



AFRICA in Today's World

By DR. CHARLES I. WEST

(Ralph McGill, the eminent Atlanta, Ga., journalist who has won wide recognition as one of the true prophets of the New South, recently had some interesting comments to offer about Gambia, that tiny, new nation that slices into the northern bulge of Africa from the Atlantic Ocean. In the following article, Mr. McGill, whose syndicated column appears regularly in the Las Vegas Sun, supplements some of the reports that have appeared in this space concerning north-west Africa today.)

IT IS NOT TRUE, of course, that one can throw a rock across Gambia, newest of the African nations. It is only when one looks at a map that such a chuck seems possible.

Gambia was Britain's last outpost of African colonialism. The story of the transfer was nice and warming, quite in the British tradition. A few moments before midnight a detachment of Royal Marines marched on to the cricket field where the ceremony was held. They took the salute of the Queen's representatives, the Duke and Duchess of Kent. The crowd stood at attention as the band played "God Save the Queen." The lights dimmed. The Union Jack came down. There was a moment of darkness and then the lights flared and the blue, red, green and white flag of Gambia ran up the pole and the band blared the new national anthem. The reporter wrote that a great cry of joy rent the night and echoed on the sea. (It might be well to ponder on why it is that independence touches something within the human being and to remember our own joy of 1782.)

Gambia illustrates a lesser known problem of the many that confront the new nations of Africa. Diversity of languages and a consequent barrier to national communication, tribal rivalries that delay a national concept, lack of trained personnel, and impoverished economics are familiar to us, but boundaries or borders are another. When in by-gone centuries the European powers hurriedly established colonies, they paid little attention to natural boundaries or to the future.

GAMBIA LONG AGO was called a "geographic and economic absurdity." In the rush to stake out colonies about 400 years ago the British wanted a foothold in France's valuable holding of Senegal. They took and held a coastal frontage and a narrow enclave that extends 300 miles into the interior along the Gambia River. In width the country averages 30 miles. It has no airline, no railroad, no army. It does not plan to have any one of these, nor does it really need them. Peanuts--or groundnuts--are the one big crop. A close trade and treaty agreement with Senegal is inevitable.

Gambia thus exhibits one of the lesser-comprehended liabilities of colonial practices.

The premier is David Jawara, until recently the one veterinarian in all Gambia. He is well trained with an advance degree in tropical veterinary medicine from the University of Glasgow. He is a member of the largest tribal group. He is a Moslem, as are most of the population of Gambia and Senegal. His wife is a Christian, a trained nurse's assistant.

If Premier Jawara, a moderate, modest, nonpretentious man, has any luck, he may work out a good life for his people. He is fortunate to be totally surrounded, save at the coast, by Senegal. That country is relatively stable and

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VOICE READERS COMPRISE a \$30,000,000 MARKET

EDITORIAL

Young Citizen Soldiers Deserve Break

WE MOST HEARTILY AGREE with Sen. Howard Cannon that enactment of a "Cold War GI Bill" that will enable young citizen soldiers to compete for jobs with their civilian counterparts is a "matter of simple justice."

Testifying before the Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs in favor of the bill which he is cosponsoring, Cannon said, "These young men are called into service at a critical moment

in their personal history. Statistics show that 40 percent do not have the opportunity or motivation necessary to secure even a high school diploma before being drafted . . . I need not dwell upon the difficulties that confront a young man who has not yet determined his future course in life."

He said that there will be approximately 4 1/2 million cold war veterans by 1973 and that it was now established that "unemployment in the age bracket of these veterans is twice that of his civilian counterparts. Our educational institutions received an enormous forward thrust under the college enrollment made possible by the original GI Bill. It is my strong feeling that we are ready for another such educational breakthrough."

Cannon stated that the growing need for trained and technically qualified men makes it more difficult for the cold war veterans to find a job than it was for World War II veterans. The Senator said that the young men who answer their country's call generally experience a higher motivation once their service in the military is completed "but by that time," he added, "the job opportunities in their age bracket have too often passed them by and the educational challenge is one which they are not financially able to meet."

(From the New York Times)

Selma Bears Witness

Law and freedom are interdependent. Freedom is the value law seeks to serve; and freedom in organized society is never safe unless protected by law—as long as that law is justly written and fairly administered.

These are the truths to which the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and the thousands of people of both races and many religious faiths bore witness yesterday in Selma, Ala. They marched through the streets of the city, as is their constitutional right. But in obedience to a temporary Federal court order, they turned back from the state highway at the edge of the city, as was their duty as law-abiding citizens.

It would have been more dramatic and, in a sense, easier for Dr. King and his fellow marchers to have defied the court order and tried to pass through the state police lines.

Since their cause is just and they have the support of the overwhelming majority of their fellow Americans they would have been sure of sympathy even if they had placed their moral claim above the legal order. When the law is being enforced by such demagogues as Gov. George C. Wallace and by his club-wielding, violence-prone state troopers, it commands neither the most enthusiastic respect nor the warmest admiration.

But the cause for which Dr. King and his supporters are laboring is too bright with hope, too rich in the resources of both law and morality of the United States, to justify such desperate action. In the ranks of Government officials, Governor Wallace is the exception, not the rule.

Injustice against Negroes is long and deeply entrenched in Alabama as it is in Mississippi and other sections of the Deep South; but prayer, perseverance, nonviolent protests and the processes of law will overcome that injustice. That is the hopeful witness that Selma may yet bear to a violence-racked world.

(From The Las Vegas Sun)

Alabama Will Find Plenty of Targets

Violence begets only violence.

The officials in Selma, Ala., created quite a problem for themselves when they decided mounted horsemen, bullwhips, clubs and tear gas would be their media of communication with civil rights workers who were marching on the courthouse to dramatize their demands for Negro voting rights.

The violent action brought a violent reaction across the nation, with the result that ministers and others in the forefront of the civil rights movement have gone to Selma to offer their own heads as targets for the whips and clubs.

The action of the public officials who ordered the marchers beaten and gassed is new evidence, although no more is really needed, that Southern white officialdom continue to resist the inexorable tide toward decency and dignity for all Americans.

They will be drowned in the flood eventually but more martyrs will be created in the interim and America's image will be further blackened.

The arrival in Selma of hundreds of those who have fought the same battle elsewhere emphasizes the dilemma that Alabama officials have created for themselves.

The cause of those who are demanding equal voting rights is just, and there are thousands who are willing targets for police brutality in a just cause.

The conscience of America decrees that this be so and the club wielders will grow weary and their weapons will splinter before they get to the end of the long line of Americans who stand willing to support this cause is exhausted.

Most Americans believe sincerely that the right to vote is the precious privilege of all citizens of our country. Even many of those who do not believe so strongly in equal rights for all in other areas resist the thought that some Americans cannot vote because of the color of their skins.

The Alabama officials who chose the path of violence face the terrible certainty that now the violence will continue or they will have to retreat in disorder from an unconscionable stand.

The only other alternative would be to hold conferences and discussions on the collision of those who decided to march with local laws which forbid such demonstrations.

That presents some problems.

It is hard to reason with a man whom you have clubbed, or loosed police dogs upon or trampled under a horse's hooves. It is hard to reach the centers of responsibility and reason in a man whose vision has been blurred by the tear gas you have used to drive him off the streets.

However, the marchers themselves, in a subsequent demonstration showed the way. After kneeling in prayer, the demonstrators sang a song declaring that they "love everybody, including Gov. Wallace."

If the civil rights supporters can love Gov. Wallace, it should be possible for at least calm reason to flow the other way.



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