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EDWIN MADUNAGU

THE BLACK STAR

20p

ORGAN OF THE GHANA PEOPLES SOLIDARITY ORGANISATION (GHAPSO) NO. 4



In the early morning of December 31 1981, soldiers of the Ghana Armed Forces moved on strategic parts of Accra and overthrew the bankrupt government of President Limann's Peoples National Party. In his first broadcast to the nation, Flight Lt. J.J. Rawlings said "This is not a coup. I ask for nothing less than a revolution --something that will transform the social and economic order of this country..."

He told Ghanaians it was now up to them to decide how Ghana would be run. From this first broadcast, Raw- hasised the role the masses were called on to play. He unced that defence committees l and national would be set hat so long as there was no stice in Ghana there would be no peace.

Resistance to the coup was short-lived, although civilians in their homes were bound to assume that all shots they heard after the first day were fired at people and not in the air.

By January 3, progressive movements such as the New Democratic Movement, June 4 Movement, and the People's Revolutionary League demonstrated in support. This was followed by one of the largest demonstrations Accra had ever seen: that of working people from mainly Accra and Tema. There could be no doubt about the popularity of J.J. Rawlings himself and the support for the coup. "This is a democratic revolution to assure for people the basic

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ciding on what to import and what not to should not be seen as a purely economic measure. Workers should be involved in it as a means of making more clear what the nature of the struggle is at this stage.

Since it is not only through the activities of the commercial capitalists that the high prices and shortages in production come into being it is necessary to boost in the short run, output and in particular food production. Peasants need to be encouraged to produce more and assisted to do so. The inputs that are needed in the agricultural sector are not all that expensive and can be relatively easily provided for. The distribution of goods that peasants need should be given some priority as well as other programmes with a view to increasing the output of this sector. Very often there are small but significant bottlenecks in infrastructure. Roads are impassable, there are problems of irrigation, or there are not enough tools, not enough people to do the clearing or the weeding at the time that they are most needed. Many of these thigns require organization and not large inputs of money and so on. Hence with proper organization it should be possible to show some improvements so far as output is concerned.

Ghana's manufacturing sector is heavily run down. A comprehensive survey of the situation is needed. The plants and industries that require the least in terms of foreign exchange for thei rehabilitation are those that should be got going first. This is especially so if what they produce is of an essential nature, or complement the agricultural sector. In the days of the PNP it was put out that the future of Ghana lay in the gold mines that were going to be activated after which there would be no looking back. But in fact the mines are in need themselves of resuscitation. It is more than likely that they are at the present a millstone around Ghana's econmic neck.

The government in these early days needs to be more firmly in control of what is going on in the commercial and banking spheres of the economy. It is not all that difficult to get some more control of this sector using the leverage that the central bank has over all such organizations. In addition to this they should be given, with the threat of santions if they do not comply, firm guidlines on lending policy. But the governmnet will itself have to get more involved in the the business of lending. Once again this is an area which calls for study and sound policy formulation.

One of the important issues that will have to dealt with soon is how the state will be able to accumulate funds not only for itself but also for the industries that come under its control at the present and which may do so in future. The main task of directing the economy will fall on the state from hence forth. Clearly the state should not resort to the same tactics of previous governments which found refuge in the printing of ever more amounts of money. At this stage perhaps the most effective method which can be implemented without too much reorganization is to alter the tax system or as may in fact be the case in many instances to implement it. Company and personal income/wealth taxes are not on the whole very well developed in many African countries and Ghana is no exception to this. There are a number of enterprises that could yield on a continuous basis income to the state from taxation properly carried out. In this connection the question of renegotiation of the contracts that exist between Ghana and a number of foreign companies comes to mind. There are mineral, industrial, agricultural, technical, manegerial and other contracts. All these could be subject to review. The experience of other countries has shown that there is room to manoeuvre in this regard. It depends on the one hand on the degreee to which the government has thought through the changes that it is wanting to make and on the other the degreee of economic freedom with wich it is able to act.

The funds so accumulated and the lessons learnt will provide a more solid basis for tackling the greater problems ahead.

The GHANA PEOPL[illegible]
ANISATION (GHAPSO)
-is an anti-imper[illegible]
which seeks to re[illegible]
of the Ghanaian p[illegible]
gressive organisations and movements in Ghana involved in these struggles
-seeks to work with all friendly, progressive, anti-imperialist organisations
- is completely independent of all political parties.

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