REVOLUTION

V.L.K. DJOKOTO

Revolution

V. L. K. DJOKOTO

D. K. T. Djokoto & Co
Accra
2025

First Published 2025 by D. K. T. Djokoto & Co
194 Avenue of the Stars, Airport Hills, Accra.

© V. L. K. DJOKOTO, 2025

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I Aŋlɔ Art of Peace 5

CHAPTER II The Aŋlɔ Prince 12

CHAPTER III Renaissance of Aŋlɔ 49

CHAPTER IV A Rebel with a Cause 70

CHAPTER V Tête-à-tête with President Rawlings 129

CHAPTER VI On the move 133

CHAPTER VII Hadzivodu 184

CHAPTER VIII Cultural Architecture, Statecraft and a Start-up Republic 194

The Pop Statesman.

Art Collection and Ka xoxowo Activities

DEDICATED

To the revolutionaries of tomorrow.

CHAPTER I

Aŋlɔ Art of Peace

The Aŋlɔ military, led by the Avadada — a hereditary leadership role — as War Minister, operates three wings, which together are known as: Avalɔgomefiawo, or Generals. The Avadada is Fiagã of the Dome — centre wing; the Đushifia is the Fiagã of the Đushi — right wing; and the Miafia is the Fiagã of the Mia — left wing. All three Kings traditionally resided in Aŋlɔgã. This permitted the Awɔmefiã, as the Aŋlɔ King of Kings, or Emperor, to summon the Avalɔgomefiawo at his convenience.

The war oracle, arsenal and food stock were kept in Atsifoame, where the Avadada traditionally resided with a council of military intelligence — known as the Avadzikpɔlawo. Atsifoame — a reservist war camp — provided reinforcement and ammunition for all the three aforementioned wings. In the event of war, the caution signal was by a distribution of corn seeds, through the Major General, to the Avakplɔlawo, or captains, of all brigades. The number of corn seeds allocated to a brigade indicated the preparation time and specific day for attack. Everyday each Major General put by a corn seed, and on the final day, with only one seed left, the

respective brigade proceeded to war. It was tradition for the Woe division to fire the first bullet, followed by the Lashibi or Aklɔbɔwo division, and finally, the Adɔtri, from the privileged central position they occupied, would attack the enemy to mark the commencement of war.

Military strategy and tactics were strictly concealed Aŋlɔ Empire secrets. The Agave clan of Aŋlɔ were exclusively entrusted with the sacred mysteries of the Aŋlɔ Empire's military. A series of histrionic rituals and ceremonies were held within temples, under the auspices of the Togbui Nyigbla and the Avadada, performed to purify and purportedly make all warriors invincible to guns, swords, spears and arrows. This string of rituals was also a technique to sieve out soldiers who were fit for warfare.

The Aŋlɔ Empire's military consisted of the entire effective male population. Aŋlɔ warriors were valiant and renowned for fearlessness. They triumphed, against all odds, over endless incidences of external aggression. It was the dream of every Aŋlɔ citizen to die in active service to the fatherland, rather than to perish by natural causes. Death on the battlefield was regarded as the most honourable form of civic achievement. In fact, by custom, Aŋlɔ Warrior-Kings were installed on the battlefield.

King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II served as Dufia — or City Ruler — of Anyako and Miafiagã of the Aŋlɔ Empire from 1873 and died on 18 June 1911, after he succeeded

General Dzokoto I, his father, a mastermind for coordinated schemes of military expansion, who previously served in the same capacity from 1825-1866[1]. General Dzokoto I notably led the successful Datsutagba war effort and siege of the Keta Fort in 1865-1866, for which he was awarded, by the Omanhene of Akwamu, Nana Akoto, a laurel of valour.

Legend has it that King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II, after a dastardly assassination attempt by the Kingdom of Great Britain's armed forces stationed at Keta, famously vanished into thin-air, leaving behind a cloth. This cloth was presented to Queen Victoria as a museum showpiece.

After Alakple, Kodzi, Fiawu and Dudu were burnt to ashes by the British, Miafiagã Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II was forced into exile together with eminent members of the Yeʋe secret society, military personnel and royal servants[2]. All across Aŋlɔ, symbols of royal wealth were wrecked before the day was through. He returned to his ancestral home, Ɖɔtsīe, and lived there for almost a decade.

He later voyaged to German-administered Lomé, then referred to as Bey Beach, and petitioned the elders of Aveɖotui land for territory. He chose a site near Ga*f*e, within close proximity from the Ziɔ River — the

[1] Sandra E. Greene, *West African Narratives of Slavery: Texts from Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Ghana*, p. 161

ancestral home of the Aveɖotuitɔwo. The elders initially pleaded with King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II to choose another site, since their people were never prosperous there. But after much hesitation, the elders accepted his request. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II offered the Aveɖotuitɔwo: Ðu ketre ɖeka — one keg gunpowder; Aha adzafi etɔ — three demijohns of rum; and, Atama aɖaka ɖeka — one box of tobacco. After a year, King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II transformed his territory into a prosperous society, to the surprise of the Aveɖotuitɔwo. They named King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II's settlement 'Tɛŋgɛ Kpedzi' — which means 'the stone on which Tɛŋgɛ sat'— at Ga*f*e to honour him.

King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II took this as an opportunity to reorganise his military — and launched a chamber of commerce. He posted a regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Adabragã Preku, at Tsikalẽkɔ*f*e, the main entrance of his newly acquired territory. Tɛŋgɛ settled another regiment at Anyro, commanded by Lieutenant Kpogo, to ward off vandals from the Adzanju end. He subsequently embarked on visits to Assahoun and Tsevie, where other Aŋlɔs were domiciled, to develop relations with them.

James Ocloo remained behind at Tɛŋgɛkpedzi to deal with any correspondences and other confidential matters at the Aŋlɔ consulate of King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II then toured the rest of Togoland to form a network of aristocrats and merchants.

King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II was introduced to the German Governor-Resident in Lomé and enjoyed the full patronage of the German Government. He became pro-German and favoured Otto von Bismarck's foreign policy of non-interference in Eʋe affairs. Until the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, Bismarck was disinterested in Africa, yet eventually felt it necessary to colonise Togo in response to Great Britain's scramble for territorial power. Representatives of the German Government, from Lomé, visited the Aŋlɔ consulate at Tɛŋgɛkpedzi regularly, especially over the weekends.

United by a common enemy, Great Britain, the Germans and King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II established a formidable alliance. When King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II constructed a military depot, with an enormous horse-stable, the Germans provided the required financial backing. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II began to recruit and train new soldiers.

Colonial officers of Great Britain, domiciled in Keta and Cape Coast, heard of the German-backed rearmament programme of King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II in Togoland, and grew suspicious of his increasing political influence. The colonial officers viewed this as a direct threat to British monopoly within the Gold Coast, and were prepared to ceasefire.

The British handpicked and lured a handful of perfidious Aŋlɔ statesmen with bribes and gifts. They, in turn,

provided the colonial office with information about Miafiagã Tɛngɛ Dzokoto II and his Batɛ clansmen. William Henry Klutse Kobla Chapman, former District Commissioner of Keta, travelled to Togoland and formally initiated dialogue with King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II. They assured King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II that the motive behind the ardent request for his presence by the British in the Aŋlɔ Empire was not at all ominous.

These treacherous few encouraged King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II to lead an Aŋlɔ delegation to Accra, Gold Coast and discuss a peace treaty with the Kingdom of Great Britain, as the official guest of the British Government.

W. H. K. Chapman cautioned King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II not to journey extravagantly, with the usual pomp and pageantry, but to show up unannounced. By the time King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II reached Kedzi, news had quickly spread and a mammoth crowd of Aŋlɔ citizens flocked to welcome the formidable Warrior-King. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II had no choice but to address the commoners.

He kept his speech concise, and said to the jubilant crowd: 'Nyemegbɔ ɖe aʋa dzi o. Amesiame neyi a*f*e. Mayi Gɛ agbɔ na mi loo'.

'I have denounced all wars and hostilities against the British. Everyone must return to his base camp. I am

bound for Accra and shall return unharmed shortly', King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II declared.[3]

King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II was received by a government envoy and temporarily lodged at the Keta Fort. He led a delegation of senior Aŋlɔ statesmen and boarded the S. S. Adolph Woeman ship from the Keta Beach to Accra. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II sailed for Accra with Chapman, Ɲomenya, Kwasi Ahīakonu and the colonial District Commander, Mr. Obrien.

A report was made to the Governor that King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II had arrived at the Christiansborg Castle. The Governor ordered that King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II should be locked in the cell. No sooner had the officer-in-escort locked the door of the cell before he came to find King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II outside of the cell, with a snuff-box in hand, calmly seated, one leg over the other, as he stroked his long beard. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II was thrice locked up in the cell but thrice came out.

After the plot failed, King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II and the Aŋlɔ leaders were graciously received into the official residence at the Government House, Osu, Gold Coast. After a few days of relaxation and round-table diplomatic activity, a conference was convened. King Tɛngɛ Dzokoto II led the Aŋlɔ-Anglo peace talks. The British expressed embarrassment and apologised for all the

[3] Charles M. K. Mamattah, *The Eves of West Africa*, p. 433

battles, and referred to their turbulent history as a trial of strength between two brave belligerent cocks.

They acknowledged that he was the greatest Warrior-King they had met among the Aŋlɔs. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II, at the conference, was declared paramount ruler from the Volta estuary down to Ave Afiaɖenyigba.

The British offered to expand the royal palace of King Tɛngɛ Dzokoto II as compensation for the ruins of countless edifices they had destroyed at Anyako. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II was recognised as the Supreme Ruler in Aŋlɔ, or the Awɔmefiã, with authority to adjudicate in all matters civil and criminal within the Empire.

King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II thanked the British Government and replied: 'Your hospitality to me and my team has been wonderful. I am deeply grateful for your fund of goodwill and for your recognition of me as paramount ruler of the Aŋlɔs'. The Awɔmefiã-elect discussed and agreed to the peace terms.[4]

After 21 days of diplomatic negotiations at the Osu Castle, the British Governor ordered that 50 soldiers and bearers escort King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II and the Aŋlɔ deputation back to Aŋlɔgã, Aŋlɔ Empire. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II was carried in a palanquin all the way by the beach through to Anyako. The Awɔmefiã-elect's delegation was seen off with 21 Kegs of gunpowder, 21

[4] Charles M. K. Mamattah, *The Eves of West Africa*, p. 435

cases of stork gin and 21 rifles. The journey to Aŋlɔ took 7 days.

When the delegation reached Aŋlɔgã, a great durbar of royals and commoners, at the insistence of the British Government, was held. The peace terms were then read over to Aŋlɔs. Cannons and artillery were fired to salute and celebrate the heroic return of King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II. The British, once more, presented King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II to the Aŋlɔ Empire and recognised him as the supreme traditional ruler.

The King thenceforth continued, along with the convoy, the trip back home to Anyako. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II enthralled onlookers with a display of mystical powers as he crossed the lagoon. The convoy successfully entered Anyako and slumbered at the grand three-storey palace of the King. This bastion of governance functioned as a permanent residence, courthouse and guesthouse. The next morning, after a delightful banquet, he bade them farewell. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II was a legendary military genius and a mesmeric royal.

A famous Agbekɔ Ʊulɔlɔ song that eulogizes King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II:

Lead: Glagovi Tete woa ‘gba nye yia
Sohɔ̃tu la ɖe miawo eh

Group: Glagovi Tete woa ‘gba nye yia
Sohɔ̃tu la ɖe miawo eh

(Repeat lead and group)

Lead: Woa ‘gba nye yia
Group: Sohɔ̃tu la ɖe miawo eh

(Repeat lead and group)

Group: Glagovi Tete woa ‘gba nye yia
Sohɔ̃tu la ɖe miawo eh

Installation of King Tɛngɛ Dzokoto II, Dufia of Anyako and Miafiagã, as Awɔmefiã-elect (Emperor) of the Aŋlɔ Empire. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II is seated second from the left. Aŋlɔgã, Aŋlɔ Empire, 1889.

Photo by Verlag der Norddeutschen Missionsgesellschaft, Bremen No. 116/Serie Keta

CHAPTER II

The Aŋlɔ Prince

Prince Daniel Kojo Tɛŋgɛ Djokoto was born a bon vivant royal, during the sweetest hours, in Anyako, Aŋlɔ State — a picturesque island situated at the peninsular of the Keta lagoon — on 26 May 1924. He was the second masculine child of King Apewu Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto III, who was Dufia — or City Ruler — of Anyako, and served as the Miafiagã, Commander-in-chief, Left Wing division of the Aŋlɔ State from 1921 to 1946. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto III reigned for quarter of a century.

Daniel's mother, Mama Martha Agluma Gbormittah of Anyako, was a soigné well-to-do merchant from the port town of Simpa. Agluma, a modernist, assimilated the subtle influences of the Victorian style. She enjoyed being draped in lavish chic garments.

Since 1846 — when by the request of a few Christian locals, Rev. T. B. Freeman voyaged to London and returned with a stock of designer European costumes and furniture — western fashion became a material symbol of affluence, especially in coastal towns like Simpa.

For instance, the Ladies Mutual Club, a Sekondi-based fraternity founded in 1904, authored essays on topics such as 'The term Lady', and as a bye-law of the club, members who toddled about town in traditional wear were fined. 'The lady wears a European dress, the woman only wears a cloth', once said an observant Wesleyan missionary.[5] Style ultimately distinguished ladies like Agluma from their perceived unenlightened peers, and made them imitable.

Unlike Agluma who was much more receptive to the new western way of life, Daniel's father, King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto III, was a rather ultra-conservative Aŋlɔ traditionalist, and a staunch anti-imperialist for that matter. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto III, for instance, viewed British fashion as a gradual infiltration of European ideas and standards of decency into Aŋlɔ culture. While Agluma was more concerned about matters of etiquette and fashion, King Apewu Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto III focused his energies on the families' mercantilist interest within the Aŋlɔ State.

In 1932, Daniel's parents, after a long tussle about cultural values, finally arrived at a compromise and decided to send the young Prince to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion School, at Simpa, for his elementary education. The A. M. E. Zion School was an

[5] *The Gold Coast Express*, 28 Sept. 1897

entirely African-owned institution — administered by gifted intellectuals, such as Samuel Richard Brew Attoh Ahuma and James Emmanuel Kwegyir Aggrey — with a focus on African liberation. Daniel was a student at the A. M. E. Zion School until he sat the Standard VII certificate examination — which he passed with distinction.

During this period, however, Daniel's father, King Apewu Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto III, encountered severe civil unrest and toppled a series of internal rebellions against his authority, as Dufia of Anyako. He affirmed his power through a cycle of long-drawn-out litigation disputes, employing a swarm of barristers.

King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto III — a prosperous concessionaire and plantation owner — harnessed a secret fraternity of clandestine operatives, and committed a lot of the families' coffers towards keeping his loyalists exceedingly incentivised. To exert absolute control over his principality, and discreetly settle vendettas, he ensured their arsenal never lacked.

A saintly figure of incalculable prestige, King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto III modulated the pendulum swings of conflict superlatively well, and consolidated his grip — with stately calm — over the island by 1921. The royal household, from the most junior servant to the

resplendent officers of the Miafiagã's Forces, were bound about by unswerving fidelity. Their knees were ever at his disposal, ready to bend in homage of His Royal Highness. This earned him the title 'Defender of the Dynasty'. He further laid a firm foundation for the establishment of the Dufiafe, or the local government, to preserve the long-term political order of the island and the prestige of the throne.

Upon completion of his elementary education, Daniel was awarded a scholarship from the reputable Prince of Wales College and enrolled, in 1939, as a student. During the blissful years at the green hill, he developed a life-long passion for rhetoric, poetry, and music. An avid sportsman, Daniel dedicated hours weekly to weightlifting, martial arts and lawn tennis. In his prime, he could knock a punching bag clean off its swivel. In 1946, King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto III, Daniel's father, passed on.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto later joined the post-secondary department of the Prince of Wales College, in 1947, to train as a teacher. Fully qualified for employment in the colonial economy, he was retained by the Prince of Wales College, as a teacher, for about a year.

During this period, a group of chivalrous soldiers, the Ex-Servicemen's Union, led by B. E. A. Tamakloe,

assembled at the Palladium Cinema, Accra on February 20, 1948 to instigate the scorned market women and glum men unable to cater for their famishing households. 28 February 1948 marked the genesis of a new political order. The Ex-Servicemen took a conscious decision to renege on their agreement with the colonial government to tread along a prescribed route. Instead, the fuming revolutionaries marched towards the Christiansborg castle. The police resorted to tear-gas and sprayed a round of bullets at the rebels. Three of them died. In total, 29 died and 237 were injured.[6]

In October, 1948, Daniel began to read the Classics, at the Prince of Wales College, under the tutelage of Professor P. Guerrey. He also encountered, during a short trip, a pretty young lady named Agatha Quansah, in Winneba — formerly referred to as Simpa — where she resided with her maternal uncle, Mr Joseph Wellington Taylor.

Komla 'Afro Gbede' Agbeli Gbedemah, a confidante of Nkrumah, who was to be later elected to the Legislative Assembly to represent Keta, began to impress upon Prince D. K. T. Djokoto, the ideals of a modern fully autonomous democratic Republic. They were both old

[6] Kwame Nkrumah, *I speak of freedom*, p. 9

boys of the Prince of Wales College — and, as indigenes of Anyako, Gbedemah was the Aŋlɔ Prince's subject.

Komla Agbeli Gbedemah of Anyako — born on 17 June 1913 at Warri, Nigeria — was a revolutionary youth activist and an iconic statesman who, as a prominent political architect of both pre-colonial and postcolonial Ghana, played a pivotal role in nation-building and shaped the political landscape of our Republic for decades, until he was an octogenarian.

He is widely recognised as the mastermind who propelled the image of Kwame Nkrumah — the father of Pan-Africanism — to national attention. Gbedemah understood the chess of the old guard, perhaps, better than most of his contemporaries, and shrewdly manoeuvred his way through a muddled political arena. K. A. Gbedemah had always maintained a position of power on the chessboard until the very hour he kicked the bucket on Saturday, July 11, 1998, at the ripe age of 85.

The Aŋlɔ Prince, handpicked by Gbedemah, joined the Committee on Youth Organisation; the youth wing of the United Gold Coast Convention. Daniel was never anxious to use his clout as an Aŋlɔ royal in a diplomatically adroit and effective fashion. In those days, the participation in social clubs was exclusively reserved

for those who were literate and educated. And the UGCC became a citadel of cavalier politics. But, in January 1948, when Kwame Nkrumah, a Marxian socialist, was officially inducted into office as general secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention — at a salary of £20 per month — his first act was to change the constitution. Nkrumah expanded the membership roll of the organization beyond the interconnected intelligentsia. Nkrumah had earlier arrived in the Gold Coast on December 16 1947, upon the recommendation of Ako Adjei, a barrister.

Mr Nkrumah embraced this new role, with a clear intention, as documented in his Autobiography, that he must be 'prepared to come to loggerheads with the Executive of the UGCC if found that they were following a reactionary course'. Indeed, a few members of the UGCCs Working Committee sensed a striking difference between them and Nkrumah at their introductory formal encounter. R. S. Blay, a barrister and vice-president of the UGCC, remarked: 'Mr Nkrumah would use the Convention as if it were his own organization'.

Danquah, especially, was apprehensive. He probed how Nkrumah was able to 'reconcile his active interests in West African unity (through the West African National Secretariat) with the rather parochial aims of the United Gold Coast Convention'. In response, Nkrumah had to

re-assure the UGCC, saying that he 'believed in territorial before international solidarity'.

He was interrogated, too, about his use of certain 'catch phrases — in particular, the word "comrade" which the Committee members feared "might arouse the suspicions of the public as well as officialdom regarding the political connections of the Convention with certain unpopular foreign forms of government.' Hence, the Committee never completely overcame their mistrust towards Nkrumah — intending to pawn him; ready to admit, and also ready to deny, what he might do in their name but haunted by an evolving anxiety of what Nkrumah might do in their absence.

Nkrumah and the Working Committee coexisted regardless of the atmosphere of growing scepticism, until the middle of 1949, when he was suspended from the post of Secretary. The next meeting of the Convention, three weeks later, in Nana Ofori Atta's house at Accra, coincided with a controversial publication by Nkrumah of the *Accra Evening News*, and, as a result, the Sekondi timber merchant, George A. Grant, or Pa Grant, as he was known — who had formed the UGCC in his old offices on Poassi Road, Sekondi — demanded Nkrumah's complete removal from office.

Blay and Ansah Koi suggested he might be made vice-president instead. Edward Akufo Addo and J. B. Danquah proposed, and others agreed, that he might be made honorary treasurer. Nkrumah refused but later, in November, accepted. At the end of the year, however, the Committee on Youth Organisation assembled under Nkrumah's leadership in Kumasi, and by February 1949 — a year after the riots and the ex-servicemen's rally — the enmity between the Working Committee and Nkrumah could no longer be concealed. While the Coussey Committee was in the midst of its deliberations, Nkrumah abandoned the UGCC and established his own political party, the Convention People's Party (CPP). In pursuit of vengeance, the UGCC became ruthless adversaries of the CPP, untiring in their quest to impede its progress at every juncture.

The Committee on Youth Organisation were strong opponents of the status-quo. 'Unlike their intellectual leadership in the Coussey Committee, who gave every indication of replacing the British strata at the top, they sought to reform society from the bottom.'[7] As Kwesi Armah describes it: 'This was, *inter alia*, the great divide between the old and conservative UGCC and the young and radical CPP…'.[8]

[7] Kwesi Armah, Ghana: *Nkrumah's Legacy,* p.9
[8] Kwesi Armah, Ghana: *Nkrumah's Legacy*, Preface.

Daniel, along with majority of the United Gold Coast Convention, swiftly joined the visionary politician, only a handful remaining faithful to the party's founding leaders. The Convention People's Party mainly drew its support from the urban poor, but its cadre was the urban lower middle class — students, graduates, teachers, low-ranking officials in government ministries and petty traders, all of whom felt that the promise of modernisation had failed them. The poised nationalism of the urban middle classes and select-few elites found its ideological expression in rationalist, secular constitutionalism.

Ultimately, Daniel had been a devout nationalist-progressive who had matured during a period of history that exposed him to the savagery of British imperialism — but, after his affiliation with the CPP, became constitutional progressive. He regarded a large number of anti-intellectuals living in slum, or near-slum conditions, as upstarts — and as a conservative elite — found some of them embarrassing.

These people, however, became the backbone of the Convention People's Party. One wonders whether the large crowd of excited spectators were aware of the great contribution they were making to the history of a new

Ghana. Although he deemed the Nkrumah-led Convention Peoples Party as radical populist nationalists, in principle, he disagreed with the recommendations by the Coussey Report on Constitutional Reform, which he maintained vested policy formulation in the hands of the colonial governor.

Kwame Nkrumah, who served as General Secretary of the UGCC, had been excluded from the Coussey Committee, before he broke away and founded the CPP. The first reaction of the CPP to the Coussey Report was indicated in the *Accra Evening News* which warned its readers that the new constitution would prove a 'Trojan gift horse'. It was labelled as 'bogus and fraudulent'. Nkrumah embarked upon a tour of the country in order to explain to the people that their indigenous leaders, who were represented on the Coussey Committee, had betrayed the people by not recommending self-government. He accepted the recommendations on the local and district councils, but challenged the inclusion of the three ex-officio members in the cabinet and the vast powers vested in the Governor. The CPP proposed a directly elected Legislative Assembly, as opposed to the one recommended by the Committee which was apparently made up of a largely indirectly elected and nominated members.

The diametrically opposed perspectives of the political factions regarding the Coussey Report mirrored the colossal divide between the autocratic and democratic elements in Ghana, and created the conditions for the subsequent decade and a half of domestic struggle for power. These essential distinctions of method became the axis upon which contemporary Ghanaian politics has continued to rotate.

Also, much like many other consumers, Daniel was in support of Nii Kwabena Bonne's — a sub-chief of the Gã State — anti-inflation campaign against the Association of West African Merchants (A. W. A. M), who charged exorbitant prices for their goods and services. It was at this material moment that Ghana's political centre of gravity moved out of the corridors of the Legislative Assembly into the street. The imperialists, who had by then evolved into matchless custodians of commerce, conceded and reduced prices. This inspired a spirit of collective defiance amongst the aborigines against the colonial regime. And, in Nkrumah, Daniel had discovered a personality capable of leading this charge.

Meanwhile, an unusually assiduous educated young man, abetted by vaults of cash, gold and property, Daniel set up a multi-disciplinary family office, D. K. T. Djokoto

& Co, in 1950. The firm effectively took charge of empire-building for the Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto Royal Family of Anyako, as well as other administrative duties. At D. K. T. Djokoto & Co — operating from a minimalist office space — Daniel's diligent guild drafted promissory notes, financed coastal merchants, and offered bookkeeping services to wealthy merchants which indulged in the import-export Aŋlɔ Atlantic trade. With a better appreciation of the global produce market, he also brokered commodity prices for commercial agriculturists and fisherfolk exporting their raw material. And procured imported goods on their behalf.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto, through his firm, began to restructure the families' approach to trade and, in an era when expatriate businesses enjoyed monopoly, set out to create an atmosphere where indigenous Aŋlɔ enterprises could thrive. Royalty and statecraft are inextricably linked. The Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto Royal Family of Anyako, founded in 1776, after more than two centuries of administration, had mastered statecraft. But Prince D. K. T. Djokoto recognized if the royal family was to endure, then it needed a business model.

His challenge seemed to be to produce a more realistic plan costing less but still satisfying the wider ambitions of the royal family. He cut out unnecessary expenses, diversified the families' assets, and focused on improving

its revenue. He also considered goodwill as one of the most valuable assets of the firm, and went great lengths to ensure the confidentiality of business associates were always protected.

After 1951, the conservative politicians, such as Dr Joseph Boakye Danquah, Edward Akufo-Addo — first senior prefect of the Prince of Wales College — and imperial civil servants, Kofi Abrefa Busia, prince of Wenchi, who hoped to trammel Ghana's nationalist movement, would find themselves swimming against the tide.

A year after, Prince D. K. T. Djokoto became part of the first students, in 1952, to move from Achimota to the Legon Hill, at the University College of the Gold Coast, together with contemporaries such as Emmanuel Noi Omaboe and Joseph Henry Mensah, as founding members of the Legon Hall.[9]

Meanwhile, the Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto Royal Family of Anyako, concerned about its waning role of status and influence in the Aŋlɔ State, since the demise of the King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto III, agreed the Kingdom needed a barrister, amongst the Aŋlɔ Princes, to consolidate its prestige and power.

[9] Francis Agbodeka, *A History of University of Ghana, Half a century of higher education* (1948 – 1998)

Also, a new era demanded a fresh approach to settling disputes. The family decided it was in the interest of the Kingdom to confront dissidents through court and apply force, as a last resort, only after negotiations had completely broken down. It was a relatively new phenomenon, much to the frustration of monarchs, when commoners — subjects of the royal family — sought legal representation to contest their decisions or conduct. This undermined the long-held customs and traditions that empowered royals to govern. It essentially interrupted the social framework and initiated a gradual psychological process which challenged the traditional justice system. English legal proceedings soon became an alternative route to justice.

Daniel, given his academic qualifications, meticulous nature and sartorial taste, became an ideal candidate for the role as counsel to the Kingdom. He took out ample time to acquaint himself properly with Aŋlɔ history, war studies and Gold Coast politics. He also consciously refined his bureaucratic skills.

But inevitably, with persuasion from Komla Agbeli Gbedemah, Daniel's single-focus on the traditional Aŋlɔ state, evolved into a political struggle to unite Africa. He increasingly grew detached from his family's decades-long, carefully orchestrated programme to subvert British rule — while still hesitant to relinquish their

power in favour of national politics — and return the Aŋlɔ State to its prehistoric status as a fully autonomous nation-state. Daniel believed in an enlightened practice of ethnocentrism, in which the parameters of social connexion were not restricted within the margins of Aŋlɔ dialects and traditions, or of similar cultures in a populous tribe occupying large territory. To the Aŋlɔ Prince, ethnocentrism implied fraternity with clansmen and hostility towards members of other clans, tribes, and nation-states. Nkrumah aspired to revolutionize this. And the Aŋlɔ Prince gradually swung into his orbit. The very concept of a hereditary royal family would soon become a glaring anachronism in a post-independence democratic Ghana where equality was celebrated, elitism deplored and privilege despised.

In Daniel's penultimate year, he was funded by the Royal Family to proceed on a three-month study tour of the United Kingdom. Particularly inspired by his grandfather's — Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II — heroism and diplomatic prowess, Daniel relished the opportunity of a frontline position in the struggle to topple British imperialism. After he returned to the Gold Coast, Prince D. K. T. Djokoto disclosed his intention, to the family, to pursue a legal career. The family fulfilled their pledge to finance his education abroad.

In July 1953, Nkrumah moved a motion in the Legislative Assembly demanding that the British Government give the Gold Coast its independence. As a direct result, a new constitution was born and, for the first time, the Gold Coast abolished the European nominated Members of the Assembly who represented the Chambers of Commerce and Mines. The Gold Coast, also for the first time, had an All-African Cabinet and a fully-elected representative Legislative Assembly. It could be said by 1954 that the independence of Ghana was a foregone conclusion waiting for formal approval, which was given in 1957.[10]

On 6 May 1955, D. K. T. Djokoto enrolled at the Inns of Court School of Law, University of London for his undergraduate legal studies and gained his Bachelor of Laws in 1958. He then asked the love of his life, Agatha, an exceptional lady, to join him in the United Kingdom. She journeyed, in 1958, for six weeks by boat, to the United Kingdom and they got married shortly after.

She graduated as a teacher, beginning her career in education at Our Lady of Apostles Girls Senior High School and St Michael's. The couple settled together on 552 Finchley Road, N.W.11. Their house, a modest villa, was Daniel's home for six years. It soon had to

[10] Bankole Timothy, *Kwame Nkrumah His Rise to Power*, p. 119

accommodate a growing family: Agatha and Daniel would have five youthful children in all — three girls and two boys. They were christened: Catherine, Anthony, Helen, Vincent and Juliana. United by a deep affection rather than shared ambition, their marriage was joyful and fulfilling.

Agatha was empathetic; she cared deeply for family, friends and acquaintances. She had this special gift to intuit the emotions of others so accurately people who encountered her assumed a discussion with Agatha included their unexpressed thoughts too. A woman of pristine glamour and refined opulence, Agatha had a knack for organising social gatherings that brought people from diverse backgrounds together, and was always eager to hear a new perspective.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto subsequently enrolled into the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple and — with the colours of a crow — was admitted to the Bar of England & Wales in 1960. While at the Inns of Court School of Law, Prince D. K. T. Djokoto was appointed by President Kwame Nkrumah as Second Secretary, responsible for foreign policy, at the Ghana High Commission, United Kingdom.

Like carefully applied make-up, 1960 changed the face of Ghana. The birth of a genuinely free Republic was a

symbolic manifestation of Ghanaian advancement, as the Third Parliament, exalted to an eminent degree of autonomy, as a result of a plebiscite held in April 1960, had now evolved into a fully democratic nation upon the departure of the erstwhile colonial Governor-General, the Earl of Listowel.

On the 2 July 1960, the first Parliament of the first Republic assembled to elect a Speaker and Deputy Speaker by Presidential proclamation. Later that day, President Kwame Nkrumah assumed the office of Commander-In-Chief of the armed forces. In 1960, seventeen formerly colonial African states became independent sovereign nations.[11] This domino effect included Togo, Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, Congo, Ivory Coast amongst others. Prince D. K. T. Djokoto earned a promotion, in 1961, as First Secretary in charge of consular affairs at the embassy, and later as and Minister-Counsellor, serving until 1966.

As part of a delegation led by Mr. Theo O. Sowa, Consular-General in New York, Prince D. K. T. Djokoto, together with Mr. T. R. D. Addai of the Ministry of Interior, was an adviser to the Republic of Ghana at the United Nations Conference on Consular Relations at Vienna, 1963. A consummate diplomat

[11] Kwame Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom, A statement of African Ideology*.

noted for his erudite negotiation skills, Prince D. K. T. Djokoto insisted on liberal and progressive consular functions. At the Fifteenth Meeting of the First Committee, he strongly expressed that no State needed to communicate its reasons for refusing an exequatur.[12]

As a trained teacher, The Aŋlɔ Prince also took a keen interest in the sphere of education and was once a representative for Ghana at the Third Commonwealth Education Conference, held in 1964, as part of a delegation led by Susanna Al-Hassan, Deputy Minister of Education.[13] In 1965, Prince D. K. T. Djokoto represented the Republic of Ghana, together with Mr. Y. K. Quartey, the Shipping Commissioner, as a member of the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organisation.

Since his wife, Agatha Bentuma Djokoto, did not think that diplomacy, or more dreadfully politics, was her metier, she focused on curating social and ceremonial activities. Her interests were so wide: museums, ancient palaces, culinary books and Catholicism. Yet Agatha's love for social and ceremonious activities did not interfere with her role as a mother and housewife. Far from it: Daniel's habit of hosting official guests at home

[12] United Nations Conference on Consular Relations: Vienna, 5 March - 22 April 1963. Official records. United States: ONU, 1963.
[13] *Report of the Third Commonwealth Education Conference*, Department of Education and Science, p. 103, December 1964

created a continuous procession of officials through her living room. She also accompanied him to public functions, and sometimes on foreign visits.

Grandma took delight in curating intimate banquets and buffet receptions. Immersed in the beauty of life, she spent a great deal of time in search of artistic locations where the Djokoto household could bond away from home, or where their guest could be entertained. The Sakumo Lagoon, which was the first of cargo liners ordered from Swan Hunter, in 1964, by the Black Star Line, was launched by her at Tyneside.[14] Bentuma was an erudite matriarch of the Djokoto household.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto was also member of the prominent Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, together with K. Gyeke Darko, then Ghana's Principal State Attorney at Ministry of Justice, at the eight sessions of the committee in Bangkok, Thailand. Together, they worked assiduously on the rights of refugees; relief against double taxation and fiscal evasion; the codification of the principles of peaceful coexistence; and the judgement of the International Court of Justice on the South West Africa Cases.

After the counter-revolutionary coup d'état, on 24 February 1966, Prince D. K. T. Djokoto was reposted to

[14] *Africa, West, Periodicals, Economic Conditions*, West Africa Publishing Company, Limited, 1964. p. 165

serve as Chargé D'affaires at the Ghana Embassy in Cairo, United Arab Republic from 1966-1970. Mrs Agatha, empathic as always, devoted to helping fellow wives of Diplomats who had recently been transferred to United Arab Republic with their husbands by setting up the Diplomatic Wives Association, to welcome and support them as they adapted to life in Cairo.

The Aŋlɔ Prince was domiciled there with his young family during the Arab-Israeli Six-day War in 1967. He frequented the Republic of Ghana as a result of an appointment, in 1967, to a four-member commission which had been constituted to probe the affairs of the State Fishing Corporation. The committee, chaired by S. A. Wiredu, held 258 sittings, heard 243 witnesses and examined 256 exhibits which was presented to the Chairman of the National Liberation Council, A. A. Afrifa. [15]

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto politely refused an appointment by the Busia-Akufo-Addo administration to serve as Ambassador to Italy. Instead, he relished an opportunity to serve on the bench — and desired to rebuild Anyako and the Aŋlɔ state. He, therefore, returned to the Republic of Ghana to settle for good and was called to the Ghana Bar Association in 1971.

[15] *Daily Graphic*, July 15 1969.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto was subsequently appointed as a judge to the Judicial Service of Ghana shortly before his untimely passing at the Amishadai Lawson Adu Lodge — an official government residence close to the Christiansborg Castle — where he lived. At 48, he was bitten by the cannibalistic appetite of the of the savage quiet dust. He died. Although young, grandpapa had taken care of his earthly affairs. The universe laid a mat on which he discovered eternal sleep.

The Aŋlɔ Prince honoured the Republic he loved so much. He was debonair, charming, ubiquitous, and kind. He was a genuine cosmopolitan and a supporter of African unity — a cause he remained wholeheartedly committed to throughout his life. Above all, he was a Ghanaian nationalist with a special love for the island of Anyako. His legacy continues to transcend the conscience of nation builders and serves as a reminder that statesmanship is a noble and worthwhile pursuit, where it is possible to realise one's higher-self by virtue of servitude to humanity. He was a cauldron of philosophies and sentiments that was always sparkling. His wife, Agatha, did her best to let it out in splotches rather than watch it detonate. The most supreme companionship The Aŋlɔ Prince could attain in the Gold Coast was a loyal cantilevered wife. Prince D. K. T. Djokoto's life is a slice of Ghana's diplomatic history.

D. K. T. Djokoto — then a member of the Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council and Commonwealth Liaison Committee — in a meeting with Edward Heath at the Marlborough House, on 19th March 1964. Edward Heath, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, who was at the time President of the Board of Trade and Secretary of State for Industry, Trade and Regional Development in the Conservative government.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto

Agatha B. Djokoto.

The couple — Prince D. K. T. Djokoto and Agatha B. Djokoto — dancing together.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto and a friend.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto, enjoying a cigarette and glass of champagne, with a friend (left) and Agatha B. Djokoto (right).

Agatha B. Djokoto and Prince D. K. T. Djokoto visit guests.

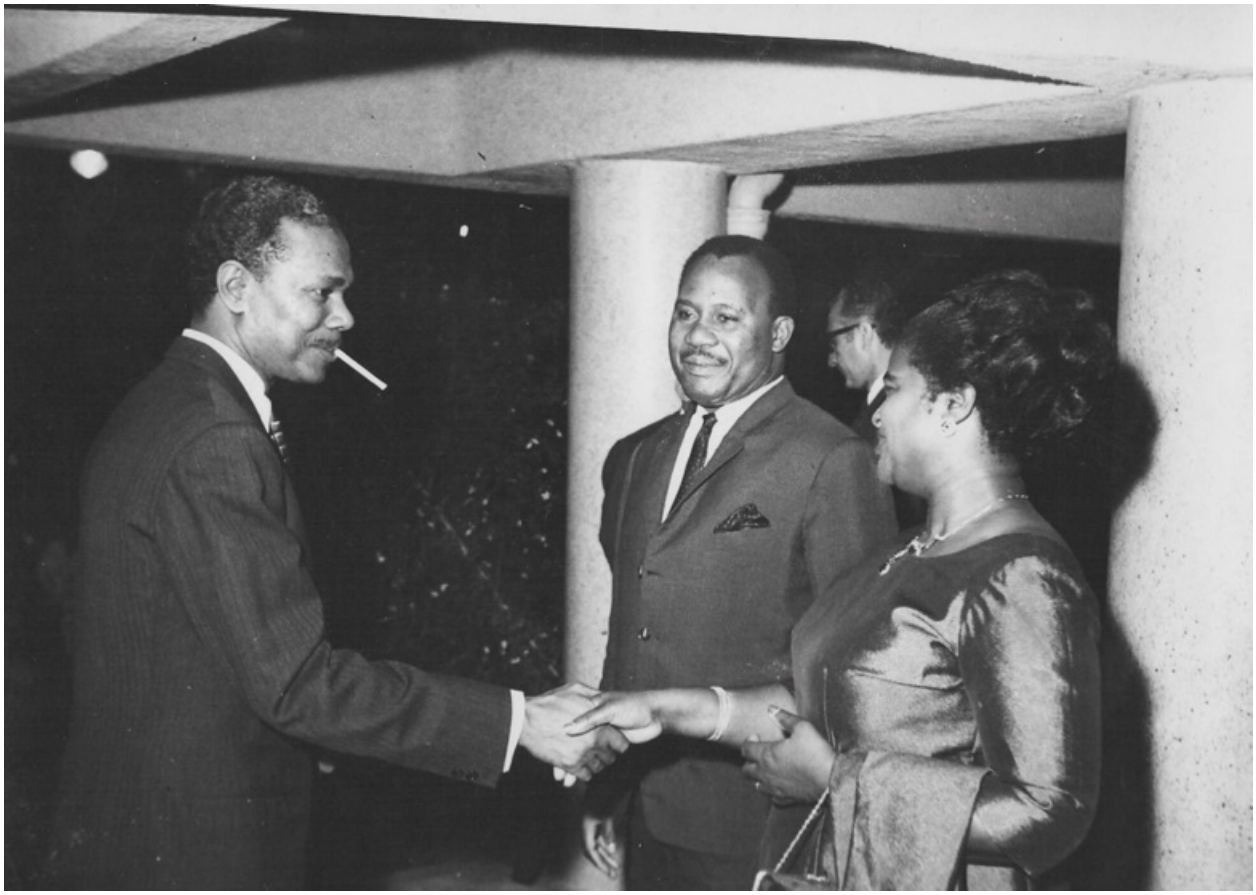
Prince D. K. T. Djokoto in a handshake with a lady.

Agatha B. Djokoto in a handshake with a guest, while Prince D. K. T. Djokoto gazes at her.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto receiving a guest.

Prince D. K.T. Djokoto in a firm handshake with a guest.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto heartily welcomes a guest.



The couple with a guest.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto in high spirits.

Agatha Djokoto with some guests.

Agatha B. Djokoto at a party.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto, all smiles, in a pose with a guest.

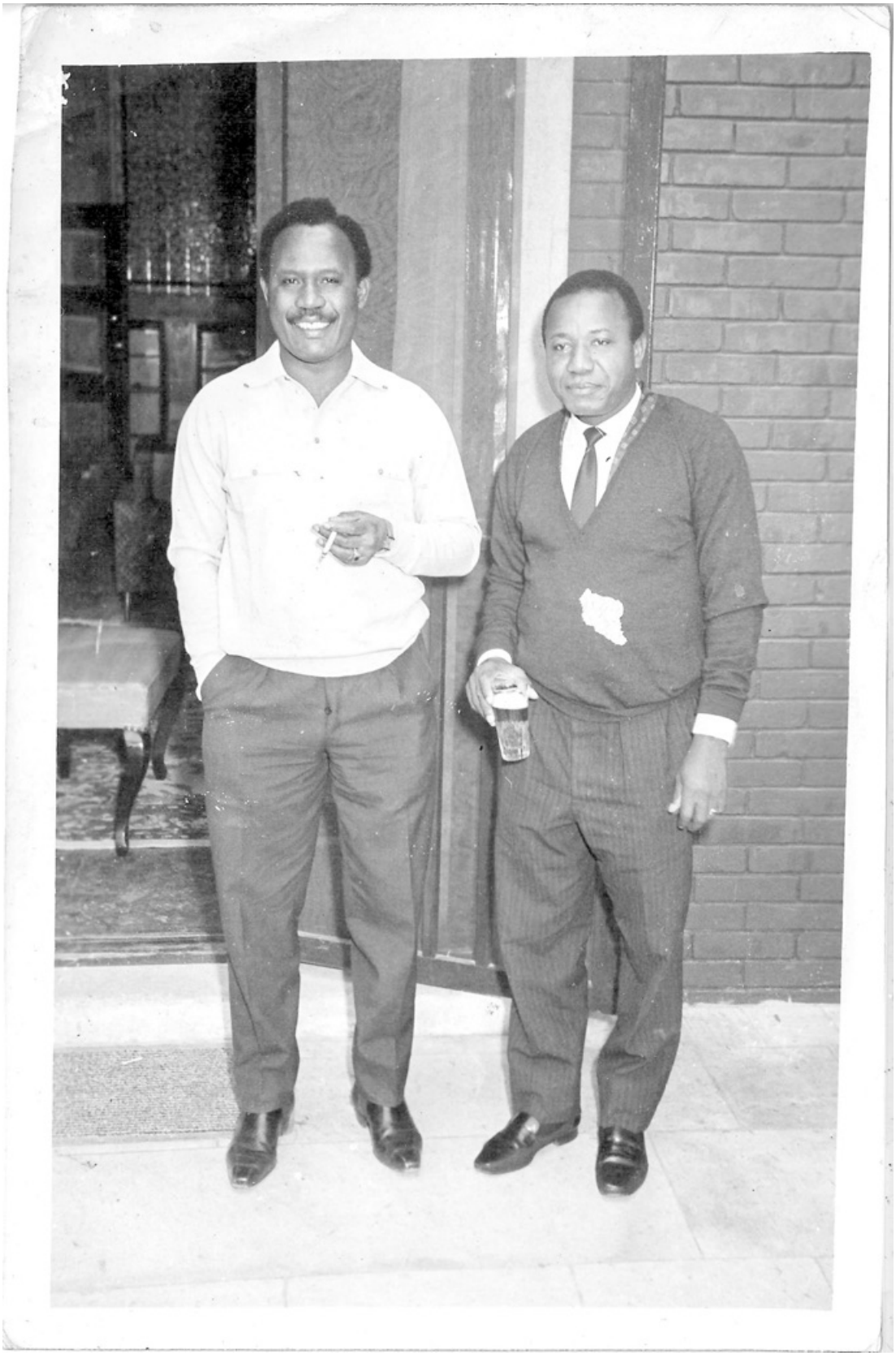
Prince D. K. T. Djokoto (far left) with his colleagues.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto in a discussion with a friend.

Agatha B. Djokoto and Prince D. K. T. Djokoto with a guest.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto with some colleagues.

Prince Daniel Djokoto (centre) in a discussion with some colleagues.



Prince D. K. T. Djokoto enjoying a cigarette, standing next to a friend.

Prince D. K. T. Djokoto and Agatha B. Djokoto at the baptism of Vincent Djokoto Sr.

Agatha B. Djokoto and Prince D. K. T. Djokoto with some friends at the baptism of Vincent Djokoto Sr.

Family portrait of the Djokoto's.

CHAPTER III

Renaissance of Aŋlɔ

We must preserve Aŋlɔ, our history and our future. The Aŋlɔ Empire, situated within the superbly scenic Volta province, South-east Ghana, has immense potential to evolve into a flourishing industrial port city, a cradle of tourism, and a trustworthy commercial centre for financial services. Behind the scenes of its dynamic seaside, and tranquil lagoon, the eco-conscious Aŋlɔ Empire can simultaneously be the linchpin of Africa's fast-growing start-up culture.

As a centrist, a modernist tempered by traditionalist bias, and a firm believer that rural Ghana needs radical socioeconomic reform, I perceive the various cosmopolitan milieus that constitute the Republic — such as the nautical Empire of Aŋlɔ — as classic contemporary muses for statecraft, reflective of an entirely new ethos of Ghanaian entrepreneurship. The gradual and steady progression of this district has piqued the interest of citizens within the Republic of Ghana, Africa, and beyond.

Aŋlɔ is a remarkable place for so many reasons: Luxury weekend escapees, gourmands and high net-worth residents, in search of a revitalising retreat, have long been seduced by its blissful landscape and the enthralling

culture that animates the social life of this maritime Empire. Aŋlɔ's buzzing culinary scene sustains the Empire with affordable haute cuisine. And Aŋlɔs will always want to go out and enjoy nature. Technology is not going to change this part of our culture. The swigging, the gaiety, the partying — none will be replaced by a pill.

There is a profoundly intimate reverence residents here generally express for nature and hygiene, deeply entrenched in Aŋlɔ tradition; a portrait vividly painted by its serene clear blue seas, and spotless idyllic beaches, especially when dappled by sunlight. The oil-rich Aŋlɔ Empire does not just offer vast unexploited wealth; it guarantees peace of mind.

The Aŋlɔ Empire additionally provides access to two separate administrative capitals within French, English and Eʋe-speaking West Africa — Accra and Lomé — which makes it a rite of passage in a hunt for life-changing fortune, and distinguishes it as a premium oasis for conglomerates focused on multi-generational projects to base their operations. Eʋe is also spoken in Benin and Nigeria. This is why leading investors and budding entrepreneurs, with a sophisticated appetite for risk, should seek to actively leverage the opportunities of its untapped Aŋlɔ delta economy.

Agbogbozã, the brainchild of Sylvanus Olympio, first President of the Republic of Togo, is an important

cultural festival which should be jointly celebrated by Ghana and Togo, as a symbol of longstanding unity between the two nations. It's an opportunity to also develop our tourism industries in unison.

Planning remains a key ingredient in the recipe for the advancement of the Aŋlɔ Empire, or any other rural community in Ghana. We can agree that a district without a straightforward long-term vision — and the administrative structures to execute it — really has no exciting future to anticipate with pride. As no civilisation can triumph without the grace of nature, it is only imperative that the Aŋlɔ Empire is adorned and engineered in accordance with the intrinsic features of its environment.

The good fortune of its unique geographical position must be urgently enhanced by monumental measures, such as high-quality sea defence walls — to resist the chronic violence of the fertile sea — as well as a vast land reclamation project. Meanwhile, in our quest for predictability, immediate measures such as improved flood forecasting and evacuation are important for mitigating disasters. These are fundamental prerequisites for an environmentally and socially sustainable, low-carbon local economy — and to enjoy the greater material rewards of the Atlantic Ocean.

The Aŋlɔ Empire was once the fulcrum in the regional economy east of the Volta and served as a point for the

collection of export products and distribution of imported goods. In 1900, between £4,000 and £5000 changed hands daily at Keta. It was, according to the Commissioner for the Eastern Province, the largest he had seen in the Gold Coast.[16] In 1906, Keta was made the administrative headquarters of the Aŋlɔ Empire.

The Aŋlɔ Empire, since 1907, has experienced severe coastal erosion and has already ceded land to the sea at a frighteningly swift pace. Each brutal tidal wave that has destroyed the Aŋlɔ Empire in recent times has been a rude reminder of the need for immediate global intervention. In fact, almost the entire colonial port town of the Empire has been buried underneath the ocean.

The Aŋlɔ were devastated by the Coode Report of 1929, which ruled out the feasibility of permanent sea defence in the Keta area, only because it was reportedly going to cost more than a £1m pounds sterling, and the colonialists asserted that the value of real estate in Aŋlɔ did not merit this expenditure, in their belittling opinion.[17] This assertion was absolutely preposterous and awfully racist; even King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II's personal fortune alone far exceeded this figure of a £1m more than tenfold.

We must alter the status quo with pragmatic eco-friendly alternatives for rural development in the Aŋlɔ Empire.

[16] Akyeampong, *Between the Sea & Lagoon*, p. 73
[17] Akyeampong, *Between the Sea & Lagoon*, p. 9

While a climate action plan is primarily the responsibility of indigenous leadership, a diverse international consultative community of reputable experts — from ecologists, engineers, diplomats, architects and policymakers, among others — are critical to the emergence of a stable order. And multilateral development banks are paramount to the financing of projects such as sea defence walls. Ultimately, an effective decision-making machinery must ensure that the more pertinent technical issues, as opposed to political ones, are grouped into constituent elements and respectively dealt with by the suitable experts in the distinct stress it involves.

Political architects have got to take the lead in protecting our environment. A bipartisan climate change interest-group, within Parliament, must push for a set of legislations which, upon implementation, would drastically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

The Aŋlɔ Empire is in a transition between its past, which it seeks to overcome, and a future it has not yet reached. Land is scarce within the district — and this means avant-garde structures such as eco-friendly residential properties, co-workspaces, beach resorts, multi-storey parking garages, a small civilian airport and commercial skyscrapers must be a central part of planning, as well as other urban archetypes. For instance, open-air spaces can be remodelled to serve as green fee-

free parks of recuperation for industrious citizens, as part of an effort to cluster the aqua district with palm trees and fragrant flower beds cultivated to give shade and quietness to residents.

Also, Fort Prinsensten — constructed on its coast by the Danes in 1784, and acquired through conquest — as well as other decrepit public assets, must be preserved and repurposed as commercial and social enterprises such as galleries, centres of scholarship, public libraries, and hotels.

Pioneering innovative and intellectually challenging agribusiness competitions, with enticing rewards of capital investment and world-class technical assistance, could further act as a catalyst for farming and other horticulturist enterprises. An opportunity to bridge the expertise between scientific innovation and indigenous entrepreneurship, this is a major step towards ecological balance throughout the Aŋlɔ Empire.

Also, historically — as far as coastal management is concerned — the Awɔmefiã has always possessed an immense responsibility to not only understand the gravity of coastal erosion, but also temper the exuberance of our charged waters. And equally, the Yeʋe cult possess institutional wisdom on how best to avoid these periodic disasters.

Hence, the onus is on the royal institutions, local political leadership and age-old fraternities to unite the key

professionals under one umbrella, so that a radical twenty-first century ecological plan for the Aŋlɔ Empire will see the light of day. Once this blueprint is complete, it will then guide decision-makers to determine which and where necessary structures may be appropriately erected. And of course, in this regard D. K. T. Djokoto & Co — given its centuries-long royal association with land-use — is immaculately positioned to help the municipal government objectively conceive and craft a long-term policy.

We plan to run a summit every year where blue-chip executives are roused into a zealous fervour about Aŋlɔ, because we believe in championing local issues. As an Empire of innovators, voyagers, and fishermen, lightbulb moments are a common occurrence in our Empire. Intelligent ideas have always been our stock in trade.

Aŋlɔ's well-educated multigenerational workforce tends to face towards Accra — but, in recent times, there has been an exodus of the professional classes from the capital city back to the Aŋlɔ Empire. Today, there are numerous impact-driven job-hopping graduates in need of employment, or capital to establish a business.

At D. K. T. Djokoto & Co, a highly principled family office, we embrace the traditions of fidelity, integrity and valour — established by our spirited Aŋlɔ royal, General Dzokoto I. Our family's imperial journey all began with King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II who decided to capitalize on his

status as a royal and lead the new wave of free enterprise across the Gold Coast and Togoland.

Since the eighteenth century, the Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto Royal Family has been a modernising force — driving the turbines of trade and developing commercial links across modern day Ghana and Togo. Over the course of Aŋlɔ's pre-colonial history, the Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto Royal Family has been involved in war finance, entrepreneurship and enlightenment activities to promote and advance industry, services and Aŋlɔ imperialism.

King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II — with his prodigiously tentacled Batɛ clan — was the first in the Aŋlɔ Empire to challenge European economic penetration. He sought to dismantle the tariffs which had exposed his fledgling local industries to European competition.

George Atiogbɛ Geraldo De Lima, who lived for a century — from 1804 to 1904 — was a mercantile intermediary for King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II, whose main functions was warehousing and selling slaves, gold, palm oil, cotton materials, tobacco, guns, gunpowder, and liquor, accounting to King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II for the proceeds, guaranteeing buyers' credit, and sometimes making cash advances to King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II prior to the sale of the goods. Geraldo De Lima operated from Aŋlɔgã, Lomé, Agoe Adzigo, Gle*f*e, Baguida, Denu, Vodza, Keta, and Ada. At the time, an able-bodied healthy slave sold for $90 hard cash on the beach.

George Atiogbɛ Geraldo De Lima and King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II formed an alliance when, after a meal — eɖu dzo —Atiogbɛ made a request to King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II, known in his private life as Lotsu Agbemeasẽŋu, to help him recover his property from Agoe Adzigo.[18]

His service was of particular value in foreign trade, and he became an important oligarch in the great period of Aŋlɔ exploration and development. Geraldo was, thus, required to negotiate on behalf of King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II or bring him and third parties into contractual relationships.

The years after Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto's death saw increasing European investment in what became one of the 'emerging markets' of the day. Instead of boosting local industry, Aŋlɔ raw materials travelled thousands of miles to the factories in Liverpool and Hamburg, before returning to Aŋlɔ as manufactured products. In the imperial supply chain, Aŋlɔ's place was fixed as a producer of raw materials and a consumer of finished goods.

The source of the family's wealth are vast tracts of land and landmark properties granted to us by King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II during the pre-colonial period. King Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto II owned a counting house, a pawn shop bank, a trading company and a several memorial buildings — such as 'Fiagble' and 'Netihaga'. One of King Tɛŋgɛ

[18] Charles M.K. Mamattah, *The Eves of West Africa: History of Eves.* p. 357

Dzokoto II's territorial acquisitions — Tɛŋgɛkope, a coconut plantation — is still owned by the family, continuing a more than 100-year legacy of private ownership.

D. K. T. Djokoto & Co, an illustrious and trustworthy multi-disciplinary family office, aims to increase flows of capital to proven, high impact enterprises that can use it to enhance the quality of life in Aŋlɔ; backing innovations that put you first.

In the Aŋlɔ Empire, you rarely hear about corporate giants splashing millions to acquire innovative start-ups. And it's a bit disappointing because indigenous businesses are innovating quickly enough, meanwhile promising start-ups aren't getting the funding they need. Capital is the locomotive that will get the Aŋlɔ Empire on the move again. If you are a small-sized thriving private enterprise looking to expand, D. K. T. Djokoto & Co seeks to raise capital through the sale of shares to interested investors.

Founded in 1950, our family-governed firm, administered by Aŋlɔ royals from its inception, has silently — through the intricate windings of life — remained at the axis of Africa's economic and political landscape. Since pre-independence Ghana, it has been our responsibility to manage affairs, providing objective and robustly independent advice to our loyal network. From our genesis until now, we have lived through a

polarized history of working for the betterment of Ghana in an ever changing and increasingly globalized world. We ultimately give our clients a God's eye view of both Africa's free market and political history — and craft solutions as unique as their genetics. Few are built to last, so let our experience unleash the value of your company.

Expertise doesn't happen overnight. As a data-driven intelligence-gathering think-tank — which firmly believes in the endless acquisition of knowledge, with an on-the-ground and down-to-earth approach to our exquisite pearls of research — we have, as embodied by our library, unrivalled intellectual capital, and an over seven-decade long track record of exceptional services.

Our guild of elite advisers has the gilt-edged expertise necessary to provide sincere guidance on arts and culture; real estate; corporate affairs and public relations; and, rural development to selected traditional royal houses, blue-chip businesses, ultra-high net-worth individuals, and governments. We also offer lifestyle and concierge services to our clientele.

Partners at D. K. T. Djokoto & Co, primarily occupied with business development and account management, focus on the financial success of our firm. We maintain the relationships with existing clients and focus on growing our sophisticated clientele. Like the generations before us, we focus on building long-term relations with

companies, institutions and people in Ghana and around the planet.

Our partners also scout rare talent and mentor employees to ensure they deliver first-rate work. As managing partner, transforming a concrete vision into a secure structure — from a legal, organisational and financial perspective — is particularly an enjoyable task that gives me purpose and fulfilment in my craft.

Our senior associates are experienced professionals and groomed hyper-perfectionists who manage departments and preserve the effectiveness and efficiency of their teams. They essentially keep the vintage wheels of our firm in motion. Meanwhile, our junior associates and analysts spend long hours on research and assist senior associates execute projects; they are specially trained to swiftly respond to any tasks, regardless of how complex, and as quickly as it develops. The entire personnel of the family office are invariably extremely valuable in keeping the business going. Think of us as your personal makeup artiste; you deserve the finest advice.

Our humanistic aspirations as a family office are to inventively engineer a financially secure Ghanaian middle-class where the citizen can earn enough income to provide for their families, afford to build or purchase a decent home, and retire in dignity. Our guiding policy as a firm has been to prioritise the long-term financial welfare of the Aŋlɔ Empire, yet retain reasonable

flexibility in the face of unforeseeable national and global events.

D. K. T. Djokoto & Co also offers diverse curated opportunities themed on agribusiness, tourism infrastructure, education, media, and financial technology to corporates looking to invest in the Aŋlɔ Empire. Our firm has thoroughly evaluated feasible industrial projects, and is prepared to invest in the growth of such enterprises. We also seek to establish professional societies and charities within the Aŋlɔ Empire. Some of the projects on which studies have been made are: millet, rice, dried fish, crabs, oysters, yams, beans, sugarcane, coconut, mat-weaving, wood fuel, boat-making, and net technology.

For the Aŋlɔ Empire's local economy to move forward, promising enterprises — especially those driven by women and pioneered by young people — need access to short-term loans from socially oriented micro-lenders. Affordable capital is essential for rural development throughout Ghana. D. K. T. Djokoto & Co actively promotes peer-to-peer lending; connecting proven entrepreneurs across Ghana to wealthy individuals and families. Our long-term vision, beyond the contours of the Aŋlɔ Empire, is to evolve our continental presence as a family office, and nurture and build sustainable industries within strategic locations across Africa and the Caribbean.

We already maintain a significant presence in Accra. Acquired over multiple generations, our modest portfolio of wholly-owned high-end residential property includes a post-independence era villa at Cantonments, a townhouse in Airport Residential, a minimalist Ridge-based apartment, and a solar-powered residence at Airport Hills, a private estate — some of Ghana's most premium locations — amongst other prime real estate, collectively worth a conservative £10m.

As temporary custodians of our persons and fortune and need, our ultimate responsibility is to ensure there is a secure structure to protect our real estate, so wealth can be passed from one generation to the next. Just as we've competently cared for our portfolio, since 1950 — steadily growing its value — we extend equal responsibility to the properties of our clientele, helping you manage and administer your real estate from a holistic perspective.

Our flagship infrastructure project is to construct an edifice — the Renaissance Tower — designed to hit the high notes in the grand symphony of minimalist architecture, finished to the immaculate standards of decoration, and to seamlessly echo the legacy aspirations of the high-value pace-setting firms, with aligned commercial interests vital to the sustained growth of the Aŋlɔ Empire, which it houses.

The Aŋlɔ Empire requires innovative factories to harness the resources of the land, and to link millions of potential consumers, across overseas markets, to products manufactured in towns such as Anyako; our family's lagoon-island.

Indeed, this is an avenue through which we can export manufactured products en masse to untapped free markets — including our technical expertise and alluring culture. I firmly believe that without excessive taxation, and a pro-business government committed to minimum restriction, the Aŋlɔ Empire can attract a significant amount of domestic and foreign capital — and can carve out a niche as one of the most dynamic business locations in prime West Africa.

Excessive taxes and rigmarole particularly place a burden on businesses and households, especially young people. This stifles innovation and discourages entrepreneurship. Hence, government must relax pressures on income and wealth, especially to shore up the financial independence of households. This is an incentive for people to work harder, earn more cash and stash enough cedis away for a rainy day. We need an enterprise-friendly tax regime and a lack of bureaucracy in setting up new industries in the Aŋlɔ Empire. Also, there should be a shift to electronic-only registration for incorporation of new businesses.

For businesses, such as D. K. T. Djokoto & Co, or individuals passionate about land banking, accurate statistics are a vital aspect in reaching informed decisions about potential property investments. In search of a fitting headquarters for our old-fashioned multi-disciplinary family office — laser-focused on rural development within Aŋlɔ Empire — I discovered a forlorn antiquated building, beguilingly branded 'Nigeria House', along the narrow and lonesome asphalt-paved roadside of Aŋlɔgã, nearby a vegetable farm.

At the time, the Keta Municipal Assembly had insufficient details about the derelict property, which, languishing in the façade of its past glory, had deteriorated into a shadow of its former itself. The Aŋlɔ Empire remains one of Ghana's prime locations for a variety of similar historic pre-independence buildings, and other centuries-old properties.

It is already quite a baffling reality that even the Land Registry does not possess an up-to-date figure as to the total percentage of registered land in Ghana. But for the Aŋlɔ Empire, this should not be the case. If a business tourist should travel 115 miles from the global city of Accra to Keta, the ancient commercial capital of the Aŋlɔ Empire, and spots a fine opportunity for investment — whether land, residential, or commercial property — the local authority had better be in a position to readily assist.

Perhaps, the Land Registry should decentralise information, and give us the option to request information from the trade and industry departments at district assemblies. This would ease pressure on its central office in Accra, or any of the regional offices too. And it is precisely why local authorities nationwide require minimalist, eco-conscious infrastructure with adequate technological equipment provided to district assembly employees to competently compile, as well as maintain, reliable digital records on properties within their respective districts. Add to this, it will guarantee swifter responses to any enquiries from estate agents or conveyancers.

These measures will combat issues such as fraud and help foster an enabling commercial environment for devoted investors, with ready-cash, and their couturier of advisers — especially for those unfamiliar with the local business terrain, or dialects such as Aŋlɔ — to decide whether or not to proceed with such a transaction.

Also, experiences like mine underscore the urgent need for rural districts to produce and retain home-grown conveyancers, for the purposes of in-person accessibility. This is evidenced by an exclusive local demand, from a select-clientele of resident-citizens, and other buyers, usually looking to secure mortgage offers from banks or building societies on reasonable and fair terms.

While district assembly officials, conveyancers and D. K. T. Djokoto & Co have a collective role to play in growing the local economy, the bank is perhaps the most important institution. A district without a resilient and responsible rural bank, as the cornerstone for an ecosystem of trade, is like a body without a healthy heart to pump blood; it wouldn't function properly.

The rural bank is the axis around which countryside Ghana can spin itself into a flourishing urban society. Its vibrant banking halls are an ideal hub for getting on with business; and its vaults are not solely for cash, or the storage of precious items, but also serve as a strong room for sensitive documents pertaining to property transactions.

Aŋlɔ's economy has never been more dependent on virtual banking and online services. For households and enterprises to bounce back, we need faster connectivity and affordable data.

For many Ghanaians, and Aŋlɔ for that matter, owning a respectable house or retail shop is a lifetime ambition. It provides a sense of security the rental sector does not, and empowers many to start a new family or build a business. But a majority of first-time homebuyers' lack funds and would need mortgage finance. To generate sustainable wealth for households and enterprises, financial institutions remain the driving force. District assemblies equally have a duty to support residents fund

property purchases through government schemes, such as equity loans.

Acquiring property — whether it's a minimalist energy-efficient residence, a lofty skyscraper or corner shop — is a guaranteed life-changing phenomenon. While the transaction process, with professional support from a property lawyer or conveyancer, may last for well over a month, it has the potential to move an entire household up the social ladder for generations to come. So, if you're a breadwinner of your family, this is a reasonable route to economic independence, or self-sufficiency, and a good return on the precious time invested labouring for a comfortable life.

A new residence in a prime location may, for instance, plant an established family in a different environment with fresh social and economic opportunities. Alternatively, given the large pockets of arable land across our scenic Republic, acquiring a fruitful location, depending on the rights and restrictions on the land, would produce cash for entrepreneurs riding the progressive wave of agribusiness.

While there isn't a shortage of sellers or budding estate agents listing property for sale, the process of conveyancing is still quite tiresome. Eventually, it's got to be done wholly electronically to save time and its associated costs.

Nonetheless, a property-owning nation-builder, when confronted with a decision to acquire property, would always invest with the greater interest of the larger community in mind. But a prerequisite for purchasing property is ready cedis or creditworthiness. There are a variety of lenders who may offer such services. But the criteria may vary depending on one's financial position, such as income.

D. K. T. Djokoto & Co is determined to see lenders make finances more accessible for the average Ghanaian citizen, so each citizen owns property — and this is why the market needs favourable repayment and interest-only mortgages. But more importantly, individuals must build up creditworthiness in order to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the free market. If there is less household debt throughout our Republic, it will relax oversight by financial institutions and, ultimately, by the central bank. This would create the conditions for a more liberal financial system in Ghana.

Also, as a Republic, we ought to migrate from a system of unregistered lands to that of registered lands, so occurrences such as forgery are significantly reduced. While this would further boost the confidence of lenders about protecting their security through mortgages, it simultaneously strengthens the property-owning nation-builder with a more effective and safer form of collateral. A more robust system that records the register of each

title is desirable. This way it'll also be more convenient for investors to understand the benefits and burdens attached to each piece of land. We should aim for up to 80 per cent of registered lands within the next two decades, especially for rural Ghana.

As far as mortgage is concerned, Islamic finance has a critical role to play in wealth creation for Ghanaians. Its global market is already worth an estimated $1tn. Perhaps, it's about time for the Aŋlɔ Empire to delve deep into it. It offers both the Ijara and Murabaha schemes. For the former, the bank can purchase the property and lease it to the customer. At the end of the lease, the bank agrees to transfer the property to the buyer. And for the latter, the bank purchases the property and resells it to the customer for profit. Unlike other loan requirements, sharia-compliant Islamic mortgages do not incur the payment of interest.

But to achieve meaningful change, financial products or government schemes must plan a far-reaching and inclusive criterion for lending, based on the complex realities of a Ghanaian constituent.

Meanwhile, a compelling incentive for fortune-hunting young professionals seeking privileged opportunities in countryside Ghana is that: if you're a white-collar employee at a profitable rural-based corporation, there's a chance you may receive a mortgage from your firm at a significantly lower rate interest, than what the open

market offers. On the other hand, it'll be a head-splitting dilemma if you suddenly wish to ditch the job should a better opening come around, since employers would withdraw their concessionary rates.

Notwithstanding the modest wealth now flowing through the Aŋlɔ economy, government must backtrack its practice of austerity, and spend more on education and childcare subsidies. Nowadays, with the advent of social media, a teenager in the island of Seva can see how the well-to-do live or what the urban trends are in Accra or Ho. The most complex puzzle of the twenty-first century, for the Ghanaian nation-builder, is to integrate the proletariat estranged from humanity — those economically, politically and culturally alienated.

Law-abiding citizens, who have done everything the Republic has asked of them, deserve a government that protects socioeconomic rights such as healthcare. Healthcare shouldn't be a responsibility left to the individual alone; it must remain a shared obligation between private citizens, privately owned corporations and state institutions. Another vital reason to cut taxes for rural-based businesses is to support employers cover routine medical check-ups and insurance plans for workers.

It is unjust that an elderly Aŋlɔ woman, who has worked hard her whole life, in a decent profession, earns a pension which barely covers her monthly medical costs.

No citizen deserves to go broke because they get sick. It is similarly inhuman that an Aŋlɔ woman has no choice but to endure the pain of childbirth, without any professional medical care during labour or patient care after, because our municipal healthcare system is a complete mess. Remember: it isn't every citizen that can afford the luxury of private healthcare. Each citizen deserves an affordable and accessible healthcare plan, especially for people with chronic illnesses who urgently need help.

Meanwhile, there is one great precondition, an integral factor that determines whether constituents will have the requisite skills and the sheer confidence to maximise their talents — and that is obtaining quality tertiary education.

Yes, there is a need for modern infrastructure from a small civilian airport, mega business hubs, to roads and hospitals in the Aŋlɔ state. But it is the paramount responsibility of the municipal governments to ensure quality education, at whatever cost necessary, is provided to the youth, wherever they may find themselves in the Aŋlɔ Empire, without regard to their individual social circumstances.

Aŋlɔ's ecosystem of innovation — that span from venture capital to tourism and manufacturing — is fundamentally reliant on access to affordable quality tertiary education. The quality of indigenous scholarship and excellence of educational institutions continues to be

a great source of Aŋlɔ pride, a worthy continental export, and our rightful claim to global prominence.

A deluxe, culturally aesthetic tertiary centre of scholarship — one which blends indigenous ancient African architecture with modern technology — furnished with a public library, resident halls, a banquet hall, private museum, clinic, athletic facilities, theatre hall, and science and technology labs — must become the intellectual heart of the Aŋlɔ Empire.

It is through a sustained intellectual culture of rationalism, freedom of thought, and enquiry — at such centres of scholarship — that our district can ensure equal opportunity for all citizens and abundant reward for ambition, with an emphasis on individual liberty and a common national purpose.

Arguably, centres of scholarship should be separated, administratively, from all institutions of dogma such as mosques or churches, with the exception of indigenous traditional temples. And our national curriculum should also include, at a conclusion of secondary school education, obligatory service to the government or a district-based enterprise, as a prelude to university studies.

It is still an unfortunate reality that if you are from a less privileged family, or raised in one of the deprived environs within the Aŋlɔ Empire, you are far less likely to receive quality tertiary education. And that means you

will be less likely to get employed at one of the lavish, high-paying firms throughout the Republic, typically in Accra, or Keta. Even worse, this will stifle your opportunities as an entrepreneur.

The municipal government must, therefore, make district funds and bursaries available — at tertiary level education — to those proven exceptional in academia, sports, and drama or theatre. Education is the single biggest opportunity to alter the narrative of our future and boost the growth of per capita Gross Domestic Product. A district strategy for tertiary education must be focused around improved incentives for educationists, adequate per-pupil funding, and academic courses that would be essential to our economic development as an Empire.

The first obvious step is to improve salaries and incentives for teachers and academics — the most vital profession of our ecosystem. They are directly responsible for the enhancement of our human capital. This will motivate and rightfully mount huge expectations from centres of scholarship to produce more success stories.

To all distressed Aŋlɔs who arise from slumber, wallowing in depression, with absolutely no clue of where the next meal is going to come from, and find no one to place their dependence upon, I care about you. To all

Aŋlɔs distressed, rejected and alone; never lose sight of the chief cornerstone.

The essence of D. K. T. Djokoto & Co is to gradually develop Aŋlɔ into a modern Empire, and this mission requires the finest expertise accessible. I encourage entrepreneurs of goodwill across our Republic to voyage to the Aŋlɔ Empire and participate in this gracious transformation.

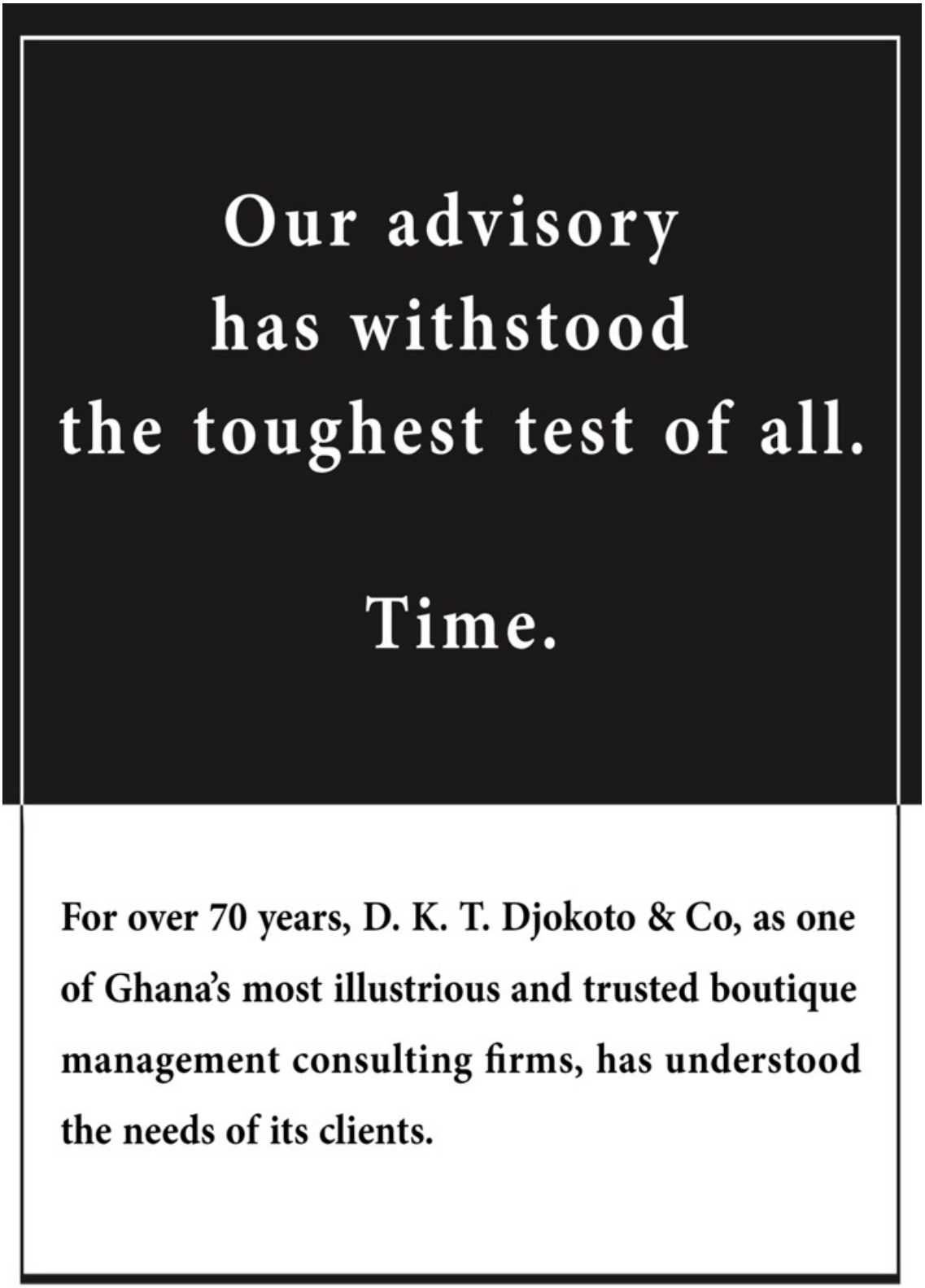
At Fort Prinsensten, Keta, Ghana — built in 1784.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

Enjoying pudding at the office garden of D. K. T. Djokoto & Co, Airport Hills, Accra.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

Donning a custom Keta cap. Keta is the commercial capital of the Aŋlɔ Empire.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

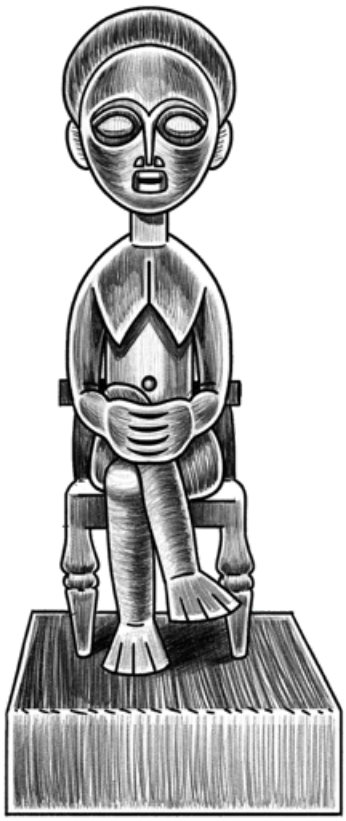
Nigeria House, Aŋlɔgã, Aŋlɔ Empire.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

In a discussion with Charles Ayitey on Joy News Television about the onshore oil exploration at Keta, Aŋlɔ Empire.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.



D. K. T. Djokoto & Co Advert.
Designed by Akwasi Boateng.

Fishermen at work.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.



1950

D. K. T. Djokoto & Co Logo.
Designed by Nana Agyekum Oppong.

CHAPTER IV

A Rebel with a Cause

In autumn 2013, as an iconoclastic single-minded eighteen-year-old freshman at Swansea University, mesmerised by the Nkrumah mystique, I blossomed on mellow late nights, rocking a chair near the floor-to-ceiling window of my rented apartment, which overlooked the wave-kissed golden beach.

I journeyed along like a curious acolyte through the borrowed dusty memoirs from my late grandpapa's library. I was so immersed in this treasure trove it was a cheerful indulgence to gently sip on port — after supper — crunchy red-berry Beaujolais or South African sherry, as I flipped through the off-white pages. Honey-licked melodies curated by Sade were the more serenading. Occasionally, there'd be a delicious hand-rolled cigar guillotined and smouldering in the porcelain ashtray.

This minimalist sanctuary, almost submerged within omnipresence of the ocean, became the creative nerve centre of a severe intellectual operation. My curious mind went nude in search of truth. I began to discover purpose within this array of mostly first edition out-of-print books. And, gradually, this aroused a profound realisation of how my God-given talents, academic

curiosities, and fraternal bonds could help improve the universe.

These moments of seclusion were spent examining manifold accounts about Ghana's ancient traditions — a cumulative depository of mysticisms and ritual practices, acquired as a result of conquest, commerce and charity — and inspired further academic enquiry about African culture, especially the mystic science of divination in Aŋlɔ spirituality, through the lens of Afã, and Hotsui. I found it all intriguing: the adversities sage forecasters see, and guide us to flee, in our endless pursuit of permanent glee!

The leitmotiv was to identify a common ideal that could bind a kaleidoscope of citizens to a common destiny of nation-building — and, increasingly, I grew determined to foreshadow these intentions through action. I devoted dawn to study the unexplored past of the various traditional nation-states that came to birth present-day Ghana.

I was particularly enthralled by the archives of James Kobla Bruce Vanderpuije. They say the pen is mightier than the sword. But, sometimes, I dare say, photography exceeds the prowess of the pen. Preeminent among all avant-gardists, the iconic cultural custodian, James Kobla Bruce Vanderpuije, at the youthful age of twenty-three, set a revolution in motion-picture when, in 1922,

he founded the Deo Gratias photography studio at Jamestown, British-Accra, Gold Coast.

J. K. Bruce Vanderpuije curated an unmatched portfolio of some of the most historic events in the Gold Coast. He captured the milestones of several opulent personalities, from the coxcomb gentlemen and blushing debutantes of the era, to cultured aristocrats, statesmen raging with ambition and devil-may-care socialites. But most importantly, J. K. Bruce Vanderpuije documented an era which portrayed a sophisticated circle, within the Gold Coast, that refined standards and exerted enormous influence over the social topography. His photography takes one down the memory lane. An ocean of ultra-nostalgia, it's an authentic record of history documented in a form even long-worded memoirs, by some of the most erudite writers, simply cannot express.

Also, far away from the gateway to Africa, and optimistic about the opportunities that lay ahead, I'd sought to distil a sense of direction about the world around us through Komla Afeke Dumor — a cultured Ghanaian broadcaster who presented the British Broadcasting Corporation program, *Focus on Africa*.

Komla was a mystery. He was imbued with this phenomenal spellbinding charisma on his audience. He was so remarkably distinguished by the gentle modulation of his baritone voice, and his views were

always suffused with a rare emphasis on humane values. Think of a consummate modern-day Pan-Africanist, and the name Komla was likely to ring a bell. He was devoted to the cause of restoring the pride of Africans in the potential of our continent. So, I latched my eyes onto the television screen, lost in admiration for such a pure gem that had graced the world. Our paths never met, and I can now only imagine what a glorious moment that would've been. Even so, no one had a deeper impact on my flair for communications and the truth-telling enterprise of journalism than Komla Afeke Dumor.

It's unfortunate he did not have the luxury of time to realise the endless possibilities that his sterling craftsmanship offered. Komla Afeke Dumor on 18 January 2014 — halfway through my first year as an undergraduate law student — leapt into the spiritual realm.

But, perhaps, what remained one of the most fascinating objects of study, during freshman year, was the throne of the President — designed by Kofi Antubam — meant to be used as the most vital instrument of nation-building.

One of the emblems of Ghanaian sovereignty, the throne represents a connexion between the sacrifices of our forbearers, the citizens of Ghana, and generations unborn. Through the observation of traditional custom, the esoteric rite of the President's installation expresses reverence for the Great Architect of the Universe — and

acknowledges dependence on our ancestors, without whose divine intercession our political misfortunes would have continued.

Firstly, true to the 4 July 1960 ritual, as observed by Ahmed Sékou Touré and William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, the President is welcomed with talking drums and a 21-gun salute by the Ghana Reconnaissance Squadron, after which the Third Battalion of the Ghana Regiment is inspected. The President is then escorted to the House of Parliament by eight linguists, drawn from the various provinces, a state sword bearer and the mace bearer. Horns, from the Juaben States' Nhatera, are then blown before the President assumes the throne. As the sun begins to set on Accra, the President sets ablaze the flame of African freedom.[19]

As the grip of poverty can only be loosened and eventually eradicated by quality public administration, Ghana's senior-most public servant, propelled to the throne by the hand of the citizenry, appoints and advances fellow citizens, or throne-carriers, to participate in the same noble profession so the throne enhances the welfare of the Republic.

The throne regulates the President's prescribed modes of action, amidst a multiplicity of options, by the laws that govern earth, and by the Great Architect of the Universe, which reminds the operating elements of the throne that

[19] Kwame Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom* (Surrey, 1961), pp. 232-244.

account will inevitably be given for service to fellow citizens through this transitory sojourn of life.

As the soul of our Republic, the throne must remain the principal unifying element of all the provinces that constitute our Republic. The might of our state sword is meant to purposefully foster a cultural, political, and economic interdependence amongst the various provinces — each Province serving as a unique pillar of our free Republic.

To thoroughly grasp the psyche of Francis Nwia-Kofi Kwame Nkrumah, the only child of Nyanibah, I relied on Genoveva Esther Marais. Nkrumah strongly insisted Genoveva biographed his life since she knew him much better than his closest acquaintances. He was vulnerable with Genoveva and never hid his emotions from her. This was the motivation behind the publication of the autobiography she authored titled: *Nkrumah as I knew him*. Genoveva was a bosom companion and confidante of Kwame Nkrumah. Genoveva was more intimate with the radical political reformist than any other person he had met throughout his entire adult life. She exposed an aspect of his personality rarely experienced by anyone else.

Genoveva relocated to Ghana, just before the former British colonial territory attained political independence, to serve as Inspector of Schools. She received an expatriate appointment from Michael Dei-Anang,

recruitment officer at the Colonial Civil Service, and arrived at the new nation on 22 February 1957.

The charismatic Prime Minister and Ms Marais met at an Independence state ball. The stunning damsel caught the eye of Kwame Nkrumah, while he swayed with swagger on the dance floor, holding the hands of another stunning lady. Kwame fixed his eyes on Genoveva and never turned away. Eventually he gathered enough courage and chivalrously requested for a dance. Starstruck by the jet-propelled political boss, it was an offer the beautiful debutante simply could not refuse. That's how the relationship between the two lovebirds began. Genoveva instantly fell for Kwame's infectious laugh; it seduced her. Kwame found comfort in the warmth of Genoveva's embrace, and God in her thinking.

Genoveva was a cultured lady of many talents with polished personal taste. She played the piano remarkably well and found interior decoration amusing. Nkrumah and Genoveva frequently played tennis at dawn. In fact, she was his stylist and personally hired the Prime Minister's tailor. She fashioned what became his subversive and iconic dandy look.

Nkrumah grew paranoid after various assassination attempts on his life. He was a marked man for whom death prowled after his life. It would seem that the bubbly Kwame was such a massive success that, but for

the distress of the Pan-African struggle, would have easily passed for a sterling example of Maslow's happy man. However, accounts from his inner circles tell of a man who battled depression and loneliness. Unconditional loyalty was the gaping void he much desired filled, and Genoveva came just in time to fill that void. Nkrumah discovered in Genoveva a brutally honest and trustworthy partner who disregarded his ego, and did not mince words with him. It was for this reason he shared his grand ambitions and deepest fears with her, without the slightest iota of scepticism. Genoveva was convinced the special relationship they cherished endured because it was centred on 'affection, friendship rather than by law'.

Nkrumah fell head over heels for her and proposed marriage. But she pitilessly rejected him. She feared her marriage to Kwame would compromise her professional career. Genoveva wasn't ready to play the role of a traditional African wife, whose duties were confined to the home. She was an independent woman driven by her individual ambitions. Genoveva eventually gained employment at the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, as Head of Television Programmes. She acted and produced theatre for radio and television.

She stood firmly by her assertion that Nkrumah was so preoccupied with his ideal of a united, classless African society that 'a wife was a hindrance rather than an asset'.

Kwame once told Genoveva, ‘African unity must always come first, if I have to sacrifice my own mother for that, I would, however much I love her’.

Nkrumah was profoundly political in every step he took. When he decided to settle down with Fathia, a Coptic Christian Egyptian lady, it was merely after an exchange of photographs. The marriage was orchestrated by close friends who collectively decided it was not ideal for the senior-most citizen to hold the highest office of the land without the companionship of a better half. They were eager for him to settle down and nurture a family. Fathia gave him exactly what he lacked his entire life — a stable home.

24 February 1966 spelled doom for a nation, a continent, a race and generations dead, alive and yet unborn. The torchbearer of the African renaissance, Kwame Nkrumah, was clipped down by his detractors. Aided by internal collaborators, Nkrumah was ousted from office by self-seeking military officers, led by Kotoka, with unflinching support from the American Central Intelligence Agency.

He was on a peace mission to Hanoi when chaos broke out in his home. But there was another home for him in Guinea, where he was elected Co-President by the Guinean Parliament. When Genoveva Marais was on her way to Guinea to see him, she got arrested. She was detained in custody by the coup makers, continually

raped and expelled from the Republic. Meanwhile, the 16 March 1966 issue of the *Life* magazine released an exposé which described Genoveva as 'Nkrumah's slender mulatto mistress'. The public, for the first time, got a glimpse into their cautiously veiled love affair.

As it is the case with most military takeovers, regrettable excesses characterised the coup of 1966. Nkrumah himself recounted the gory violence meted out to women in a post-coup observation thus, 'Mothers are murdered in their own homes. With appalling barbarism their children are snatched from their lifeless embrace and flung from the third and second-floor windows to crash dead on concrete pavements below'.[20]

After a brief stop in Togoland, the Chief of Security paid Genoveva a visit at the hotel and summoned her to the Sûrete; the police headquarters. There, Genoveva was interrogated by six men, which included two Ghanaian nationals. Her bags were thoroughly searched and some of her possessions threatened with confiscation. She was held under house arrest before they eventually allowed her to leave. A stressful trip to meet her revolutionary lover, she misplaced the manuscripts for the book on the plane but recovered the documents afterwards, with the help of Miriam Makeba.

Nkrumah only ever disclosed his affectionate pursuit of Genoveva to his wife Fathia Nkrumah and two other

[20] Kwame Nkrumah, *Voice from Conakry* (London, 1967) p. 12.

close friends, explicitly Ayeh-Kumi and Professor Dei Anang. The personal relationship between Genoveva and Kwame still remains an unexplored part of the man, the myth, the legend.

Genoveva later rediscovered love and married Victor S. Kanu, heir to one of Sierra Leone's royal families, the Chieftaincy of Malal. He had served as the High Commissioner to the United Kingdom for Sierra Leone until he was dismissed from his post for his marriage to her.

I should, however, like to think first year at Swansea University wasn't all Aŋlɔ culture, Ghanaian history and Pan-Africanism. I did have quite a bit of fun too. After all, you're only young once. I took up horseback riding — after contemplating fencing — with the Swansea Equestrian Society, but seldom turned up for practice.

If I wasn't at the beachfront of my apartment — armed with a bucket hat, impenetrable sunglasses, and a jacket to resist the spiteful embrace of the bipolar weather — I was certainly at the Singleton Park, on campus. There, especially after a dull lecture, I'd sprawl across the neatly trimmed grass, and with earphones plugged in, ever prepared to drift off into an oasis of satisfaction.

I'd cautiously roll, with organic brown paper, glittering-green marijuana, until it was neatly folded. Turning my back against the current of the malicious winds, ignoring jazz chirps from the birds, I'd light a matchstick, wait for

the phosphorous to burn off, and bring the flame close to the joint before inhaling. As cool as water, and as smooth as ice — as the sailing squalls abducted me, and I defied the science of gravity, with the clouds moving dawdlingly — it felt like hiking up, rather effortlessly, an archway to heaven; to Bob Marley's ideal imagination of paradise.

Higher than a Guinea palm tree, eyes shut, and often meditating to either Fela Kuti's occult compositions, Tony Allen's hypnotic percussions, or Carlos Santana's album — *Supernatural* — I'd teleport into the future and imagine all the endless possibilities. The entire playlist — a shrine of records — was curated by Theodore Soussoudis; a free-spirited, candid, laughably naff childhood friend of my cool father. His playlist takes you on a calm smooth ride, through the blues and glee, on a freeway.

For the most part of freshman year at Swansea, a cheerful smoke and a provocative chat appealed to me much more than nursing a hangover after a reveller's night on Wind Street. Marijuana certainly flung open the psychological doors of perception. Your mind is your world; an experience accessible by no one else — so it was somewhat gratifying, no doubt. But in reality, nothing had changed, and the academic journey ahead required grit, willpower, and discipline. Marijuana, speaking personally, only made me more lethargic, and, at times, detached from reality. It was merely an

exuberant adventure of the senses; a young man's peccadilloes.

By second-year, while most of my course mates endured sleepless nights ascending the creaky wooden staircase to the law library, crunching voluminous texts — either fuelled by coffee, cocaine or cigarettes — I hardly ever burnt the midnight candle. If I did light up a candle, it was because I needed to swirl a glass of port around it and inhale a deep whiff. I was genuinely fascinated by some aspects of my studies, such as commercial law, equity and trusts, so I naturally flourished at those modules.

At the time, student politics had begun to weigh heavily on my mind. But I shrugged off the thought because it was, to me, a swarm of energetic cut-throat jackanapes, and amateurish rabble-rousers, knee-deep in a bloodbath of back-biting and back-stabbing. It didn't seem the least bit worthwhile at all.

Instead, I joined the Singleton Lodge No. 8399, a masonic lodge in the South Wales province, in second year of university. I was initiated on 19 January 2015 at the Singleton Lodge No. 8399, passed by the Singleton Lodge No. 8399 on 18 January 2016, and raised at St. John Charles Lodge No. 6466 on 19 May 2016. I also eventually became a founding member of the Colonnade Club.

Indeed, with all brethren prim to perfection, a remarkable spirit of pleasure pervaded our spiffing banquets. There's nothing more convivial than bubbly, especially when it's uncorked after a decade to mature, before and after refreshment. Well, that's until you have to heave yourself out of bed the next morning. But lodge was way more than fêtes champêtres, dinning on risotto in a black bow-tie, and savouring ice-cream loaded with plump red-ripe cherries and buttery golden almonds.

In Freemasonry, I discovered a secular fraternity that reinforced thoughtfulness for the plight of others, trustworthiness, courtesy in society, fairness in all things, and a firm bridge between distant brothers. Spic and span up, blotto from the fountain of youth as my flute runneth over, after one top-up too many, I'd usually stroll alone from our rendezvous, with a flaring Montecristo between my lips, pocket square tilted gently, still struck by thoughts of an infant Republic in pursuit of nirvana, and the quality of life that continues to elude the average Ghanaian. All this, while the smiling lunar moon mocked the conscience of a wandering reveller; a rebel with a cause.

That long summer break, in 2015, I flew back to the rough shores of Accra for an internship at Kimathi & Partners; a maddingly fast-paced contemporary urban law firm led by workaholic and eccentric, Kimathi Kuenyehia — a stickler for perfectionism. A

predominant aspect of my grooming at Kimathi & Partners was psychological. Marinated in the temple of labour, I developed an uncomplaining stoicism and composure under pressure; and gained insight into the blue-chip corporate world.

At the time, the startup law firm had just three lawyers and ten other workers, which included other legal specialists; a librarian; a dispatch rider; a few technicians; and a five-star chef.

As a comfortable twenty-year old, I had no work experience in the corporate world whatsoever and arrived at the premises of Kimathi & Partners, on a tiring Wednesday morning in my papa's navy-blue Jaguar, clueless yet immensely determined to broaden my horizon; to make sense out of life. I was privileged to be accompanied by my papa — who had recommended me to Mr Kimathi Kuenyehia — on my very first day of work.

The interior of the office was not the portrait I imagined prior to my arrival. It definitely was not as formal. The walls were decorated with graffiti, canvas art and wooden-framed portraits of global icons. This included polarizing personalities such as Steve Jobs and Kwame Nkrumah amongst many others. My favourite art piece was a graffiti which boldly read: 'Performance buys freedom'. I regarded this piece of advice as my first

omen. Also, in the midst of all these iconic pictures and street art, there was a mesmerising painting of an Awoulaba-shaped African woman. One could sense an unorthodox culture at Kimathi & Partners already. The art was inspiring; it gave the décor an all-round go-getting vibe.

These walls yelled loud and clear about the lofty expectations thrust upon any member of the Kimathi & Partners mafia. A gallery and a household simultaneously, at each and every corner, there was a gentle reminder of raging ambition expressed by art. I found all this inspirational, but I also felt a bit nervous staring at all these historical figures, wondering if, perhaps, my portrait would ever grace the walls of a swank firm such as this one day.

Meanwhile, I anxiously waited outside the office of Mr Kimathi Kuenyehia for a brief moment, admiring the personal accolades of this squeaky-clean squire, littered all over the walls, before entering for a formal introduction. After an introduction by my papa to Mr. Kimathi Kuenyehia, we exchanged pleasantries and embarked on an official orientation of the office.

'This internship will give you sleepless nights.'

'It's going to be assiduous, but approach the experience with an open mind' Mr Kuenyehia said.

‘Yes Sir’, I nodded in agreement, like a naïve primary schoolchild.

I was quite frankly astonished to see the young discernibly charismatic managing partner of the firm. This caused a paradigm shift in my perception towards entrepreneurial leadership. I had finally encountered, in the flesh, a shining example of an individual embodying a rebellious sense of independence, who was succeeding at life on his own terms.

I remember walking into the library, during the orientation, and staring at the numerous books which were not only law-oriented but were also about philosophy, finance and history — among others. The library was an exceptional storage of caviar for thought. It also had a full set of drums, which I found really exciting, and somewhat liberating.

‘You can come and distress with the drums whenever you feel overwhelmed’ Kimathi proposed.

The library, after my working desk, would become my favourite place in the office.

I first had to complete a set of requirements, with distinction, before being fully accepted as an intern. I choose to refer to this as the ‘sieving system’ of Kimathi & Partners. I was required to personally submit a curriculum vitae, a perseverance essay and a writing sample. In addition, I wrote a mock Multistate

Performance Test. What was the bloody point of a laughter-filled introduction then?

Together, this was a stringent yet helpful self-examining exercise. This laborious process was only a slight hint of the excessive responsibilities one was expected to shoulder during the course of the internship program. I found the personal statement jolly challenging, but it gave me an opportunity to assess myself through deep introspection. It was like building a mirror with words.

The perseverance essay similarly put me in a state of deep reflection. It served as a personal reminder of my ability to conquer any obstacles, in our deep-seated desire to self-actualize. And I read this particular script, occasionally, throughout the internship for motivational purposes. The Multistate Performance Test thoroughly examined critical thinking, writing skills and creativity simultaneously. At the end of this intense exercise, I was psyched for more complex tasks.

The orientation concluded with a heartfelt salute to my comrades in the trenches of nine-to-five who embraced me with open arms, after plenty of questions. I was then escorted to my personal office space by our boss.

Even before I could settle at my freshly allocated working desk, I was quickly summoned back to the office of Mr Kuenyehia, for an issue of my first reality ‘cheque’. I had walked in on what seemed to be a very intense discussion.

Mr Kuenyehia's large jam-packed office always immediately restored one's sense of urgency.

I reported back to the office to present a legal memorandum to Mr Kuenyehia, who scrutinized every tiny detail of the document, and either required clarifications or suggested corrections. Every aspect of the document was crucial, even the style and size of font. At Kimathi & Partners, nothing was left to chance. I learnt to critically consider things I would normally tend to overlook. I left the office at 9:00 p.m. that day, this was one of the earliest times I would leave the office during my month-long internship, with the exception of Fridays. Everyone was expected to arrive by 7:30 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. was the minimum time anyone could leave; nobody was exempted from this rule, not even Mr Kuenyehia. This, of course, was very unusual considering that most law firms in Ghana close by latest 6:00 p.m.

The entire family, at Kimathi & Partners, profusely bled excellence. The ideal of flawlessness was not compromised in any way. I was personally docked — an office culture where our boss extorts a few cedis from you — on more than one occasion for failing to punctuate properly, or failing to clearly explain certain terms to the satisfaction of Mr Kuenyehia. There was a profound culture of accountability and each task reaffirmed this. It was forbidden to see the principal, Mr Kuenyehia, without a pad and a pen. There was never an idle

moment. These qualities have since shaped my work ethic. Mr Kuenyehia always applauded outstanding work with a generous tip and rewarded employees with tougher tasks. He had zero-tolerance for mediocrity and complacence.

As mentioned, I left at exactly 9:00 p.m. on my first day. I came back the following morning to a thorough tongue-lashing from Mr Kuenyehia. He dared me to exceed the expectations I had set myself, and — to mitigate the harangue — expressed his confidence in my ability to do so. I left the office at an average of 10:30 p.m. each day since then, fulfilled and determined to be more productive the next day. In line with the traditions of the firm, I visited for a few hours each weekend to engage in personal research or leisure reading. And to distress by beating the drums to the pulse of the moment.

The corporate atmosphere was always highly tensed. Time was of the essence and each day was to be marked with a new personal achievement. It was almost off-limits to dedicate time and effort to work without producing exceptional results. I basked in this new found energy, sparked by the union of prodigious minds with infinite passion.

During the course of my almost month-long internship, I read ten books and produced a report for each of them. I never knew I was capable of digesting this much information, within such a short period of time, until I

started working at Kimathi & Partners. It took maximum focus, drive and composure to function throughout the day. My knowledge on each book was tested either through work for a client or in a general discussion with Mr Kimathi Kuenyehia. On many occasions, I was required to demonstrate my knowledge in books I read at very unexpected times. Mr Kuenyehia would bring it up in the middle of an unrelated topic. I had to remain constantly alert.

I once received a surprise phone call from Mr Kueyenhia who instructed me to handle an emergency on his behalf. I had to draft a legal contract for a mining company. I remember walking in and out of his office countless times striving to perfect the assignment. Such experiences thought me to be innovative and highly responsive. I learnt to anticipate tasks with a strong can-do spirit. Mr Kueyenhia personally guided me in applying finesse to the various tasks I was assigned. Apart from that, I was entirely responsible for the final outcome of these tasks.

I found it quite overwhelming to be almost fully in charge of objectives extremely essential to the firm, after just a week as a neophyte intern. I had to prove my competence and worth with each passing day. The books I read often enhanced me with the necessary skills and knowledge I needed to execute my hitlist. Most importantly, I would discuss each report with Mr. Kimathi Kuenyehia, who cleverly honed my understanding of transactional law

and drafting contracts. Also, he would always take time to explain how beneficial these lessons could be in my prospective profession. There was a perfect balance between the theoretical and practical aspect of the internship. Every facet of theory was tested, whether it was with social skills or with writing skills.

To absorb all the pressure, I'd step outside the office premises, occasionally, equipped with a box of Rothmans King-size cigarettes, to blow off excessive steam; taking an occasional smoke break on the blindside of my colleagues.

One of the most progressive facets of Kimathi & Partners was its well-established mentor-teacher relationship culture. The system was designed in a way where each individual is always teaching and learning from the other. I spent ample time in Mr Kuenyehia's office over the course of the internship, apart from the times I was summoned. These were the most memorable moments. Kimathi would always encourage me to 'till the land' and caterpillar my way through with a winner's mentality. We often spoke about the state of Ghana and exchanged ideas on governance and development in freedom.

Apart from my work duties, Mr Kuenyenhia was very particular about self-discovery and development. He always stressed through a parable, a quote — or an uncensored tongue-lashing — that I had an obligation to myself to emerge as an iconic personality someday. He

was always brutally honest with his opinions and constantly challenged me to aspire without limits. It was through these daily thirty-minute sessions that I began to develop a healthy appetite for lifelong success.

I also enjoyed an enormous amount of support from my very busy colleagues. Each and every one of them executed their hectic tasks with tireless drive and composure. This began to rub off on me. My tender-hearted colleagues engaged me in their individual tasks, and did not hesitate to offer exhaustive explanations on topics I found overly intricate. They had clearly been refined through the rigorous process I had recently been initiated into, and this made it easier to forge a rapport. The support system was solid.

The insanely proactive, big-bellied Odame Sarpong didn't vacate his seat until he met the demands of our frenzied unapologetically capitalist boss, Kimathi. Yet, after an exhausting day, Odame still found time to drive us from Airport City to Adabraka for night-time waakye at a joint called 'Sisters'. Enyonam Tsegah of Anyako — an absolute sweetheart — made the chaotic atmosphere slightly more habitable. There was also a pointedly cool-headed legal brainbox, Augustine Kidisil — who didn't speak much — and walked with a slight limp. And then there was Reginald Odoi, a petite religious and quietly ambitious man who, to my amusement, given his calm

nature, thrived under intense pressure from our unbearable crème de la crème capo.

On one drizzly morning, Mr Kidisil, a senior associate of the firm, gave me an opportunity to accompany him to court. This was one of my finest moments as a twenty-year old intern. I observed the lucid Augustine Kidisil neatly organize his documents early that morning as I was briefed on the case. He then handed over the dossier to me.

We left the office for court and arrived at least forty-five minutes before our case was scheduled. This emphasized the need for punctuality. I observed how the Ghanaian court system functioned, and learnt a great deal about the etiquette of advocacy. I watched wig-wearing barristers, with distinct personalities, argue out their cases passionately before discerning judges. It was truly eye-opening – but certainly not enlightening.

The time had finally come for us to stage our case. I cautiously studied the respectful yet forceful manner in which Mr Kidisil addressed the judge. He swayed the judge with his apt preparation and oral prowess, to the detriment of our seemingly unorganized opponent. As his right-hand man, I proudly chronicled all the essential points of the proceedings, as well as all the personal observations I had made. We engaged in a thorough discussion of the proceedings after it was all over. And Mr Kidisil offered a lot of advice based on the scenarios

we both witnessed at the court that day. After we got back to the firm, I quickly prepared my first court report. This was yet another proud personal milestone. Also, the firm had an amazing chef who consistently fascinated me with exquisite cuisine. I enjoyed some of the most delicious local meals at Kimathi & Parties. Auntie Esther's — the chef — food still remains a baffling head-scratcher.

Fridays were my favourite of all! At the climax of the working week, we quaffed Dom Pérignon and listened to placating music underneath the summer hat behind the main office building, quietly enjoying each other's company. The mood was always much more exciting, particularly because one felt deservedly entitled to a weekend of relaxation. And this emphasized the work-hard-play-hard mentality at the firm.

I formed some great life-long friendships at Kimathi & Partners. I have no doubt in my mind that I was surrounded by imminent legal masterminds. Although the internship was not long enough, I went in clueless and came out with full confidence in my potential to rise to the greatest of heights as a young master of the universe.

I spent the rest of the vacation in Swansea with my athletic fiancée, Adzo — a keen photographer, and a majestic symbol and substance of honour and stature — compiling a comprehensive fact-sheet on the life of a polarizing Ghanaian statesman, for a children's book, titled: *Things Every Child Should Know about Dr J. B.*

Danquah, which was published by Frangipani Books Ltd, and authored by Abyna-Ansaa Adjei.

We also spent quality time in New York — with emotions tied to a launching rocket, bonding over Bollinger and chess; the winks, and clinks of sparkling flutes, as we unwound — where Adzo, as a student of Columbia University, was busy developing stills at the campus's photography studio.

'You can capture life. But you can't control it', Adzo once remarked.

All my veins were lines she had drawn; the route of voyage she marched on and on.

Finally, in June 2016, the following year, the curtains were drawn after three blissful years in the south of Wales, with deep-seated questions my academic course hadn't answered. Yet I'd developed a clarity of purpose about life and a useful knowledge of the world centuries before I arrived here. While in Swansea, genuinely a safe haven in which I could convalesce, I had the peace of mind and solitude to evolve. The stakes were no doubt high and there was a future to look forward to with assurance. I'd also, in the footsteps of my grandfather, in June 2016, enrolled in the Honourable Society of the Inner temple, as a student member.

At twenty-one, I'd realized my métiers, fidelities and proficiencies — although mixed with contemplation.

And above all, I discovered an innate ability to combine masculinity with intellect, talent and morality. I also identified the value of time; and the ability to exercise absolute control over it. The lesson is: it's not about circumstances so much as it is one's conduct within them.

Regrettably, the bonbon lustrum-long relationship with Adzo came to an abrupt end, ruining a rare bond of two conscious blue-blooded lovers. We were at the Hilton, in London, that night when she concluded our bond had been permanently sullied. I became melodramatic; pleading profusely and weeping. She was composed, perfectly detached, insisting 'it's over. I feel nothing for you!'. Adzo talked nineteen to the dozen.

I had to swallow the pride I ate. She led a heist and had stolen a part of me I couldn't replace; engraved her name on the élan vital I couldn't erase. We cuddled as soulmates for the final time that dusk; it was bitterly cold, tears rolled down my cheeks, and I did so with trepidation.

I was in a pretty pickle and fell into melancholic silence. You only truly fall in love once. If I close my eyes, I can still imagine Adzo lying on the bed with those gauzy knickers. I pulled a muscle stretching for Gatsby's foreseeable green light. Hurt cuffed in an emotional arrest, I could only persevere through the emotional unrest. Clueless and naïve, Adzo and I had roamed the Avant-garden of Eve, seeking relief in a false belief. I had

wrapped her heart in silk, stumbled and stammered; nailed it, but never hammered. Fear grabbed my heart, and squeezed my mind. I later exhaled all the pessimism out of my soul, and by default, started to readjust destiny and time.

Unconditional love is rare; the odds are not in favour of the myth. It's a dream for all to pursue, yet realized by so few. It's a feeling of complete oneness; a sacred hyperactive cult for two. It's a utopian ideal everyone is devoted to. Yet it shuts the door on some, and opens up to others; a letter rarely written on the sheets of many covers. Even loved ones are bound to change like the seasons, for different decisions, actions and reasons. All the same, a joyful, firm relationship is the most significant desire in my life. As for Adzo, etched in my subconscious, she reappears in my dreams every now and then.

There were other delicate matters I wasn't too thrilled to return to, such as an incomplete home. My childhood had been one of personal grief, recurrent respiratory issues, and excess material comfort. I fell sobbing on my knees, in prayer, the dawn my parents separated. I was twelve-years-old and life, within the blink of an eye, became one infinite circus of emotional swings. We had barely turned our house into a home when the support system that nurtured me began to crumble before my teary eyes.

Nonetheless, my then octogenarian grandmother — a staunch Marshallan — taught me about the Rosary Novena, at a very early age, and guided me through the process of reciting it. These values were reinforced during my primary education at a strict Catholic institution, the Christ the King International School, and, as a child, it served me thoroughly well throughout the trials and tribulations of my childhood. My godmother, Reeta Auguste, would also always remind me that 'God was always a prayer away'.

Ghanaian television series classics like *Home Sweet Home*, *Things We Do for Love* and, especially, *Sun City* were shock absorbers during this period.

My father, and personal god on earth, Anthony Apewu Tɛŋgɛ Djokoto, a multi-lingual — English, French and Japanese — cold-eyed black-lipped chain-smoking natural resource lawyer and economist, is a workaholic who cherishes his privacy to a fault. Dad, correct in the department of manners, as a young post-graduate student, from the Commonwealth Hall of the University of Ghana, joined the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in 1984 as a civil servant, during the rule of the Provisional National Defence Council, and left as its chief inspector of taxes in 1999. He also studied tax and economics at the Yokohama University, Japan.

Papa went on to become Assistant general counsel for Ashanti Goldfields Corporation in 2000 for almost a

decade, after leaving IRS. He was a part of the legal team responsible for the merger which produced Anglogold Ashanti.[21] Subsequently, he became the general counsel at Tullow Oil for another decade[22]. Dad never retired and still runs Equator, an old-fashioned commercial law practice, from its base at the Nyaniba Estates, Osu.

My mother, Yvonne Forster — an educationist, restaurateur, and by the standards of activism in the early-2000s, a hands-on feminist — lectured at the Accra Teachers Training College. She read Home Economics at the University of Winneba. Our gastronomic culture inspired gluttony on Sundays, since Mama knew how to make the ingredients sing — the taste always outweighed the guilt. Mama wholeheartedly believes in miracles, manners, and moderation. To her, it's a tripartite badge of honour. Ever determined to chisel our vices into virtues, the one binding piece of advice Mama constantly gave my brother and I was that: 'Character is grounded in the things we do, and that God always rewards the pure-hearted.'

Before my parents separated, we lived in Agbogba, then a dreadfully quiet village on the outskirts of Legon, with diverse exotic trees and chirping birds. Our bosom sat on a small estate my father had begun to develop in the middle of nowhere. My smooth-swinging elder brother, Tɛŋgɛ, still lives there. The entire experience felt like a

[21] Ayowa Afrifa Taylor, *Sam Jonah and the Remaking of Ashanti*.
[22] *Reuters,* January 6, 2010.

topsy-turvy nightmare. But I made a personal commitment that, regardless of what challenges lay ahead in life, it could never be as cruel as the gloom I had endured, and that I was not going to let those circumstances ruin my future. I also realised love is about patience. It's possibly the greatest virtue of all, because time always heals.

Dad and I eventually moved into a modest single-story solar-powered residence at Airport Hills — a land of plenty in a Republic of need — on the Avenue of the Stars; a private estate. One of the weird experiences about growing up in Airport Hills was that even when the Black Stars — Ghana's men's football team — scored a goal, you could still hear a pin drop. Up until a few residences sprung up on the Avenue of the Stars, I could enjoy the view of planes landing at the Airport from the front porch.

After recuperating at my grandfather's post-independence cantonments residence for a few months, upon my return to Ghana, I finally settled on the Alema Avenue, at Ariasville, Airport Residential — a colonial street full of neat-looking residences and sky-high trees — in one of papa's properties. As the crane moved over Airport Residential, I observed a city under constant construction, with peasant labourers building lofty fantasies for the affluent. A chic half-caste British-Ghanaian ex-lover of mine, Ekuba, shaped like an

Akua'ba doll artefact, was once domiciled on the same avenue during her childhood. Ekuba and I shared the exact strong wistfulness for life in the Gold Coast. We'd bond over movies like *Heritage Africa* by Kwaw Ansah which is, by all standards, a classic film that narrates the pre-independence Gold Coast era with brilliance. Her visits became choreographed and scripted routines that neither her nor I wanted to change. In a hostile and unpredictable world, we relied on each other to provide something to count on.

Our first date was rather unorthodox. Accompanied by a police escort, Otu, we toured Nshorna; a coastal Gã community — much to the chagrin of her pious coal-dark well-endowed mother. On another visit to her home, in a split second where Ekuba had excused her mother and I — she headed upstairs briefly — her mother warned me 'not to handle her precious jewel like I handed Adzo'. I felt jumbled. But characteristically, after a few seconds, I was unruffled and grooved on once Ekuba descended the staircase of their Legon-based residence. Scarred and scared of what might erupt; all my fears were frozen in my tear duct.

Unfortunately, in a twisted reality, Ekuba had been coerced by Akua, a maternal cousin of Adzo, to secretly record me puffing in exchange for a worthwhile job at the British Chamber of Commerce. She confessed to this during pillow talk, while I opened up to her about the

revolutionary background of my blankly inscrutable Dad — cold as a bowling ball — and how His Excellency Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings would ride to our Madina-based Redco flat on his bike in the 90s. Ekuba, ultimately, refused the offer from Akua. None of it made sense.

Hate chews, our erotic love, exploring our erogenous zones, was a sneeze, that pursued the morning breeze, piloting our moaning bees. It was tough to screw loose the cuff. But, nonetheless, a noble act. Our love life was complicated by petty politics which ultimately broke the trust. The ticking clock numbed the pain — and hearts apart, we overlooked the perpetual scars which remained, pretending they didn't exist.

As a matter of fact, some of the only indelible moments of genuine inner-bliss from my childhood were during history class at the Roman Ridge School — and English Literature too. At school I read history devotedly. My choice of Pan-Africanist authors revealed a curiosity about the lives of great figures; the first book I read from The Roman Ridge School library was Gaddafi's biography.

Mr Dennis Doku, the history tutor, beneath the veil of his modest outlook and miniscule stature, was a fiery storyteller. He was patently charismatic. Mr D. D., as his students called him, infused his impassioned lectures with current affairs and documentaries. I loved history class,

especially from form 3, perhaps, more than any other subject — and was proud to consistently pick up prizes for it during our annual award ceremony. It was on a random day during one of these classes that the desire to pursue a life in politics suddenly dawned upon me.

When I was handpicked as fourth head boy, against all odds, in lower sixth, Mr D. D. looked at me, with a grin on his face, and said: 'Oh my goodness, so you managed to charm them didn't you?'

'Feather in your cap', Mr Dennis Doku concluded.

The premier head boy of The Roman Ridge School, tempestuous Kelvin Browne, is a descendant of the B. J. Da Rocha, whose paternal grandfather, Candido da Rocha, a merchant prince, was generally recognized as the first Lagosian millionaire. Kelvin's grandfather B. J. Da Rocha is credited with introducing the word 'new' instead of 'national' in the name 'New Patriotic Party'. [23]

As a teenage poetaster, who felt he had the right to write until there was nothing left, I also enjoyed English Literature — and nabbed the ultimate prize during upper sixth as the best student, receiving a book titled: *Political Armies*, edited by Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt.

There were other ecstatic moments too I'd never forget, such as watching and playing football. Football is by far

[23] B. J. Da Rocha and Ayodele Kingsley-Nyinah, *Memoirs & Biography – My life in law and politics*, Foreword, p. 13

the most revered sport in Ghana. It remains interwoven with our sociocultural identity as a Republic. On the other hand, the perennial rivalry between Accra Hearts of Oak and Asante Kotoko splits the Ghanaian football world like none other. I happen to have found myself on the side of the 'Never Say Die' club, the famous Hearts of Oak, affectionately known as Phobia, since the early 2000s.

I owe much of my affection for Hearts of Oak to our household chauffeur, Mr Sarpong. Mr Sarpong, a grey-haired thin elderly man, always sharply dressed in a political suit, was a member of the Indomitable Chapter 88 of Kotobabi, Greenford Guest House. He would never miss an opportunity to narrate how they would congregate to carefully deliberate over the management of the club, and to curate the prudently coordinated morale-boosting gestures which the excitement of the stadium experience has been attributed to.

I could not interpret the rules of the game then as shrewdly as I can now. Back then, it was simply about the thrill of the sport, the cult of celebrity, and the athleticism of the footballers. But Mr Sarpong, who bragged as though he could do a much better job than Jones Attuquayefio, took the sport much more seriously. The legendary coach, Attuquayefio, led Hearts of Oak to the pinnacle of sporting excellence by clinching an iconic

treble — the Ghana FA Cup, the Ghana Premier League, and the CAF Champions League in 2000.

Unlike Mr. Sarpong, I had not yet volunteered to become yet another pro-bono tactician for Accra Hearts of Oak. If you'd like to witness a classic scenario of constructive criticism, simply engage any Phobia enthusiast in a pre-match, halftime, or post-match analysis and you'd absorb the devotion fans have for this spirited rainbow-coloured club, at the speed of light. As our battle song professes — 'Our roots, our roots are old, so be quiet and don't be silly. We are the famous Hearts of Oak. We never say die!'

Recently, in 2022, there's no doubt the lacklustre performances by the lads partly dwindled Samuel Boadu's knack for grinding out wins. But, as expected, and fairly so, the gaffer would always bear the brunt. But Mr Boadu secured Accra Hearts of Oak's iconic domestic treble — after almost a perplexing dozen years of misfortune. I still frequent the Accra Sports Stadium with my childhood friend, Selwyn Sackey — a quintessential quixotic gentleman — who inherited a thriving freight-forwarding business from his late father, and is almost equally obsessed with his wife, Nadia, as he is with his football agency Small Poles.

One of the most profound moments as a teenager I relish to reminisce was falling in love. It is one of those emotions

one never truly forgets; whether it's an idealistic or traumatic experience is another matter altogether.

I took a gentle step — well more like a leap of faith — into the chapel and almost skipped a heartbeat. I chanced upon a caramel-skinned petite lady, ethereally invented by God to dazzle the minds of lustful sinners and anointed observers. It almost felt like a sin to blink. I froze in the heat of the moment and whispered in bewilderment: 'Alhamdulillah'.

Suddenly, all the multiple voices within my mind, each with a different piece of advice on how best to lure this miracle of a creation, grew louder and louder. I clinched both fists for a few seconds, exhaled and moved towards the row where my brother, Tɛŋgɛ, was seated; it was a seat or two behind the mystery lady.

'Excuse me, please I'd prefer to sit next to my brother. Could you kindly scoot over?' I asked a stranger next to him who, after a thorough stare-down, obliged.

'Can we all rise on our feet and pray', the priest ordered, as he squeezed his paunch into his designer suit.

'Tɛŋgɛ, Tɛŋgɛ', I tapped my brother, whose eyes were tightly closed, twice on the shoulder.

'What?' he whispered with frustration.

'I think I've just discovered an angel' I confessed.

'See!' I insisted.

‘Shut up and pray’ he said.

‘Well, how the hell do I shut up and still pray smart ass?’ I lashed back. He opened his left eye, chuckled and gave me a nasty knock on the head.

‘Ouch, you bloody prick’, I shrieked.

After a church service, I noticed her strutting across the lawn. So, I pulled in air, brushed my shirt and marched toward her.

‘Hi’, I mumbled, offering a handshake.

‘Letsa. Thought I should introduce myself.’ I continued.

‘Why?’ she replied.

I was slack-jawed with brooding eyes. I broke into sweat trying to retain eye contact, and almost coughed.

‘Accept my apologies’ I replied.

I was just about to swing around when she said, with a wide smile: ‘Adzo’.

‘I have to leave. The car is waiting. It was nice to meet you’, she continued.

‘Shit!’ I impulsively blurted out.

‘What?’ she replied, clearly disturbed.

‘Uhm, it’ll be a pleasure to speak to you some more. Could we kindly exchange numbers?’ I pleaded.

‘I’d add you on Facebook, don’t worry.’ she replied.

‘Sure. Do have a wonderful evening, Adzo. Take care of yourself.’

‘You too. Letsa?’ she said, with some scepticism.

‘Yes, it’s Letsa. Letsa Djokoto.’ I proclaimed; with all the oratorical powers I could summon from within. ‘Bye!’ we said in sync.

I waved and started to whistle. I could see Tɛŋgɛ by his car shaking his head. I threw an uppercut in the air and strolled through the garden to the car.

‘Tɛŋgɛ, I’m in love’ I confessed.

‘You’re 16, dimwit. You can’t even afford data. Get in the car and let’s get out of here’ he yelled.

Our naïve rapport eventually evolved into a long relationship that helped me sail through life in emotionally bewildering times. Aubrey Graham provided the background music to our splendid five-year virgin romance.

Meanwhile, back in Accra, things began to take shape. I had just completed my undergraduate studies in law at Swansea University, and flirted with the idea of an adventurous career in the army, as a war reporter. I was profoundly convinced this would be a useful prerequisite to a dynamic career in global affairs.

I was also honoured to finally meet Erasmus Kwabla Kalitsi, a bosom friend of my grandfather, whom I

frequently visited with my brother, Tɛŋgɛ. Kalitsi amused us with privileged reflections on Aŋlɔ, before and after independence, and also about my grandfather.

I enjoyed visits to his Cantonments residence. First, a preposterously tiny, almost pointless, cup of sugar-free tea, paired with an enjoyable banana cake, will be served. Then, the retired engineer would himself pour each of us a shimmering double shot of scotch into a crystal glass, squeeze just a bit of lemon on it, add a teaspoon of brown sugar, with crushed ice, and stir. On other days, we'd be served fresh palm wine in a neatly polished calabash. We playfully toasted to finer days, aging with grace, and to many more gluttonous nights of splendour at the Dzokoto palace.

We always observed traditional Eʋe etiquette. For instance, we offer the first morsel of our meal, or the first drop of our drink to our ancestors. These are modes of conduct that affirm how well-mannered, courteous or culturally astute one is.

For lunch, we'd usually take delight in yellow-fin tuna with spiced lentil salsa and arugula, crispy duck and watercress salad — although the portions were prudently designed for comfort and not speed. The amuse-bouche — scrumptious crab croquettes – were addictive. Then we'd chin-wag for hours, recounting his lively past and planning my future, until his butler, Kudjo, thought it fit to ruin an often-buoyant dialogue.

Meanwhile, I was introduced, thanks to the nepotistic intervention of my darling aunt Suzie — who loved to natter on the phone during evening walks — to one Group Captain Richard Forjoe, who was kind enough to provide his counsel on joining the military. He assisted me secure employment as legal aide. Three years onward, Group Captain Richard Forjoe would arrange a life-changing tête-à-tête with the most accomplished military officer in Ghana's political history; an enigmatic fearless rail-thin radical who once shattered Ghana's fine mahogany table of hegemony.

The Ghana Armed Forces presented an idealist perspective on duty and discipline. The code of conduct that regulates soldiers emphasises reverence for hierarchical structure, interdependence, and respect. The pomp, pageantry, and precision which characterised esoteric rites to commemorate historical landmarks at Burma Camp particularly unleashed, deep within, an unwavering allegiance to the flag of Ghana, designed by Theodosia Okoh — a Ghanaian teacher and artist.

It was a prestigious environment for an impressionable young man. I was confined to the library, mostly occupied with some kind of research on international dispute resolution, or about defence partnerships. But personally, I endeavoured to investigate the exact role Ghana's military played in statecraft, and was delighted

to encounter a handful of elderly people, still lurking around the barracks, who had witnessed a palace coup.

'Now listen here, boy. We must keep servicemen from interfering with politics, and politicians from meddling in the affairs of servicemen' Mr Quaye said.

'That may be your opinion, Sir. But you do know, of course, that every aspect of life in Nkrumah's Ghana is drenched in partisanship, even for soldiers.' I rebutted.

Mr Quaye, or 'Old Quaye' as I preferred to call him — a grumpy night-dark giant figure — was a typical 'Gold Coaster' who, for the majority of the time we spent together, had his head buried in whatever the latest issue of the *Daily Graphic* was. He never quite revealed his exact day-to-day duties at the barracks.

At the time, I had also undertaken the strenuous task of negotiating for the representation of the Ghana Armed Forces, as an interest-group at the Ghana Youth Conference — a networking event, convention and public lecture.

The purpose of the Ghana Youth Conference was to mobilise young people, as a united front, mount a platform for an unfettered exchange of views concerning national affairs, and to exert moral pressure for an era of constructive statesmanship. The society was advertised to a wider audience as a post-partisan youth-focused organisation whose members advocated for the increased

participation of students and young professionals in nation-building.

It wasn't enough to donate cast-off clothes, most probably taking up space in our comfortable urban homes, or organize cookouts for famished street children. While, of course, this was a worthy sentimental consideration, it felt awfully mediocre and somewhat patronising.

It was with such optimism that I gathered a few trustworthy friends to form a new club, spontaneously named the Sankofa Society of Ghana, during a donation to the Ummul Qura Centre for Islamic Education and Humanitarian Services — on the 30 August 2015. Privately, as six founding members, we identified ourselves as the Citizen's Circle; thoroughly inspired by Kwame Nkrumah's secret society.

In 1945, Kwame Nkrumah envisioned a secret society that would provide the raison d'être for the emancipation of Africa from imperialism. He carefully observed, from afar, personalities who demonstrated the valour, discipline, and intellect needed to wage and win a revolutionary struggle. One of the most remarkable qualities of Kwame Nkrumah was his superior ability to recognise talent and form strategic alliances. Nkrumah coordinated anti-imperialist activities from the headquarters of the West African National Secretariat,

where he served as Secretary, located at 94 Gray's Inn Road, London, United Kingdom.

He frequently voyaged to Paris where he met African members of the French Assembly, such as Léopold Sédar Senghor and Félix Houphouët-Boigny, and mooted the establishment of a Union of African Socialist Republics. Nkrumah wasn't encouraged by the reactions he received. It was clear that African members of the French Assembly, although arguably Pan-Africanist, weren't committed to a radical political scheme aimed at the absolute decolonization of Africa at the time. But, all the same, Nkrumah still made some progress. The conversations yielded some admirable results. A West African National Congress was scheduled for October, 1948 to assemble all Pan-African oriented political organizations and movements across the African continent in Lagos. Unfortunately, the conference never occurred.

Nkrumah, a prolific writer of debatable thought-provoking articles, turned his attention to print press. 'He is a master of the art of playing on the emotions of his readers through the skilful weaving of words', wrote Timothy Bankole.[24] He managed a monthly newspaper called *The New African*, with the motto: 'For Unity and Absolute Independence'. The first issue, subtitled, 'The

[24] Timothy Bankole, *Kwame Nkrumah His Rise to Power*, p. 39

Voice of the Awakened African' was published in March, 1946.

The New African became an effective propaganda channel, widely read for its unique perspective on the global political order, and the question of self-determination after the Second World War. It quickly gained a wide readership. Nkrumah's enterprise wasn't driven by profit. He didn't structure *The New African* as a sustainable business venture. He was primarily concerned with its accessibility and influence on public opinion. The newspaper lacked sufficient financial investment, because Nkrumah didn't bother to raise any, and soon collapsed altogether.

Nkrumah, after this ordeal, felt it had become necessary to institute a secret society. This mysterious fraternity of non-conformists became known as 'The Circle'. The society prided itself on three principles: service, sacrifice and suffering. Its membership was largely drawn from scholars that met regularly at the West African National Secretariat. Members identified each other by a unique grip.

They held several discourses that were recorded in a document also known as 'The Circle'. This doctrine prepared members for revolutionary work, as a profession, across the African continent. It was difficult to gain admission into The Circle. The society was exclusively reserved for exceptionally conscious people.

Members swore an oath of unconditional loyalty to one another; to the endless pursuit of its stated aims and aspirations; and to never divulge its secrets. This oath included the mandatory acceptance of Kwame Nkrumah as leader. The Circle congregated religiously. Its members were required to fast, from sunrise to sunset, on the 21st day of each month, and assemble to meditate on the values that shaped the society.

It centred its operation on two core values: the ability to organize, as a mass-based socialist political organization, workers and peasants; and the need for Africa to unite. The society encouraged its rank and file to infiltrate influential organizations, secure important positions within such organisations, and subtly infuse it with a spirit for African unity.

The Circle hatched a series of well-coordinated non-violent strikes, boycotts, and other forms of civil disobedience. Its unflinching position was that violence would be a last resort. The Circle never regarded decolonization as a matter of negotiation; it was regarded as a fight for the dignity of all Africans, and generations unborn. Members committed themselves to missions, regardless of the risks involved, in furtherance of African unity.

The society kept its dialogue discreet; it relied on face-to-face contact, couriers, and messengers for communications. The conventional methods of

communication, such as letters, telegrams, telephones, and cables were only used to book appointments. The society forbade discussions about its inner-workings in public spaces.

The Circle disintegrated towards the end of 1947, after Nkrumah returned to the Gold Coast to serve as General Secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention. The grand ideal behind the establishment of The Circle was to expand its territorial presence and gradually transform into a fully-fledged political machinery, representative of West Africa, which would administer a Union of African Socialist Republics.

The Sankofa Society of Ghana, just like The Circle, did not have thousands of members — far from it — but its youthful membership had hundreds of thousands of cedis, and a handful of affluent patrons who bankrolled our fledgling social club.

Our founding-treasurer, Adzo, brought on board Enterprise Insurance and Databank as sponsors. Oumou — a devout Songhai Islamic lady — another founding member, also brought on board now defunct Unibank, as a financier, as well as the Excellence in Broadcasting group (EIB), as a media partner. In addition, Oumou also hired, through the benevolence of her father, *Enjoy* magazine which officially gazetted the Ghana Youth Conference. That's how I met Juanito Mario, Editor of

Enjoy magazine — and Dominique Paravicini, Editor-In-Chief.

I was warmly received by Sammy Forson on Live FM, then at their Adabraka-based studio to discuss the duty of the youth in pushing the agenda for a better quality of life and a higher standard of living. This was my first time on air. Adzo and I later granted an awkward interview on *Good Evening Ghana*, hosted by Paul Adom-Otchere.

The most challenging, and perhaps, engaging interview was on GHOne TV, hosted by Baisiwaa Dowuona-Hammond: Each statement I uttered was met with critical scrutiny, in an intelligibly aggressive manner. I enjoyed the interaction and lauded her stance to commit fundraising initiatives and conventions of this calibre to utmost transparency and accountability. All three interviews took place within the space of a week. The conference sought to nurture a fervent affection in the breast of the youth towards our Republic, transcending all traditional clans and nation-states; religious affiliations; and partisan allegiances.

We spent ample time on the drawing board, at the Sai wine bar in Labone, and fashioned out a clear plan for the conference. Club meetings were always quorate and our views were aligned on most matters. Meanwhile, Kusi Adu-Amankwah, our founding vice-chairman, consulted with the Akoto Ampaw — his godfather —

concerning our constitution; and it was tweaked by the deceased legal luminary.

But, back at the Ghana Armed Forces, parleying with servicemen is a most exasperating expedition, as any rooky civilian employee within Burma camp will readily admit. A thick dark cloud of suspicion hangs over any newcomer, especially, in my case, a lean lad always uniformed in morning trousers, and a double-breasted suit, with a pair of glossy black leather toe-cap oxfords I coaxed across my knees to an excellent gloss daily. A few young officers would let their guard down with an opinion here and there — but this was rare, if not out-of-character.

I attended meetings with the various Commanding Officers, preceded by long-worded letters espousing the objectives of our social club. I was pleased the efforts did yield our desired outcome. Our conference had a decent number of uniformed servicemen.

The Ghana Youth Conference (GYC) was held in the ambiance of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre at Teshie, Accra on 27th August 2016. This was the first GYC organised since 1948 and the second held at Accra, after the convention assembled at the illustrious Achimota College, in 1930 to discuss: 'The Essentials in the Progress and Development of the Country'. It also coincided with the Chale Wote Festival.

HIGHSTREET CLERK

In search of broader exposure to the inner-workings of age-old public institutions, I secured employment as a clerk, at the Accra circuit court, shortly after the Ghana Youth Conference took place. I administered oaths, and prepared reports on cases before the court, every day from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Upon my arrival at the office, I'd usually take a brisk walk through the potholed roads of Accra, past the bumper-to-bumper gridlock, to queue up — together with trotro drivers, head potters toting babies, motor mechanics, data voucher vendors, and white-collar workers — at a local taxi station for some hot, delicious Hausa koko and koose.

And with almost every inch of the Makola marketplace occupied with an enterprise of some sort, or craft of some kind, it was unavoidable manoeuvring through the littered pathways without bumping into other pedestrians, amidst the relentless barrage of hyper aggressive traders.

The gutters were chockfull with plastic bags and left-over food half-chewed by scrawny stray dogs. The daily congregation of almost the same batch of customers at the table-top breakfast spot, over time, bred familiarity amongst us; and more consequentially, the multiple

layers of the Republic's administrative capital began to unravel.

I'd breakfast with hustlers of all stripes, as we ping-ponged about current affairs, normally for just about half an hour. I'd absorb the dirges of miserable workers who laboured under deplorable conditions to fill the pockets of their employers — and take care of their city-based families which sought shelter in dreadful shacks. Thereafter, I'd head back to the courtroom along the John Evans Atta Mills High Street.

I developed an innate desire to nurture synergy with the have-nots of the Republic, and thenceforth adapted a down-to-earth approach to life in Ghana. I relished the early morning discourses with the informal 'Koko club' as a way of filling this void.

'It isn't easy, my brother. But I must send money back to Tongo so my family can be comfortable' Shareef, a commercial motorcycle rider, complained. Cradling his beer with a tattooed arm, Akoto added a few words to sum up the Ghanaian dilemma: 'We've had enough of these stomach politicians!'.

I could always sense their pent-up frustrations and inherent lack of confidence in the intellectual elites. Besides the entertaining fables of a few popinjay storekeepers who bragged about their riches, several sombre testimonies of wishful citizens, disparaged by

enticing political promises, dominated our conversations. The stories got more confidential with each passing day.

What if the dice fell on the wrong number and I was conceived by poor parents? Would I have found myself, by default, in this vicious circle of poverty?

Quite frankly, I do not condone the defeatist cliché political argument by the far-left middle-class cigar-smoking Marxists that the jetsetters are the reason for everything wrong with society; and this isn't because, by lottery of birth, I ended up in an affluent Aŋlɔ royal family. The well-heeled are resented, by the have-nots, not exactly for their enormous material wealth, but for the wide gap of inequality between the elite and the rest of Ghana.

A Republic cannot inspire its citizens to nation-build if citizens remain hoodwinked from the light at the end of the tunnel. These were workers completely convinced that the have-nots found themselves on the blindside of an out-of-touch political elite. And, meanwhile, the market, policed by a shameless bribe-taking mafia, was a mounting chaos on its own.

Although we all agreed that, if we were to progress as a Republic, both the political structure and our role as citizens needed radical reform — my repetitive argument for a nouveau post-partisan mass-based civic movement, as a necessary step for a renaissance, was always met with very little enthusiasm from the audience.

It seemed almost absurd to them, especially to passionate partisans, that the traditional political structure could ever be disrupted by an alternative organisation. Nonetheless, the idea of elected governors, instead of appointed regional ministers, seemed to have struck a chord with them.

As weeks turned into months, it became difficult to remain detached from the real-life complexities accentuating the cases of young jetsam's arraigned before Justice Aboagye Tandoh, a stoic ship-shape man.

Day after day I witnessed first-hand, right before my passé desk at the court room one, the sorrowful trials and incarceration of young adults, brought before the Circuit Court by prosecutors, for consuming small quantities of marijuana. The prosecutor, Dampare, was the kind of official that slid his index finger across his neck whenever he spotted a crime.

I'd gaze into the eyes of citizens-turned-prisoners, destined for an agonising life in an overcrowded prison — which really offers no real prospects of rehabilitation — as we listened attentively to the pronouncement of the judgements from behind my rickety seat. I was only on the other side of a mirror.

Trapped within an almost non-existent legal aid system, those who could not afford to retain the services of a lawyer had no choice but to represent themselves and, clueless about the implications of their sworn statements,

often struggled to mount a convincing defence. A few affordable washed-up scruffy-looking litigants, or fledgling barristers would help out every now and then. But by and large, many were left to face their legal battles alone. I realised there are two distinctly separate justice systems that operate in Ghana: one for the poor and the other for the rich and connected.

In sheer silence, I could only communicate my sympathies by intuition as tens of young people were whisked away by prosecutors each day. In some instances, the spouses of those bound for gaol, on some occasions, were left to their fate as single mothers, or fathers, without any adequate social welfare benefits, or even a secure job to earn a decent income.

Also, Ghana is a patriarchal, devoutly religious Republic where heterosexuality is expected and enforced. In our public outrage against oppression and discrimination, accommodating unorthodox social identities often slip through the cracks. Is the discrimination, aroused by both clerical and conservative forces, in the name of God, and corruptly institutionalised by the rule of law, towards people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) justifiable? Is this in alignment with the virtues of our judiciary?

However, Ghana criminalises consensual, loving same-sex relationships, entrenching prejudice and putting people at risk of blackmail, arrest and imprisonment.

Through a human lens, the Ghanaian society, free from primitive dogma and relying on thorough research, must devise a peaceful resolution which accommodates the LGBT community, and annul our current laws on unnatural carnal knowledge. Each adult citizen of sound mind should be free to exercise individual liberty as long as this does not alienate the rights of another citizen.

Let Ghana Build Together! A complete emancipation of Ghana's LGBTQ community does not undermine our traditional heterosexual society in any way. This would be a noble leap of human liberty as opposed to a mere form of ethical hedonism. As a Republic, popular opinion and remnants of our colonial culture may bitterly oppose the God-given rights of the LGBTQ community, but this should not deprive citizens of their due liberty as Ghanaians. Nationalism has nothing to do with sexual orientation. In an ideal Republic, one can choose to be whatever one wants in Ghana without the constraints of societal mores. We must herald a new age of glamour and speed — an era of adventure, sexual liberation, intentional living and endless *soloku*.

The bench, as infallible as its members may be, acts as the moral compass of the Republic; and defines our personality as a Republic. Our constitution is a Pandora's Box. We may not like it, and with freedom of speech, we can publicly denounce it, and even urge other emphatic Ghanaians to use all constitutional means to change it;

but so long as it remains the law, we have no choice than to obey.

Nonetheless, our inactions and numbness to these cruelties shall haunt our conscience in due time if we continue to abandon sections of the youth who have fallen in this vile grave of human resource, where talent is buried; the prison system. Our generation is on a wild curve and we need to row away from the rocks. If not, the generations unborn, in hindsight, will question the humanity of our laws and, perhaps, realize how Ghana, since its inception, was sharply divided by ethnocentrism, classism and discrimination. They'd come to know that Ghanaians were driven by a desire for violent retribution to deprive people of their most basic rights.

Haggard after a typical day on High Street, I'd stand at the brink of the eroding Jamestown harbour dock, perplexed and observing the fisher-folk and their apprentices aboard colourful wooden canoes, labouring for a meal and a better life, as they cast their nets into the troubled seas of Accra.

From the edge of the dock, the paradox of High Street revealed itself — the fragile symbols of progress, such as the modern court complex, and the remnants of colonial architecture, such as Christiansborg castle, were in clear sight from this poverty-stricken fishing hamlet.

I also toured round the shops in Victoriaborg during lunchtime, persuading traders to advertise their

businesses on my dot.com start-up, *Accra Evening News*, for a meagre fee. As an ardent Nkrumahist, I'd revived the *Accra Evening News* which had originally been launched on the afternoon of September 3, 1948, over six decades ago. Soon after, I endeavoured to turn abstract academic knowledge into relatable nail-biting front-page news. Also, I needed to earn some extra cash, so my inclination towards activism would be more manageable.

`

POST-GRADUATE LAW SCHOOL

I'd grown as thin as a clothing hanger barely three months into post-graduate legal studies. I studied myself into complete exhaustion; processing a mountain of information, having many irons in the fire. But as a contrapuntal nostalgic, I could, of course, be relied upon to champion the renaissance of hairstyles that others thought otiose. Sleep deprived, overdosed on assignments, and as lean as a straw, law school had sucked the life out of me. But I still wrote for multiple online platforms, in addition to my monthly column for *Enjoy* magazine, which continued to circulate in Accra, Tema, Kumasi, Takoradi and Cape Coast.

The opportunity cost for political engagement was practising the time-consuming profession of law and, later on, foregoing the lucrative work opportunities the Square Mile offered. The Legal Practice Course jealously demanded complete focus and planning. Like a circus performer walking on a tight rope, I had to balance the demand between academic work and full-time social

activism — a job for the wildly ambitious — while at the City Law School, University of London.

I also began to apply the method and meticulousness entrenched in the style of thought required for legal studies towards journalism. Hideously, law school taught me that sleep is not the cousin of death. In fact, one must not perceive slumber as a door of no return.

Beyond investing in a movie — *Lucky* — I also launched the *Pop Statesman* round-the-clock, a counter-culture comic magazine and a series of non-fungible token (NFT) collections, illustrated by FeoIsUgly, known in his private life as Prince Ampofo.

Blockchain technology would certainly add commercial value to Ghana's arts and culture, spinning digital illustrations into money-making artworks. This would enable artists raise cash through alternative means and drive investment towards the market. The *Pop Statesman* also provided affluent young investors, seeking to diversify their portfolio, with an opportunity to acquire shares in bankable digital art. The NFT phenomenon supports the decades-long struggle to solve the puzzle of intellectual property. While digital art can be easily copied, this unique system arms each creation with a traceable code that affirms the authenticity of any digital asset.

Ghana, as far as the crypto space is concerned, certainly needs to get ahead of the curve and lead the emerging

market on the African continent. Government, regulators and legislators must outline a clear set of progressive rules which ensure digital assets can be patronized without any unnecessary hurdles. The new world order is based on the digital economy and it is important that we begin to wholly embrace it.

Meanwhile, at the City Law School, I wasn't immersed in Theodore Soussoudis' musical selection as much. I listened to fresh productions springing from the fountain of Ghana's youth. Ghana's contemporary pop culture remains a canvas, with its paintbrush held by the finest tastemakers. And this vivacious rainbow generation continue to push aesthetic boundaries in an era of emotional sensationalism. There were a select-few Ghanaian artistes, with unique personalities, I paid close attention to at the time, namely: Amaarae, Kwesi Arthur and Darkovibes.

A quaintrelle by nature and connoisseur of tailleur, the acutely meticulous artiste Amaarae — a high school era friend — exudes a distinct star quality of gamine. She is an epitome of the renaissance. Amaarae's debut project, *Passionfruit Summers — EP,* remains a seductive piece of art; its soulful melodies manipulate all five traditional senses. The tunes transcend a vibe that soothes the soul and creates a rather euphoric ambience. Her illusory visuals tease intimate scenes of a coquettish

lady. If you want to seize a moment in infinite time to unwind and ease your mind, listen to Amaarae.

Darkovibes, Paul Nii Amu Andrew Darko, part of the fabled La Même Gang, was another innately talented musician who strung various languages and melodies together to invent alternative coast music. His sound was a manifestation of teen spirit married to streetwear. There was a certain spontaneity, free-spiritedness and authenticity to his craft that felt rebellious.

It captured the pseudo-Rastafarian hippie Accra lifestyle. A witty lyricist, his songs are often laced with wavy slangs, perfect for a blotto night of revelry. His vocal skills have never been conventional. He sings from deep within — it's clearly more about the feels. His compositions aren't suppressed by a forceful desperation to rhyme. Instead, it focuses on the vibrations. The production is also refined, and his unpredictable cadences are neatly interwoven with feel-good beats. He broke the code and discovered a way to make his music borderless. It doesn't sound tailored for a specific demographic. But it still preserves the signature Gã language on most records which draws the audience towards his identity.

Darkovibes has a fine collection of conscious records which explore the themes of life, death and the positive vibrations between these two extreme ends. Darkovibes had been on a steady rise since his elevation from an underground counterculture musician, with a magnetic

charisma, to a pop star. And it was epic. He was an early devotee of an alternative rhythm defined by the genius of music producers like Kuvie and Nxwrth. His music is the swiftest broom to nirvana.

Finally, Kwesi Arthur's project, *Live from Nkrumah Krom – EP,* is a manifesto of street culture, which depicts the daily struggles of life in Ghana this quicksilver generation are confronted with. His music projects the toils of the youth far more accurately than power-drunk and status-conscious politicians can.

The *Live from Nkrumah Krom — EP* is two hundred and thirty-three feet deep and a heartbeat. It is about the rigorous routine and endless pursuit of the Ghanaian dream — high hopes, sleepless nights and a journey on the road less travelled. It reveals the ascension of an ambitious musician and mirrors a son of the motherland in her womb. It echoes the emotions of an artiste who submitted his entire dream to a higher power. The melancholic instrumentals and succinct agony in his voice portray a rebel, with a flambeau, determined to carve a new path.

The impact of music on a Ghanaian renaissance is essential. Pop culture must insist on a society built by futurists — citizens that dare to enrich the identity of our Republic. Music, in particular, has redefined the image of modern Ghana. It is a revolutionary tool that can shift our moods, influence our perspectives and incite action.

In the sacred words of an African legend, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, 'music is a spiritual thing'.

I later relocated back to Accra after a gruelling year abroad. The Ka xoxowo Salon, my Airport Residential townhouse, an otherworldly make-shift shrine full of primitive African artefacts and paintings, brought together outré personalities — journalists, fashion models, photographers, musicians, filmmakers, artists — from all walks of life. It's been a central but quiet passage way — within the heart of the city — for the arts. I'd hosted a cocktail for a rising feminist group; and the Ka xoxowo Salon became a short-lived headquarters for the Fighters — a radical far left-wing political start-up led by Ernesto Yeboah. The Fighters were a non-partisan political club that sought to prick the conscience of the nation about the fast-eroding values of nationalism and patriotism. Also, I organized an art exhibition, in partnership with Boxer Studios, titled 'Intenso'. And then another art exhibition, in partnership with Mel Arthur, titled 'Nyɜ Kɛ Wɔ'.

Since, I financed the *Enjoy* magazine from 2017 to 2019, from my generous monthly allowance, thanks to my father, this gave me the creative freedom to determine, entirely, what my column should feature. The last two columns I wrote where commercial; a drift from history and post-partisan politics. The first was an exclusive question-and-answer with miss universe Ghana 2018, in

the Enjoy No. 135 February edition. The second column was a lucrative story I spun on Trans Sahara Africa in *Enjoy* magazine, in collaboration with the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre.

Sundiata — a supermodel — dazzled us all with her fierce beauty, radiant eloquence and exquisite style when she represented Ghana at the renowned international beauty pageant, held in Thailand.

I had the privilege to sit down with the reigning Miss Universe 2018 and ask her a few questions about the pageant, pop culture and her wider career aspirations. We were photographed by Ofoe Amegavie. After a year of pure friendship, being a frequent visitor of the Ka xoxowo Salon, Sundiata — with dimples of Venus — became an artistic muse and our *Kalakuta* romance lasted for almost a year, until she began to make plans to relocate to Rwanda. Sundiata, the sweetest taboo, consistently busted my brains.

On the brown suede couch she would lay, a masterful moulding of clay, aging with grace day by day. I experienced the panorama of her soul, heard the Gaŋkogui of her heart, and the Kagaŋu of her brain. Suddenly, I was unified and whole, after centuries apart; it was euphorically insane. Finally, I was at peace in the mind, where blissful thoughts still linger, freely roaming her earth. I was at ease and aligned, a floating thinker, with no fears of death. We'd always voyage to the stars

and above, from the clouds and the sun, from the sea and the skies. The inward glow of love, in search of the one, as the feeling multiplies.

THEATRE OF THE MIND

Soon, I found employment as a broadcast journalist and corporate executive, at the Class Media Group — owned by Seidu Agongo — founder of defunct Heritage bank. And it came with its own inimitable experiences.

I'd been cheerfully savouring a fine glass of Pinot Grigio at the climax of a calming weekend. That was until I woke up in panic, roughly around 4:00 a.m.; the stridor tone of the phone at my bedside rang close to my ear. The call was from Robert Israel, the nocturnal and insanely industrious bald-headed producer of the morning show.

'Signor, kindly peruse the information I've sent you,' he said.

Bob had already sent an entire thesis for the radio programme, an hour earlier.

As the muezzin's azan for Fajr at dawn echoed through the streets, the usual cool morning breeze was all soothing, the road was clear, the temperature cooler than usual and I was already en route to the Ridge-based office, a stone-throw away from the Ka xoxowo Salon — to surf a smooth few hours on the airwaves. At dawn it all begins, the minor strides toward major wins.

As a political journalist, generally speaking, it was my duty to ensure our community of listeners and callers had exhaustive information regarding the policies and politicking of each party before deciding on which one to endorse at the ballot, notwithstanding any biases.

Robert, adrenaline-charged as always, would be on his feet, sleeves rolled up to his elbow, pacing up and down the lounge adjacent the studio, plotting with the team for the morning show. He'd usually be the only one standing, insisting on fine tuning even the most thoroughly arranged programme for the umpteenth time, if his instincts dictated so. Anyone who has worked with Robert understands how intensely meticulous he is with pre-production and news. Benjamin, neat as always, would be seated in a corner — and with divided attention — practicing an opinion-editorial for his brutal segment: *A piece of my mind*. At the time, he'd taken over from Moro Awudu, the blasé journalist, as the host of the buccaneering radio's flagship programme: *Class Executive Breakfast Show*.

Meanwhile, inquisitive Karim, our in-house socio-political analyst, and a compulsive researcher by nature, would usually be on his mobile phone — and besides fact-checking — reading Lord-knows-what: probably some terribly intricate extra-terrestrial report on space or the moors. Mounkheila, our forceful, and at times, hobbledehoy production assistant, specialised in getting

things done at the eleventh hour, which — in an era of social media driven news — proved to be an outstandingly valuable asset for our team. He got all the tittle tattle from Parliament, or deep within the Jubilee House.

There was the big-bellied, soft-spoken Phillip, notorious for ludicrous rebuttals on-air and tactfully stuffing his mouth, intermittently, with snacks held in one hand underneath the table, or from his often-snug pockets, during live radio. Then there was Nii Marmah — a teetotaller evangelist who preached on the streets at dawn, from 3:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m., before setting off to the office — who was a workhorse. As for Korletey, he was a disillusioned communist constantly pondering a revolution through his one-man-run political organisation: Ghana Communist Party. My office sweetheart, Zita, could strut any Paris runway.

'Men are their own enemies! You pair two grown men on such a prestigious stage, in front of the entire world, and they cannot even compose themselves!' I'm slack-jawed with ruminating eyes. There comes Felicity Nelson, an athletic motor-mouthed radical feminist, twisting the door knob to the studio, prepared to swing yet another brutal jab at toxic masculinity.

She was referring to a brawl that ensued between the camps of Stonebwoy and Shatta Wale at the Vodafone Ghana Music Awards. The duo commanded the largest

fan-base, if not in the entire music industry — probably only being challenged by Sarkodie — but most definitely of dancehall in Ghana. This event brought stardom under one roof, entertained busy dignitaries and foreign diplomats and gave fans a rare chance of meeting practically every musician that mattered.

Once the usual suspects assembled, we were ready to rumble, and wax eloquent over current affairs, while sipping on coffee. Every morning presented a chance to manipulate the national mood — and it begun with reviewing salacious newspapers. Radio is at the heart of everything that happens in Ghana: show business, new media, and telecommunications. The custodians of the culture, writers, freethinkers, and academics have a duty — in these censorious times — to re-establish respect for the freedom of expression. Your right to mock God, unfortunately, should be protected. But you shouldn't have the right to mock or discriminate against any individual on the basis of their religion or faith.

AYAWASO WEST WUOGON BY-ELECTION

The Ayawaso West Wuogon by-election was underway and the Class 91.3 FM *Executive Breakfast Show*, anchored by Benjamin Akakpo, had constituted its standard in-house panel of three — including myself and Karim, ready to surf a smooth few hours on the airwaves once more.

The focus was on the one public office that is, without the slightest doubt, the vilest in public service: chairperson of the electoral commission. It was as clear as crystal that the political weather forecasters, like the obese Ben Ephson, misread the mood. The assumption was that the ballot will transpire fairly, and with little drama, given how boring by-elections tend to be.

As a matter of instinct, I didn't agree with that. But of course, without any substantial political intelligence reports to suggest the Electoral Chairperson, whom I knew personally, was either impartial, incompetent or a puppet civil servant, it would've been reckless to incite anxiety and arouse fear. So, I thought it prudent, as well as responsible, to ditch the war drum.

The irritation beneath the beauty of live radio talk shows, for panellists, involves hours of listening to opinions with which you might severely disagree. But there's probably nothing more exasperating than being ballooned with

passionate ideas and not getting a chance to express your thoughts.

On this particular morning, it took a considerable amount of self-restrain not to interrupt Benjamin and Karim. I heard myself clamouring from within: 'hush up you damn optimists, let's fan the fires of suspicion and mistrust instead'. I then scribbled a few punch lines across the page of my notepad — but crumbled it in frustration. The rant needn't be scripted. I was prepared to strike my arguments home with verve. The opportunity finally presented itself and I began fulminating on all cylinders. Then, barely five minutes into the outburst, the unthinkable happens — Jean Mensa, eye-turning Chairperson of the Electoral Commission, struts in. I was utterly perplexed; Jean caught the entire production team off-guard. I lost focus for a bit.

'Wait a minute, hang on, I don't quite think Jean Mensa has ever granted a live studio interview. This must be her first?' I whispered to Nii Marmah, the studio manager. He looked even more befuddled.

It didn't take long to conclude for us both to grasp that this was a somewhat landmark occasion. But then, it also occurred to me that it was completely uncharacteristic of an Electoral Chairperson to join an in-studio discussion, right in the middle of an election; in fact, this had actually never occurred before.

The standard is for the Chairperson to address the public only when the entire voting process was over. For someone who is constantly admonished by the press, politicians and the general public, Jean Mensa always maintained an assertive posture. She slithered with such confidence it was almost impossible to tell that, while she was in the middle of an unscheduled interview, the entire electoral exercise had gone south. And in the heat of the by-election, Sam George, a stout legislator for Ningo Prampram, was assaulted. He was engaged in a bellicose exchange with an alleged member of a politically affiliated mercenary syndicate, referred to as the 'Invisible forces'.

Unfortunately, boisterous Sam was at the mercy of the raging hooligans. No one should have to take three bold and reflective steps backwards to recover from a slap, only to be met with a couple more. Truly despicable to say the least! And to wit, Sam had the best public relations twist after being subjected to both public ridicule and sympathy: He claimed that rounds of shots were fired directly at him, and yet the bullets, just like most of Akufo-Addo's policies, missed the target completely. Well, clearly, Sam is much better at self-defence than the footage of him getting whipped around would have anyone believe.

In the aftermath of the bloodbath, the social democrats, then a toothless minority of the 7th Parliament, were

furious. But they didn't just bark; they took a 2.23-kilometre trek to the police headquarters to register their displeasure. Quite frankly, since politics is an extreme sport, it was a healthy exercise, for a party obviously eager to demonstrate their fitness to run the affairs of state.

FROM THE PRESS GALLERY IN PARLIAMENT

It's rather likely that if you were the least bit cognizant on 15 November 2018, you were listening to Ghana's Finance Minister, Ken Ofori-Atta, outline a political agenda — to reorient our socioeconomic sphere — when he delivered the 178-page 2019 budget statement on our economic policy.

Here in Ghana, the budget is normally a way of prompting citizens about our economic setbacks, so we can anticipate more challenges. And when Mr Ofori-Atta fired the starting gun for Ghana's fresh sprint out of a cost-of-living crisis, he shot right into the foot of his panicking party. The budget ticked a few boxes in theory but almost none in practice. The man in charge of our public purse declared he'd add billions of cedis to our national debt — and to hell with the consequences for future generations.

As a broadcast journalist on Class 91.3 FM, I'd joined the fraternity of press agentry which was deployed to cover the occasion, and engaged various Members of Parliament and other journalists in discourse concerning the prospects of economic growth, for our Republic. And even more importantly, how the budget was going to impact the youth of our Republic.

Journalists had been allocated a space right behind the press gallery in the House of Parliament, from which a

dozen radio and television stations were broadcasting the event live. The atmosphere was charged. Fresh-faced and composed after a restful yet brief sleep, I perused a thick volume of documents I had been primed with, by the research team of D. K. T. Djokoto & Co, the previous night, and rolled complex issues around my tongue all night.

While New Patriotic Party spinsters had the unenviable task of retailing a bogus 2019 budget, NDC communicators were eager to court Ghana's left-behind generation, and assure them that they could find their greatest support in the National Democratic Congress, as a genuine bastion for socioeconomic progress.

The cliché skittish blame game between the Members of Parliament across the political divide, about the woeful economic circumstances of the average Ghanaian, dominated the discussion as usual. There is often a tendency for the incumbent government to undermine the culture of accountability by shifting the responsibility for our contemporary challenges on previous administrations. And these conversations ultimately never reveal any significant information; it is only a chance for politicians to spew propaganda to score political points. But our happiness as Ghanaians is no laughing matter.

Politics in Ghana, as it stands, is about seducing electorates long enough to earn their vote; the only one

real objective is to have the Ghanaian citizen in the condition of continually voting every four years. Nothing else matters! And, apparently, the average Ghanaian voter never makes the same mistake twice. Yet, most Ghanaian voters are not exactly as bothered about the athletic race for power, and care more deeply, about the development each Presidential tenure brings.

I was spoilt for choice, even with the few minutes of time allowed for my probing of the politicians on our panel, considering the endless cases of incompetent governance and the pulp of disputable facts, or utterly lame excuses that came from them.

The radical bank-cleaning exercise, led by finance minister, Ken Ofori-Atta, was a systematic method of coming to the wrong conclusion with an awful lot of confidence. Of course, the idea certainly sounded much better chirruped in economic management committee meetings than it did in the chamber. Ghana's banking sector sunk so much if the bank returned your cheque marked 'Insufficient Funds', you had to call them and ask if they meant you or them.

Our budget told us what we could afford. But that had never prevented government from spending beyond its means. Politicians preach fiscal discipline but are only economical with the truth. To many Ghanaians, the New Patriotic Party's solution to problems was often as bad, or even worse, than the problem itself.

The government would have been highly beneficial if they really acted to their professed character. But whatever might have been the essence of their election, they'd become utterly worthless, and the Republic; a great cesspool into which all the citizens were irresistibly drained.

Accra, Ghana's multi-cultural romantic capital, quickly absorbs high skill, exceptional talent and scarce cash — but fails to emit lucrative opportunities for the youth. The consequence is losing resourceful young people who relocate for greener pastures. Access to a higher quality of education — and capital! — is required to be competitive within the global economy.

The media-driven effort, by the ministry of information, to maintain the fiction that NPP were decent public administrators must have been exhausting. Household balance sheets weren't healthy, and many had emptied their lifetime savings during the cost-of-living crisis, particularly for low-income households in urban areas. While government shouldn't jam the wheel of fortune for its citizenry, this had been the case with the NPP.

In fact, the first of April should be an annual holiday dedicated to citizens as a reminder of what the New Patriotic Party did to us for the other 364 days of the year, especially since Nana Akufo-Addo took our whole Republic for a vast practical joke. We'd look back on the Nana Akufo-Addo era as an uninspiring time when a

gang of inept politicians ran the Republic to the ground, and the rest of Ghana looked on in utter shock.

Hopes were sky-high and the Akufo-Addo government did very little to restore faith in public administration, or confidence in our economy. Ghana is still racked with tribalism and a deeply divisive culture of partisanship. And Akufo-Addo's ethnocentric corruption-soaked regime had been the prime beneficiary of this needless chaos. There was a deeply entrenched belief that due to the cunning manoeuvring behind the scenes, courtesy his surreptitious operatives, even the rule of law in our Republic had been consistently overshadowed by political considerations.

Wage growth had failed to keep pace with rampant inflation. Ghanaian consumers couldn't save. And, much worse, people were being forced to borrow themselves into substantial debt so they could settle bills. Akufo-Addo turned Ghana into a hellhole with a government overdosed on corruption, and a citizenry burdened with an outrageous cost of living.

'In fact, the extent to which citizens are willing to endure hardship would determine the degree of our political stability over the next few years.', I asserted on radio.

In all honestly, it's really not just the economy Ghanaians were upset about: From delayed Ghana cards and passports to unreliable telecommunication services and unstable electricity supply, there was a sense in the

country that nothing worked properly anymore. Unfortunately, the tragedy of Ghana's cost-of-living crisis is that, even when the economy finally begins to recover, millions of households would have already been left far behind – and hard-earned wealth would've depleted too.

For the far-right New Patriotic Party, there is no longer a shred of doubt that elections are really about splashing enough cash to gain power and advance the mercantile interest of a select-few. But for the centre-left National Democratic Congress, elections are genuinely about empowering others. There was a great sense of expectation and an anticipatory feeling of momentous change about the next National Democratic Congress government — such as equal opportunity across ethnicities and gender, and a robust welfare state that could absolve the hardships of lower and middle-income families in such dire times. There was a clear difference: The NDC being a party of substance, and the NPP a party of slogans.

The reality of Ghanaians, beyond the plush infrastructure of the Jubilee House, remained gloomy. The cedi was falling, Accra-based businesses continued to lay off workers, hawkers were recording less sales and overcrowded hospitals didn't have enough beds. Ghanaians desired political stability, freedom of press and the right to vote. Ghanaians wanted accessible

healthcare, affordable housing and quality education. Instead, vigilante groups, sympathetic to the New Patriotic Party, had infiltrated key state institutions such as National Security and the Bureau of National Information. And the press fraternity is still scarred by the gruesome murder of Ahmed Suale; while the Volta Region was targeted for voter suppression.

It was a topsy-turvy ride for Ghana's MPs in general. But for NPP MPs, especially with their President asleep, it was a nightmare. The Akufo-Addo government's policies had rarely led to any form of significant development even in its parties' strongholds. The NPP government promised to deliver quality education, fight corruption, and scale up on infrastructure. Its rhetoric reached fever pitch and some Ghanaian voters were swept off their feet. Years down the line, progressive policies to deliver on its mandate remained elusive.

If you are not fit to lead, do not put your face on the ballot paper. There was no doubt that the President knew the way but he couldn't drive the car. It wasn't that he was ignorant; it was that he knew so much that wasn't so. And in the end, progress is accomplished by the person who does things, not one who merely boasts about doing things.

Some argued our Republic had been on a backward path for decades prior, others insisted the NPP government had almost singlehandedly collapsed Ghana. But

regardless of what your opinion is, one fact is clear: this nation was at rock bottom and Ghanaians had given up. Akufo-Addo continued to use the Jubilee House as a safe haven for an orgy of corruption. He was an accident of history who desiccated everything he touched. The Akufo-Addo government, despite the overwhelming support it received from trusting Ghanaians, brought the virtuous craft of nation-building into great disrepute.

There were many enterprising young Ghanaians, within the rank and file of the New Patriotic Party, that looked up to candidate Akufo-Addo and his prospective government as the much needed intellectual-front that would deliver progress. But the New Patriotic Party was busy brewing the bitterest socioeconomic crisis throughout the entire history of our Republic. The government accumulated debt while its hierarchy gorged themselves on our national purse. Unfortunately, we will all pay the price.

Ghana was heading towards a humanitarian catastrophe — and since cunning Ken, minister of finance, borrowed irresponsibly and spent rather recklessly, our Republic had more or less been locked out of the debt market. There was no aid to offset the economic toll. In reality, though, you'd agree that an economic recovery plan built on debt was actually no recovery at all. This was a government that opted to borrow every time they were a

few caviars short of a champagne party at their ivory tower.

What we witnessed in Ghana, as a result of the short-sighted spivs at the helm of government, was a collapsing free market that continued to devour enterprises and households. The price of fuel was more certain to rise than the sun was — and this was the final nail in the coffin of our economy.

All of a sudden, the NPPs 'development and freedom' slogan sounded even more preposterous, especially in a high-inflation environment where hawkers were bargaining with passers-by and motorists to patronize their wares at slashed prices. I say, again, Akufo-Addo had turned Ghana into a hellhole with a government overdosed on corruption, and a citizenry burdened with an outrageous cost-of-living.

It did not matter where you found yourselves those days, whether you were at a plush rooftop bar in urban Accra swilling champagne, or at your favourite roadside table top tilapia joint in rural Anyako, the conversation was always along similar lines: Ghana was boiling. It became a taboo to discuss politics, especially when millions of livelihoods had been banjaxed by a helplessly doltish posse of swindlers.

These were years of diminishing productivity growth for our Republic, and the gap between the haves and have-nots spiralled out of control. Middle income families were

gradually falling beneath the breadline. In fact, it had never been that painstaking for punctilious households and entrepreneurs to ascend what had become an awfully wobbly social ladder. The average Ghanaian family, regardless of how prudently parents budgeted, still did not have enough cash to comfortably feed their households, fill gas and keep up with expensive electricity bills.

For graduates, expectations were set high, and beyond the boundaries of tertiary education, faced with the dingy reality of a collapsed economy, too many degree-wielding citizens, actively seeking a source of income, had been chucked into an abyss of immoral hustle — from online sex work to fraud — and just couldn't find decent-paying legitimate jobs anymore.

There was a widespread will to succeed, and an even greater desire to thread a morally rewarding path in pursuit of financial independence. But the Akufo-Addo government had failed to create an enabling environment to buoy up the ambitions of young Ghanaians.

Yet, all the same, Akufo-Addo appeared to be in denial about his reputation. For the genuine-hearted partisan who took a leap of faith with him and his ostentatious government, they'd come to experience the daunting reality of a deadpan featherbrained head of state.

As for Bawumia, he sweet-talked the entire NPP partisan base, and a hopeful electorate at large, into believing his government had what it took to mastermind an economic miracle. Yet small businesses lacked the capital needed to scale up, and the electronic transaction levy was a hole in the pockets of entrepreneurs, especially for start-ups.

The endless pious prattle about the electronic transaction levy smacked of a regime bankrupt on ideas. The imposition of an e-levy, without the slightest whiff of doubt, derailed government's effort to transition towards a robust digital economy, and its consequences on the standard of living, especially for rural Ghana, was terribly catastrophic. At a time when households were tightening their belts, it is worth remembering that these tax increments drained the pockets of the very citizens whose living standards government was apparently eager to see improve.

A democracy misgoverned by an inept few, irritatingly unaccountable to the mass of our people, poses an existential threat to Ghana's socioeconomic growth. But the crisis ravaging Ghanaians at that material moment was not only that millions couldn't afford the basics; it was that the callous New Patriotic Party had no credible solution to lift Ghanaian households and businesses out of the mayhem.

‘Politicians need to urgently protect what is left of our crumbling Republic — if an unorganized uprising spontaneously springs, innocent households and small-scale businesses may bear the brunt of misplaced anger. Ghana feels frightfully susceptible to an insurrection. In fact, there are deep-seated fears that the pervasive grief and frustration across the Republic may fuel a situation beyond the control of even the most seasoned statesmen.’ I insisted on the radio programme.

Nonetheless, the average partisan still lost all sense of objectivity and open-mindedness, even when presented with these hardcore facts, once the actions of their preferred party was subjected to critical scrutiny, and deemed detrimental to the welfare of the citizenry at large.

To an extent, I could sympathise with the rather irrational emotional response: it wasn’t that such passionate partisans were asinine lackeys; it was the guilt and opprobrium associated with endorsing a crook-coddled political establishment that haunted the conscience of these people.

So, when one receives a tongue-lashing from a disillusioned partisan simply because they were looking out for their parochial interest, I recommended you give them a warm embrace. They had absolutely no idea how terribly ineffectual their choice of government would be.

I cannot overemphasise what politics is not; it isn't about exclusive cliques that exert extraordinary influence over society to fuel their personal greed. It is about channelling a spirit of unapologetic selflessness that drives one's ambition to labour ceaselessly — around the clock if need be — for the greater good of our Republic. We must never lose sight of this. Politics is an extreme sport for the average player; it is a beautiful game of chess for the more sophisticated player; and it is a matter of destiny for a true visionary.

In this scenario, it was as if we were in a bus. The driver was Ofori-Atta. He drove us around one sharp curve after another. We all swayed, some more, some less, but we all swayed. This, fellow citizen, is the portrait of our Republic: A landscape where the multitude struggle to reach the mountaintop, only to watch the select-few devour the promise land.

Meanwhile, the court of public opinion, in a unanimous decision, had rejected Ghana's budget.

COURT REPORTER AND ASSISTANT PRODUCER – *GOOD EVENING GHANA*

I also worked for the Metropolitan Entertainment Television, a spell lasting almost 8 months, as an assistant producer and court reporter, for *Good Evening Ghana* — an award-winning bi-weekly evening current affairs program. The business had been freshly acquired by Dr J. S. Agyepong. Love or loathe the host, Paul Adom-Otchere — a sharp-knifed assassin of political reputations and a serial feather ruffler — knew how to keep the ratings sky-high with witty political commentary and a load of cobblers. And yes, even with a bunch of outright ridiculous tricks up his sleeves. He was all mouth and no trousers. It could, altogether, be an off-putting sight. But it was while producing *Good Evening Ghana* that I fully grasped the art of spin; a field Paul was a critically acclaimed masterful villain in. For Paul, production was about how fast the political frenzy could reach its apogee. For the public, *Good Evening Ghana* was prime time political entertainment like none other.

I was poached to become assistant producer and court reporter for *Good Evening Ghana*, after Paul's interview on *Straight Talk*, Class 91.3 FM; an afternoon political programme I produced, hosted by Felicity Nelson.

There was a popular perception, amongst the politically conscious, that Paul was a card-bearing member of the New Patriotic Party, active behind the scenes. But he didn't quite agree with this, although he was candid enough to concede that partisanship would certainly influence the views of even the most objective journalist.

Paul, however, famously credited one of his finest hours in journalism to His Excellency Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings. The former President allowed Paul to accompany him, with cameras, as he cast his ballot in 2000. Adom-Otchere certainly carved a niche as one of the few Ghanaian journalists of his era with intimate proximity to some of the most influential statesmen of our time. Paul also admitted he had a personal relationship with His Excellency John Mahama. He had the rare privilege of interviewing the immediate former President, at the time, at his office in the Jubilee House on two occasions. This was unprecedented in Ghana's history.

John Mahama, while deputy minister of communications, took it upon himself to rebrand the image of the National Democratic Congress — which had a revolutionary background and history of taking power through the barrel of the gun. Paul and John developed a strong bond during that phase. According to Paul, Mr Mahama made the party more media friendly.

Paul Adom-Otchere, who was a Board Member of the National Communications Authority, had one foot in

public service and the other in mainstream media. One thing is for sure, working for Metro TV led you into drawing rooms of power.

Meanwhile, the increased litigiousness of politicians consolidated Ghana's Supreme Court's role as the ultimate battleground for power — and those elections, or the success of legislative reforms, could be won or lost there. As a court reporter, I experienced this up-close and personal.

At a quarter past nine, on the twenty-fifth of June 2020, I steadily ascended the vaulted crimson staircase of the Supreme Court of Ghana edifice. Built in British-Accra, right at the heart of the capital, its architecture remains a conspicuous remnant of colonialism.

I pulled my mask off at the main entrance, for a brief moment, just to inhale some fresh air, then twisted the door knob, and gently slid into the court room. The deadliest plague of the century was still ravaging lives. The coronavirus had altered our freedom, made us approach our neighbour with anxiety and we were warned not to trust the very air we breathe. Cynicism was encouraged to safeguard your life so a minute-by-minute hand washing was not an exaggeration, sanitizers were applied on our hands as an additional layer of protection, and face masks were no longer a safety tool only for

people in hazardous work environments. I spoke to the *Washington Post* about the ordeal.[25]

After a few excusez-moi's, I settled for the last chair of the second row, to the left from the main entrance, and sat upright next to a rusty three-foot window which overlooked the road. The decision of Ghana's apex court was highly anticipated. There were about thirty-three journalists already seated and eager to report the outcome of the National Democratic Congress and Electoral Commission case.

Eyeballing from one end to another, I took a thorough inventory of all the personalities present. I'd presumed the respective parties involved would be on the verge of distress. But the lawyers and politicians seemed quite calm. Godfred Dame, the then Deputy Attorney General, appeared self-assured. And the maverick Edudzi Tameklo, lawyer for the NDC, seemed rather relaxed. We waited over an hour for the judges to grace us with their presence — by that time I had swapped my curiosity for boredom and leaned against the wall, day-dreaming. I was gutted I didn't have a cup of coffee in hand and a mille-feuille; I felt awfully famished.

The judges finally arrived after an entr'acte. I rested my gaze on Chief Justice Anin-Yeboah as he detailed the unanimous decision of the court. He spoke with such incisive accuracy in his announcement. It lasted for

[25] *Washington Post*, Aprill 11 2020.

slightly over 10 minutes. After weeks of persuasive arguments, the court gave concise instructions to the Electoral Commission to compile a new voter's register; and to exclude the existing voter's ID in this process. That was the end. Edudzi Tameklo briefly exhibited a bewildered look.

In the spirit of the hour, I engaged a few politically savvy lawyers, notably Alex Segbefia Esq and Joyce Bawah Mogtari Esq, for further deliberations on the court's ruling. A warm smile, brief introduction and an occasional wink is usually sufficient enough to lure polite lawyers into an off-the-record conversation. Having opened my notebook, I began fact-checking for accuracy and clarity.

I subsequently excused myself with a bow and exited the court room. By then, the General Secretary of the National Democratic Congress, Johnson Asiedu Nketia, flanked by Edudzi Tameklo, was circled by the press and granted an explosive interview. A bubble of chatter erupted accompanied by flashbulbs exploding. Swept by the currents of his own emotions and a genuine misinterpretation of the court's decision, rather than by a mischievous agenda to misinform the general public and mock the apex court, Asiedu Nketia spun an erroneous view on the ruling that puzzled journalists. This was the pinnacle of a controversial day.

Well, whether one's leanings were NDC or NPP, or whether one's electoral chances had changed for the better or for the worse, surely, at long last, it was time to leave the premises, quaff to the longevity of our democracy, and enjoy some Akple. After a local lunch, I sped to the Teshie residence of Mr Paul Adom Otchere to recall the happenings at court for a *Good Evening Ghana* episode.

DILEMMA

As a young social activist on the horizon, with an in-built hardwired need to serve, many found it odd enough, if not absurd, that I was not officially aligned to either the National Democratic Congress, or the New Patriotic Party. In Ghana, the prejudices against a non-partisan social activist can be terribly crippling. At best, as I came to realise, whenever I was engaged or involved someone in a conversation, non-partisanship could effectively protect one's integrity, especially with folks who, although partisan, had grown frustrated with the political establishment. Another coveted badge of honour, it created a sense of uprightness and, perhaps, a bit of hope in a fresh political movement that could receive the goodwill of swing-voters.

But the reality is daunting: history has revealed that citizens rarely support non-partisan politicians at the polls in Ghana. For those who choose to toe the line, it's often a lonely road to the grave with a heavy load of lofty dreams. And too often, the nail that sticks out against the political establishment is often hammered. Every time I sought to assert my independence from the political establishment, there was always one question that followed: 'Where are you from?'

Half the time, I was tempted to reply 'I am Ghanaian, you dimwit'. But I was raised by a mother who is a

staunch disciplinarian, so I could only keep my cool. In this context, the question was about what ethnic group I am from, and had nothing to do with the ignorance of what my nationality was. I grew to accept that a single individual couldn't do it on their own. Power cannot be vested in the human palms of one man or woman. Nation-building is about unity under the banner of an organisation for the pursuit of shared aspirations. And to a large extent, institutions are more likely to be held accountable by a political party than by one person, or an ad-hoc movement destined to become a political party.

However, when I envisioned independent politics, I wasn't exactly referring to a solo quest nor campaign for political office. Rather, it was about independence from the strings of the political establishment. It was about one focus: statecraft, and one purpose: service. The challenge of a young self-focused politician is to strike a fine balance between independent thought and partisanship, so that, as a protégés and apprentices, one can avoid simultaneously being a pawn on the chessboard.

I constantly battled the idea of getting compromised. I always found myself digressing into the hope of a revolution; a revolution of grace — the possibility of a golden age in Ghanaian politics, the belief in post-partisanship and the emergence of a fresh organisation to champion this cause. But the duopoly of Ghana's

political architecture was deeply rooted in the fibre of the society. It assumed a character of fanaticism, even among the elite, hence a revolution from a third force was considered a wild goose chase. Eventually I conceded that, perhaps, it was better to effect change from within an existing political institution.

In search of a career in politics, I faced a classic dilemma: whether Ghana's politics would be a continuation of the past; or whether I should anticipate the next political revolution. Revolutions aren't as fashionable anymore — but elite politicians, the capo di tutti i capi's, tend to be over-confident and to favour the status quo.

Then, there's also the ongoing class struggle. The white-collar working class, although disoriented with the establishment, are much more inclined toward the political elite. It is a paradox. But it isn't so difficult to understand why, despite the widespread dissatisfaction, the working class have a soft spot for the political elite. After all, the working class is the pool from which politicians are habitually selected.

This is simply because, on the ladder of social mobility, partisan citizens within the working class are always a few steps from the political elite. It is like a game of chess: the pawn, upon reaching the eighth rank, is promoted to a queen, knight, rook, or bishop of the same colour.

There is a common perception that the political elite sustains its hegemony with money, especially in the case

of the peasant majority. This often comes at a cost and benefit to both the voter and the politician. The former is perceived to trade their vote partly for gifts and favours, instead of data-driven, budgeted and dated promises. The latter acquires an unquantified share in the government business that could reap returns should the gamble earn them a spot amongst the elected-few. The bitter truth is that to a large extent, political power, unfortunately, is for sale. This illicit trade of votes for money can only possibly be regulated and prevented by our conscience. Nonetheless, it would be misleading to suggest that the voting-class is entirely motivated by individual interest. Also, Ghana-based firms do not win elections. But some do influence them by illicitly funding political parties, often on an imperial scale.

There is an aspect of collective aspirations too. Politics in Ghana is like religion and some citizens are devout partisans. They have enormous faith in the values of our political parties and the ability of political candidates to change their lives. Ghanaian politicians often over-promise and under-deliver. It isn't that citizens cannot hold them accountable. The fact of the matter is that, in Ghanaian politics, hope is often the best marketing tool. Hope sells. And Ghanaian politicians understand this concept very well: use hope as a bait, and just like fish in the sea, citizens can be captured with ease.

The peasant majority and working class still back the political establishment. Ghana is a democratic Republic and so the support received, from both the peasant majority and the working class, by the political establishment is out of free will. It is clear that the working class, by and large, want a new style of politics and an alternative political movement. The peasant majority want this too. However, there is a wide gap between the peasant majority and the working class that has not been bridged.

The average Ghanaian worker labours to earn a daily wage and make profit for the employer. The National Democratic Congress seeks to ensure the industrious Ghanaian worker is justly rewarded for hours of labour, and that the employer still earns a reasonable profit. The New Patriotic Party, on the other hand, appears predominantly focused on accumulating wealth in the hands of the employer, with little regard for the welfare of the employee.

The political order of Ghana's 4th Republic — our longest period of stable democracy — was shaped by the National Democratic Congress. All conscientious social democrats, therefore, feel an inherent duty to preserve and develop a nation the NDC bequeathed long-lasting peace to. Social democrats are united by common values and principles — that every Ghanaian deserves equal opportunity to succeed; that probity and accountability

should be the two fundamental pillars of governance; and that Ghana comes first, at all times.

In my London apartment drafting literature, and listening to Amaarae.
Photograph by Natalie Narh/Latch Productions.

Reading about Ghanaian history.
Photograph by Pele Voncujovi.

A lady reading my *Enjoy* magazine column.
Photograph by Zulfiquer Gbedemah.

At the Class 91.3 FM studio, on the *Executive Breakfast Show*.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

Mask, Gabon.
Wood, height: 34 cm.
V. L. K. Djokoto collection — Ka xoxowo Salon.

Mask, Ghana.
Wood, height: 70 cm
V. L. K. Djokoto collection — Ka xoxowo Salon.

Baoulé mask, Côte d'Ivoire.
Wood, height: 41 cm.
V. L. K. Djokoto collection — Ka xoxowo Salon.

Akua'ba Doll, Fante, Ghana.
Wood, beads, height: 48 cm.
V. L. K. Djokoto collection — Ka xoxowo Salon.

CHAPTER V

Tête-à-tête with President Rawlings

I had both hands firmly gripping the steering wheel, and my foot decisively on the accelerator pedal of my cerulean blue Suzuki Celerio — bumping my head and whistling to 'Come on Home' by the Lijadu Sisters — when I received a phone call, around 9.00 am, on 3 October 2019. It came from Group Captain Richard Forjoe. He was formal, brief and instructive: 'Good morning, Mr Djokoto. President Rawlings would like to meet you later today'.

'Of course, I'm obliged. Please tell me exactly where and I'd be there,' I spontaneously replied, rather eagerly, interrupting even before he could provide specific details. He then ordered me to park outside the Alisa Hotel, North Ridge, at exactly 3:00 p.m. and ring him.

After the phone call, I took a quick detour to a beach near the Christiansborg Castle, just to reflect on a rather pleasant surprise. Initially, I struggled to put my finger on exactly what the meeting could be about. But it really didn't matter; the stars had aligned, the ancestors had intervened, and a fine moment had presented itself.

I parked, stepped out of the vehicle, and gazed at the endlessness of the hypnotic sea for a moment. Then I cautiously descended a few corroded rocks and

proceeded to stroll along the solitary shore. Intuitively, it felt like a good omen; and just a few hours from a milestone encounter. I took a long shuddering breath, kicked my pair of penny loafers off and held them, then placed both feet in the chilly sea water, the seaweed tickling my toes, and mumbled — with eyes closed — a short prayer. I could feel the breeze behind as I paced back to my vehicle.

I arrived at the Alisa Hotel later, around 2:00 p.m., on a sweltering afternoon. The entire Accra appeared to have been dropped into a cooking three-legged coal-pot. Reggae was the most soothing remedy for the bizarre fusion of anxiety, euphoria and discomfort. And so, I enjoyed a few records by Bob Marley to pass time.

I called Group Captain Forjoe after an hour and informed him that I had arrived as scheduled.

'Good afternoon, Sir. I hope you're well. Please I'm at the location, as discussed.'

He dispatched a chauffeur to fetch me from the location to the rendezvous. After about quarter of an hour, a black Mercedes Benz Viano, with dim tinted windows, came and I hopped in. The chauffeur, a uniformed young officer, was mute for the entire ride. And the radio was off. He responded to my initial greeting, which I mandatorily offered out of courtesy, with a slight nod and a straight face. He then lowered the temperature of the air-condition significantly and proceeded to drive.

I sat quietly until we reached the destination. The chauffeur then got out of the car, leaving the engine on. He didn't utter a single word. I monitored the right-hand side mirror in suspense. After about a quarter of an hour, I could see a towering figure — clothed in a neatly pressed long-sleeve white linen shirt, black trousers and shiny boots — descending from the stairs in a majestic manner. It was His Excellency Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings. He took a brisk walk to the car.

President Rawlings then opened the passenger's side of the car door, and assumed his seat. I was directly behind him. He commanded that I moved over to other side; behind the driver's seat. I complied. He then opened the glove compartment, as if to inspect it, then turned around to face me — and the conversation began. I must admit I was initially star-struck. The circumstances under which our conversation took place was unique. I'd never anticipated such an intimate tête-à-tête with President Rawlings.

'Chief. I've heard some great stuff about you. And I've read some of your opinion editorials too. Good job! How are you?' he said.

'Thank you very much for the kind words, Sir. I'm not doing bad at all. How's life?' I replied.

'Well, I am taking it each day at a time. I'd like to know what your thoughts are on where we stand as a nation' he probed.

‘I believe Ghanaians, especially the youth, desperately want a new style of politics’ I suggested, then paused briefly.

‘The current political order has been nothing but an instrument of oppression and it’s only a matter of time until it crumbles.’ I continued.

President Rawlings listened with rapt attention as I spoke, squinting all the way through, and did not interrupt even once. The world had abruptly paused for us two. It was a surreal, almost spiritual moment. All of a sudden, Mr Rawlings wasn’t the least bit intimidating. He then gasped and turned his focus towards the ceiling. It appeared as though he had slipped into sudden despair.

‘You know, it’s really sad and it hurts. After all the tough sacrifices we made to salvage what was left of this nation, we’re still so far from moral uprightness and social progress’ he bemoaned.

The emotion with which he expressed these deep-rooted fears was somewhat overwhelming. President Rawlings sounded like an idealist consumed by agony who struggled to cope with reality. Then he started to quiver. He clutched the seatbelt buckle for about half a minute. Visibly distressed, sweat droplets trickled down his forehead, flowing to his neck.

‘Chief, what are the chances that a new force could emerge in our national politics?’ he enquired.

‘For a new force to emerge, it’ll have to be powered by the youth, backed by the middle-class intelligentsia and funded by the masses,’ I answered.

Mr Rawlings leaned in much closer. ‘But who has the courage to lead such a struggle and motivate the people?’ he whispered.

‘It certainly would be a fearless young man, or woman, who would be moved by the hand of God and the spirit of nationalism, at His appointed time’ I replied, in a rather religious tone, lost for a straightforward, logical answer.

‘Currently, the majority of young educated people with the capacity to not just lead a revolution but administer the Republic are ideologically aligned to the National Democratic Congress. And, Sir, these are also the calibre of people, mainly socialists and Pan-Africanists, that are keen on a radical movement to reshape our Republic.’ I insisted.

‘I’m afraid if there’s a third force, it’ll most likely divide the NDC and that’ll only inure to the benefit of the Danquah-Busia-Dombo tradition’ I continued.

‘Forget the political elite and its traditions. Isn’t there a way to bridge both the base of the NPP and NDC, you know, especially the grassroots?’ he probed.

‘The NPP-leaning youth are hoodwinked by a deadly mixture of tribalism and a false sense of elitism. They believe more in the targeted success of the educated salariat or entrepreneurs rather than the general welfare of the community. The revolution is inevitably going to come from within the NDC. Its values and principles will then seduce the capitalists and lure them across the carpet.’ I replied.

‘The soul of Ghana is wrapped in socialism.’ I maintained

‘What’s the best way forward, Mr President?’ I asked.

‘The answer must come from you, my friend. These are the things that should keep you up at night.’ He said.

‘Always ask yourself whether your actions are in the interest of Ghana, or if it benefits just you.’ He remarked.

‘Chief, it’s been a pleasure meeting you. I look forward to more of such conversations.’ he said.

‘Pleasure to meet you too, Sir’ I replied. We parted with a firm handshake.

‘Your hands are soft. Goodness gracious, you’ve never done any chores before have you?’ he asked, sniggering.

This was my personal experience with H. E. Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings. He remains a chief cornerstone of the 4th Republic; an accomplishment that goes beyond mortality. His death must continue to be a uniting factor

for all Ghanaians — especially socialists and Pan-Africanists.

CHAPTER VI

On the move

In hindsight, as a non-conformist twenty-five-year-old, with grandiose dreams, and a boiling pot of self-esteem, I took some extremely misleading paths, and even made some comical false starts. But the brighter part is, through this puzzling voyage, I developed a more profound sense of direction, and discovered a priceless map. I learnt that any action that adds value to the phenomenon of life, and improves the human experience for others, is a form of worship.

Sometimes, triumph is simply a result of the relationships built along the journey of life — those binding handshakes and kisses. So, cherish each and every person who is benevolent enough to make sacrifices for you, no matter how little. Never take them for granted. And make sure not to surround yourself with people whose only interest is what you can offer them. Never forget, it brings pleasure to those who truly care about you when you succeed — especially when a conscious effort was made to ensure they were a crucial part of your success story.

When you finally receive an opportunity to succeed, do not slip up. Pull through by any means necessary. Believe

in yourself, refine your craft and manoeuvre through the times. Pay close attention to your instincts. But may you never compromise your principles in pursuit of your innermost desires.

Between June, 2020 and December, 2021 was a monumental display of grinding perseverance in the teeth of adversity — my emergence on the political scene seemed like a feat of levitation. The year and a half had been an endless string of milestones and surreal experiences that rolled like a fairy-tale reel. I'd joined a historic 2020 campaign to spruce up Professor Opoku-Agyemang's brand, built a credible political ticket for the Keta constituency post-election, and laid down the foundations for a lucrative entrepreneurial expedition — venturing wholeheartedly into the finance industry.

I must admit: A national campaign is a perplexing challenge for any inexperienced politician. But when the future stares you in the face, you have to move forward, there's no other pathway. Lured more by the historic breakthrough of a young politician than a million-cedi pay-check, I had no idea what controversy awaited me in the end. Witnessing a campaign, as part of the core team, I stood, for a brief period, at the peak of Ghana's political pyramid; an enlightening point of view, with a panorama of life monopolised by a few. Behind the scenes and beyond the ordinary, there were many unspoken words for untold stories; a vault of lost memories.

Particularly, one could feel the squalls of anger. I experienced, as the honking cavalcade of veteran politicians led us through towns, aged social democrats dusting off their retro Jerry John Rawlings-era National Democratic Congress paraphernalia. The simplicity of its sophistry.

Another fundamental realisation was that sex in politics is as significant a subtext as tribalism. In fact, personally, breaking my virginity was a political decision. Sex has the power to alter elections, dent parties, and, possibly, change history. And, the tabloids taught me that, behind the scenes, everyone is speculating on the sexual nature and eccentricities of every rising and forceful political personality.

While I joined survivalists in Seva and studied how to forage for a delightful meal, nurture fire and trade of nothing but our wits — this silent ride had taught me to think of others, and put their needs and wants, ahead of mine. It had taught me to keep my ears and mind open to what fellow citizens have to say or offer to the development of Ghana. More often than not, society would offer some wise suggestions.

My elder brother, Tɛŋgɛ, a traditional priest, often spun the cliché quote, 'Even a stopped clock is right twice a day', like a broken record. This has continued to serve as a valuable reminder that each individual we encounter

in life is a teacher, and their unique experiences a lifetime lesson. We must be prepared to learn from the experiences of others. You'll never know where that life-changing piece of wisdom may come from.

Ask a thousand citizens what entrepreneurial ideas they have and you'd get a thousand different answers. As a young entrepreneur, those were the kind of conversations I enjoyed having with other entrepreneurs with a vested interest in the development of Ghana. How citizens see life, what they expect from the government, and how they can play a role in nation-building is crucial to our plan to move this Republic forward. Your point of view is really what matters.

MAN, OF LETTERS

The late Elvis Kwashie, the meek Online Editor at *MyJoyOnline*, had been liberal and beneficent enough — through my reliable public relations fixer, Oswald Azumah of Ho — to publish well over a dozen of my extensive opinion editorials, without much hustle. I'd made Oswald's acquaintance, towards the end of 2018, through Portia; an Eve Christ-conscious darling of mine with an unmatched flair for volunteerism.

I was introduced to Portia by my paternal first cousin, Kojo Amonoo-Neizer, then a student of psychology at the University of Ghana. Kojo and Portia both stayed at the African Union Hall during their days on campus. Kojo discussed with Portia my enthusiasm and borderline obsession with politics. And in the final month at the City Law School, Portia, aged twenty-two, and I spent a lot of time getting to know each other online, as she delivered astute practical lectures on the reality of politics in Ghana.

She claimed to have fallen in love with me. We'd never met in person by then. I reciprocated her emotions by playing highlife love classics such as Kojo Antwi's *Nfa Me Nko; Ho*, George Darko's *Odo Colour*, and The Ogyatanaa Show Band's *You Monopolise Me* over our lengthy video calls. She impressed upon me the need to strengthen my

relationship with Jesus Christ, cut-off my kinky afro and wear more African print shirts.

I refused to heed her advice. But, there's no shred of doubt that she was, already at such a very young age, a sharp political operative who understood the culture of politics far more than her average age mates, including myself; a total novice and, by then, a naïve idealist clueless about the reality on the ground, who vicariously lived through Kwame Nkrumah.

Portia was so eager to see me conform she once, supposedly out of nervousness, packed up all the African artefacts which decorated the eavesdropping walls of the Ka xoxowo Salon, and dumped them into the storeroom, claiming they were idols; that's how Christianized she was. I never took offense. After all, western religious heritage has become contemporary African tradition.

Portia came and sat on my lap during the 9th NDC Delegates Congress, much to the infuriation of Sedem Ofori — usually an unruffled corporate affairs executive — who rebuked me for my lack of control over the situation, especially at such a crucial public event. It was the first NDC event I was covering as a fresh broadcast journalist.

'These are the kind of women that have slept with the party hierarchy from bottom to top' he whispered, rather harshly.

'She's a political prostitute' he alleged. This was the first time I heard such an expression being used in contemporary Ghanaian politics.

Meanwhile, Sedem Ofori, during the political season, had organized a purely Pan-Eʋe apolitical caucus — and we convened a few times at the Ka xoxowo Salon to deliberate over the financial progression of the Volta and Oti regions. Sedem has been an influencer and serial conspirator within the fourth estate for a significant period. He possesses institutional knowledge of the media and political turf. According to first-rate straight-talking producer, Robert Israel, with whom he had often been in cahoots with, he was the artistic mind behind the Class 91.3 FM brand. Mr Ofori had been keen to launch me into national politics — but this never materialized. He, perhaps, felt I wasn't ripe.

At the 9th delegates conference, I also met Honourable Zanetor Agyeman-Rawlings, Member of Parliament for Klottey Korle constituency, for the first time. She granted my colleague, Moro Awudu, an interview which was reported by the *Daily Graphic*. We since grew to become bosom friends, brewing a bond over nearly half a decade — and maintaining a close relationship of mutual respect.

An intelligent national jewel, Ms Agyeman-Rawlings possesses a weightier appreciation of life as a metaphysical journey, and power as a means to free the

subjugated. I'd noticed, within her, the capacity to become, in the short term, Ghana's first female vice-president; for which I conducted a poll via *Data Politico* — an inconspicuous political column, as far back as 2018, years before NDC picked a female vice-presidential candidate. *Data Politico* had been set up on *Modern Ghana* to influence political behavioural patterns and test-run a career in political journalism. It garnered over a million reads by 2018.

It was also at the 9th Delegates Conference that the legendary, maternally Aŋlɔ revolutionary, His Excellency Jerry John Rawlings, Zanetor's Dad, delivered his last piece of advice to the National Democratic Congress. An old wise sage, who had suddenly become a statesman of few words, all he had to say to the congress was: 'Listen to yourself'.

FIFTEEN MINUTES OF FAME

Stan Xoese Dogbe — a polemical media guru — is the kind of personality any team can turn to when it's three-nil down and there are only fifteen minutes to go. He'd not just inspire the equalizer but grab the match winner too. He's got enough grit and focus to see the job through, no matter how difficult it seems.

My 15-minutes of fame within the NDC came after Stan Dogbe's media firm, Woezor Television, aired an editorial in which, as a floating voter — labelled a business executive and social activist — I wholeheartedly endorsed the National Democratic Congress and His Excellency John Mahama ahead of the 2020 election. An electorate which had never been more ambivalent towards the major parties, huge swaths of voters remained undecided. I'd performed one of the many articles — 'Ghana Deserves Better Leadership'[26] — previously published on *MyJoyOnline*. Before that, I was virtually unknown to the rank and file of the party.

Woezor TV had, earlier on, covered my nonagenarian grandma, Agatha Bentuma Djokoto's funeral — this was during the coronavirus era, and Mr Dogbe's firm were the ideal outfit to take care of such a sensitive once-in-a-lifetime event. Their production, manned intriguingly by

[26] *My JoyOnline,* 14 April 2020

a young crew, was phenomenal. Stan Dogbe is a prototypical methodological professional. And he provided his services at a discount, apparently for a favour I'd unknowingly done for him in the past. Francis Owusu — Mahama's happy-go-lucky photographer — shot the event. Mr Dogbe personally attended the mournful funeral too.

Subsequently, after the funeral, I then requested his paid-service to record the opinion editorial. He politely refused to accept any form of payment, and sent over his crew to record the editorial for free, which by the standards of Ghanaian politicians, is tender loving care.

His all-black-clothed crew came to the Ka xoxowo Salon with a Landcruiser full of advanced technology. Mr Dogbe, their boss, wasn't present himself. The entire production team at Woezor Television brought the video production alive and delivered it with charisma into people's living rooms. The video editorial was directed by Awenseba Sofo Ali. This, to me, marked the beginning of the years of video repetition that embeds one's face into the historical consciousness of our Republic. But the idea was never to build a brand, but instead to establish a presence. I was responsible for designing the set which featured my collection of handicrafts, a chessboard, a canvas painting and some books. In an army green kaftan, I said:

The fact is: little more than lip service has been paid to the illusory promises and unrealistic targets of the Akufo-Addo government. The grim reality today is that work and happiness has eluded the average Ghanaian worker.

John Dramani Mahama's government, as compared to Akufo-Addo's, was socially progressive, fiscally responsible, pro-business and Pan-African. He under-promised and over-delivered. The immediate past President presided over a more equitable and just society with a firm culture of innovation.

Akufo-Addo's government fell asleep at the wheel, crushed the economy and continues to impose punitive taxes on citizens to fix its huge mess. Ghanaians, especially young people, are affected by a quiet and deadly economic depression. The cost of living in urban Ghana is ridiculously high, wages are terribly low, and the new generation will have to pay for the hefty loans borrowed by the Akufo-Addo government while his crook-coddled team enjoy retirement on six-figure, or more, account balances.

The so-called change the New Patriotic Party propagated has been devoted entirely to self-serving

interests, while the most critical issues today, which concern the survival of Ghanaian households, have been either delayed or completely ignored. Our political advancement has been retarded. Standards of public service has been so lowered that the efficiency and integrity of the government is seriously impaired. Today, there is a strong suspicion among Ghanaian citizens, particularly within the middle-class, that free-market initiatives would be sabotaged by the pressures of powerful politically-affiliated conglomerates. There is no longer fluid social mobility.

We have moved past an era where complacent declarations and mediocre achievements retain a government in power. Politics is no longer about slogans that promise the world: free this, free that. It is about practical and creative solutions. It is about poverty-alleviation and sustainable wealth-creation.

This is why the National Democratic Congress has put forward a leader who is firmly committed to the technological revolution of the 21st century, modern infrastructure and a youth-oriented policy agenda. The party's manifesto has been centred on civic engagement; it is driven by the ideas of the people.

There are essentially two different kinds of Ghanaian politicians:

The first is merely obsessed with the ascension of the social ladder and determined to exploit political power for the benefit of a privileged few. This calibre of politician views the arduous responsibility of statecraft as a tea party political movement, to be conducted at leisure, by a select group of clansmen, friends and business associates; to them, government has absolutely nothing to do with the masses beyond getting their vote. These are largely the kind of politicians that dominate the present administration.

The second is concerned, not with the largesse of the Republic and social prestige, but about social reformation and nation-building from the bottom up. It is the day-to-day conditions of the peasant farmer, in the hinterlands, and the working class that is prioritised. This political culture cuts across tribal and social differences in Ghana; it is a breakaway from the impediment of a pretentious bourgeoisie which seeks to enrich its interest-group at the expense of economic independence for us all. This is the style of politics I identify with.

Well, the choice is yours. Do not give up your right to shape our path forward. A salient question is: how

> can the many Ghanaian citizens who continue to go through hardship possibly endorse a myopic administration? It is either we reject or maintain a government that has never worked for us and isn't likely to ever function in the greater interest of Ghanaians.

The editorial went viral. Moro Awudu expeditiously plotted a meeting at Honeysuckle, where I met with Edudzi Tameklo and an unassuming gentleman named Mr Allor, a confidante of Mahama. Mr. Tameklo, during our lunch, suggested I maintained a low profile, be a team player, and build up gradually in silence within the party. Mr Allor had very little say. On our second meeting, at an obscure Asian restaurant in Labone, this time just between Mr Allor, Moro Awudu and I, it was suggested that I should be mentored by Felix Kwakye Ofosu. Another meeting in vain, this never transpired.

YOUTH WITH JANE

I received a pleasant, somewhat life-changing, visit at home from Mr Robert Nunoo — a high-end banker — at the Ka xoxowo Salon, and a cult-friend of Bliss Dumashie. Mr Dumashie — who like Bernard Ashiadey, of the *Business & Financial Times*, and Laud Nartey of *3 News* — was a staunch public-relations collaborator of mine, except whom I had a more personal relationship with, since he had once taken up residency at the Ka xoxowo Salon. Mr Nunoo conveyed his intent to set up a meeting with Mr George Opare Addo, to which I readily obliged. I later spoke to Mr Opare Addo — a hoarse-voiced bulky barrister — who served as youth organizer for the NDC, to meet at his then Tesano-based office.

At the time, this was the NDCs youth secretariat: A fort established for operatives — such as Julian Cobbinah — apprentice politicians and other underlings of Mr Opare Addo. Edem Agbana, then a captivating deputy youth organizer for the NDC, was present but not within the meeting — his demeanour, when I encountered him at the office, smacked of a slight gawkiness. It was the sort of reception one might have expected when arriving for a masonic banquet in a pre-tied bowtie. I wasn't sure why. Mr Opare Addo made it known, during our fleeting dialogue, that the campaign team had requested

a meeting with me, booked for the next day. We agreed to meet at a dead end in Cantonments at 6:00 p.m., where Professor Opoku-Agyemang's campaign office operated from.

The following evening, I drove to the Cantonments-based campaign office and met Mr Opare-Addo. In an all-white linen shirt, he was parked at the junction in a black Mitsubishi Pajero.

'Djokoto, good to see you, and you're on time', he said. 'They'd be waiting for you inside', he continued. He ushered me into the interview but, wasn't himself, one of the questioners. He greeted the 'committee of movers and shakers', and proceeded to exit immediately. I was offered a seat at the head of the conference table. Present was the shrewd Honourable Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa MP, gentle James Agyenim Boateng Esq and deft Joyce Bawah Mogtari Esq, amongst a few others. My competency was being weighed up for the role of a moderator for a question-and-answer event. This was going to be the foremost media interaction by the fairly virgin politician, Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang, at a student-packed event dubbed 'Youth with Jane'. After a round of questions from the well-versed power-brokers, I concluded by stating: 'I hope you don't burn the late-night candle', to which there were giggles on the boardroom table.

The event was scheduled to take place in three days. I worked on the synopsis with Eugene Bawalle and another solicitous gentleman. I later with, Honourable Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, Member of Parliament for North Tongu, and special aide to the vice-presidential candidate, presented the synopsis to Professor Opoku-Agyemang, at her small squeaky clean office upstairs. I was jolly surprised when she gave authentic responses during the unofficial briefing. I could see her frantically skimming through her articulate vocabulary for some choice of words.

I'd expected us to simply work together on stage managing the occasion. But this revealed a lot about the purity of Professor Opoku-Agyemang, the strait-laced former education minister. To her, this pivotal debut civic interaction wasn't a public relations stunt, and she clearly wasn't a political actress. Since politicians love the oxygen of publicity, especially in the run-up to an important election, her honesty was charming and typical of a politician who wasn't prepared to perform for the cameras. Still, Professor Opoku-Agyemang is an oddity in 21st century Ghanaian politics. On the day, briefly introduced by Berla Mundi, I gave a short speech, and then presented the vice-presidential candidate:

> Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it's an honour to have you all here today. In 1948, a group of ambitious young men set out to free Ghana from the

grip of colonialism. And less than a decade later, we toppled foreign oppression, and took our territory back.

And that is why we are here today. That all begun with a Ghana Youth Conference. Today, the youth of Ghana find ourselves on the threshold of a new era of politics. And that's the symbolic representation of what's happening here today. Ghanaians, young ones as such, across various professions, are in a civic dialogue so we can suggest policies and the direction in which we seek our republic to develop.

Indeed, there is no greater opportunity than to engage a political colossus with a track-record of delivery and someone whose worked in the most vital ecosystem to the youth, which is education, since the mid-80s.

I am honoured, personally, to delve into the fine mind of the co-pilot of a political organisation that, hopefully, would decide where we would end up and how we will take Ghana forward.

vice-presidential candidate of the National Democratic Congress, it is an honour to have you here. And we would be honoured as a whole if you

> can grace us with your presence for a special Q-and-A session. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

Her introductory dialogue — which took place at the Mensvic hotel, East Legon, on 18 August 2020, and broadcasted live by Woezor Television — as vice-presidential candidate to the public, despite a mainstream media blackout, was a success.

I later met with a much more pleasant Edem Agbana at Kikibees, East Legon to iron out the unsettled issue over soft drinks. Apparently, there were some disgruntled youths who weren't too pleased the upper echelons of the party didn't select a fully-baked student politician, with a reputation amongst the youth wing, as moderator — or so he claimed. While I didn't take this with a pinch of salt, I didn't lose any sleep either.

Still in an attempt to penetrate first-time and floating voters, I recorded the second opinion editorial — 'A New Path Forward' — for Woezor Television the morning I was joining the Professor Opoku-Agyemang campaign. We didn't record with the air-condition on to avoid its penetrating sound — and to prevent compromising the quality of the film. The hall became quite warm and I developed a sweat patch, after a few attempts to get the video on-point. This led to a wardrobe malfunction —

and that's when I wore the crisp-white Mahama shirt I'd purchased earlier.

REMEMBRANCE: MAWUENA ADZO TREBARH (NEE DUMOR) — A LADY OF PERPETUAL ELOQUENCE.

It is still within a melancholic state-of-mind that we consciously mourn the tragic demise of an astute public servant, and — from first-hand personal experience — an intuitive public-relations-collaborator, in whom I eventually discovered a genuinely purposeful and dynamic friendship, through Ghana's gruelling premier post-pandemic political campaign.

Mawuena Trebarh (née Dumor); an eagle-eyed investor and courageous geologist, was the trailblazing pioneer female Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre — and throughout her thrilling career — Mrs Trebarh consistently demonstrated exemplary corporate leadership, with acute finesse. Her impetus was always a profound sense of duty; she did not struggle for personal empowerment, but for the privilege to serve Ghana, which implies ingenuous selflessness.

During her stint, as deputy spokesperson of the John Mahama and National Democratic Congress Election (NDC) 2020 campaign, Mrs Trebarh laboured

assiduously for the long-term success of the congress and influenced many significant developments.

Everyone — family, friends and acquaintances — whose life was touched by Mrs Trebarh (née Dumor) will be diminished by having to live in a Ghana without her. She perpetually pondered over the destiny of the party. Her legacy shall continue to inspire generations unborn. Rest in peace, boss.

AN OFFER I COULD NOT REFUSE

I was head-hunted, first, by Nana Kofi Quakyi, who after the 'Youth with Jane' event, thought it'll be good idea for me to work on strategically luring first-time and floating voters. The other offer came — over brunch at Bistro 22, Labone — from lady Joyce Bawah Mogtari Esq, to develop a communications strategy for the John Mahama and Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang campaign, a roll-out plan I duly submitted.

Lastly, I met with Bill Boglo, an actuary and protégé of Kotei Dzani. He had an office — the makeshift communications bureau in Labone — spearheaded by Mawuena Trebarh, at the top floor of the same building which, at the time, housed Moses Kanduri's firm; Alex Pay. They had all made the same offer; one I could not refuse — joining the communications team of the campaign, although in different capacities.

The most decisive meeting, however, was at the Labone rooftop office, which included slick and sharp communicators, such as Raymond Yeldidong Bayor, who had once worked at the Presidency. There were serious criticisms about the fashion sense and style of the vice-presidential candidate during the meeting.

Mrs Trebarh, obviously a vocal feminist, in Professor Opoku-Agyemang's strong defence, chastised the all-male boardroom for what she felt was an unfair profiling and marginalism of an accomplished elderly woman she held a deep respect for.

'She's full of substance and that's what matters', Mrs Trebarh, the only one standing up, at the head of the table, fiercely asserted, with her knuckles firmly on the table. Working with Mrs Trebarh was the most promising offer, and so I accepted to join her on the campaign trail, as a public relations specialist.

As a result of recording — that morning — the second video editorial, I'd missed the convoy, which according to the campaign office security, had already left about almost half an hour before I arrived. Providentially, Mrs Trebarh had some mechanical issues with her Landcruiser, so she hadn't departed yet. This wasn't resolved, so we all left with Alex Segbefia, deputy campaign chairperson, who politely waited behind for her.

'Go to the Tesano police station, and I'd meet you there', Mawuena ordered.

I left my car parked at the Tesano police station — a stone's throw away from Mr Segbefia's residence.

On the road, I quickly noticed the tentacles of the divinized Church Street mafia, most of its leaders, in the

twilight of their lives — consisting of the Ahwoi brothers, Totobi Quakyi amongst other kingpins — and their minions were wrapped tightly around the candidates' team. Professor Opoku-Agyemang, as I saw it, was merely the symptom of a campaign crew whose priorities had become higgledy-piggledy. It elevated its kingmakers' decisions over its rank and file. The organization of their minions into a small syndicate left us with very little room to manoeuvre.

'Our ships must sail in the same direction. We can't have parallel objectives', I told Mr Ablakwa, at our lodging in the Eastern Region. He nodded in silence.

I didn't have the power to enforce the many bright public relations strategies coming from a pool of journalists — much to the frustration of folks like Pete Tenge, who overrated the authority I actually possessed. A party founded as an instrument of power for the downtrodden had become an expression of virtue for an old-guard. I kept nudging Mrs Trebarh that we needed control of the social media handles.

'We can't be dodging hard choices. We must change the outlook of the National Democratic Congress and redefine its values.', I told Mrs Trebarh.

When we arrived at a hotel in the Central Region, a meeting was called ostensibly so the security personnel — henchmen and private detectives — would be familiar with the rest of the campaign team. One of them,

Xaxabu Djokoto, happened to be my relative; a member of the Tɛŋgɛ Dzokoto royal family.

Honourable Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa MP — a development agent par excellence — openly, in a rant, reprimanded Bill Boglo for leaking information to sections of the public that he had hijacked the campaign team, in his capacity as special aide to Professor Opoku-Agyemang — but this was, in fact, true to a large extent. He appeared to be a young politician who, in the spur of the moment, saw arrogance as his greatest asset.

'Sam did you really need to do this in front of everyone?' Alex Segbefia, being the voice of reason, queried.

Besides this obvious flaw, Mr Ablakwa competently attended to the affairs of his constituency and simultaneously made time for the campaign. He didn't hesitate to go to parliament during the day and return at night to maintain an omnipresence over the campaign. He was quite popular in remote areas, often introduced to our gatherings, by rural party bosses, as a ruthless communicator the NPP were terrified of.

I finally took charge of the social media handles after a quiet tussle with Mr Ablakwa and his posse; the Church Street mafia. As team-lead — communications — for Professor Opoku-Agyemang, I managed a lean crew of photographers and a filmmaker, with very little resources. After taking control, I began pulling the strings and our spin operation became a closed micro-managed

campaign — as we were plunged into a fierce battle to capture the minds of Ghanaians. I had the personal log-ins to Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram of Professor Opoku-Agyemang — and for months, communicated on her behalf, with Mrs Trebarh directly supervising my work initially. She later entrusted the posts to my discretion. I also worked on a variety of human-interest stories, which were published across newspapers and online news platforms.

I didn't, unlike Mahama's communications team, upload tens of pictures at once. My strategy was to use one, or just a handful of pictures, and either a policy or motivational caption. The focus was more on unique individuals in curating an online experience for Professor Opoku Agyemang's fanbase. In a strict, almost domineering nature, I'd physically shift the photographers to get the right shots and chastised them for sleeping on the job when necessary. When you've only got one iPhone, one rickety laptop, two cameras and no stable internet — order becomes a necessity. I'd extend my hand and bring my thumb up to meet my fingers in one motion when the photographers were chattering too much.

I once scouted a baby girl and put her on the laps of the candidate. This happened in the middle of a constituency event, after I had consulted with Alex Segbefia first. He was part of the posse seated behind her.

'Just go about your job normally', he said.

I wasn't sure if it'll sit well with Professor Opoku-Agyemang: she was always much more emotionally in tune with every moment, rather than aware of the photographer's lens. And, secondly, this was an era in which social distance was a big deal. But I felt that shot was needed to convey her motherly instincts, which were real. I recall, on one occasion, at Professor Opoku-Agyemang's hometown residence, she personally refreshed us with breakfast. It was a bit like the erstwhile Queen Elizabeth pouring tea for her guests — we didn't necessarily expect it of her, and so her humility stood out more. So, that's how we got the shot of Professor Opoku-Agyemang holding a baby on the campaign trail. It was a risk, at the time, because close contact wasn't permitted due to the coronavirus.

At the Suhum constituency, where we visited the Suhum Palace, in the eastern region, I spotted another striking woman within the crowd. She spotted a black NDC-branded polo shirt, at the time, was personal aide to Amanda Okyere, a parliamentary candidate. I directed Nana Gyasi Boateng to grab a shot of her. At the time, the photo went viral and became one of the defining shots of the vice-presidential campaign. It was my job to spot such fine photography opportunities outside capturing just the candidate and her predictable crowd. I would compensate the legendary shots by our

photography team with a cold bottle of indigenous Ghanaian beer — Club — whenever I spotted one from a shop during our campaigns stops.

I similarly asked then party Chairman Ofosu-Ampofo to pause and pose, with motorcycle riders as the background, which he complied — and this made for another iconic shot too.

At President Mills' constituency — Komenda Edina Eguafo Abrem Constituency in the Central Region — we completely ditched the team and climbed uphill to the top of a mountain where a deprived family were dwelling, and recorded a short reel of their everyday life.

We bumped into them while they were busy cooking. There were some other young men busy enjoying a joint at the site overlooking the entire town. In such areas, I made it a habit to always look for a higher platform such as this, where I'd bend down and soak in the entire campaign experience. And, with my eyes as the sole utensil of my imagination, I was simply a helpless witness who, usually with a self-destructive cigarette in hand, and on one occasion LSD, admired the eclectic and sober nature decorated with human frenzy. On that particular acid-themed day, the campaign experience took a spiritual turn.

Going to bed at 2:00 a.m. and waking up 5:30 a.m., totally frazzled, Professor Opoku-Agyemang was more than just one person: she became a collective entity, an

entourage and a coterie of officials and advisors whose main task was to manage her beehive of daily activities.

For months, the prudish former education minister made speeches on rural development, observed traditional rituals, promoted the manifesto and flag bearer, 2John Dramani Mahama — and visited some of the bleakest parts of our republic. Meanwhile, I would telephone and text far-flung journalists all night to follow up on stories. Journalists accustomed to her usual formal — some might say stern and even awkward — style of speaking were taken by surprise as Professor Opoku-Agyemang joked with the crowd in colloquial Fante. She quickly learnt how to sway excitable crowds in delirium through her oratory, bringing the everyday language on the street into the realm of high politics. The cautious and quiet academic had suddenly discovered how to woo the grassroot electorate.

'There were plans for Komla Dumor to be a vice-presidential candidate, and since he passed on, that responsibility became mine', Mrs Trebarh confided in me. She had organized her entire life in anticipation for this position.

A religious lady, who had utmost faith in Jesus Christ, her persuasive prophet had reassured her that the role of vice-presidential candidate was her manifest destiny. She would have, no doubt, been a more appealing candidate than Professor Opoku-Agyemang. But because of her

own vice-presidential ambitions — and the disappointment she experienced after not being nominated, she grew, especially with the cold war between our rookie camp and the Church Street mafia, detached from running the communications machinery, beyond a few radio interviews.

She was constantly on her phone, either with Esther Cobbah, or her husband — a fine-looking young well-built former military officer — who, according to Bill Boglo, apparently left the service because, as a conscientious objector, he refused to go on duty for a war. The Trebarh's paid me a brief visit together once at the Ka xoxowo Salon, where I was formally introduced to Mrs Trebarh's husband.

Nana Gyasi Boateng, a gifted photographer — who although not a Freemason, wore a masonic ring which caught my attention — and his gang of hustlers, including Joojo Assibey, were novices with very little professional gear. We couldn't rely on Wi-Fi in rural parts of the constituency; and it was tumultuous using Nana Gyasi Boateng's run-down Hewlett Packard laptop. Airdrop was a better alternative; so, we demanded Apple products; this request was never honoured.

The technical team had been hired by Bill Boglo, a crooked individual who sought to use Mrs Trebarh's position as an opportunity to skyrocket himself within the

party; and also make money by skimming off the top of our chicken-change budget at every opportunity. Bill would personally get down from the car and walk towards fuel attendants, then tell them to inflate the price of the fuel we bought, so he could recover the margin from Mawuena Trebarh.

Bill and Mawuena had a mother-son relationship which he had sought to exploit. Mawuena made a suicidal blunder by selecting Bill Boglo as her special aide — a pathological braggard, Bill believed in Aŋlɔ supremacy, and was particularly bitter about how Eʋes had lost control of the National Democratic Congress; a sentiment I could strongly relate to. Nonetheless, he fatally undermined our credibility.

In the interim, I explained our qualms about being underfunded to Alex Segbefia of Anyako, and all he could tell us — after weeks of complaints about being technologically under-resourced, and snatching control of the social media handles, asserting our authority over Professor Opoku-Agyemang's communications — was that we, the entire media crew, were 'pawns'. What a deplorable statement.

He had chosen a high-handed rather than a compassionate approach, which totally took me by surprise. Alex Segbefia, a seasoned politician, was inhumanly apathetic — keeping all his decent cards close to his chest. An Aŋlɔ royal? A pawn? I found this severely

insulting to myself and ancestors, especially coming from a royal subject.

'Keep calm, after the elections, you'd get paid', Alex Segbefia assured the technical media crew.

Lacking impulse control, unwisely in retrospect, and regrettably so, I decided to revenge; an eye for an eye. In an amateur move, I launched 'operation *Dadea Anoma'* only because Mr Segbefia had disrespected our value as spinsters and dared to degenerate us. That's when I made up my mind to tango with the devil within. I decided my subordinates wouldn't shoot any longer until they got paid in cash, fully, for their services.

They desperately needed the money to upgrade their equipment. Alex Segbefia paid a mere sixty thousand cedis, all in cash, a day after. No hedge fund manager would get out of bed for that kind of chicken feed. I later received a stake in the photography company. And with our on-the-road experience, I continued 'campaigning' even after we lost the election.

'I've never felt this disrespected in my life', Alex Segbefia reacted.

I didn't think he'd take it personal; it was just business. I never heard from him again until about a year later when he called, after I sent him my ground-breaking article on Nkrumah's secret lover, to which he remarked: 'We need

a historian as President'. I later confided in Joyce Bawah Mogtari Esq and told her about the entire drama.

'If you're always cleaning up everything, it'll stain your hands — it might even end up smelling on you' Tɛŋgɛ remarked, about the situation.

Meanwhile, Kwabena Opoku-Agyemang wanted a voice recording of Bill Boglo seeking to extort Nana Gyasi Boateng — and asked for this at a dinner at Alliance française. All is fair in love and war. Initially a bit sceptical, I felt an overwhelming need to exonerate Mrs Trebarh, who took her reputation very seriously.

'As Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Chief Executive Officer, I dealt with personalities like the Rothschilds', she confided in me.

'Do you know what it takes to deal with such people and not be corrupt?' she once said, calmly forking her salad.

My entrance into the National Democratic Congress couldn't be characterized by petty thievery. The stigma that I had been part of a clique stifling paltry campaign funds for private use wasn't the reputation I needed. I had to clear my name. So, I obtained a voice recording from Nana Gyasi Boateng and sent it to Kwabena Opoku-Agyemang as requested. This, to throw Bill Boglo under the bus, was a non-negotiable demand. At the end of it all, there was no better location for a perplexed Pan-Africanist to completely unwind than

at The Republic Bar & Grill — especially when kissing its signature *Kokoroko*.

ARTICLES I AUTHORED ON PROFESSOR OPOKU-AGYEMANG DURING THE CAMPAIGN

Yes, she can: The Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang factor

Professor Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang's candidacy inspired a wave of female inclusion at the highest levels of management, whether in government or in the free market — a spark that may very well define Ghana's political culture for centuries to come.

Politics is the engine of development, and Professor Opoku-Agyemang clutched the wheel, as co-pilot for Ghana's largest opposition party, the National Democratic Congress. A generational thinker and change-maker, Opoku-Agyemang is concerned with the pursuance of policies that will have an endless impact on the mass of our people.

But it is not just about gender, Opoku-Agyemang is an ideal vice-presidential candidate. She's intellectual, assertive and

discipline. The *Accra Evening News*, in collaboration with the *Accra Free Press* club, based on research, asserted that the reaction to her candidacy was so euphoric that it exceeded the excitement for any other vice-presidential nominee in the 4th Republic. I couldn't agree more.

This is a lady that has dedicated her entire adult life to public service. Professor Opoku-Agyemang has been at the helm of educational transformation in Ghana since the mid-80s. Her revolution in public life has been quiet and effective; she has steered her path through the complexities of public administration with grace. Naana has a track-record of delivery.

A lecturer and administrator with the capacity to juggle multiple responsibilities, Opoku-Agyemang was entrusted with various roles at the University of Cape Coast. She served as the Head of the Department of English, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Warden of Adehye Hall, Valco Trust Fund Post-Graduate Hostel, and Dean of School of Graduate Studies and Research. Her sterling performance earned her the position of Academic Director of the School for

International Training in the History and Cultures of the African Diaspora.

In March 2007, Naana, a celebrated black woman of excellence, emerged unto the global scene when she addressed the savagery of racism — one that has continued to divide humanity for centuries — at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, during the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery. She has always championed the rights of the misgoverned, underprivileged and oppressed. Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang shattered the status quo when, in 2008, after 63 years of independence, she became the first female Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast.

Opoku-Agyemang, despite her personal opinions and interests, was widely regarded as a citizen that placed the agenda of a better Ghana above that of partisanship. She always kept her public utterances fact-based, simple, straightforward and salient.

She demonstrated this as Education Minister between 2013-17 when she embarked on a radical infrastructural programme that planted centres of scholarship in the hinterlands and

made education accessible to the impoverished. And that is the calibre of leadership the Republic deserves; someone who believes in equal opportunity for all.

Even the New Patriotic Party, her detractors by default, have welcomed the integrity she brings to Ghanaian politics. The National Democratic Congress has brought on board a political figure that is a reflection of middle-class Ghana; she enjoys goodwill among the intelligentsia and can relate to the everyday struggle of low-income households and enterprises. [27]

[27] *My JoyOnline*, 27 July 2020

The infectious charisma of Professor Opoku-Agyemang

Professor Opoku-Agyemang has an insatiable desire for service. Her work ethic is in itself leadership elevated to an art. And I witnessed this distinct quality she possesses, in abundance, from a front-row seat. The vice-presidential candidate of the National Democratic Congress — John Mahama's seasoned co-pilot — has this profound ability to instantly establish an intimate connection with voters while on the move.

It's past sunset and Professor Opoku-Agyemang has been on the road since sunrise. We finally arrive at the Sekondi Palace and manoeuvre through the euphoric swam of patriotic citizens — many of them visibly seduced by her presence. It's the last official event of the day and her entire team is terribly exhausted. But not the vice-presidential candidate. For her, the deeply engrained pursuit of excellence goes on. Professor Opoku-Agyemang is always ready to draw people closer and deliberate with them.

She has an infectious charisma that arouses excitement within the mass-based rank and file of the party. But what she's even far more remarkably excellent at is to stimulate the intellectual interest of apolitical people and apathetic voters. The affection was reciprocal and quite characteristic of a woman that has spent decades dedicated to the lives of others — especially young people. She gazed at the young man for a brief moment, with an obvious look of melancholy, and waved.

Professor Opoku-Agyemang never ceases to take her eyes off the voters. She devotes her entire attention to the energy of the crowd and measures the pulse of the people. To the exuberant youth lined up on the streets, the emotions do not stem from their fascination with her fame, there's more to it. As a pace-setting academic — the first female Vice-Chancellor of a state University — her natural instinct is to develop the talents of people; that has been a core value of her profession.

Naana, over the course of her academic career, has administered an institution clustered with citizens from all provinces of Ghana. The Cape Coast University — a centre of scholarship over which she presided — is more or less a microcosm of the Republic. And that's why her stance on

ethnocentrism is straightforward: to deconstruct institutionalised tribalism and build on the values that unite us.

She emerged through the glass ceilings of society with grace and earned the respect of Ghanaians. She continues to restore faith in the hearts of us all that politics can, indeed, be a decent profession if done differently. This was a defining moment for Ghana. We were on the verge of a historic occasion and she was at the heart of this movement. [28]

[28] *Graphic Online*, 16 September 2020

From Sekondi with love

It is slightly past midday, we are in Sekondi and the weather is as hot as lava. All it takes is one drop of water, or maybe more, for any of us to exude steam. But for now, the campaign team still has miles to walk. We soldier on.

The team is boxed within a sauna from the coal-tarred streets beneath and archaic cement buildings surrounding us. The sea is only a stone-throw away, lined up with hand-crafted banana-shaped traditional Fanti pirogues and canoes, sculptured from wood. There is only a thick pile of rubbish on rocks that divides us; it merely mirrors the calibre and performance of the present government entrusted to shape our society.

But there's a shift in our moods and energies moments after. And of course, it's powered by the music. A vehicle right ahead of us, loaded with speakers, blasts without any apologies the political rendition of gospel hit song 'Bobolebo'.

I'm not the only one suddenly invigorated — joined by a flock of progressives, the team jog and clap to the message of the song. It's not too long before we

hop in the car and get back on the road. Destination: the Ghana National Association of Teachers Hall. Professor Opoku-Agyemang is scheduled to hold a dialogue session with traders and professionals.

The ambiance within the building upon her arrival is almost spiritual — there's a rare sense of genuine love and admiration for Prof. Opoku-Agyemang. She glides through the hall with grace and ascends the stage.

The rapture couldn't be tempered even after an ambitious plea by organisers for people to calm down. And, in that divine moment, the vice-presidential candidate, with what has become her signature dance, sways gently from side to side, rolling one index finger over the other. I was utterly shocked by the cult around her personality.

The hall is packed with a kaleidoscope of citizens: From the meticulous carpenters and masons that erect the structures of the city, seamstresses that keep the community vogue, an association of gender equity activists and so forth.

One after the other, the groups outline their aspirations and shower the vice-presidential candidate with praise. Prof. Opoku-Agyemang

remains principled. She does not adjust her flag to the wind. Instead, she stays on course. She listens. She absorbs opinions, assessments and notes down ideas. She finally makes her way to the podium. There's a brief few seconds of silence in anticipation of her speech.

Prof. Opoku-Agyemang made a case that the denial of basic socio-economic rights to Ghanaians wasn't a partisan issue and called, in an outburst of nationalism, for the community to broaden their idea of Ghana as a Republic above tribalism. We all sat tightly glued to our seats and assimilated her values. The happiness she was received with didn't quite match her exit; they were determined to halt her departure. 'Yaa Asantewaa don't leave', a lady attired in NDC colours wailed.

To women like her — green, white, red and black are more than just colours; the NDC flag is a character and a distinct approach to nation-building. The era of a new dawn in our struggle draws nigh. Ghana is blessed with an elegant culture, diligent citizens and abundant natural resources. The mass of our people can't continue to endure the painful socio-economic realities that keep them in poverty and disease. We must rise above the

challenges and leave a past of mediocre nation-building behind.

The National Democratic Congress shall return Ghana to its post-independence era of glory, so we take our rightful place amongst the nations of the universe. [29]

[29] *My JoyOnline*, 17 September 2020

From Cape Coast with love

Professor Opoku-Agyemang began the Central Region tour at the studios of Radio Central where she held a tête-à-tête with Benjamin Tetteh Nartey, host of the Central Morning Show.

I walked across the road from the radio station to a local fast-food joint close-by to grab a light meal — I noticed a petite aged lady, limping towards the food counter, with her radio set close to her ear, tuned into the show. A group of casually dressed young people had also gathered around a cell phone also tuned in.

The media brings the sentiments of citizens, wherever they may find themselves on Ghana's map, directly to politicians. It even goes beyond that: media institutions like Radio Central are an essential catalyst for trade, education and entertainment within the province. This is why press freedom must be protected at all cost so journalists can hold state institutions accountable. The mission is to reach the remotest parts of the hinterlands. It is 12:00 p.m. and we have just arrived at the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-

Abirem municipality. The team is excited to be back on the road.

The citizens are happy to welcome the National Democratic Congress. But beneath the chants are hidden scars of poverty disguised by the smiles of a hospitable electorate. The loud endorsement for the National Democratic Congress is met with mild stoicism from Prof. Opoku-Agyemang. They can sense the time has come to flip the script and charter a new path. We can too. But it's much deeper than that: the 8th government of the 4th Republic is expected to work twice as harder than all previous governments combined.

It's a Herculean task. The responsibility to reinvent a Republic after centuries of economic exploitation would require a unique politician. Well, the miracle here is that the vice-presidential candidate of the NDC brings this calibre of leadership to the ticket — she is a revolutionary. We finally arrive at the Kotokuraba market — the entire town literally poured onto the streets, all uniformed in NDC merchandise. It's cinematic.

A couple of boisterous lads hop unto the side-step of our vehicle. I'm not quite if I should be disturbed or excited. They're fired up — but in no time I realized

that was just a tip of the iceberg. It was a deceitful hint of the frenzy we were to encounter. The road ahead is packed to the brink. It almost looks meticulously rehearsed. Is this a pop concert? This is a brilliant curtain raiser to the tour — it doesn't take a soothsayer to predict the NDC has spread its wings across the Central Region. People are ready for change.

Voice of the silent majority

This is the turning point of the campaign season. Almost the entire partisan base of the National Democratic Congress is poised and determined to challenge the political establishment. Ghanaians have decided to take the bull by the horns and put a stop to the politics of our past.

There are views commonly held by the silent majority; the anti-establishment citizens. And it is the perception that the fundamental pillars of our democracy are supposed to check and balance the excessive power of the government, such as the Judiciary, Electoral Commission and mainstream media, have been compromised. This is why the NDC has expanded its reach and captured the support of once undecided voters.

Public opinion suggests there are simple reasons for this: The gap of inequality is wider than ever; nepotism continues to undermine the prospect of a fair and equitable society; ethnocentrism is on the rise; and, lastly, the economy has been poorly managed.

The vice-presidential candidate for the National Democratic Congress, Prof. Naana Opoku-Agyemang, is regarded as the voice of the silent majority. And that is because Ghanaians can vouch for her integrity; she has the discipline to restore dignity in our politics. The Jubilee House can no longer be used as a catalyst for an oligarchy in Ghana.

Since Prof. Jane resumed her tour of the Central Region, it has been clear: there is a sudden sense of urgency. It's glaring and her campaign staff is in sync: success is the only option and we cannot afford to make this historic occasion slip away. We shall campaign on every corner of the hinterlands, on the sea and in the mountains — we shall never surrender until victory is ours.

We can choose four more years of Akufo-Addo's divisive politics, failed social interventions and poor economic management — or we can usher our Republic into a new era of Ghanaian politics. It isn't enough to win the Presidential race. The Office of the President would not get any support from an NPP dominated parliament; it will be practically impossible to steer Ghana in the right direction.

From the northern to southern part of Ghana, and everywhere in-between, the National Democratic Congress has a formidable team of candidates ready to take over parliament and retire Mike Ocquaye. A glance through the candidates list for the upcoming party conference revealed an immensely organised, competent and practical set of politicians, deeply rooted in the NDCs proud tradition. To lose any of them would've been a devastating blow for the next flag-bearer and the party. This is why we must avoid a hung parliament and secure a majority to put Ghana back on track.

This election is about the struggle to preserve our national identity, protect our democratic franchise and develop our economy. John Mahama and Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang are focused on creating equal opportunities for all Ghanaians, expanding the middle class, improving healthcare and providing progressive governance. John Mahama and Professor Opoku-Agyemang can do this.[30]

TABLOIDS

[30] *Graphic Online*, 5th October 2020

Bridget Otoo, a seasoned characteristically unpretentious journalist, and established cement retailer — with whom I had a brief affair — finally provided the Midas touch. She took it upon herself to launch me into the public sphere, and decided to personally promote me on Twitter. Ms Otoo incentivized thousands of people — some bots — with cash and follow-backs, all in an effort to get more awareness towards my page, which, upon receiving attention, grew less abstract and more populist. Bridget Otoo single-handedly provided a segue into the cultural zeitgeist.

She had reached out via twitter — early December 2020, post-elections — and expressed admiration for my style of politics. We subsequently went for a sparkling dinner date at Bistro 22, Labone where we muttered — with grins hard to hide, in the union of our sight — about our childhoods, over a bottle of wine, and after feasting, came back to the Ka xoxowo Salon where we swayed to Kojo Antwi's music.

Ms Otoo later held a birthday dinner at Villa Monticello, Airport Residential on the 31 December 2020, where I met other journalists Nana Aba Anamoah and Serwaa Amihere, as well as comedian, Barima Amponsah — and there was also an upcoming rapper who freestyled for us too. Kwabena Opoku-Agyemang was also in attendance. Her good-looking husband-to-be, Van Tetteh, clearly an over-enthusiastic freemason, met me at the close of

dinner singing, with pointed poetic accuracy, masonic appellations. I found this a bit awkward, but nonetheless admired his relentless and boisterous passion for the good old craft. I also went along with my photographer, Nana Gyasi Boateng, who after taken up residency at Ka xoxowo Salon, developed a liking for chess, and mastered how to manipulate the guitar. A devout catholic, Nana Gyasi Boateng was keen to arrive at the Ka xoxowo Salon and crossover with a prayer. I wasn't too bothered.

A few weeks after, Bridget, Nana and I met up at Serwaa's. Serwaa was a ridiculously beauteous swan spawn with a Pepsodent smile. A most gracious hostess — hair-tied in a pony with no make-up on — clothed in a decent violet bodycon, we were graciously welcomed inside her home with a few bottles of Moët, which sat obediently in an ice-bucket.

So, we kicked off an eventful night with bubbly, and then later indulged in an infused tangerine cocktail — notoriously labelled *Amen* — mixed with Hennessy. We then dined over a Japanese meal. I barely ate. Serwaa then invited me into her spotless kitchen where she was preparing jollof. I'm not quite sure if it was the munchies — but it had to be the best jollof I've ever tasted in my life. She's a terrific cook. Above the clouds, eyes rheumy, and on my fifth or so glass, I quietly watched her glossy lips move, nodding from time to time.

At around 3:30 a.m., Bridget and Nana — two lightweights — had completely passed out, and so our hangout came to an abrupt end, as Serwaa paused the *Made in Lagos* album and walked upstairs. I indulged, perhaps the most, but was still up and alert. After sitting in the silence of my drunkenness for a few minutes, I headed upstairs to her room — to say goodbye.

I knocked.

'Come in'.

She was tucked beneath a neat plain-white duvet.

'Can I join you in bed?' I asked.

'Oh yeah, sure' she said, without hesitating, with a raucous glee.

I had an involuntary erection at this point; the feeling of sensory overload. But kept the discourse purely professional. This was around 4:00 a.m.

I kicked my shoes off and went underneath her duvet. She was busy monitoring local current affairs; it must've been a pre-recorded show — and I asked who her favourite politician was. After she replied, I then left her room. It's a myth how hard she works, and still manages to keep herself so beautiful.

I then sped — the proverbial aesthetic psychopath behind the wheel, hurtling with the drive and force of feel — to Osu intoxicated, drunk-driving, blasting Olamide's

Loading through the car speakers, occasionally running a few red lights, and went to see Angelique, a Beninese stripper on Oxford Street who I picked up to the Ka xoxowo Salon, to temper my libido. Oxford Street is one of Ghana's hotbeds for assorted discounted pussy.

Upon reaching the residence, and accessing my chateau, I alternated between Marijata's 'I Walk Alone' and Balla et ses Balladins' 'Paulette' — back-to-back, for about half an hour, until the session was over. I gorged on the melodies from a yin yang plate, and drank gallons of long preserved vintage faith. Until now: secrets blended with the complexion of the night; skeletons locked in the closet; and lips sealed. Angelique, who smelled like Kyara, nailed me against a board and played darts; she had a distinct taste in human arts.

'Oh God', I whispered.

Her beauty lied at the heart of its detail, as I worshiped God through the body of a female, available for retail.

'Why wouldn't you just have sex with me?', Angelique demanded, in a thick francophone accent, moaning praises to the highest.

'It's just a principle of mine, Angelique. Kindly keep pirouetting', I replied, with inch-perfect confidence and immaculate discipline.

I lit up a Partagás, and slipshod on my bovine leather Barcelona chair, with lungs pumping smoke out like an

old chimney, observed — through Angelique's sensual tease — the exquisiteness of Accra's unrepentant culture of wild debauchery. Excessive alcohol triggers a penchant for such self-destructiveness and a flagrant lack of self-control. This is why, like a Catholic priest, I only consume alcohol in small quantities nowadays; the rest goes into the sacristy.

Angelique later hailed a lone taxi roaming Alema Avenue at dawn, sat in the backseat and faded back into the chronic lust of the streets. I then drove back to Serwaa's house to fetch Nana — who was still fast asleep on the couch, except this time with a stertorous snore — when I arrived. In the early morning, before sunrise, Accra was still cloaked with grey and shadow, with a hint of rain in the air. After a long lively ribald night, I had a bubble bath and went off to slumber without pleading with God.

Nana Aba Anamoah, also quite influential in my public relations work at the time, organized a handful of television interviews for me on GHOne TV in January, 2021 — and, based on her observations, didn't think my style of politics was conducive to the Ghanaian environment. 'You're too posh. You even say exchequer instead of minister of finance.' She once remarked.

She later, during the heat of the flagbearer for National Democratic Congress, arranged for a meeting with Kwabena Duffuor Jnr, who offered me the position as

spokesperson for his father's campaign. On that day, prior to the meeting, I visited my ex-lover, Abena's Tse Addo residence for advice. She declined to see me. But her younger brother, who I met, encouraged me to go ahead with the meeting, and that everything was going to be fine. I just needed reassurance from a trusted person.

Abena's parents, a noble couple, always graciously received me into their stately home. They were sentient of my active involvement in the 2020 campaign and generously shared their rare insight into Ghanaian politics. Although Abena was a perfect match, I had to break off the relationship to delve into unconventional pop culture politics; pursuing a clout-based fictional tabloid relationship with Serwaa Amihere and Bridget Otoo, much to her abhorrence. This was a short-sighted cost for a second chance at real love. Many of my former lovers have since been taken to the alter.

I was chauffeured in my late grandmother's sedan Mercedes E-class to Airport Residential for the meeting. It was about ten minutes from the Ka xoxowo Salon. I eventually rejected the offer after brief consultations with Stan Dogbe and Joyce Bawah Mogtari Esq. And, one by one, the camera fodder dropped out of the race as the winnowing process culled the superfluous Mr Duffuor.

KETA CONSTITUENCY AND POLITICAL START-UP

Our little *cosa nostra* — my political start-up, for our experimentation with practical politics — consisted of Ibrahim Adle Muhammad, as special aide; Osman Musah, as security personnel; Nana Gyasi Boateng and Joojo Assibey, for photography and videography, respectively. Nana Gyasi Boateng and Joojo Assibey stayed with me at the Ka xoxowo Salon, after the campaign, for a year.

Together, we'd cruise to party press conferences at Adabraka — all fitted in my tiny vehicle, while Osman rode his motorcycle. I'd usually discuss the hadith with Adle and Osman before setting off. Osman later began to provide personal security services for Mona Faiz Montrage, which was more far lucrative than working for me for free, based on pure loyalty. We operated on a lean budget.

I'd been comfortably steering the narrative and building a credible ticket for the Keta Constituency until a peacock nincompoop, Kojo Jones Mensah — a trite nouveau riche bearded spiv, cosplaying a politician — popped up from nowhere, and backed by the Tinubu

family from Nigeria, started throwing cash in every direction, crisscrossing Aŋlɔ without any strong local roots. My father could've easily funded a landslide victory, given his wealth and network within the establishment, but plainly refused. It's never been his wish to see me pursue my childhood dream of an active career in politics.

All the same, I always had larger desires that exceeded the astigmatic funfair and trickery involved in convincing stomach-direction delegates, or trying to lure people whose loyalties were clearly established beyond materialism. Kojo Jones Mensah came a terrible third after blowing money fast. Fool is, indeed, the last to know.

His loss was a proud moment for the NDC. And Keta constituency delegates proudly demonstrated that Jerry John Rawlings's hometown seat was not for sale. The joke of the decade, his money galore sought to compromise values and ethics.

In spite of everything, there'd always be scheming cosa-nostra-styled factions lobbying pokerfaced delegates to ensure their handpicked candidates are crowned at political catwalks. Underpinned by panic, it is part of the startling but exciting world of internal party elections.

Meanwhile, rare is the politician who doesn't have premeditated views on the election of party representatives, and whom exactly they prefer. But John

Mahama — who was marginally more popular than anyone else vying for flag-bearer — remained neutral with regards to this, refusing to divulge if he was, in fact, backing anyone. Delegates aren't sheep, and do not need shepherding. So, this was a brilliant, professionally appropriate stance. And Mr Mahama had enough goodwill to heal the rifts, bury the hatchets, and unify our party post-congress.

For the NPP onlookers, theirs was to observe in silence and pray NDC contestants eviscerate themselves. They were eagerly monitoring the airwaves, prying for soundbites and punchlines in preparation for a frivolous smear campaign about how divided our party was. In the terrifying but comic world of politics, if you add to each rant of malice a large dose of secrets and sentiment, listeners will interpret your vitriol as plain-speaking and your prurience as sympathy. But there's a gloomy sub-plot running through all this fun-filled hate.

Although the banter had been fierce leading up to the ballot, it was but low-budget *kumawood* series compared to the real-life crisis in full-swing. Rumblings of popular discontent had been lapping around Ghana's economic management committee for years; but there was never a significant reshuffle. Many felt the quicker they bolted off into oblivion, the better for generations unborn.

In pursuit of the Keta constituency safe seat, against conventional politics, I didn't go to the delegates. Instead,

I founded an investment firm — Voltacoast — with a straightforward vision of managing the Anlo Rural Bank, which held its monopoly as the constituencies' only bank and principal financial institution.

Voltacoast was comprised of a team with an excess of 30 years of combined high-profile management consulting, financial advisory, technology and project management experience. The firm's directors had exposure to projects in a diverse range of sectors, both locally and in foreign markets.

The team consisted of Benjamina Addy — a dexterous and result-driven professional with over ten years of experience in branding, media, and showbiz and over three years of experience in strategy investment and financial advisory — who was in charge of strategy; Elom Lardi-Glawu — my quiet yet devastatingly effective best friend — a veritable powerhouse of competence wrapped in calm composure. Here is a fellow who has mastered the fine arts of project management and finance, wrestled with the hydra-headed beast of fuel integrity, and emerged victorious from a decade in the bustling world of business and downstream petroleum. Resourceful? Absolutely. Unflappable? Without question. When it came to operations, Elom was not merely in charge — he was the engine room itself, maneuvering with quiet brilliance and getting the job done while others were still looking for the manual;

Kwame Agyei — a laid-back financial wizard — versatile and proven leader with over fifteen years of experience across different industries, who served as non-executive director; and, lastly, Albert Abakah — an established information technology expert — who was in charge of technology.

Lomé — just about an hour from Keta, Volta Region — is a scenic city with a significant amount of capital and a market that can be useful to the development of the constituency and province. Our blueprint included an extension of active future political campaigns there, to draw more Ghanaian-Eʋes living across the border to the economy and the ballot box.

From my Ka xoxowo Salon study, with a direct view of Stanbic Bank and the Consolidated Bank of Ghana office, we — enjoying éclair and wine, after the ritual sabrage — fine-tuned a plan to place funds of US$500,000 which was to be sourced from external investors, at the Anlo Rural Bank. Over the next few months — with lots of popping of corks, cracking ice, clinking glasses and vigorous stirring and shaking — we planned and plotted. The primary purpose of this placement was to stimulate sustainable economic growth within specific sectors of Keta's local economy — namely: salt, fishing, creative industries, and technology. I pitched the idea in the Anlo Rural Bank boardroom with everyone who mattered present.

‘This should be a shoo-in for me’, I thought to myself after Winfred Venunye Amegago — head of business development & marketing — disclosed: ‘While we wouldn’t outright sell the bank, there’d always be a chair upstairs for you to lead’.

‘Over the next few months, we shall twist some arms. We shall charm. We shall dialogue with distinguished social democrats, youth activists, and fellow Ghanaians — and flip traditional politics inside out. For years, I’ve taken measurements. But the time has come to take measures. And that is why I am calling on you all to join me build the Keta constituency.’

This was the succinct script I recorded for what would be a lonely campaign that failed miserably. I didn’t receive the support I felt I deserved from family or friends; and just couldn’t bring myself to begging my circle for the funds needed to lure delegates. It dawned on me how solitary the pursuit of power was. I urged my network to kindly support our on-the-ground efforts, as we embarked on an intense broad-based community development campaign, to resolve some of the most complex issues impeding development within the Keta constituency, by purchasing my ‘Cocoa with Djokoto’ mugs for GH₵50 only.

I also created a brand, Emefa coconut oil, based on the NDCs popular phrase ‘Emefa – mea mea mea’, seeking to tap into the massive database of the partisan machine

collated by party delegates, and adding a feminine touch to the ticket. After it had become crystal clear that the future looked bleak, I put out a press release quitting politics which was, in itself, politics.

Quiet nights, scented candles and dim lights, I was immersed in deep reflections. My childhood dreams had soared like buoyant kites, amidst the blatant imperfections. On lonely nights, an owl will visit, posing on the electricity wire, and gazing straight into my study for hours.

'Far from the dream, close to the deadline, since God reigns supreme, it'll manifest in God's time.', I penned to console myself. And yet it was a bitter pill still hard to swallow, as I had aimed for a black star with my bow and arrow. The sacrifices one makes in pursuit of genius. Oh God, I'd taken one paint brush to a gun battle.

I'd spend dawn in the garden soaking music. During these hours, especially when caressed by the breeze, there's nothing more therapeutic. In a wake and bake session with Tagoe — a Rastafarian sculptor — he remarked: 'Life, indeed, has everything to offer. But there's nothing to it'.

While I withdrew absolutely from the political process, I commissioned a local intelligence team to monitor the channels of gossip, gather information about the elections, and help us navigate its complexities for a possible attempt in the sobering glimpse of a better

future. A bona fide friend, Osman and I went through thick and thin together through this period, especially when the political future seemed blur and I had to reorganise. He stood by me the entire time.

'I'd set up everything for you. So, when you decided to put out the press release quitting politics, I was heartbroken. I didn't eat for two days', Adle, now Managing Editor of the *Accra Evening News*, said. He soon developed an intimate relationship with Kwame Awuah Darko — and was blatantly decisive on the future leadership of the National Democratic Congress, as a prime driver of the Awuah Darko for President campaign bus.

Nonetheless, my mentee, Adle, a distinctly intelligent operative, arranged meetings, through our initiative, 'Cocoa with Djokoto' — where I still held discussions with a variety of people at the Good Vibes café, Osu. That was how I met my then girlfriend. I began dating a flirtatious slim ebony hijab-wearing — which, by the way, veiled her blonde-dyed natural dreadlocks — Islamic lady, Salma, who was a modest model and atelier.

She indicated her absolute lack of interest in politics only to smoothly clinch the position of General Secretary for the Tertiary Education Institution Network — an ideal intellectual student community to shape policies that provide a stepping stone for Ghana's youth at-large — at

the University of Ghana, Legon campus. Typical politics. We were from two completely different social classes, religious backgrounds and orientations. The irony of my disdain for hardened student politicians is I ended up dating one and befriending, extremely closely, another. They're a necessary evil — you may not succeed with them; but can't succeed without them.

Recording the ‘Ghana Deserves Better Leadership’ editorial with Woezor Television.
Photograph by Owuraku Jedidiah.

At The Republic Bar & Grill, Osu, Accra.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

On ‘GH Today’, GHOne Television, discussing the ministerial appointments made by President Akufo-Addo.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

On ‘GH Today’, GHOne Television.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

After an interview, with Serwaa Amihere.
Photography by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

Photography by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

At the office of Praetorium Solicitors with Joyce Bawah Mogtari, Esq.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

‘We were from two completely different social classes, religious backgrounds and orientations’.

At the Ka xoxowo Salon with Salma.
Photography by Owuraku Jedidiah.

At a café reading.
Photograph by Owuraku Jedidiah.

On New Day, TV3.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

In a conversation with George Opare-Addo.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

On ‘Good Morning Ghana’, Metropolitan Television.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

Ritual haircut at the barbershop before television interviews.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

At ‘Vapour’ — a private gentleman’s club.
Photograph by Owuraku Jedidiah.

An advert for Emefa Coconut Oil.
Photograph by Nana Gyasi Boateng.

Trotro stickers — campaign merchandise.
Designed by Leslie Bruce.

Campaign Season.

CHAPTER VII

Hadzivodu

An African Order

Supreme wisdom knot,
craft of our ancestors,
our soul shall not rot,
the divine constructors.

Centre of light,
degrees of might,
spiritual and mental health,
unearthly power and wealth.

Orishas shall guide,
thy mind must abide,
sip from the chalice of life,
to rise and be alive.

The universe is a verse of ours,
positive impact with mystical powers,

the eye of the towers,
our possession of divine hours.

Tɛŋgɛ's Oath

To the craftsmen and artisans,
may you never labour in vain,
remain valiant until we assemble again.

The Aŋlɔ constitution is within the chessboard,
our movement shall endure,
should any one of us fall on the sword.

Take a seat within the circle,
all circling square,
under God's trustworthy sheath of care.

All clans shall come to dine,
excess bread to break,
neatly polished calabashes for the wine,
a glorious convention for the movement's sake.

Bridging the gap of centuries,
a vision and a burden so divine,
toward priceless memories,
unity in purpose with an edging deadline.

Onward march to our revolution,
grab the tools you can find,
reconstruct our nation,
from the crux of her foundation.

Closing Prayer

Soulful melodies of the spirits,
deposit wisdom into my mind,
enable me deliver the sacred manuscripts to mankind,
our ancient civilization hidden in time.

I surrender all ignorance at this shrine,
as I am reconnected to my bloodline,
one fine night the cabinet shall shine.

Sun god, Ɗyidɔ Mawu,
penetrate my skin,
reveal the power of my melanin,

Trɔ va koɛ,
begin.

The sanctuary of Yeʋe that shines after sunset,
the temple that carves the mindset.
Set your sight on your son,
guide me Divine one.

Fiasidi

Ram blood polished throne,
whispers in secrecy,
from the spotless white shrine,
monotonous chants by the cornerstone,
sings the mermaid beauty,
through the grapevine.

A smoking pipe in her mouth,
and a basket of cowries on her head,
turning every mind roundabout,
with all her radiant wings spread.

The sun stared with a smile,
as I shut my third eye and strolled a mile,
and stumbled upon a gloomy moon,
which howled at me to return soon.

Perplexed, I dived into the bottomless blue sea,
still in pursuit of her majesty,
my Fiasidi.

Shrine Revelry

The aroma of marijuana,
our incense of freedom,
as Mami Wata beats the drums,
to echoes of laughter,
and dirges of wisdom,
our chimney lungs.

A litre of sodabi,
to seduce our ancestors,
as we agbadza and sing,
to the glory of the present,
as our fleeting lives,
flash before our eyes.

Our faces painted,
with tobacco in hand,
as the chief priest chants,
to the instruments of the gods,
dirges of wisdom,
our chimney lungs.

‘79, 4th June

I broke the fine mahogany table of hegemony,
the guillotine is shining and set for the ceremony.
Putsch forth for our mutual rise,
the flag must soar above Moorish heights.

Sling the throat of the traitors that sing our anthem,
pierce a sword through their conscience,
socialist etiquette,
colour palettes birthed by blood, sweat and tears.

Clothed by the celestial apparel of our patriotic vest,
enriched by the faith we invest,
bound by the oath of honour to do our best.

You may now summon the sommelier,
and the sous chef for éclair,
after which, we shall stir up our soup d'état.

To see and flood the shore with triumph,
the promise land.

Cheers

Our calabashes clink for the rich and pour,

sweet palm wine paired with folklore,

as the smoke twists and turns skyward,

to kiss the clouds,

while the winds pilot our whispered vows,

and through the changing phases of life,

we maintain a smile,

queuing for death in a single file.

Our atsimevu reverberates with Tɛŋgɛ's grace,

the voice of hadzivodu time cannot erase,

Anyako; memories buried beneath our feet,

where yesterday and tomorrow meet,

with each step, our roots remain,

whether marching through joy or pain.

Puff

In my sphere,

preserving the peace of solitude,

I puff,

because life is tough.

In my garden,

witnessing nature's attitude,

I puff,

because life is tough.

In my study,

building with fortitude,

I puff,

because life is tough.

Voyage

A succulent thick roll,
a flute of crispy rosé,
and saccharine acoustic music,
at the placid beach,
for a euphoric night,
in Dzeluko*f*e.

A delicious whopping roll,
a calabash of sweet palm wine,
absorbing the dulcet waves,
as we cruise the island's lagoon,
through a serene sunset,
in Anyako.

A delectably hefty roll,
a cask of coconut water,
eavesdropping the whistling birds,
and nurturing the garden,
through a blissful sunrise,
in Accra.

Observations of a boy

A man's tears should never drown his soul,

or flood the earth,

a man should fear himself more than death.

A man only lies to his mind,

the cerebral repercussions follow suit in time.

A man must overcome lust,

a man must separate himself from his past,

but never detach himself nonetheless,

a man must protect his family first.

A man must honour his path,

a man must know when to end,

and how to start,

a man must know when to defend,

and how to attack.

A man must master his art,

and perfect his craft.

A man must subdue corruption,

and persevere through exhaustion.

A man must believe in a God above him,

a man must uphold truth over any schism.

CHAPTER VIII

Cultural Architecture, Statecraft and a Start-up Republic

At this critical juncture, in our nation's quest for evolution, we find ourselves in a vital race against the perpetuity of time itself. Our national efforts, for centuries-long, have been driven by solutions from missionary initiatives, foreign governments, and innumerable forms of expatriate enterprise. But the western civilisation is not the yardstick by which our enlightenment as a Republic must be measured.

The stench of neglect shall continue to plague our Republic until our strides in nation-building respond directly to our domestic crisis. The plight of the Ghanaian has become virtually unexplainable in the conventional language of conversational English: Agbeme nya sese!

Our cultural architecture, the civilising values of the Ghanaian reality — social, political and economic — must create fresh opportunities and provide purpose for the mass of our people, majority of whom are peasants. Ghana is fortunate with its endless reservoir of a sophisticated culture, intelligent citizens and an abundant wealth of natural resources. Hence, it's illogical

for the mass of our citizenry to continuously endure the agonising realities that enslave them in poverty, ignorance and disease.

Inspired by our own set of unique challenges, we can independently resolve these difficulties through our very own indigenous innovations, and for our common quest to experience nirvana — Dziŋkusi — on earth. Today, Ghanaians are disillusioned with a democracy that is the envy of Africa.

Ghanaians require a Nkrumah-style leadership; one that appeals to the citizenry on a national basis, capable of arousing a common desire for nation-building, with a practical enlightenment programme and theory on which to base its method of statecraft. Yet change isn't attained by the gentle wave of a magic wand, we must restructure our political culture through a mixture of pragmatism and enflaming ruthlessness.

The sole focus of a cultural enlightenment program — the Ghanaian dream and renaissance — is to instil, in the breasts and psyche of the Ghanaian, a consciousness of fidelity to the Republic; awareness of civic rights and responsibilities; and an authentic African identity. It is to instil in the very heart of the Ghanaian, a potent sense of purpose. This requires a government with an infectious enthusiasm, administrative genius, and a visionary leader with the aura and charisma to ceaselessly stir the imagination of our citizenry.

The Ghanaian dream is to be a competent law-abiding administrator of your household and an industrious entrepreneur or public servant. Ascending the ladder of life, the Ghanaian must then aspire to be a proven catalyst of community or district development — and, beyond this, an accomplished national figure to the province. Above all, as a sum of all the aforementioned qualities, and at the apex of servitude, the Ghanaian dream is to be a generational architect of the Republic.

The Ghanaian renaissance is an artistic manifestation of our cultural aesthetics in romanticizing public institutions and private enterprises — one which crystallises the diverse cultures of each nation-state, ethnicity, and clan that constitutes our Republic. Our customs, languages, art, philosophy, ethics, family institutions and enterprises are threads in the fabric binding all Ghanaians in our diverse society as one.

Ghana requires a genuinely all-inclusive, dynamic leadership which shall proactively engineer coexistence across all provinces: linking each clan to the superior ideals of the Republic, citizen to fellow citizen and our Republic to the experience of Dziŋkusi; from the meticulous carpenters and masons that erect the structures of the city, to the seamstresses that seamlessly keep community's vogue, feminist activists and so forth.

Pan-Africanism provides the foundation, the very pathway itself, upon which cultural architects must

establish themselves. It is the high ground from which one may more clearly perceive, recognize, distinguish, unify and correlate all aspects of the African society. Our challenge is to annihilate institutionalised partisanship and build on the values that unite us, so a harmonious relationship between the cultures of various ethnic groups and political factions is possible.

Life in itself is a process of statecraft and every citizen is a nation-builder. A nation-builder masters statecraft and applies this skill to the service of others. An ideal cultural architect, thus, envisions life through the lens of a nation-builder, and bases every political campaign on two fundamental pillars: firstly, an introspective analysis of the cultural architects' star qualities; and secondly, a legitimate roadmap that can penetrate the conscience and earn the cooperation of nation-builders. The latter requires every cultural architect to reason through the psychological components of a national roadmap against the background of our socioeconomic realities as a Republic. Ultimately a supreme cultural architect's Eros is to nurture a healthy, wealthy, and wise population. A cultural architect, as a pioneer of a better future, represents a luminous path out of poverty, ignorance and disease.

Cultural architecture relies on a widespread shared conception of the Republic and a common mindset to collectively realise this vision. Civic dialogue, therefore,

provides consensus about the permissible aims and methods of nation-building — providing axioms to govern by. This reliably provides any cultural architect with a clear idea as to what constitutes the problems of our modern society, and the criteria relevant for a long-term solution.

To grasp the mindset of the Republic, a cultural architect must focus penetratingly on any given audience. It is not just about the obvious forms of communication between the cultural architect and fraternity of nation-builders; facial expressions, and even the tone of feedback from citizen's matter.

In an era of cutting-edge technology — in addition to social media, print media, emails, and leafleting — even holograms can be used to simultaneously engage people of distant public conventions in live interactions. But, nonetheless, the orthodox door-to-door heart-to-heart campaign is irreplaceable.

When the roadmap is based on fundamentally different conceptions of the future, leadership becomes complex. If nation-builders identify with the roadmap, they themselves, on their own accord, shall endeavour to find every tool possible for the art of statecraft. This would transform any campaign conducted by a cultural architect into an enthralling movement that stimulates the nationalism of citizens in a way that is beyond their own control. A well-established roadmap inspires a sense

of unity, courage to build, and the willpower to make monumental sacrifices.

A broad path ought to be paved, which expands our basic powers as nation-builders, and enables increased direct influence and inclusiveness within public decision-making networks. This would not only bring an abrupt end to a long era of invisible governance, which absolves government from accountability to the citizenry; it would also lead to a restructure of Ghana's public institutions, and systematically uplift our infant democracy out of the restricted sense of periodical elections in which it is mainly practiced in.

The periodical elections are, nonetheless, always an opportunity to re-evaluate our ideals regarding the Republic and to mandate the finest representatives to manage the social complexities of our time in accordance with our expectations.

A start-up Republic, to identify the various aspirations which dominate the thinking of our modern society, must be centred on the involvement of citizens in affairs that directly affect them. I believe such a Republic should be crafted around autonomous self-organising and self-financed clubs that actively use public spaces, or homes, to debate ideas for community reform, and to let government hear their grievances.

For instance: Ghana is overpopulated; hence, the need for strict family planning. Our national economy isn't

able to accommodate the employment needs of our labour force — and this creates a mass waste of our human resources.

Also, public institutions must rely on legally-binding quotas which directly tackle discrimination against women, as opposed to discretionary targets. In another scenario, the national daily minimum wage, at the present time of writing, is GH₵ 11.82 — and a significant number of employers still don't meet this requirement. We need more effective trade unions and workers associations to defend the rights of the Ghanaian labourer.

Wherever you may find yourself — whether you're a mobile money merchant, table top fast-food seller or coder — set up a civic or social club, with at least seven people, and meet as regularly as possible to learn and plan concerning your community. The acquisition of knowledge and architecture of culture is not just for ourselves; we acquire knowledge and design our living experience for the benefit of our lineage unborn. It's not only about making things better, but about making us better; an inward transformation and illumination, as opposed to just our outward material improvement.

This culture of ceaseless Ghana-centred dialogue would give Ghanaians the freewill to ascertain objectives as an organised community, prioritise socioeconomic and cultural issues on the basis of consensus, and instruct the

relevant provinces to construct. The Republic, mirroring the ideals of freely participating nation-builders, then becomes the principal architect; and the provinces, the contractors.

This culture would also maximize the contribution of nation-builders, as thinkers and doers, even in the remotest of the interior, whether formally educated or illiterate, rich or poor. The flexibility of this prescribed mode of organisation accommodates the broad interests of society without discrimination towards certain social structures, or beliefs, and creates an enhanced environment for free thought.

These diverse fraternities would bring nation-builders together, in their respective communities, and encourage them to collectively deliberate over local and national issues — such as enterprise, human rights, clean water supplies, childcare subsidies, compliance with sanitation regulations, and improved public medical assistance.

This would further cultivate a keen interest in constitutional matters as well as wider techniques of joint action, especially by Ghana's youth. It would also breathe new life into public discourse which has, with the exception of politicians, become largely dominated by a handful of academics, barristers, bureaucrats, and journalists. This culture would bring a breath of fresh air to a Republic whose politics are both baroque and broke.

Once this nouveau political practice gains momentum amongst nation-builders, government would generally be able to generate more accurate data to guide its policy framework, upon which it is more likely to arrive at impactful decisions.

Today, there are several circles of youth-oriented enterprises, social and cultural movements that hold a steadfast interest in secular welfare. As a broad-based civic grassroots movement, an axis of the youth can effectively bring standard-setting policies to the notice of government.

The next great move of social cohesion and conscience shall be to usher a post-partisan nationalist movement above the backward limitations of partisanship. Ghana's cultural progress is impeded by the flaming animosities, fears and denigrations involved in the devastating conflict between social classes and intertribal clashes — the sociopolitical conflict of the toiling masses spearheaded by the intellectual elites.

An enduring post-partisan culture of solidarity — if we are to end the isolation of underprivileged, misrepresented, or distressed citizens — is crucial to our values as nation-builders. It's not about the partisan colours of the political machinery, or how pulsating it appears, or whether it is new-fangled or deep-rooted, or even the paroxysms of glee, but, most significantly: whether it works for the advancement of the Republic.

I believe this spontaneous necessity for rapid modernisation, in coherence with a cultural renaissance of the Republic, naturally gives youth-oriented institutions the prescriptive right to leadership on a national scale. The old sociopolitical order, fraught by the self-injurious conservatism of partisanship, must gradually disintegrate and pave way for ideas representative of a new community of interests.

The curtain shall eventually ascend and a new generation of nation-builders will emerge as the political architects of a national renaissance.

In pursuit of evolution in our national politics, a constitutional amendment of the Presidential age-limit has the potential to be one of the most radical steps in political advancement ever taken by the nation-builders of this Republic. The amendment would offer a fresh framework for our national government. I have no doubt that a young, vibrant and qualified group of nation-builders would rise to the status of revolutionary national figures. A new Presidential age-limit must be set at 30. There is a sense of optimism, euphoria and a renewed spirit for national development that comes with a modern political order.

Ghanaians must repose faith in a new frontier of leadership. The youth are endowed with the dexterity to operate as foremost builders of a modern Republic. Ghana, through a strong identification with modernism

— while surrendering its fate to an axis of the youth — can pioneer avant-garde initiatives across the free market and government that would revolutionise our entire human experience. We are the seed bearers of energies too long smothered by the thick haunches of the worn-out, archaic, entrenched way of doing things.

We are the spark that Ghana so desperately needs. A startup Republic, that seeks to reposition Ghana as Africa's economic centre of gravity, is the surest path towards nurturing a solid working class with improved standards of wage labour and technical proficiency.

We must reinvent the Ghanaian society and improve the welfare of households through an engrained culture of entrepreneurship. The reinvention of the Ghanaian society, however, must be firmly intertwined with the principle of meritocracy — a Republic that rewards diligence and talent. One's prospects of success should not be solely determined by circumstance of birth into wealth or privilege; citizens must simply be valued for what they can do. Ghana's hardworking lower-class, which form the majority of our society, deserve an equal chance to succeed. A better chance at success, which guarantees profit and pleasure for the average Ghanaian citizen, can only be attained when we expand the domestic economy and establish a larger middle-class of manufacturers. Building a legacy of reforming the

peasant-class is the prime objective of a Pan-Africanist cultural architect.

Our Republic, through the efficiency of our export-sector and the exceptionalism of Ghanaian industry, must simultaneously advance free trade — together with our alluring flag — across the continent with a vision to consolidate an indefatigable economic sphere of influence within Africa. We must dedicate, on average, a majority of our total consumption expenditure to Ghana-made locally produced foodstuffs; and, as much as practicable, patronize only essential foreign products.

The generational objective is to create an external dependence, by the various Republics throughout the African continent, on Ghanaian private enterprise, not only for quality Ghanaian manufactured goods at affordable prices, but also for our services and popular culture. This is to fiercely tackle the underlining problem that Ghana faces: a chronic and debilitating lack of economic growth. A fundamental progressive measure towards the realisation of this objective is to include, within the legal framework, our informal economy — and initiate unprecedented cooperation between the expertise of tech-savvy entrepreneurs and ingenious petty trading businesses.

A robust economy is not just a pre-condition for a better quality of life but, more crucially, is essential to the transformation of the Ghana Armed Forces, as an

effective institution committed to the maintenance of peace across the African continent; and to tilt the continent's politics towards Pan-Africanism. In our lifetime, Ghana must venture beyond its own borders and take political and economic leadership of the African continent. It is our right to the moral leadership of this continent. A Republic which fails to maintain a sound social order, within its sphere of influence, cannot advance the larger interests of its society. Widespread political stability on the African continent is essential to Ghana's economic growth and social advancement. To this end, we must be prepared to reinvent our national identity in a perpetual struggle to gain a competitive edge.

If you want better economic conditions, respect for your individual autonomy, affordable living, and opportunities for earning income, support an axis of the youth. It is time to try something new! It is us youth, whom by birth-right, possess the noble duty to ensure the sustenance of the Republic, and our success shall forever be dependent on our participation as a united front in reconstructing our Republic.

Life is to knock on the door once; politics is to knock on the door twice. Indeed, our puzzling challenges shall not be resolved with a few brusque strokes of excellent effort. The task of erecting this most supreme Republic on a hill shall be arduous and painstaking. But the energies of the

cosmos are on our side and our feet are washed by the blood of our indomitable ancestors for this onward noble march towards Dziŋkusi. We'd return Ghana to its post-independence era of glory and take our rightful place amongst the nations of the universe. One fine night the black star shall finally shine.

It is; therefore, imperative that change occurs, above all, in our minds. This shall, without doubt, be Ghana's century of light and beauty. The Republic shall thread a positive revolutionary path. And I continue to advocate, as a matter of urgency, and in the spirit of nation-building, the unity of all Ghanaian youth-oriented groups under one convention, representative of the ideals of a new generation, and one Republic under God.

Life in Ghana must be worth living. Let us be the generation that changed Ghana — the generation that engineers power, wealth and artistic magnificence. The stage is set, and soon, the hero shall arrive. May our union be divine, may our lives be intertwined. May we find peace within the telepathic temples of our minds. May we seek light where the sun shines — and may we be sharpened with the times. One day we will.

Portrait at the Ka xoxowo Salon.
Photograph by Owuraku Jedidiah.

Depressed
Depressed
Depressed
Depressed

FREE
THE MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG MEN
YOUTH ACTIVIST
USAGYEFO
IN THIS ISSUE
NEW GENERATION,
NEW IDEALS.
FUTURES
SPORTS
HOMES
FICTION
MUSIC
RADIO
BUSINESS
MEN'S APPAREL
THEATER
HUMOR
MOVIES
PHOTOGRAPHY
JANUARY 2018
9.50GHC

OSAGYEFO'S
BROTHERHOOD

HOLY MARY'S
GARDEN

FREE
THE
YOUTH

The universe is on our side.

MiND
over
matter

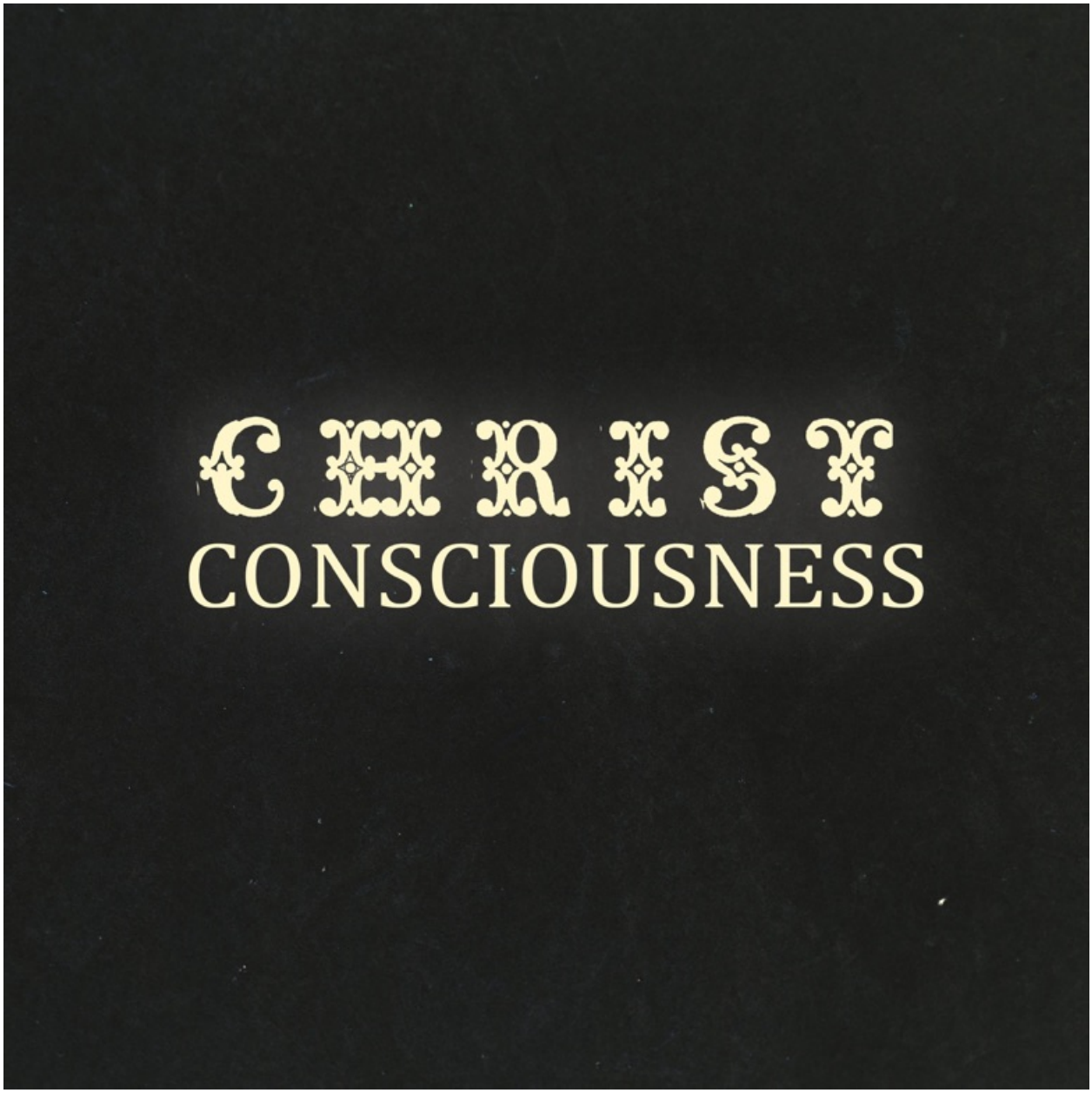
HALLUCINATIONS
HALLUCINATIONS
HALLUCINATIONS
HALLUCINATIONS
HALLUCINATIONS
HALLUCINATIONS

Cheers

EASY
SKANKING

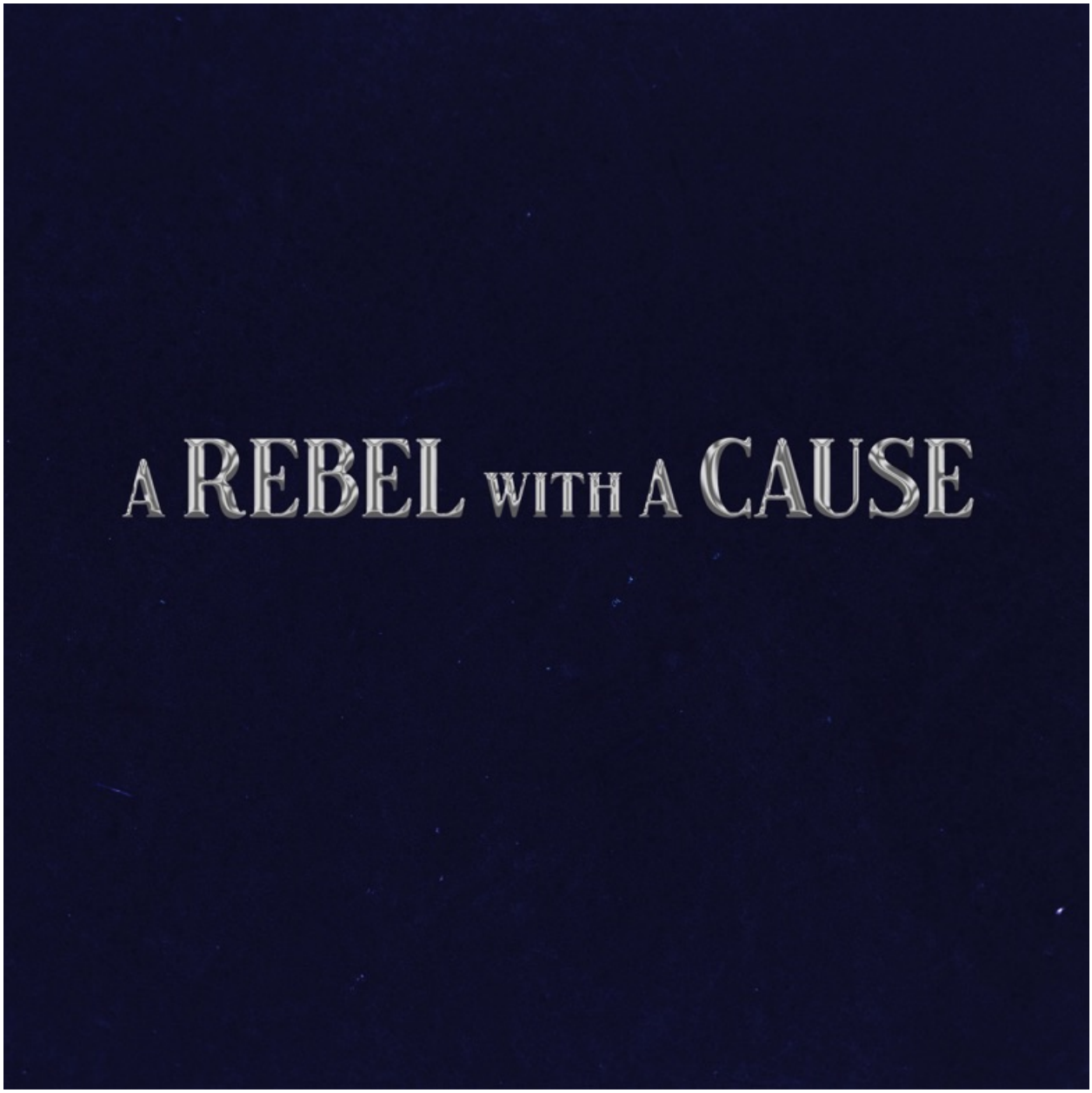
PERSEVERE
PERSEVERE
PERSEVERE
PERSEVERE
PERSEVERE
PERSEVERE

WOKE


CHRIST
CONSCIOUSNESS

An Offer You Can't Refuse

A REBEL WITH A CAUSE


A REBEL WITH A CAUSE

I NO BE
GENTLEMAN
AT ALL

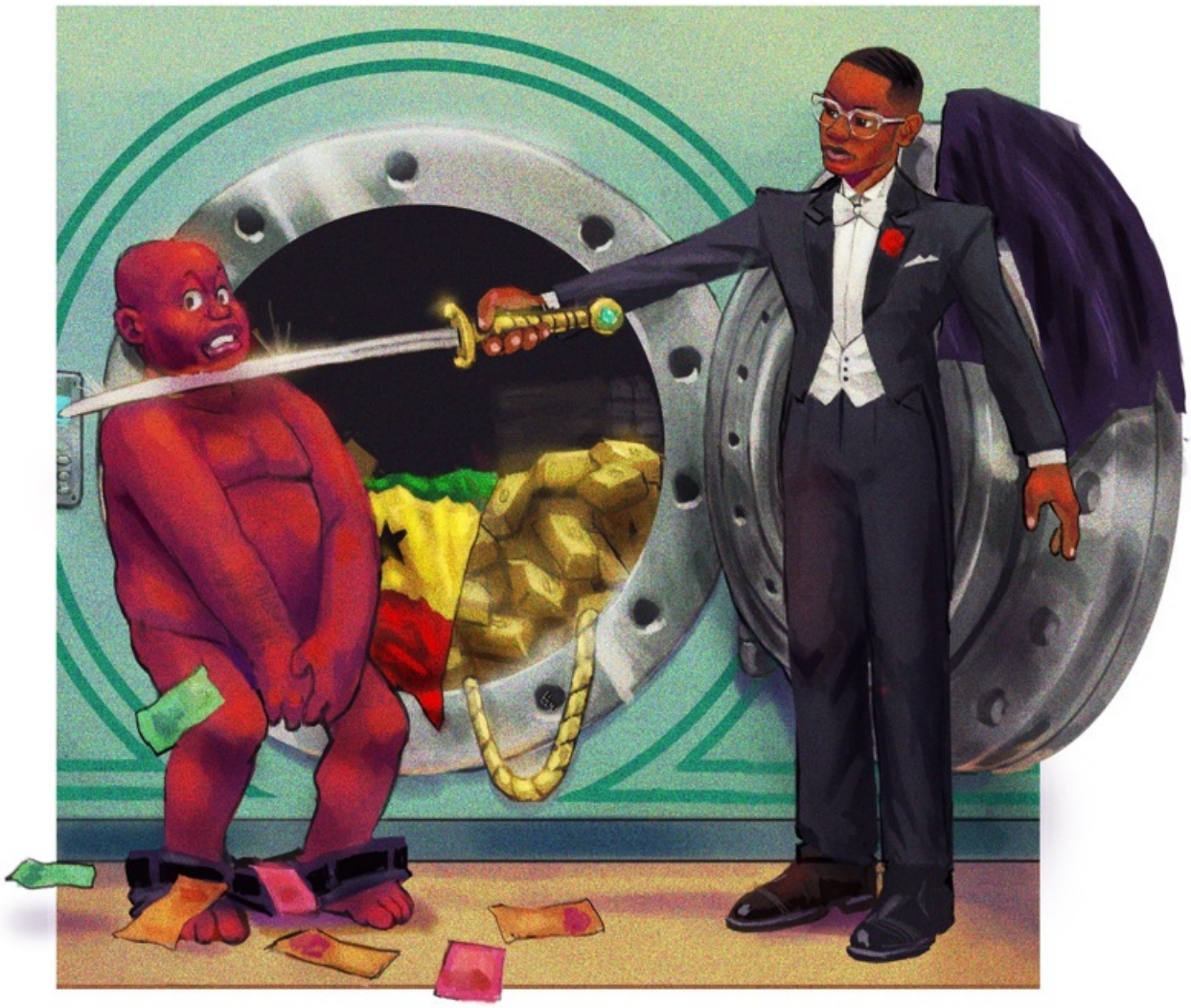
PARLIAMENT
OF
GHANA

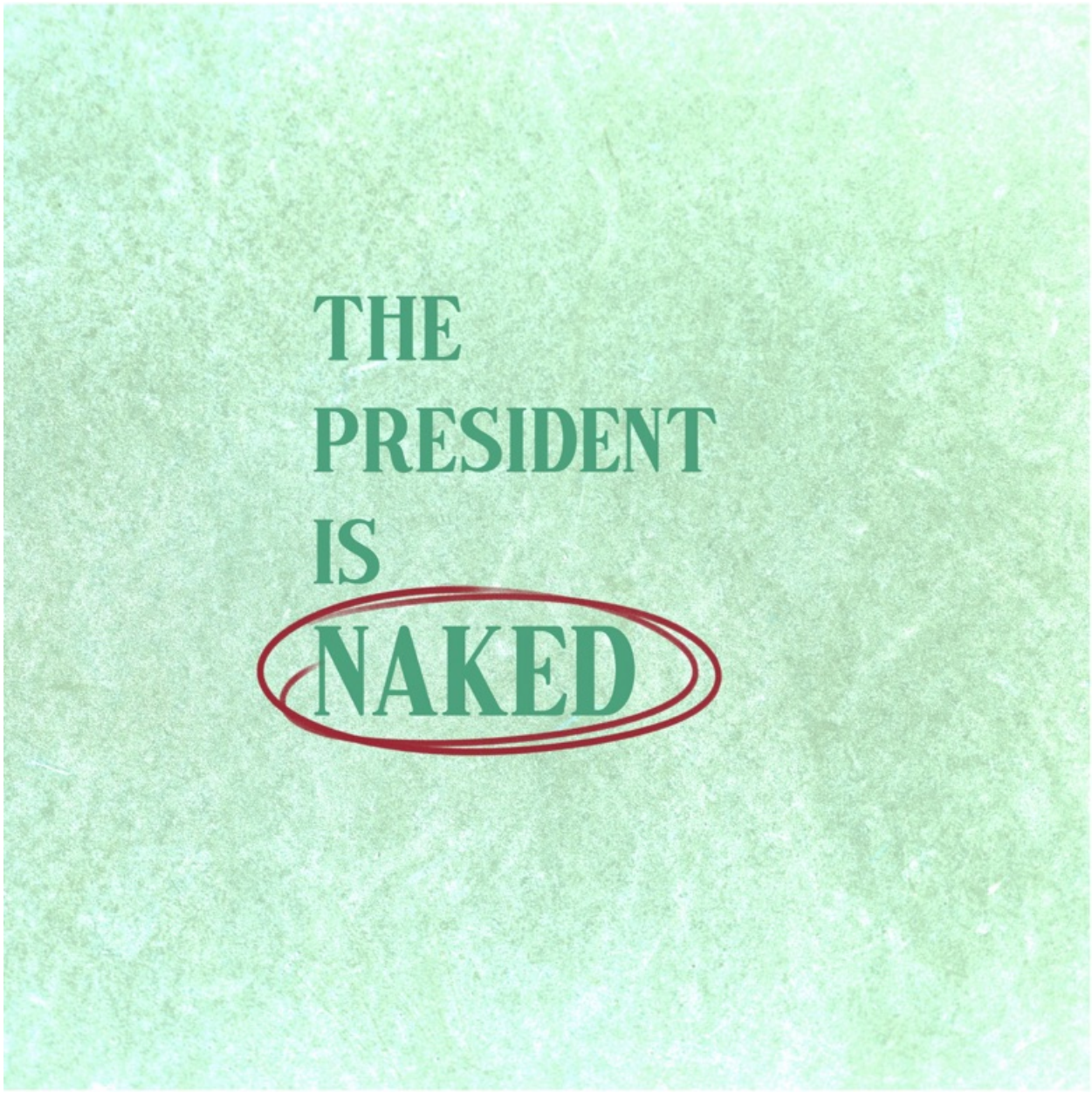
POLITICS

A Conversation
With RAWLINGS

OUTH

Power
of the
youth




THE
PRESIDENT
IS
NAKED

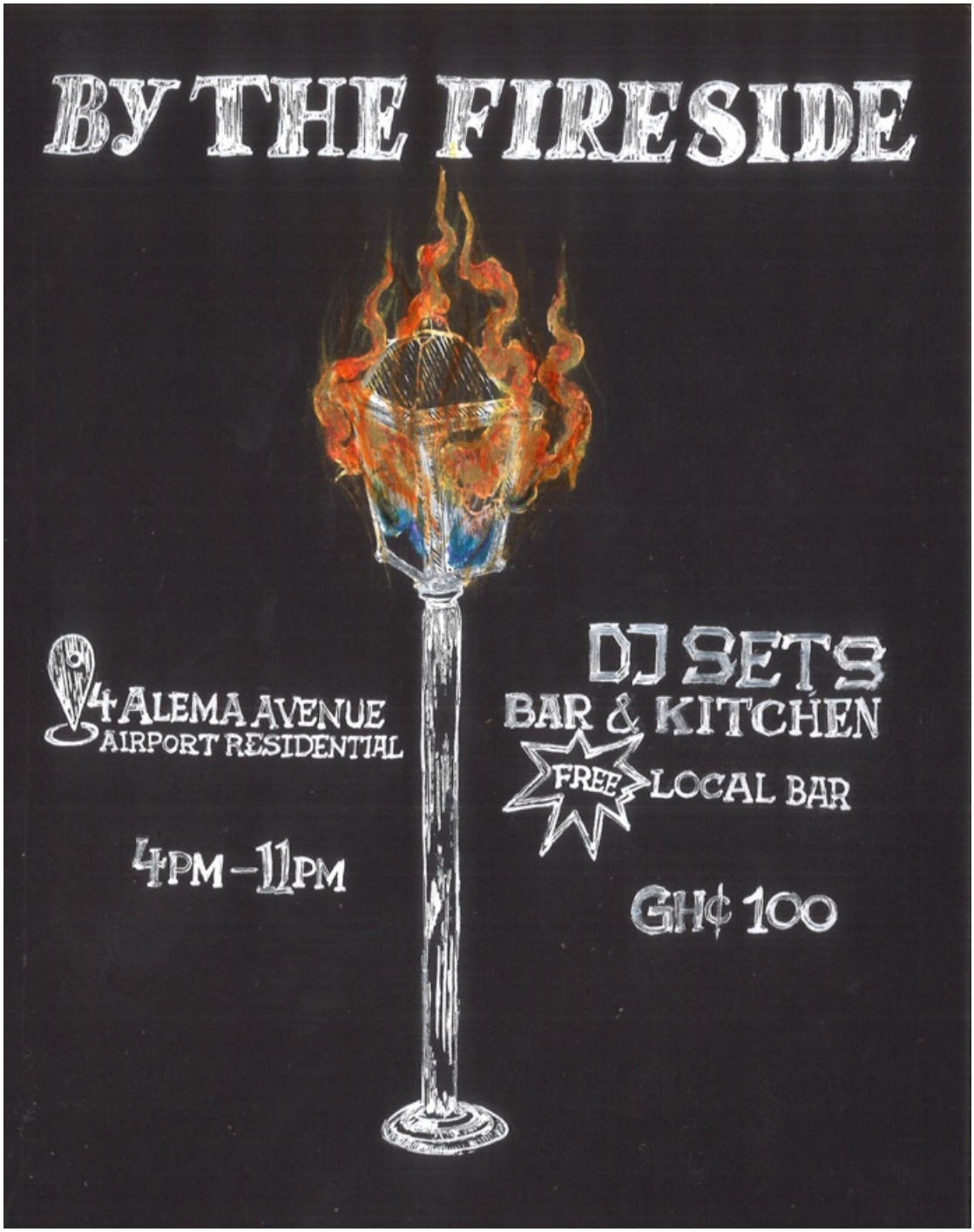
MAY THE
REVOLUTION
BE WITH YOU

SMOKE

COASTAL
THERAPY

CONSCIENCISM

Art collection and Ka xoxowo activities


BY THE FIRESIDE
4 ALEMA AVENUE
AIRPORT RESIDENTIAL
4PM – 11PM
DJ SETS
BAR & KITCHEN
FREE
LOCAL BAR
GH¢ 100

PALMWINE & HIGHLIFE OPEN STUDIO

29. Sep – 11. Oct 5:30pm to 9:00pm

Alema 4 Ave.

RSVP

Highlife

Artist: Kɔsi Gobah (b. 2002)

Medium: Acrylic and spray paint on canvas.

Dimensions: 98 x 133 cm.

Classification: Paintings.

Coins and consequences

Artist: Kɔsi Gobah (b. 2002).

Date: 2025.

Medium: Acrylic, newspaper and coffee on canvas.

Dimensions: 140 x 120 cm.

Classification: Paintings.

Strings of Memory

Artist: Gusikende Seyon.

Date: 2025.

Medium: Acrylic, sawdust, cowries and newspaper on canvas.

Dimensions: 3 x 4 ft.

Classification: Paintings.

Quicksilver

Artist: Kɔsi Gobah (Ghanaian, b. 2002).

Medium: Acrylic on canvas.

Dimensions: 60 x 88cm.

Classification: Paintings.

90s Bad Gyal

Artist: Kɔsi Gobah (Ghanaian, b. 2002).

Medium: Acrylic and spray paint on canvas.

Dimensions: 57 x 47 cm.

Classification: Paintings.

Ghanaian Middle Class

Artist: Gusikende Seyon (Beninese, b. 2002).

Medium: Oil on canvas.

Dimensions: 5 x 4 ft.

Before the fall

Artist: Gusikende Seyon (Beninese, b. 2002).

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Dimensions: 4 × 5 ft (122 × 152 cm)

Fiasidi

Artist: Gusikende Seyon (Beninese, b. 2002).

Medium: Oil and cowries on canvas.

Dimensions: 3 x 3ft.

Life is a fight

Artist: Kɔsi Gobah (Ghanaian, b. 2002).

Medium: Acrylic on canvas.

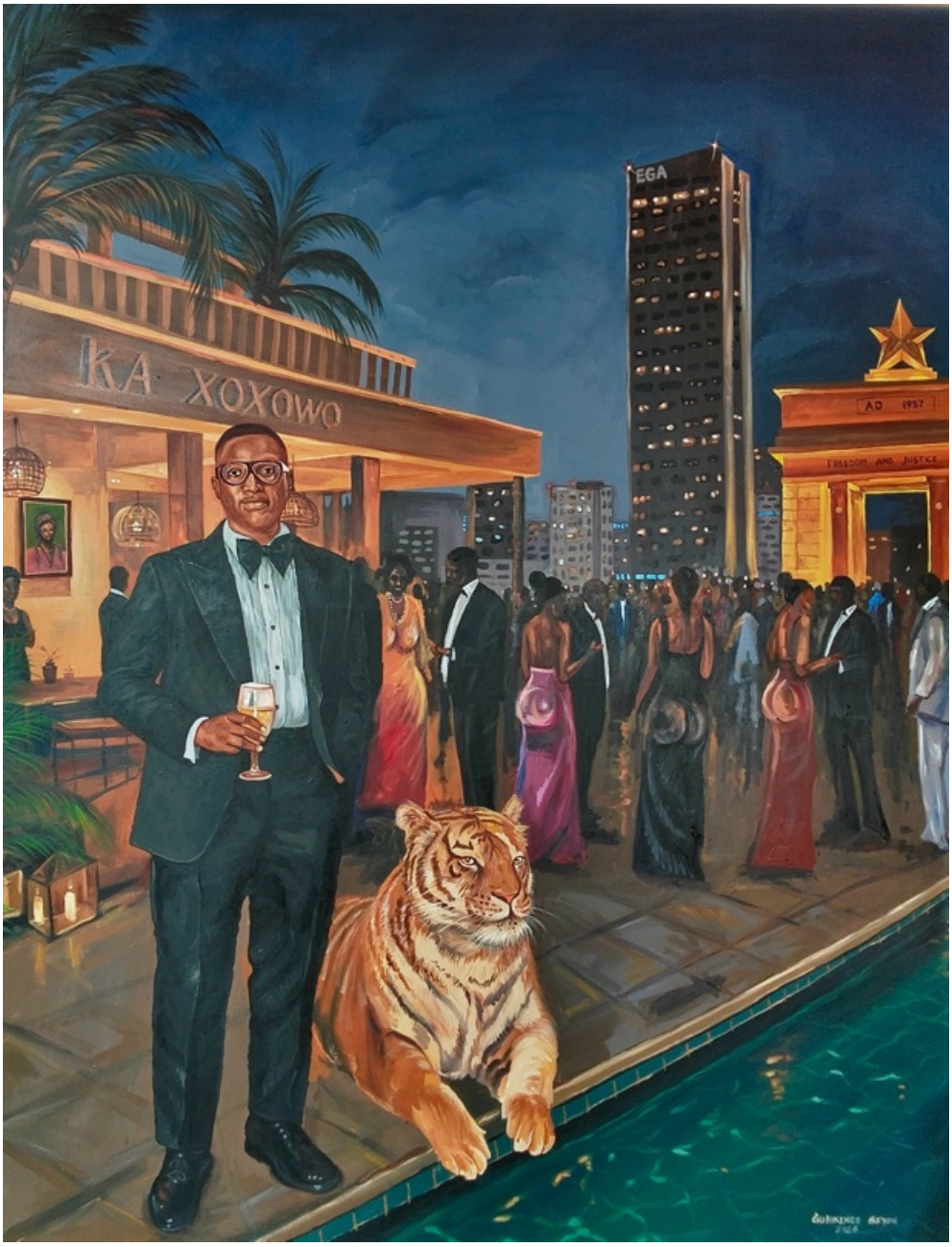
Dimensions: 185 x 120 cm.

Ayisoba

Artist: Gusikende Seyon (Beninese, b. 2002).

Medium: Oil on canvas.

Dimensions: 91 × 91 cm (3 × 3ft).



Aŋlɔ kotsiklolo naketi ɖeka nɔ dzome bi nu

Artist: Gusikende Seyon (Beninese, b. 2002).

Medium: Oil on canvas.

Dimensions: 5 x 4 ft.

Life

Artist: Gusikende Seyon (Beninese, b. 2002).

Medium: Oil on canvas.

Dimensions: 3 x 4 ft.