively enriched themselves at the expense of the nation and of the armed forces' prestige. The deep resentment which had grown over the years, crystallized in a determination to wipe out all privilege, not only within the military but within the civilian domain as well.

The sense of this is the conviction that a large group of bureaucrats,

businessmen and various local and foreign opportunists exploited the corruption of senior officers in the military administration to enrich themselves. The collaborators were in all sectors, including the ministries, and their activity covers practically everything from import licensing and contracts awards to revenue collection and commodity distribution.

These people are the real hoarders and profiteers in a corrupt system, able by virtue of their position to take care of themselves and their friends. The functionaries of the state apparatus were part of a network of privilege and patronage, self-help and mutual help during a time when the living standards of the majority of Ghanaians plummeted. The banks were there to give huge loans and overdrafts to Commissioners of State to pursue their business interests. Good farming land... was shared out between Commissioners like booty.

This amounted to organized plunder of national resources by the elite of the Armed Forces and their civilian helpers. The support for the June 4 coup comes from the general feeling that "these people have chopped the country too much."⁴

Soon, suspicions grew that there was to be no sustained revolution in Ghana.

As soon as the AFRC began reappointing certain Commissioners and increasing their portfolios, a lot of ordinary people began to be confused. All these Commissioners were associated with the overthrown regime, and what had now happened to justify their reappointment? Perhaps merely the need to assure a continuity in administration. The appointment of Lt.-Gen. Joshua Hamidu, former Chief of Defence Staff, as liaison officer with the government machine has also caused some bafflement. Some feel that he has been allowed to assume a central role of crucial importance which can only frustrate the aims of the June 4 takeover.... Gen. Hamidu is the inside man for all those forces who stand to lose most from the events of the last two weeks.⁵

As Bentsi-Enchill points out, there was a strong feeling within the ranks that too much time was being wasted, that their revolution was being sabotaged at the top. More-

over, the people on the streets had immediately identified with the uprising and they were increasingly goading the still armed ranks with the battle cry, "Let the blood flow!" As noted in Part I of this Report, Rawlings was warned that his life was in danger from the other ranks who were determined to keep up the momentum of the revolution and to respond to the people's call to "Kill them all!" Indeed, it is astonishing that Rawlings was able to limit the executions to a mere eight officers. It is no less remarkable that he was able to redirect the wrath along the path of moral reform.

The only serious criticism of Rawlings and the AFRC is one which says they have not gone far enough. In Ghana, even the people currently developing ulcers "agree" that some cleaning up is necessary. Outside Ghana, liberals and reactionaries should be rather praising Rawlings for having done very well so as to contain a potentially revolutionary situation in Ghana. They should praise him that only eight people have been executed. Since June 4, Rawlings had repeatedly spoken of a "potentially explosive" situation and all his efforts to defuse it. Even though things continue to happen which belie his assertion that the uprising was against corruption and not its hierarchy, Rawlings still wants to lead an anticorruption brigade rather than the armed section of a revolutionary movement.⁶

The House Cleaning

.... You would have to kill 70 percent of the Ghanaian population to clean out corruption.... [But] Before arguing over that 70 percent of Ghanaians would be guilty before this court, do that many Ghanaians have the means to give bribes and the jobs to exchange compensation and favours? Is the illiterate woman selling cigarettes above control price guilty, and the permanent secretary with two fine homes also a victim of the "chain of corruption"? It is, after all, not just a question of where to draw the line, but who draws that line. Again, poor people do not make the rules... otherwise they would not be poor.⁷

The main focus of revolutionary action was the market. From the very beginning, the soldiers directed their attention to the traders, punishing those who were found selling above

the "control price." In particular the women, because they dominated the market, were subjected to considerable violence and abuse.⁸ In their efforts to stamp out "hoarding," groups of soldiers entered houses and countrywide "snap searches" were promised in order to uncover hoarders who would then be taken away to be shot by firing squad. We have exhausted all our options. After this last warning, there will be no questioning, no investigation, no trial. Those caught will be shot."⁹

In this same newspaper, however, one reads of General Hamidu reassuring public servants that it was not the AFRC's intention to molest or victimize them. At the same time, Rawlings managed to persuade 3,000 conservancy workers to call off their strike, promising he would personally set up a committee to examine their grievances. "I promise you before we leave the scene, all of you are going to be happy. When we start action, there is going to be no turning back."¹⁰

It is not known just how many businessmen were arrested during the first few days of the revolution, but they included many Lebanese. On one occasion soldiers in Kumasi arrested and paraded 14 hoarders and profiteers, including prominent businessmen and a police official. The prisoners were forced to wear placards reading "I deserve to be shot," "I am a disgrace to the police," "I am a criminal," "I am chief of kalabule" (a term coined to cover dishonest practices of all kinds). Such was the indignation of the gathering crowds that the soldiers had to protect their prisoners from being manhandled.

The assets of large numbers of people were frozen, and their houses and other properties seized. On one day alone, 36 foreign nationals, including Lebanese, Indians, and 3 Europeans and their families, were given 24 hours to leave the country. Their businesses were appropriated by the state and anyone who was found engaging in business with these or other aliens who had already fled were warned that they would be dealt with drastically. One such alien businessman was arrested after C4.5 million worth of goods was discovered on his property. Back income taxes, and unpaid customs duties amounting to millions of cedis

were collected, merely by setting deadlines for payment! Owners of illegally imported Mercedes-Benz and other cars were ordered to deliver them immediately to Burma Camp. Every day more information was published on the assets of those who had been arrested. It was learned that the members of the Supreme Military Council had received a C40,000 "operational allowance" monthly, and that the former head of state, General F.W.K. Akuffo, had received C10,000 in addition to his salary and allowances. People grew more and more enraged as they read through the lists of houses, properties, business interests, vehicles, loans obtained without security—all of it acquired by senior military officers and civilian officials employed in modestly paid jobs.

Workers' demonstrations served to alert the AFRC to other areas of the society which required "house cleaning." Bank employees paraded with placards describing the malpractices of officials. The firemen marched through Accra to protest against the mismanagement and theft of state-owned properties by the Chief Fire Inspector and his colleagues. The students complained to the AFRC about discrimination against workers at the University Hospital. An editorial in the *Ghanaian Times* on June 30, 1979 called for an investigation into the Government Medical Stores which, it was alleged, were filled with useless drugs and medicines whose shelf life had long since expired, sometimes years before they had even arrived in Ghana. The AFRC published a control price list for locally manufactured drugs and warned that it would "relentlessly smoke out drug thieves...those in the habit of diverting drugs and other essential medicines [into the private medical sector] should desist from the act or face the consequences."¹¹ Workers at the GHAIP Oil Refinery called on the AFRC to investigate malpractices and reshuffle the managerial staff in the national interest. Secretaries in offices provided documents which led to the arrest of their bosses. An editorial in the *Ghanian Times* alerted the AFRC to the many fake factory owners who had obtained huge import licenses (that is, foreign exchange allocations) with the connivance of state

and banking officials and had used them for importing luxuries.¹²

Many suspects fled the country but the possibility of escape was reduced when the AFRC ruled that any Ghanaian traveling abroad required official permission, the documentation for which could only be obtained at Burma Camp. Furthermore, the public was warned, those who managed to escape would be tried *in absentia*. Other escape routes were blocked: the AFRC warned senior officials in state employ against "indiscriminate" resignations and finally ordered that all resignations would have to be approved by the AFRC.

Contractors were a major target of AFRC action. Announcing this nationwide exercise, one AFRC spokesman noted that their action was aimed at exposing all unqualified and incompetent contractors who were awarded contracts through their "connections" and "bottom power" (this latter referring to the large numbers of women who had obtained contracts). Contractors who had failed to carry out their work were forced to refund the monies they had been paid, plus interest, which in one case at least was put at 18.5 percent.¹³ They were warned that failure to repay these monies immediately would mean forfeiture of all their assets. In just one arrest involving eight contractors the amounts they owed totaled C70,840.67.

Insurance firms had to submit lists of holders of duplicate certificates. Managers of companies and stores were publicly caned in front of their workers. One investigation found six companies guilty of overinvoicing and they were ordered to refund C1.2 million to the state. Four persons were charged with stealing C6.5 million belonging to the electoral commission. The Police Department was subjected to a "probe" and 36 senior police officers were asked to take immediate leave of absence while awaiting the results. The chairman of the committee carrying out the investigation announced that the police force "as it stands now, stinks... so much that one wonders whether it would not be better to dismantle the whole apparatus and start with entirely new personnel... the whole machinery of the Ghana Police Force was turned into a debt-collecting agency." Other defects included a "bail racket of the most

cruel proportion." Amounts ranging from C50 to C1,000 had to be paid before bail could be granted, and persons who looked like aliens were often rounded up and money extorted from them before they would be released. Superior officers were accused of having targets which the men who manned the roadblocks had to pay at the end of every week. At Christmas, gifts in the form of goats, fowls, drinks, and foodstuffs had to be "heaped on the Inspector-General of Police who had to be pleased at all times."¹⁴

The prison administration was also investigated and hundreds of prisoners who had been gaoled for opposing Acheampong's Unigov plan were released. Later, a senior prison officer confessed that he and other officials had defrauded the government of C38,247.32. As a result of an investigation into Ghana Airways, nine individuals and two organizations were ordered to refund large sums of money in both cedis and foreign exchange, the latter from bank accounts abroad.

In an effort to reduce the waste of foreign exchange, the AFRC ruled that from August 7 they would give no further approval for any foreign exchange to be issued for holiday trips, visits, or any unauthorized trips abroad. The Ghana Airtours Company was liquidated because of corruption and its officials and their families were ordered to declare their assets. Moreover, all those who were dismissed were disqualified from ever again holding any public office in Ghana.

On August 6 the AFRC ordered that all individuals and state organizations owing the Electricity Corporation and the Ghana Water and Sewage Corporation must pay up by 3 P.M. on August 13. Unpaid electricity bills alone amounted to over C18 million. Property rate defaulters were also ordered to pay the C320 million owed. The Cocoa Marketing Board and other organizations associated with the purchase and sale of cocoa, Ghana's main source of foreign exchange, were a particular focus of AFRC attention. In fact, *all* executive chairmen, managing directors, chief executives, managers, accountants, secretaries of boards and corporations, procurement officers of all state corporations and enterprises, judges and heads of Ghana's diplomatic missions, were

ordered to declare their assets. Special forms were available from Burma Camp or any of the regional military headquarters. None of these individuals was allowed to draw more than 500 cedis from his private bank account per month and each was also asked to account for all withdrawals for the past year. Later, all senior principal officers were retired from the civil service in one fell swoop.

Some beneficial results of this "house cleaning" were immediately apparent. Prices did come down: beer, when it was available, could be purchased at the control price; cigarettes, which had sold for as much as C17, were now down to C3; secondhand clothing prices were cut by 20 percent and stationery and book prices were "voluntarily" reduced by 40 percent. Spare parts dealers agreed to conform to price controls, appealing to the Prices and Incomes Board to make a price list available. But while prices for food dropped, so did supplies. Some people blamed this on the policing of the market and disciplinary canings, but even when Rawlings did withdraw the soldiers from the market there was very little improvement in supplies.

Bread — that food source which had been so unnecessarily introduced into Ghana and other West African countries and upon which so many of the poor in the cities now subsist — was rarely seen. The enforcement of price controls did little to change the situation since there was almost no flour in the country and it was available only at black market prices. In Accra alone, the AFRC discovered and arrested 97 "ghost bakers," people who had official allocations of flour from the state but who had no baking facilities of their own.

Fish, too, was in extremely short supply. There had been a long-standing practice whereby Ghanaian fishermen, both private and state-employed, met Togolese fishermen out at sea; the Ghanaians would sell their catch to the Togolese for CFA francs and return to their home ports with empty nets. The currency black market was obviously much more lucrative than fish sales at home. The State Fishing Corporation was given

People spent most of the day searching for food to buy.

seven days (from July 7) to repair the broken-down vessels, reactivate its fleet, and get out to sea in order to produce more food to feed the nation.

"One man, one house" became the watchword of the AFRC's attack on landlords. Rents were reduced with immediate effect and a Rent Decree Amendment was passed specifying the maximum rents that could be charged for rooms or houses of various sizes. In addition, a landlord had to have AFRC approval before evicting a tenant. The AFRC also ordered that the renting of houses by the state for civil servants should cease immediately: only the normal 20 percent housing allowance would be paid to the staff concerned. Building luxurious houses to rent to the state or expatriate firms is a common and fairly lucrative business in cities throughout West Africa. Now the AFRC made it an offence for public officers to live in state accommodation when they had built houses in the towns where they worked. Most of these houses, it was noted, had been built for letting with monies obtained from the housing loan schemes of the public service. Those who had managed to acquire more than one government house were forced to release them.

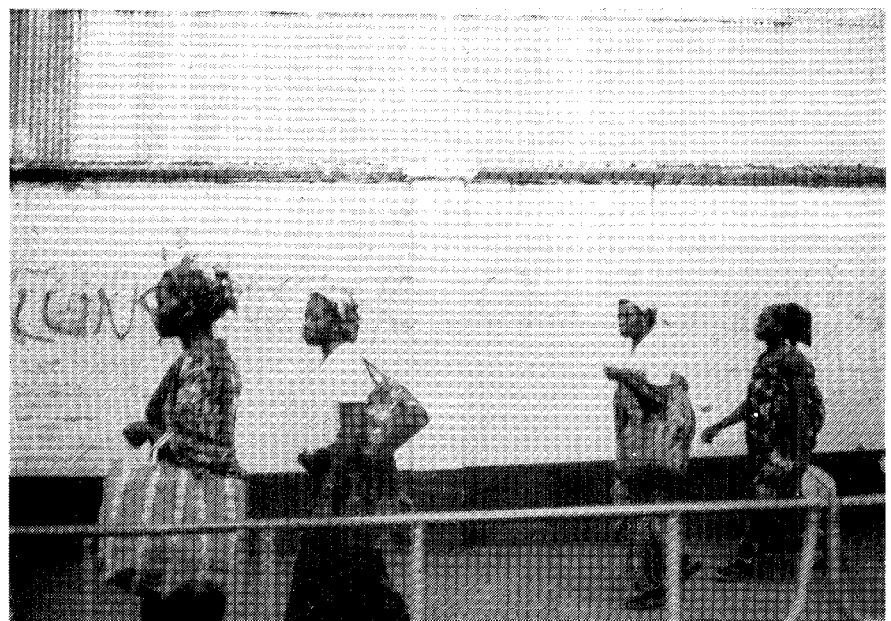
...whereas some people have no place to lay their heads, others with connections have been allocated too many government houses...after getting their first house in their own

*names, used the names of their spouses, children and relatives to acquire additional ones.*¹⁵

The AFRC also mounted an attack on the inefficiency of government departments. In one case, the Ghana Highway Authority and the Cape Coast District Council were given three days to fill the potholes in the streets of Cape Coast. The Chief Justice was given full authority through an AFRC decree to suspend the salaries of judges and magistrates who failed to deliver judgments within the prescribed time limits. Various institutions that lacked means of transport were ordered to collect their long-repaired vehicles left standing at the mechanics' work yards.

The "house cleaning" extended also to educational institutions. As one correspondent reminded the AFRC, it was well known that headmasters often selected students not on the basis of their success in examinations, but "on other means which enrich them such as demanding various sums of money from parents"; sometimes such demands were even made after the student had passed the examinations. Parents themselves were not blameless: they "rush to the schools with huge sums of money to 'dash' the headmaster to make him admit their children."¹⁶

Rawlings also accused the majority of chiefs in the country of failing the



nation by their unwillingness to stand firm and fight injustices. The chiefs, he said, should be responsible for an equitable distribution of land; yet in the Accra area, "double-selling" of plots by the chiefs and their elders accounted for a considerable number of land cases. Rawlings reminded the chiefs that their status did not derive from legislation. "No central political authority can force a people to honour a chief. Esteem... has to be earned from his people by the chief himself."¹⁷

War was also declared on smugglers: hence the summary execution of the border guards.

Ghana lost about 45,000 tonnes of cocoa through smuggling in the 1977-78 season alone.... In the last half decade, again, Ghana has fed at least seven neighbouring countries with her consumer goods through smuggling. After the goods had been smuggled away and Ghanaians could not get enough to buy at home, they had to chase the goods to the neighbouring markets with money that could be negotiated only on the black market.... On a grander scale, smuggling has affected Ghana's gold and diamonds, resources which affect the very stability of the whole national society.... The whole smuggling drama is conceived, planned and executed by top members of the society.¹⁸

Religious organizations too, were not above the revolutionary law.

Dondonli, a suburb of Wa, referred to by Muslims as "the land of God" was on Wednesday besieged by soldiers who hoarded goods worth several thousands of cedis in a dawn swoop... the inhabitants performed certain rituals to restrain the soldiers from searching the area, but the soldiers managed to enter the place.¹⁹

In a speech a few days earlier, to Muslims who had congregated for prayers to mark the first Friday in their fasting month, Rawlings reminded them of their important role in bringing "sanity into the national economy." But he also warned them against hiding behind their faith to indulge in evil practices.

He said it was a fact that Moslems were active operators of the "black markets" at Cow Lane, Nima, and Tudu all in Accra, currency trafficking and smuggling of diamonds. It was also an open secret, he said, that Moslem butchers were supplied meat in the night by some unscrupulous employees of the Meat Marketing Board which they, in turn, sold at exorbitant prices to the public in the day... it was not of any use to indulge in all these evil practices throughout the week only to turn round and come to pray to Allah on Fridays for forgiveness. "Allah is getting tired of your evil deeds. You must stop cheating. You must stop hoarding. You must stop evading tax."²⁰

There was widespread appreciation of the thoroughness and efficiency of much of the AFRC's accomplishments. During the first decade after independence, Ghana had been the leading country in Africa in the field of popular music. But, like other areas of society, this had become so corrupt that on July 4, 1979, MUSUGA, the musicians' union, petitioned the SMC to investigate the corruption, violations of copyright, and the nonpayment of royalties by those who had monopolized the business. Who could imagine that the AFRC would have time to investigate the complaints of such an interest group? Yet, in August, a committee was formed of representatives of the Ministry of Information's Copyright Centre, the Ghana Book Development Council, the Registrar General's Department, and the Ghana Publishing Corporation. A revised Copyright Act was drafted. Leading musicians sued the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation for failing to pay royalties on performances of their music. The managers of two recording companies were arrested.

This was the opening offensive by a Prices and Incomes Board revitalized by two untiring AFRC representatives on the PIB, Flight Officer C.A. Brachie and Pilot Officer M.K. Bekoe. They summoned all record manufacturers and producers about whom complaints were made. Usually their names were announced on the radio in the evening and they were told to report to the PIB at State House in Accra the next morning or "face the consequences".... Previously, musicians had to spend months trying to find the managers of these businesses, who were masters in the art of "dodging" and delaying tactics.²¹

They could no longer dodge back payments in taxes and royalties. One band alone was owed C147,000. The Prices and Incomes Board also reduced the prices on recordings. And the allocation of raw materials for the manufacture of records was also changed.

... all record manufacturers in Ghana are to allocate 75 percent of their total raw material allocation for the pressing of indigenous Ghanaian

Food sellers had very little to offer their customers.



music. The remaining 25 percent will go for other African and overseas music, whose influence it was observed, has only been a drain on the national economy and more particularly a setback to the development of an abundant supply of local talents. The PIB also declared that 70 percent of the vinyl in the country would be given to a Producers Union, made up of 18 independent local producers.

So in just a few weeks the AFRC has done an amazing amount for the Ghanaian music industry....this has been like a shot in the arm for the musicians and their union...[who] have a lot to thank the AFRC for...²²

Power to the People

Imagine if, following the example of the lower ranks, workers or laborers, housemaids and washmen also locked up their bosses...we might then start talking about revolution in Ghana.²³

An important factor which no doubt supported Rawlings's call for an end to the executions was the widespread acknowledgment of national guilt: the entire society was riddled with "kalabule." The Rev. E.V. Acquah-Harrison was only one of many who pointed out how "The whole society is saddled with it from civil servants to the messenger... lawyers allegedly make false insurance claims, and doctors demand 'envelopes' before treating patients, while the word policeman is synonymous with bribery and corruption."²⁴ From the outset of the revolution people were urged to report on each other and to name all hoarders. Fears of such disclosures led to large amounts of consumer goods being secretly dumped. Pilot Officer K.R. Forjoe, a member of the AFRC, asked students to extend the cleanup revolution into their own homes, and urged them to persuade their erring parents to repent. "If you know your mother is a cheat and your father is a kalabule, you better report them now."²⁵ An editorial reminded the public how pervasive hypocrisy was in society: "Forever behaving like the fleeing thief who joins the chorus of thief, thief, from those chasing him, too many Ghanaians raise the 'foul' cry against others in order to cover up their own corruption." The writer called for the AFRC to pave the way for the "Ghanaians' long-term mental re-education." The extent of hypocrisy, he noted, was

illustrated by the outcry against some alien businessmen.

It is an open secret that behind every corrupt foreign businessman in this country there are about twenty corrupt Ghanaians. For example, there is no Lebanese working in any bank in the country: no Lebanese works in the Ministry of Trade or the Ministry of Industry. Any Lebanese who gets favorable treatment must grease the palms of a chain of Ghanaian officials.... It is also a fact that many of those shouting kill them, kill them have the greatest need of being purged themselves of the many iniquities they have committed against God and man. We say Ghanaians are hypocrites. And a house-cleaning group like the AFRC has its best friend in its own analysis and singleness of purpose.²⁶

Rawlings himself placed great emphasis on the role of the people in the "house cleaning" and he urged them to cooperate in his three-month national assignment: "Stay behind us. Don't let us down because if we do not do it now, it cannot be done again." One of the main themes of his public speeches throughout his period in office was the "power of the people."

*Do you know that you, all of you here, matter in this country? Workers like you have the power. Although 140 Parliamentarians have successfully and democratically been elected to the next assembly to represent you, the power still lies in the hands of the people.... At the moment you are in power, not Ft.-Lt. Rawlings—because it is you who have the destiny of this country in your hands.*²⁷

Rawlings assured Ghanaians that the AFRC was prepared to listen to them and he urged them to make all their complaints and grievances known "without fear or favor."

Ghanaians' characteristic tolerance and passivity came under strong attack.

Perhaps, the one major reason why Ghanaians and probably most Africans suffer unnecessary hardships for too long a period may be attributed to their nonchalant attitudes towards national issues, even where they are severely affected. In the past few years, Ghanaians have suffered untold hardships but have miraculously endured these almost impos-

*sible living conditions. Within these past few years, a way of behaviour has developed with the Ghanaian where each one shuts up and suffers quietly. Even in situations where extreme harm is done to the welfare of Ghanaians, the usual slogan is "Ghana is not for me alone." And in a few instances when one or two people try to protest, the others in chorus, shut up the "crying ones" with the phrases that they are "too known" or "too forward".... The question is, if Ghanaians as a people fear to demonstrate their support for their genuine cause, why should the mass media sacrifice its life and existence to a cause that would yield no good?*²⁸

This writer went on to remind his readers how members of the press had suffered for writing against Unigov. They were brutally and mercilessly beaten, their cameras were destroyed, and, in one case, a reporter's leg was broken.

*There was never a word of protest on behalf of the unfortunate pressmen or sympathy from any quarter of the public, much more to speak of show-down by Ghanaians on the issue.*²⁹

One factor that certainly increased the solidarity of the general public with the aims of the revolution was the attempt from outside to interfere with the course of the revolution. As Rawlings pointed out, "International reactionary forces [have] ganged up to stifle the revolution [which is] aimed at making life worth living for Ghanaians." Rawlings did not try to conceal from the public how much they were likely to suffer as a result of attempts by other countries to impose a food blockade.

*...a boat which should have discharged 200,000 cartons of mackerel in Ghana on June 23 has sailed past Ghana and "is now in the port of a sister West African country." It was also doubtful if the country could get another consignment of 281,000 cartons which was scheduled... from Japan by the same boat... and the council had received other reports of similar shipments for Ghana being interfered with. He, therefore, reminded Ghanaians that they were going to pass through rough times and exhorted them not to waver in their support for the revolution. "We are going to be short of meat, wheat, and, most serious of them all, we will encounter a shortage of petrol."*³⁰

Again and again Rawlings appealed for unity and an end to tribalism which "has resulted in disunity, and 22 years after independence, we are still hungry. The tribal barrier must be broken."³¹ In another speech, Rawlings declared: "The spirit of Ghana is now awake and should not be killed." He went on to point out that he was neither a capitalist nor a communist, but he knew what it was to be hungry. In Ghana, he said, "Twelve million people continue to be hungry and exploited by the few."³²

The AFRC asked students to help educate the masses on the aims of the revolution and to impress on villagers the need to bring their food to the markets. Rawlings also reminded the students that it was their responsibility to challenge any soldier found guilty of misconduct. The June 4 uprising was a moral revolution and called for the support and cooperation of all. Students at Cape Coast responded to this appeal by leaving classes just one month before their examinations to "carry the revolution to the countryside." They promised not only to educate the farmers, but to help in the harvest as well. Later, hundreds of students from elsewhere in Ghana joined this effort.

Ghanaians were repeatedly exhorted to their responsibility to fight oppression, if only by standing up for their individual rights. A colleague observed an incident in which a bus conductor had overcharged *all* his passengers. A soldier ordered the passengers out of the bus and forced the conductor to slap each one in the face for allowing him to overcharge them. He then made every passenger slap the conductor's face for his offense. The incident showed the soldier's "common sense," my friend remarked. A lawyer described her effort to buy six yards of cloth, but the sales clerk had refused to cut the 12-yard piece in half. She stood her ground, demanding that the piece be cut in two. The people in the queue watched with amazement at her courage; then one woman came forward saying that she, too, would like to have six yards; she explained that earlier, the clerk had also refused to sell her this shorter piece. Once she had prevailed, the lawyer advised the crowd, "Next time you fight your own battles." A similar situation arose when I was waiting in a kerosene queue. A policeman jumped the

queue; no one said a word. Soon a woman with two children moved up from her position to join the policeman; there was no reaction. I restrained myself, waiting to see what would happen. In the end, the man serving us compromised by making the policeman and the woman wait at least a few minutes longer than they had hoped. Throughout this scene, no one had objected. Occasionally, however, people were prepared to take matters into their own hands. For instance, spectators at a football match against Liberia "seized power at the gates chanting slogans accusing the Sports Council of 'kalabuleism' and demanded that the gate fees be reduced from C20, C10, C8, C5, and C3 to C10, C8, C6, C4, and C2."³³

As one observer wrote, "The leaders of the 'little man's coup' are hoping that by the time the civilians have taken over control of the Government, Ghanaians will have changed, having learned to speak up for themselves."

Chairman Jerry, atop an army truck, dressed in airman's overalls, screwdriver stuck in thigh pocket, asks his audience of Accra workers to look up the word "emasculate" in their dictionaries. That's what has happened to you, he tells them. Then he recounts a story.

"A group of Ghanaians were queueing to buy something at control price. A foreigner, a white man, stopped his car, got out, jumped the queue, threw money on the table, got his supply and walked away. Out of the queue came someone else, who confronted that man and said 'What makes you think you can jump the queue?'—'I'm sorry, I'm in a hurry,' he replied. 'What makes you think we are not in a hurry too?' the person asked." Rawlings, puffing at his cigarette, pauses. Absolute silence. "The point I want to make is this—out of that queue of Ghanaians the one person who got out of line was...another, white woman.... Why Can You Not Fight Your Own Fights?" The lesson.... If people can monitor Ghana's coming third attempt at democracy, then the army will stay happily in barracks."³⁴

At a three-day seminar for students in Accra, Pilot Officer Richard Forjoe, the AFRC representative for student affairs, maintained that the revolution would not be over on the

day of hand-over to civilian rule. It would only end when "reactionary elements in the society are made to realize that they cannot exploit the people anymore. It will, therefore, be up to the citizens to rise up against any government which attempts to betray the objectives of the Revolution." He noted with regret that Ghanaians had given the world the impression that without soldiers they were helpless.

Often, he noted, the Ghanaian wanted a soldier to stand by his side and defend him against the cheats in the society and warned that "this attitude does not lead to progress"... instead of looking for a law enforcement officer to take action against a trader who sells above the control price, the people should organize themselves and prevent the trader from cheating. They could also organize themselves to prevent people from buying from that trader. 'When the masses become aware of their civic duties, there will be no need for soldiers to beat up people to force them to do the right thing.'

The purpose of this seminar was to prepare the students who were going out to carry the revolution to the rural areas. Forgoe warned them that they must "do away with some of the luxuries they were enjoying. ...be wary of reactionary elements who would try to use their ill-gotten wealth to infiltrate their ranks."³⁵

The students were also addressed by a lecturer of the Faculty of Law who urged "those students who have the nation at heart to use their youthful power to help identify and isolate the enemies of the revolution who are being backed by imperialist forces."

In another address to a large crowd including fishermen, Jerry Rawlings again called upon Ghanaians to renew the spirit of togetherness so that no one from above could cheat them.

Ghanaians must never allow themselves to be taken for a ride again by selfish individuals.... we the soldiers, cannot be on the scene forever... no matter what government is in power you always remember that the wealth of the country is for you to defend, then our country will at least be on the road to real economic recovery...the monkey dey work and baboon dey chop mentality must be nipped in the bud...it behooves

each and everyone to eschew tribalism in order to bring Mother Ghana to her feet... Whether you are a Fanti, Ga, Ewe, Frafra or Ashanti, remember that we all live within one country. For instance... my mother is an Ewe, and my father from overseas, but I am a proud Ghanaian.

He concluded by admonishing his audience:

Don't regard me as a man talking from the outer space. Believe me, you are in the majority and it is you who can move this nation from oppression and suppression. My speeches alone cannot do anything for this nation, unless you reflect on them and act on them.³⁶

"Action, Action!" was the call of the public to the military. But Rawlings reminded Ghanaians that to demand action was not enough; everyone must make a positive contribution. Thus, as the roads were in a sorry state, August 4 was declared National Potholes-Filling day, and Ghanaians were asked to turn out en masse to clean gutters, empty choked drains, and cut overgrown weeds. Rawlings himself and other members of the AFRC took up shovels and joined in the exercise.

Housewives, voluntary organizations, children, students and workers from corporations and commercial houses took part in the exercise aimed at ensuring that the public and all agencies connected with the maintenance of roads put their maximum efforts to make the roads car-worthy. The inability of the Ghana Highway Authority to supply sufficient quantities of bitumen to many areas did not dampen the spirits of the people who had to fill the holes with stones, sand, gravel and clay.³⁷

August 11 was named as a day when every Ghanaian was expected to set about cleaning his own surroundings. The response to these national appeals was truly remarkable and reflected the enthusiasm and energy which the Rawlings' leadership had galvanized.

Throughout August and September Rawlings carried his message from area to area. He declared that no part of the country was too remote or too

Students delivered protests to the embassies of those countries whose interference they most resented. (Photo courtesy Ghana Ministry of Information)

small to be considered by the government. "No matter where one comes from, Ghana belongs to us all and we must unite to rebuild it."

The Revolution should start from the child at home in the villages and spread to the big man at the top. It is when we are all involved that kalabule will be buried forever... neither the constitution, the bullet, nor the politicians can save the country unless they realize the need to eschew the idea that the suffering of the common man is his lot. The black man has been emasculated and most of them are being led like herds of cattle.³⁸

Mere criticism and wishful thinking were not enough, he said. Young people who had migrated to urban areas were urged to return to their rural homes and help in development. To the people in one rural area, Rawlings said:

I want them to come back home and make the best out of your environment. The riches will no longer remain in Accra so you must remain in your area. [He] advised the youth to till the land and work hard to produce food for themselves and the nation... Ghana has reached a stage where it was necessary for all to refrain from spending half of their hard earned salaries on expensive guarantee shoes, wigs and cosmetics to bleach their faces. The Chairman asked the youth to take delight in communal labour to help improve the living conditions of their

parents... "Ghana needs Ghanaians and not outsiders to feed us. We must make use of our fertile lands. We must know that the destiny of the country lies in our hands." He advised Ghanaians to stop thinking that they would enjoy better living conditions abroad, but should rather stay at home and pool their resources in reconstructing the country. After all, Americans, Russians, and peoples of other developed countries used their sweat to develop their countries.³⁹

Military and Civilian Relations

As noted earlier, the widespread looting and rioting by the lower ranks during the first few days after the June 4 coup was soon brought under control, although it appears that violence continued for some time in cities outside Accra. The press was vigilant in calling the attention of the AFRC to incidents of unjustified acts of violence against the citizenry. On numerous occasions, Rawlings publicly cautioned members of the Armed Forces to "desist from molesting defenseless citizens and robbing them of their legally acquired property."

Addressing officers and men of the Ghana Army in Kumasi, Flt.-Lt. Rawlings stated emphatically that he and other members of the Council did not risk their lives for those acts. The Chairman who arrived unannounced, deplored the attitude of some personnel whom he described as "black sheep" among them. He



*noted with concern arrests of people on charges of hoarding three tins of milk, and asked, "Is this hoarding?"*⁴⁰

The presence of soldiers in the markets was widely thought to be the reason why the market women refused to "bring out their goods," and Rawlings was finally persuaded to withdraw them. Not surprisingly, however, soldiers continued to assume wide discretionary powers. There were, for example, a few attacks on women for wearing trousers, which produced a public statement from the AFRC:

It has come to the notice of the authorities that certain persons, including soldiers, have been going around harassing ladies found wearing certain dresses including jeans and trousers.

*The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council... said those engaged in this shameful act had not been authorized to do so. "They are detractors of the Revolution." ... anyone caught in this act would be made to face the full rigors of the law. It is said that Ghana is a free society and as such everybody no matter his sex, had the right to wear the dress of his or her choice so long as these dresses did not smack of indecency. Even if they did, the appropriate law enforcement agency, that is the Police Force, would be expected to deal with the situation, the statement said.*⁴¹

The continued harassment of citizens, however, caused Elizabeth

Ohene, Acting Editor of the *Daily Graphic*, to devote an editorial to the topic. She warned against the false belief that the revolution was making gains simply because people were now behaving only for fear of receiving a brutal flogging. There was, she pointed out, a great difference between obedience through terror and obedience through conviction. The behavior of some soldiers bordered on sadism, she maintained, and this threatened the objectives of the revolution.

*The molestation of citizens cannot be justified under any circumstances whatsoever, nor can the public degradation and instant justice being administered by some soldiers be deemed to be either revolutionary or in the interest of the Revolution. ... Genuine respect for authority has nothing to do with the show of force. ... The image of the Armed Forces has been lifted from the mud with the June 4 Revolution, and nothing should be made to drag it down again. That is the surest way of ensuring that the Revolution continues long after soldiers have gone back to the barracks.*⁴²

Other citizens too, warned the AFRC that continued harassment would lose them the support of the masses. As one university lecturer pointed out, the revolution was aimed at correcting evils in high places, not at molesting innocent individuals. His definition of "innocent" raised again

the difficult question of where the line should be drawn.

*Almost all Ghanaians could be said to be guilty of contributing to the damage of the country, the fact still remained that many of them, particularly the rural folks and the lower-income group, were victims of circumstances... [he] cited cases of the teacher who resorted to selling goods in the classroom and the mechanic who stole bolts and nuts from the factory to sell, and said they did so against their conscience, but felt it was necessary to make ends meet.*⁴³

A month earlier, *The Echo* had raised its voice against the public whipping of housewives: "instead we would suggest that there should be a sudden review of the existing laws so that profiteers and hoarders can face a minimum sentence of ten years... We strongly believe that whipping belongs to the stone age..."⁴⁴ The situation was complicated by the frequent impersonations of soldiers by gangs of thieves who capitalize on the situation for their own ends.

Rawlings tried to convince the public of the sincerity of the AFRC's desire to control the violent excesses of the ranks against the innocent. Yet I myself witnessed several scenes in which the severity of the punishment exceeded the offense. One day I was waiting for an interview at Burma Camp in a room shared by many others. A man fell asleep during the long wait. Finding him like this, the soldier in charge knocked him about very roughly and hit him to impress on everyone that "Burma Camp was not a place to sleep." Paradoxically, the same soldier listened sympathetically to every detail of the complaints of another man who had brought his wife, victim of a severe beating in an arbitrary arrest, he said, of an entire busload of people. All the while we could hear sounds from an adjoining room of a vigorous interrogation which culminated in the vicious beating of the accused. His cries of agony were punctuated by the footsteps of six "kalabule" men who were being "drilled" outside: dressed only in their underpants, their heads shaved, they were being forced to dog-trot around the camp in the heat of the day. Again, waiting at the

The Ministry of Information posted slogans designed to awaken the consciousness of Ghanaians.



Naval Base for an officer's signature on a form, I watched women brought from the market at gun point for selling balls of kenkey that were too small for the control price. But through it all, one never got the sense that such incidents served to dampen the general public's enthusiasm for the "house cleaning." And there was evidence that the AFRC was prepared to deal severely with those soldiers guilty of such offenses. In one case, heard by the Special Court, a woman was accused of having offered C10,000 to a soldier to protect her husband from arrest. The woman alleged that the soldier had asked for money. The Court ruled that the evidence regarding their respective guilt was not sufficiently clear, and the woman was released.

Relations between the AFRC and the university students became slightly strained when a press statement, attributed to the AFRC, was taken by some students to imply that certain members of the establishment were being protected. But Rawlings was adamant that the basic understanding between them was strong enough to withstand "attempts in certain quarters to sow the seeds of discord..."

The recently publicized statement attributed to the AFRC and widely publicized in the media seems to me as one of those attempts...no amount of distortion of the AFRC's intention could break the bonds between the Council and the students. The AFRC, he said had taken responsibility for the statement issued in its name "but I assure you that we are investigating the circumstances surrounding the issuing of this statement so that appropriate steps can be taken on the matter and it should be clear to you in whose interest it is for such distortions to arise...we know that we share common aspirations with you...everybody knows how students had stood in the forefront of resistance to tyranny in the country and how they had struggled relentlessly against corrupt and bankrupt leadership in the country since May 13, 1977...." The Chairman said there were many in the establishment who had become frightened because they know they were part of the problem which the revolution was seeking to solve...students had put fear even into dictators and some of their remain-

ing collaborators still dread student potential so they were even more frightened "when they see you in our revolutionary ranks" but "we of the AFRC value your support and your initiative in seeking to advance the revolution."45

An editorial in the *Ghanaian Times* commented on the solidarity which had developed between the soldiers and the public. "The most impressive evidence is the demonstration of the determined extent to which Ghanaians are prepared to bear hardship to enable the AFRC to maintain the tempo of the process." Foreign interference in the economy only intensified the revolutionary spirit.

Topping it all has been the people's attitude to what they see as the consequences of external pressures to discourage the AFRC from the house cleaning: For example, if the petrol shortage is part of the pressure to sabotage the AFRC's efforts, then the people have accepted it without regrets. And if the diversion of milk and sugar to other countries and the stoppage of the shipment of other goods to Ghana are intended to turn the people against the AFRC, then it seems that those causing such pressures are going to achieve nothing....

You cannot starve a self-aware African country into submission; not in Ghana where crops can grow anywhere....So the pressure string pullers would try other methods—such as attempts to destroy the solidarity between the AFRC and various articulate national bodies.... We know it all right: If the distortion breaks the bonds of the people's solidarity with the AFRC and this sabotages the house cleaning, it would be in the interest of only the external and internal forces which have benefited from the corruption from which the majority of Ghanaians have suffered so much and for so long.46

Rawlings also strengthened the bonds between the military and the people by proposing a plan which would "turn the Ghana Armed Forces into a viable productive institution for large-scale farming, construction of military barracks, roads, bridges and clinics."

Under the revolutionary plan all redundant, unproductive and unemployed civilians will also be mobilized

on a network of state farms to be established throughout the country.... He observed "a great number of government officers are overburdened with people who do virtually nothing but eat"...47 The Chairman envisaged that the next three to four years would be "hard times" for the country and advised the people not to waver but to stand firm behind the Revolution and always insist on their rights after discharging their duties.

He said that he was not prepared to be a leader of cowards.

"When the time comes for all such people to be sent to the farms... Please be prepared to follow the Forces to the farms and other productive sectors."48

Part of his plan, as he explained it to me, was to utilize the engineering and mechanical skills of the military to overhaul the transportation system. He reminded me that there were thousands of vehicles lying about the country and there were no spares to repair them. His idea was to collect scrapped machinery and establish a works yard where the trained military personnel could salvage usable spare parts to put them back on the road again. "But," he said, "we had no time."

The massive support the AFRC managed to generate in such a short time was available to the new government. For example, many students who had participated in the rural educational program told me they were now willing to give up their university studies for a couple of years to help the farmers. "What is the point of getting a B.A. when there is no food in the country?" Some, who had found themselves helping in the harvest rather than teaching the peasants, explained how much *they had learned* from the rural folk in the process. "We should close the universities until we can put Ghana on her feet." It is a tragedy that the pride and petty jealousy of the new political leaders prevented them from mobilizing such enthusiasm and putting it to the service of the country.

Rawlings himself was available "to be of service to the country" in whatever way that was available so long as he believed in the sincerity of the country's leadership. He demonstrated then, and later, despite in-

tense provocation, his support of the president and the institutions of government. His belief in the importance of preserving the hierarchy of leadership is confirmed in the remarks he made to me, after he had returned to the barracks, concerning the problem of the military's "return of discipline." He explained his plan for mobilizing the military for productive labor but stressed that since they had had "no time" (an oft-repeated phrase in our discussion), such initiative now belonged to the government—to the Ministry of Agriculture and President Limann. As for discipline, "It is returning and returning quite quickly. Takes some time to relax you know, after flexing your muscles, but discipline will return. But this time, madame, authority will be based upon respect. It will be authority, *not power*, which will instill discipline." Rawlings could quite easily have been co-opted by a government which was absolutely sincere about solving Ghana's ills. His charisma was to be desperately needed in helping to challenge the Ghanaian people to endure the long process of economic reconstruction.

The Revolution and the Press

There is no doubt that the local press played an enormous role in the process of communicating the aims of the revolution and provided the main forum for public discussion—whether in support of the AFRC or criticizing its activities, or alerting the Council to some new sector of the economy which required the application of its broom. That the AFRC's support of a critical press was much more than mere rhetoric was demonstrated in the case of Elizabeth Ohene, the person appointed by the AFRC as Acting Editor of the *Daily Graphic*.

Elizabeth Ohene graduated from Legon University in 1967 and worked for the *Daily Graphic* as literary editor until 1977, when, without explanation, she was transferred to the Ministry of Information. After a few months, she was returned to her desk at the *Graphic*, writing columns which rarely saw the light of day. Ten days after the June 4 coup, she was informed by the New Minister of Information that the AFRC had appointed her to replace the former editor.

Her letter to the Commissioner, written after two meetings to discuss

her proposed appointment, confirmed the consistency of her attitude to the way previous governments had treated journalists. . . .

Much as I am ready to face the challenges that would be posed by the post of editor of Ghana's largest circulation daily newspaper, I would like to state again my preoccupation with the proper mode of effecting such a change. I have personally been very concerned and loud in condemnation of the removal of editors every time there is a change of government, giving the unfortunate impression that each government wants an editor that would sing the official tune only. If the editor of the Daily Graphic is being removed only because there has been a change of government and his loyalty is thus suspect, then I am afraid that I find it impossible to accept the offer. If, however, there are good reasons for removing him, then I would like such reasons to be publicly given so that I do not have any struggle with my conscience. There is the added consideration of the provisions that have been made in the Constitution of the Third Republic about the press. Editors are supposed to be appointed by the Press Commission and I believe that it would be appropriate that a situation is not created whereby, on the coming into office of the new government, it would feel compelled to remove me or any other editor because such a person was appointed by the previous government. I would like to entreat you to spare me such an embarrassment by making sure that proper reasons are assigned for these matters. It is my opinion that it would be in everybody's interest if my appointment is made an acting one until the coming into power of the next government.⁴⁹

Elizabeth Ohene took up the post of Acting Editor and proceeded to write fearless editorials on events in the country. One of the issues that concerned her was that of the executions. Having always opposed capital punishment, she is described as having been "deeply troubled" about her responsibility as a journalist in the present situation. In a highly critical editorial, she called upon the professional organizations to voice their opinions of the executions. There was an immediate response and the paper published numerous letters and articles on the

matter. Religious organizations, among other groups, were outspoken in their objections to such "instant justice" in view of Ghana's long-standing reputation for upholding the rights of an individual through legal procedures.

But this courageous policy brought vehement criticism, especially from the students. Placards carried in demonstrations demanded her instant dismissal on the grounds of her failure to give absolute support to the revolution. In one fairly dangerous incident, an armed, drunken soldier held the *Daily Graphic* staff as hostages until someone managed to get word to the AFRC at Burma Camp to send help. Rawlings is said to have deeply admired Miss Ohene for her courage, remarking that he could not bear a coward. Addressing the students, he pointed out that the AFRC was open to criticism from any quarter.

In this regard the Council has no quarrel to pick with the stand taken by the "Graphic" in its editorials about some measures adopted by the Council in its house cleaning exercise. . . . The newspapers should be free to criticize the Council whenever it went wrong so that the Council would be in the position to correct its mistakes.⁵⁰

He asked the students to leave her alone because she is "free to speak her mind," and he reminded them of her reputation for taking unpopular stands on national issues.

Letters to the daily press praised Rawlings for upholding press freedom. The students were reminded how they had in the past despised the Ghanaian press for being "prone to playing up to the authorities of the day." As one student wrote:

Tolerance for the opinion of others is what could make Ghana the Heaven we all desire. I have known Miss Ohene as one of the very few journalists of repute in Ghana today. She is highly principled. I have not known her to compromise what she believes to be the right for principles once compromised cease to be of any value. In spite of this writer's stand that all plunderers should be executed as contained in a telegram sent to the AFRC, the writer respects the views of other citizens, including that of Miss Ohene and believes that there is wisdom in their thoughts

too! Miss Ohene should never look back for I believe she fits perfectly well in the Revolution.⁵¹

Regrettably, this freedom has now been eroded and the new PNP President appears ready to tolerate only a press which serves his interests. The bill seeking to provide for the establishment of the Press Commission was published on February 12, 1980. Three days later, Miss Ohene was informed that her position as editor was confirmed, but that the president had also appointed a "supervising editor."

Elizabeth Ohene saw red. She felt a principle was at stake and saw in that announcement the opportunity she had been waiting for to tell the government she was not prepared to sacrifice that principle for personal recognition.⁵²

In a detailed examination of the constitution, an editorial on the front page of the same issue of the *Graphic* argued that the president had overstepped his constitutional powers in making such appointments.

It is impossible to imagine that the constitution makers, after our past experience and the tenor of debates in the Constituent Assembly on Press Freedom, wanted to place the power to appoint and fire editors in the hands of the government. It was precisely as a result of previous experience, when editors that were found to be critical of government were fired and maneuverable editors appointed to ensure that only government views are propagated in the national press, that the constitution has taken this power from the hands of government. The implications of this move are so grave for the future of press freedom in Ghana that all those who do believe in the concept must resist this insidious attempt at subverting the letter and spirit of the Constitution.

The paper also printed the Attorney-General's refutation, delivered at a press conference. But, "Elizabeth Ohene does not accept that view," he declared.

*So she has now gone to court for a declaration that by his action in seeking to appoint editors for the *Graphic* and Ghanaian Times, the*

Voting at the run-off election for president on July 9, 1979.

President had contravened the Constitution. The Press Commission Bill is now before Parliament. At the appropriate time MPs will have their say—and no doubt recent developments will provide useful background material for a lively debate. In the meantime the country awaits the outcome of the court action with bated breath.⁵³

The Interim Period: Transitional Provisions and the Third Republic

The experiences that led up to the June 4 coup and the events that followed have shaken Ghana to its very foundations. Civilians had demonstrated their loathing for military rule; yet many hoped that the AFRC would remain in power. For, while most people believed in "democracy," they saw little evidence in their own history (or in that of any other West African State) that the ballot box could produce a truly representative government.

For the average citizen, it was a perplexing situation. Most Ghanaians abhorred capital punishment, for instance; yet they wondered what punishment would "stick" once the civilians took power? The long tradition of respect for the law and legal institutions had been severely challenged by the secret trials in the AFRC's Special Courts; yet the people were all too familiar with the machinations of their open courts where "people were punished for stealing two cedis whilst those who stole one million went free."⁵⁴

The majority, who were barely surviving, wondered about the right of the few to enjoy luxury, but they were not yet prepared to question the structure of their society. They despised the arrogance and hypocrisy of the foreigners in their midst; yet they realized Ghana's dependence on these people and were unable to throw them out. Hoping that September 24 and the Third Republic would mean a fresh start, they were, nevertheless, increasingly cynical about the promises of politicians who, experience had shown, saw political office as a means of self-enrichment. And, overshadowing all prospects and possibilities, was the grim reality of a bankrupt economy. "We have lost our way," said Rawlings.

Throughout the months of political activity preceding the elections of June 18, the Western press expressed its clear preference for the Popular Front Party with Victor Owusu as its presidential candidate. That the election results gave the PNP a majority of seats was seen as an unfortunate development as far as Western business interests in Ghana were concerned. But the ambiguity of the PNP's political program should have reassured those who feared the aura of Nkrumahism. Dr. Hilla Limann went out of his way after the election to emphasize that his government's policy would be pragmatic rather than dogmatic and that it would welcome "foreign investment."



The Constitution that was promulgated by the AFRC just three days before the elections required that the president should win over 50 percent of the votes, so although Limann had won the majority on the first ballot, it was necessary to hold a further ballot between Owusu and Limann. There were many appeals to Owusu's Popular Front Party to concede defeat and thus save the costs of another election, but the second round of voting took place on July 9 and Dr. Hilla Limann, having won 61.88 percent of the votes (less than 2 million people voted), was declared the victor. The AFRC had forbidden any celebrations or demonstrations by the winning party, "an order... calculated to allow passions to cool down and to avoid possible infractions of the law."⁵⁵

When the results were declared, Rawlings thanked the parties for putting up a good fight and said that the AFRC was encouraged by the conduct of the elections and the maturity displayed by all concerned. He also commended the opposition leader, Mr. Victor Owusu, for the mature way in which he had conceded defeat and congratulated the victorious party: this demonstrated to the whole world that Ghana is "politically matured, contrary to the expectations of some skeptics." He warned the politicians, however, that "the spirit of Ghana had been dormant for some time, but it is now alive."⁵⁶

Just after the second ballot, in an address to the students at the University of Ghana, Rawlings remarked that the best gift the new president-elect, Dr. Limann, could give the country was to purge his own party first: "Tell him we shall give him all support but he must purge his party first," Flt. Lt. Rawlings told them amidst deafening applause."⁵⁷ In a meeting with the AFRC, Limann assured the members that his party was indeed taking steps to cleanse its own system: "Please take my word seriously. I and my party have the stamina to do the work and at the moment we are engaged in organizing ourselves to tackle the job."⁵⁸

There were those who were offended by Rawlings's "cheek," but most Ghanaians knew that the PNP was not free of the "taint of corruption," and they regarded Rawlings's remarks as apposite.

Asking the PNP to clean its house is, then, not to be taken as interference in its internal affairs; it is necessary because we believe that both the AFRC and the PNP are equally interested in the continuity of the house cleaning process. Since the Government machinery can be troubled by an irresponsible Opposition, the AFRC Chairman's concern for smooth government locally means a concern for good Opposition too. So the charge for internal house cleaning goes for the other parties too. We have the rare case where the President-elect got his votes from all shades of the body politic, and therefore needs a broadminded approach to his decisions. And we have a clear case where the old "bring them down" type of Opposition is no more tenable.⁵⁹

In defense of both Rawlings and the PNP an article appeared in the *Daily Graphic* entitled, "Let's Leave Limann Alone."

I was at the meeting where Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings told the President-elect, Dr. Hilla Limann, that he should clean his party. Since then, many comments have been made, some of which have gone to the extent of misinterpreting Rawlings's statement to mean that the PNP is rotten and that the whole set-up needs cleaning. What Jerry meant in effect was that certain people within the ranks of the party had, by their misdeeds, courted the displeasure of the society and society is now spitting them out and that the continued association of these people with the PNP would lead to its destruction.

A critical observer of the political scene will notice that the PNP relegated to the background during its electioneering campaign, those of its members, whose presence at its rallies was embarrassing to the party. In fact, some of the discredited "old guard," knowing that they were not acceptable to the people, agreed to be relegated to the background.

The PNP, an offshoot of the Convention People's Party (CPP) is a disciplined army and all members regard themselves, first and foremost, as "friends in adversity." Herein lies the success of the party. The party is a conglomeration of "orphans," their father having died in exile and everybody is prepared to

die a little to save our great party from destruction.⁶⁰

It was no secret, however, that Dr. Hilla Limann,⁶¹ a newcomer to the political arena, had almost at the last moment been nominated as the presidential candidate because Mr. I. Egala, the person expected to be chosen, had not been cleared of charges by a commission of inquiry. People were hardly reassured when Dr. Limann announced that Mr. Egala had led a team to Nigeria to negotiate on behalf of Ghana for oil.

... the question that has agitated the mind of this writer and I believe the same is true of many civic-rights-conscious Ghanaians—is whether or not Mr. Imoru Egala, the FATHER and FOUNDER of the People's National Party (PNP) has any right to negotiate with any country or individual for anything whatsoever on behalf of the Republic of Ghana.... Mr. Imoru Egala has been disqualified by the governments of the NRC and SMC from holding any public office in Ghana. This disqualification has now been confirmed by the Justice Francois Review tribunal and the government of the AFRC.... Therefore once disqualified from holding a public office, the person so disqualified cannot and should not join a delegation which negotiates on behalf of the people of Ghana. If such political strategies are not nipped in the bud this country will soon be confronted with the revival of the old political formula which equates a political party with the whole nation and thus justifies or legitimizes everything done by party members in the name of the Nation.⁶²

Throughout the interim period, Rawlings consistently supported the newly elected president.

He said he had met Dr. Hilla Limann, the President-elect and found him to be knowledgeable. "I don't think he is going to disappoint us," he said. The destiny of the country, he said, was in the hands of all Ghanaians and not in either the AFRC, the Police, Dr. Limann, or in the Constitution. "We don't have the monopoly over what is right or wrong, we are also not in the majority."

Asked whether the AFRC had any plans to assist Limann to purge his party, Rawlings reminded them that "Dr. Limann is not just a party leader

but a President-elect of millions of Ghanaians and...would have his own methods to achieve the objective of cleaning his party."⁶³

Legalizing the Revolution

Even before the execution of Acheampong, the AFRC had demonstrated its loyalty to Ghana's inherited British tradition for "legal tidiness." A decree signed on June 15 indemnified the coup-makers for any acts in connection with the overthrow of the Supreme Military Council. More decrees followed, one of which established the special courts to try specified offenses. Explaining this new law to the public, the press observed that every Ghanaian could be found guilty by the court given the list of offenses over which it assumed jurisdiction. These included

The acquisition or obtaining of any loan, property, material, promise, favor or advantage whatsoever by any person who uses, abuses or exploits his official position in any public service;

illegal or dishonest acquisition of property by a public officer, citizen of Ghana or other person resident in Ghana; intentional or reckless misapplication of, or cause of loss or damage to public property;

gross negligence or dishonesty in applying public property;

intentional or reckless dissipation of public property;

connivance at the exaction of exorbitant price for property purchased or services contracted for by any person or body of persons supplying property or services to the state;

improper demand or acceptance of compensation, consideration or personal advantage in respect of the performance of any public duty;

doing any act with intent to sabotage the economy of Ghana; smuggling; looting; hoarding; selling above the control price; conditional sale;

receiving directly or indirectly from any person, whether personally or through any member of family or other person under the control of the receiver for his benefit any gift, loan, promise, compensation or consideration in the form of money or otherwise for assisting or in return for a promise to favor the giver or any

other person in connection with the exercise of the functions of any public office.

The penalty for anyone found guilty by a special court for any of these offenses was death by firing squad or imprisonment with penal labor for a term of not less than three years. All illegally acquired assets were to be forfeited to the state. The decree specified that anyone accused of any of these offenses would be tried by the special courts, and restricted the right of the civil courts to hear cases. The decree also covered the composition of the courts and their procedures. A special court would comprise a president and four members, all appointed by the AFRC or another body authorized by it. The courts were to have a judge-advocate with the status, duties, and functions of the judge-advocate of a general court martial. The charge was to be read by the prosecutor after which the accused was to plead. Witnesses called by the prosecution could be cross-examined by the accused and the court was required to receive all relevant evidence in "proof or disproof" of the charge against him. Both the prosecution and the accused had the right to address the court before it took its decision.

Decisions by these special courts were to be unanimous or by a majority of four to one and were subject to review and confirmation by the AFRC, which was given the authority to reduce any penalty deemed inappropriate. And to reassure the supporters of the revolution that the penalties imposed by these courts could not be overturned, the legislation specified that:

No appeal shall lie from a decision of a Special Court that has been reviewed and confirmed or otherwise varied by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council.

It shall not be lawful for any Court to entertain any action or proceedings whatsoever for the purpose of questioning any decision, judgment, findings, order or proceedings of any Special Court convened under Section 1 of this Decree; and for the removal of doubts, it shall not be lawful for any Court to entertain any application for an order or writ in the nature of habeus corpus, certiorari, mandamus, prohibition or quo warranto and declaration in respect of any decision, judgment, findings,

*order or proceedings of any such court.*⁶⁴

The clause specifying that a case against an accused must be heard in his presence, either in public or in camera, was later amended to allow for cases to be heard *in absentia*.⁶⁵ Before hand-over, 68 people had been sentenced *in absentia* under this provision.

The Echo called it a "bad law," demanding that it be repealed and that executions should cease. An editorial blamed the Attorney-General's department for failing to give good legal advice to the members of the AFRC who, after all, were laymen, not lawyers. Yet there had clearly been a professional hand in the drafting: just which lawyers, the paper demanded, were actually giving advice? The writer also questioned the right or wisdom of the present regime to make any substantial changes in the Transitional Provisions of the Constitution (June 24 and July 1, 1979).

When Jerry Rawlings did eventually announce that executions were to cease, he took the opportunity of reassuring the people that the "country would not abandon her respect for human rights": the AFRC was fully aware of Ghana's obligations under the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. But, although the executions had stopped, the laws of Ghana would still be operative. Those found guilty from now on would be dispatched to penal farms and their properties would be appropriated by the state.

*Let me tell you in simple language. The people of Ghana have endured hunger for far too long. There is not one single worker who could make ends meet and the miracle is that the people have been able to endure this for so long. You may say that this has been possible because of our excellent tradition of tolerance and patience. But patience and tolerance can be dangerous because they allow a build-up of anger to such an extent that when the bubble finally bursts there can hardly be a way of containment. Countrymen and friends of Ghana, we must thank God that this pent-up anger did not erupt as it might have. The threat to the unity of the nation was real. If we had not acted the way we did, the nation could have faced total disintegration.*⁶⁶

The PNP Promises

Shortly after the second ballot, the AFRC established a working relationship with the leaders of the People's National Party which was formalized in late August in the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and Incoming People's National Party Administration Joint Planning Commission Decree, 1979, No. 7. The president and vice-president-elect moved into temporary offices at the State House and Dr. Limann began receiving representatives from the diplomatic missions stationed in Accra. In a public statement he promised that the PNP would not put pressure on the AFRC to hand over power before October 1 unless the council itself decided to do so. Ghanaians were given assurances that the politicians and the AFRC would work together during the remaining time to insure that the revolution continued. Limann reminded the people that the whole world was watching to see how Ghana would handle its new democracy; he advised his party not to do anything that would "scare off non-party members" but to "extend friendly hands to them," since the PNP could not "hope to reconstruct the nation or resuscitate the economy without the cooperation of everyone."⁶⁷

Dr. Limann promised open government, including regular meetings with members of the media "who have the vehicle to convey to all our people, various actions and programs of the government." He emphasized the role of the press in maintaining the accountability of the government to the people. The priorities of his program would be agriculture, housing for the poor, improving the lot of the workers and in general, reducing the gap between the rich and the poor.

Limann's and Rawlings's speeches shared front-page coverage in the press and they spoke as if in concert. Dr. Limann promised that the "soul-searching and self-cleansing operation started by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council will be continued in the Third Republic."

The majority of our people want a wholesome change for the better; a change which will bring immediate and lasting solutions to our economic problems, raise the moral and social values of our society and put the smile back on the face of every one of us...it was this need for

change that caused Ghanaians to embrace the principal objectives of the PNP's manifesto: objectives "which seem to be re-echoed in the motives behind the June 4 Revolution now considered by many as a necessary soul-searching and self-cleansing operation in this period of crisis of confidence and conscience. This operation, therefore, sets a pattern which the Third Republic shall have to follow to its logical conclusions...the measures initiated by the AFRC must lead to continuous progress of the aspirations of all Ghanaians, and not just mark another phase of temporary expedient and fits and starts after which we may relapse into the same old ways which have destroyed our economy and our image as a people. There can be no turning back; indeed, those who will fail to move forward with the tide towards the ultimate goal of improving upon the lot of the majority of our people may probably find themselves left in shoals...it was absolutely necessary that policies lately initiated or to be promulgated henceforth should be well outlined and fully discussed with the incoming administration so as to ensure continuity of their implementation and the realization of ultimate goals...never again shall a few greedy individuals be allowed to plunder the State and destroy the moral fiber of our society with impunity. Ethnocentric prejudices, subjectivity, social snobbery and insolence of wealth can no longer save us..."⁶⁸

Rawlings too, in his address on August 10 inaugurating the establishment of a Joint Commission to plan the transition to civilian rule, cautioned the commissioners to insure that the pace set by the AFRC did not slacken when the AFRC left the political scene.

If the slightest indication were to be given that the new administration would put out the flames of moral regeneration lit by the AFRC, it would demoralize the nation and bring about untold hardship.

The decision to involve the PNP administration fully in the exercise, the Chairman explained, stemmed from the Council's knowledge that the incoming administration had no intention of letting the nation down in such a matter. He observed that by working closely through the com-

mission during the interim period, the new administration and the AFRC would lay a foundation for cooperation and consultation to enable both sides to approach certain thorny issues with the frankness and trust necessary for the achievement of a lasting solution...there was urgent need that a better understanding should exist between the military and the government than the purely mechanical relationship associated with the giving and taking of orders. In the economic sphere, he stressed...that the two administrations should work together without delay to try and solve some of the country's economic problems."⁶⁹

Limann assured the nation "that 'kalabule' and other antisocial acts would not reappear after October 1 as feared by many people." He explained that his government had "effective methods," the "military would be used where necessary and...the war on antisocial elements should not be waged by the military alone, but by all sections of the community including the press."⁷⁰

An important part of the documentation of this period is Limann's statements, made just three days after assuming office, in which he pledged his support for the decisions of the AFRC and his wish to demonstrate that his government would be different from its predecessors, promising that the punishments imposed on the corrupt would *not* be reversed. In a front-page editorial headlined: "No Turning Back—Says Limann," it was reported that

The President-elect, Dr. Hilla Limann, has declared that he will not revoke any action taken by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) in the interest of the nation. He said he would not entertain any petition for the reversal of AFRC actions against corrupt elements, asserting "I am not a man of half measure....Ghanaians have the bad attitude of praising too hastily and condemning too hastily" and made it clear that "I don't want petitions to come along for actions already taken. Those we condemn are Ghanaians and some of them committed offenses with our complicity."⁷¹

During the interim period there continued to be dramatic evidence that the momentum of the house cleaning was not declining. The de-

struction of Makola Market No. 1 in Accra was the most vivid example. At the same time, however, Rawlings assured Ghanaians that the military was making plans for returning to their barracks and that some of the members of the council had already resumed normal military duties, such as guard duties, in addition to their council assignments. And about his own plans, he said,

"I will go back to my squadron and show my colleagues that I have not changed one bit." He said he liked flying, both as a profession and as a hobby and would like to continue it, serving under his seniors in his unit... though he was going back to his unit, he had not abandoned the idea of going into farming and stressed the need for all Ghanaians to go into food production at this critical period of the country. "We have large tracts of land to cultivate for the production of basic food and we should not leave that burden to our aging fathers in the villages to shoulder" ... On discipline in the Armed Forces, Flt-Lt. Rawlings assured the public that "we are not going to have any problems. Discipline is solid in the Armed Forces. Check it in the units and you will realize that rapport exists."

At this point in his speech, the Chief of Defence Services arrived and, "true to military tradition and discipline" all AFRC members stood and saluted.

The CDS acknowledged with a bow before he took his seat. Amidst laughter, Flt-Lt. Rawlings asked the pressmen whether they had seen a little bit of the discipline he was talking of. ... Pressed whether he would be "tempted" to enter politics, Flt-Lt. Rawlings said as a Ghanaian he would exercise his civic rights as any other citizen. He declared: "I am not qualified to do this job (Head of State). There are as many dedicated and qualified persons to do the job." ... he would make himself available for service to the country and would contribute his best in any capacity.⁷²

The public was also informed that all the members of the AFRC had declared their assets immediately upon taking office and would do so again before returning to barracks. "We are in without a pesewa, and we will

be leaving without a pesewa." He went on to reveal his political views.

... the Revolution is not against anybody acquiring wealth legally and honestly... in certain parts of the world, wealthy persons acquired their riches through hard work. In Africa, particularly Ghana, however, it was the opposite with some people ... [he] called for equitable distribution of the national wealth because the worker through whose toil and sweat the wealth is generated does not benefit from it.⁷³

In mid-August, the AFRC established a committee of 58 persons representing a large number of organizations, with the responsibility of disposing of all the assets which had been forfeited to the state during the house cleaning. Rawlings informed the group at their first meeting that everything had been carefully listed and classified to "make the disposal exercise straightforward and simple."

He explained that the exercise of disposing these new State assets had been well thought of because the Council attached great importance to it for the lessons it offered... the committee had the mandate of the Council to dispose of all seized assets strictly according to guidelines drawn up after collecting several opinions from different quarters on how best to tackle the exercise... the guidelines were geared towards avoiding a mere transfer of ownership from one set of individuals and organizations to another set with "the same undesirable characteristics as the first. The disposal is to be done to reflect on the injustice which surrounds the acquisition of such assets by their former owners and to let the people of this country with whom these assets were directly or indirectly stolen to take back ownership rights from them." ... Flt-Lt. Rawlings explained further that the decision of the AFRC to constitute this large representative committee to include parties interested in seeing to a fair disposal devoid of personal interests and manipulations of entrenched elements of the society "stems from the clear desire not only to assure ourselves and the nation that the nation's interests will be placed on top of any other interests but our intentions will be seen to be so by all."⁷⁴

The public welcomed this approach to the problem of the illegally acquired properties that had been confiscated; many had feared that the properties might be returned to the people from whom they had been seized. As Elizabeth Ohene, acting editor of the *Graphic*, reminded her readers, although Limann had given assurances "to allay such fear" it ought to be clear that the ultimate power was not with him or his party, but with the people of Ghana.

The last time such confiscated properties were returned to their original owners, it was done twelve clear years after the state had acquired them after going through a lot of cumbersome and detailed legal procedures. When the properties were returned, even though most people felt that the decision was wrong, nobody, no organization, no society uttered a word of protest; we all pulled eyebrows and grumbled in the safety of our homes. And this will happen again, no matter what guarantees there are in the constitution, unless the people of Ghana take it upon themselves to ensure that they prevent a recurrence of such behavior. ... Dr. Limann might keep to his word... but his is only the first government and another might come as it did in 1972 who would feel secure enough to ignore the voice of the people. That is why the "Graphic" feels that the committee that was inaugurated yesterday... to see to the proper administration of the seized properties, holds the key to the place in history of the AFRC. ... When the history of the present time is written, we want it to be possible to say that those who stole the people's money, had the money returned to the people from whom it was originally stolen.⁷⁵

Miss Ohene also asked that the names of those serving on this committee be made public as this would "be the best way of keeping tabs on how they discharge their responsibilities and it would be the surest way of debunking any future charges of vested interests and corruption."

On August 31, the AFRC announced that the handover would take place on September 24 rather than October 1. At the same time Jerry Rawlings announced that he was going to lead the Ghana delegation to Havana to attend the Non-Aligned

Summit Conference to "explain the objectives of the June 4 revolution."⁷⁶ There were rumors that Rawlings would use his trip as a one-way ticket out of the country. Other rumors alleged that some AFRC members had asked for political asylum in Britain. But, as Nii K. Bentsi Enchill wrote, "There is, however, every indication that Rawlings and other AFRC members do not think in terms of 'fleeing.'"⁷⁷

Rawlings did return to Ghana to complete the last days of the "house cleaning," including the dramatic termination of the Cocoa Marketing Board.

*Apart from the eight executions, the blowing up of Makola No. 1 Market, ... there has perhaps been no action of the AFRC more spectacular than the dissolution of the CMB. It has been common knowledge for many years that people have been making fabulous amounts of money, that the executives were profiting from the cocoa industry much more than the cocoa farmers or the nation itself, and that most recently, cocoa money provided some of the finance for the Union Government campaign. Such was the network of patronage... that it was recently said with some justification that the CMB was a kind of state within the Ghanaian state. And in considering the action taken by the AFRC, it must be remembered that it was on the basis of the Archer Committee of Inquiry set up by General Akuffo's SMC II in September last year—at the time, the investigation was supposed to take three months to present its findings, but it seemed to be dragging on in the likelihood of throwing up scapegoats, since there were members of the Akuffo regime with a lot to hide.*⁷⁸

In September, Ghana sent two teams comprising military men and political leaders to try and impress on various overseas countries that the new government would continue to pursue sound economic policies. As the commissioner for economic planning explained in an interview in London,

*... the main purpose was to obtain aid for the Ghana economy, but they also wished to demonstrate the rapport that existed between the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and the incoming politicians.*⁷⁹

But could this "rapport" really be maintained?

The crucial issue which was to test the new civilian government was the addition to the constitution which prohibited any reversal of decisions made under AFRC rule. Section 16 of the Transition Provisions of the *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1979* read as follows:

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Constitution, any confiscation of any property and any other penalties imposed by or under the authority of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council under any Decree made by that Council in pursuance of the exercise undertaken by that Council to purge the Armed Forces of corruption and graft and to restore the image of the Military and to deal with the accomplices of the guilty members of the Armed Forces and other persons guilty of malpractices to the detriment of the economy of Ghana or the public interest or both shall not be reversed by any authority under this Constitution.

Later, as pressure built up from "the other Ghana" to expunge these provisions from the Constitutions, Rawlings testified:

*"I should like to point out to the whole country that the AFRC did not just write the Transitional Provisions into the Constitution. These provisions were the product of the Joint Planning Commission on which the Vice-President, the Attorney General, the Defence Minister and the Minister for Works and Housing were among the PNP team."*⁸⁰

As the date for the transfer drew nearer, the whispers from the "other Ghana" grew louder, centered on the threat Rawlings represented to Limann's leadership and there were criticisms of the president-elect for agreeing to function "under the shadow" of Jerry Rawlings, thereby losing "credibility and authority even before his inauguration."⁸¹

Does the AFRC think it can just return to barracks... does Rawlings think that he can just become a pilot again as if nothing has happened... do you think any government is going to have him sitting somewhere behind their shoulder all the time? Do you think those people can stay in Ghana after what they have done, particularly Rawlings himself? And

after hearing the venom with which a niece of the late Gen. Akuffo described Rawlings as "that bastard," it is easy to imagine the vengeance in the hearts of relatives of those eight soldiers executed in June.

*But revenge is not the main issue, and neither is Rawlings, as more people have come to realize without gaining solace from this realization. Since Dr. Hilla Limann was confirmed as President-elect by the July 9 run-off, it has also become clearer that the main issue is not the prospect of a PNP government... Many people would like to say that the main issue is the Armed Forces... and the threat they pose, immediately and more potently than before, to constitutional rule in Ghana. Some go further to talk of their threat to "society as we know it"... the importance of the military to government in Africa since 1963 makes this focus on the military as the source of the crisis understandable, but not necessarily correct.*⁸²

The whispers were orchestrated by the foreign press. Just after handover to civilian rule, the editor of *West Africa* contributed to the PNP's myopia by distorting the truth of Rawlings's words at his handover address.

*It is surely intolerable for President Limann to have such a man as Flight-Lieutenant Rawlings always in the background at his shoulder, conspicuously not in the ranks, particularly after he has uttered veiled threats about what will be done if a civilian government does not come up to expectations. A final act of patriotism seems to be demanded of the Flight-Lieutenant: that he should remove himself farther off.*⁸³

During the first weeks of civilian rule, the new government made strenuous efforts to justify the repeal of the offending section of the Transitional Provisions and to convince the people that June 4 was a nightmare to be forgotten, and its "injustices" to be reversed. The possible reaction of the military to the politicians' efforts to subject the recent past to judicial review was naturally a source of fear and there was not a great amount of reassurance from the public. But, in late November, Dr. Limann capitulated to the pressure from the "other Ghana." He joined them in defining the enemy as the military, personified in the charis-

matic Flight-Lieutenant. Rawlings was forcibly retired.

... the Government said that his retention in the armed forces as a serving officer was "incompatible" with his status as a former Head of State.⁸⁴

In this, political leaders concurred. The main opposition party, the PFP commended Limann and its party newspaper, the *Star*, alleged that Rawlings had been undermining the loyalties of a large number of serving personnel and had left the impression that "two Governments" were running affairs in the country. "This anomalous situation appeared to have undermined the effective operation of the security agencies of the state. It is hoped that the decisions of President Liman will bring fresh thinking and a new sense of responsibility in the forces."⁸⁵ Not long after, Limann retired two senior army officers "because of personal animosity between them which was undermining the stability and security of the state."⁸⁶ The officers issued a joint statement flatly denying the allegation and accused the government of concocting the story as part of a series of actions aimed at undoing the gains of the June 4 revolution. They hinted that their dismissal was unconstitutional. But the foreign press complimented President Limann who "...has shown that he is capable of firm and decisive political action."⁸⁷

Recent events suggest, however, that this "firm and political action" may, in the end, be Limann's undoing. In a recent interview Rawlings remarked:

I didn't expect them to retire me at all. ... I was doing what I could for the good of the country. And considering that I had also played my role to contain the tempers, the anger, I thought the last thing they would try to do was to get me away from the boys—seeing the rather positive influence I had on them.

Yet the persistence of the belief that it is the military, not poverty, which is the chief threat to the stability of the new government, has nurtured the rumors of coups and more coups since the beginning of 1980. With Rawlings's influence effectively removed from "the boys" and anger within the society mounting, the prophecy may well become self-fulfilling. Recently several soldiers from the lower ranks have been arrested and it is said that one has died during interrogation and others are hospitalized as a result of severe beatings.⁸⁸

Faced with a bankrupt economy with which it cannot cope, the PNP government has attempted to divert attention to constitutional issues and the problems of how to preserve "democratic institutions" (which for the debaters means finding a way round the Transitional Provisions).

The problem for Ghana (and for the world of ever-increasing poverty) is that there are various ways of understanding "democracy."

Even if the "other Ghana" (with the support of the foreign press) is successful in removing the person of Jerry Rawlings, it will still be confronted with the actual source of instability. As he recently put it,

No one can stop the democratic process. It is irreversible and the defense of democracy is not a matter of fine theories from editorial writers but resolving the real problems of the people: food for those who are hungry, and houses and clothes for those who have none. ... I also know that the constitution contains clauses on fundamental human rights and with all the noise that is being made about educating the people to know about these rights, I hope that people will get some food to eat while this knowledge is being fed to them.

The question for Ghana is this: if discontent again erupts to the point where "power is literally lying on the floor," who will pick it up next time?

(May 1980)

NOTES

1 *West Africa*, June 25, 1979.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Although it was assumed that most of the campaign money came from Lebanese—"after all, who else would have such amounts"—there is strong evidence that South Africa attempted to fix the election by supporting the PFP through funds channeled to Ghana from Ivory Coast. Such foreign involvement in elections in Africa is fairly common. The Soviet Union is said to have given money for Acheampong's Unigov campaign. The most recent example of such wasted investments is the support for Bishop Muzorewa's campaign in Zimbabwe which came from Britain and South Africa. The amounts are rumored to be in the region of £64 million.

4. K. Bentsi, Enchill, *West Africa*, June 25, 1979.

5. *Ibid.*

6 *West Africa*, July 23, 1979.

7. *Ibid.*

8. For a more detailed account of the attack on market women and the destruction of Makola Market No. 1, see my "Women and the 1979 Ghana Revolution," *AUFS Reports*, No. 4, 1980.

9 *Ghanaian Times*, July 12, 1979.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ghanaian Times*, July 19, 1979.

12. *Ibid.*

13 *Daily Graphic*, August 10, 1979.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Daily Graphic*, July 12, 1979.

16. *Daily Graphic*, September 27, 1979.

17. *Daily Graphic*, August 24, 1979.

18. *Ghanaian Times*, June 19, 1979.

19 *Daily Graphic*, August 3, 1979.

20 *Ghanaian Times*, July 28, 1979.

21 *West Africa*, October 29, 1979.

22 *Ibid.*

23 *West Africa*, July 23, 1979.

24 *Daily Graphic*, July 20, 1979.

25 *Ghanaian Times*, July 18, 1979.

26. *Ghanaian Times*, July 2, 1979.

27 *Ghanaian Times*, June 26, 1979.

28. *Ghanaian Times*, July 2, 1979.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ghanaian Times*, July 4, 1979.

31. *Ghanaian Times*, July 5, 1979.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ghanaian Times*, June 25, 1979.

- 34 *West Africa*, August 13, 1979.
35. *Ghanaian Times*, July 26, 1979.
- 36 *Ghanaian Times*, August 6, 1979.
- 37 *Ghanaian Times*, August 5, 1979.
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 *Daily Graphic*, August 16, 1979. An unpleasant aspect of the response to the AFRC's emphasis upon the people's power after September 24 was the activities of vigilante groups whose formation was initially at least supported by the PNP government.
40. *Daily Graphic*, July 26, 1979.
- 41 *Ibid*
42. *Daily Graphic*, July 26, 1979.
- 43 *Daily Graphic*, July 31, 1979
- 44 June 24, 1979.
- 45 *Ghanaian Times*, July 21, 1979
- 46 July 23, 1979.
- 47 In the Ministry of Information 23 people sat idle in the Publications Department and not one could sell me a single item "The man with the key" was "out" and no one else had a second key or the authority to sell
- 48 *Daily Graphic*, August 4, 1979.
49. Reprinted in *West Africa*, March 31, 1980
- 50 *Daily Graphic*, July 4, 1979.
- 51 *Daily Graphic*, July 12, 1979.
52. *West Africa*, March 31, 1980.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ghanaian Times*, June 8, 1979.
55. *Ghanaian Times*, July 21, 1979.
- 56 *Daily Graphic*, July 16, 1979.
57. *Daily Graphic*, July 13, 1979.
58. *Daily Graphic*, July 14, 1979.
- 59 *Ghanaian Times*, July 18, 1979.
60. *Daily Graphic*, July 27, 1979.
61. A PNP political advertisement entitled "Dr. Li-Who of P.N.P. NOW Dr. Limann of Ghana traces his background. "Born 46 years ago at Gwello in Upper Region Dr Limann was educated at the Lawra Primary Boarding School and Tamale Teacher Training College, Tamale where he qualified as Certificate 'B' teacher After teaching for three years he left for Britain for further studies as a private student . . . While in Britain he obtained his G C E 'A' Levels before entering the London School of Economics where he obtained his BSc. (Econs) in 1960. He then left for France where he studied at the Sorbonne and obtained a Higher Diploma in French in 1962 Later in 1965 he was awarded a Ph D in Political Science and Constitutional Law after studying for three years at the Faculty of Law and Economic Sciences in the University of Paris. Still not content with the degrees he had then acquired, he studied history as an external student with the University of London and was awarded B A. (Hons). As an academic, Dr. Limann has since 1967 been an examiner for the West African Examinations Council as well as the Public Service for promotional examinations and graduate entry into the Public Service."
62. *Daily Graphic*, August 18, 1979.
- 63 *Ghanaian Times*, August 23, 1979.
64. Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (Special Courts) Decree, 1979, No. 3.
- 65 Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (Special Courts) (Amendment) Decree, 1979 No 19.
- 66 *The Echo*, July 1, 1979.
- 67 *Ghanaian Times*, July 30, 1979.
- 68 *Ghanaian Times*, August 11, 1979, emphasis added.
69. *Ibid.*
- 70 *Ghanaian Times*, August 18, 1979.
- 71 *Ghanaian Times*, September 22, 1979, emphasis added
- 72 *Ghanaian Times*, August 23, 1979
- 73 *Ibid.*
- 74 *Daily Graphic*, August 14, 1979.
75. *Ibid.*
- 76 *Daily Graphic*, September 1, 1979.
- 77 *West Africa*, September 10, 1979
- 78 *West Africa*, September 17, 1979.
79. *Ibid.*
- 80 *West Africa*, March 31, 1980
- 81 *West Africa*, September 17, 1979
- 82 *West Africa*, September 10, 1979.
- 83 *West Africa*, October 1, 1979.
- 84 *The Guardian*, November 30, 1979.
- 85 *Ibid*
- 86 *Ibid* , December 3, 1979.
- 87 *West Africa*, December 3, 1979
88. *West Africa*, April 14, 1980.
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