

# **J. B. Danquah was Never Chief Campaigner or Founder of University of Ghana**

**By:**

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(Cite as: Lungu, Botwe-Asamoah, & Dompere, 2019)

***"In writing this article, we utilized more than one source to establish the history of the founding of the University College of the Gold Coast for all to see. Pioneering advocates for a British West-African University go back to the late 1800s. Then we have, in the Gold Coast, J. E. Casely Hayford, Sir Arku Korsah, Dr. Nanka-Bruce, significant professional groups, and the collective Gold Coast citizenry, some of which worked harder towards the establishment of the University of Ghana, compared to Dr. J. B. Danquah. Therefore, the dastardly plan to assign unjust and unearned historical dividends to a vastly over-rated second-tier supporter of that agenda will never work. That is the objective verdict and responsibility of scholarship, intellectual honesty, and freedom of thought. Dr. J. B. Danquah did not play the role of chief campaigner, primary negotiator, or chief spokesperson, and even less, found the University College of the Gold Coast," (Lungu, Botwe-Asamoah, & Dompere, 30 June, 2019).***

## **Introduction:**

President Akufo Addo's assertion during the launching of the "University of Ghana's Endowment" on 7th May 2018 that "it was the inestimable work of Dr. J. B. Danquah that mobilized the Ghanaian people to insist on the building" of the University of Ghana is grossly misleading if we must be

charitable. It is a brazen attempt to re-cast Ghanaian historical facts. By that same token, his contention that "it would be wholly appropriate....to describe Joseph Boakye Danquah as the founder of the" University of Ghana is totally fallacious. It is a gross misrepresentation of history. Those statements border on attempts at appropriating history and pilfering valor and service to country by other more notable figures, and the collective citizenry. We see this case as yet another attempt at assigning unjust and unearned historical dividends to a vastly over-rated political figure who, more than once, first as faculty member, then as "Mastership", even turned down appointments, to join the leadership of the top educational institution in the then-Gold Coast, the Prince of Wales' College (now Achimota College).

When and how did Dr. Danquah's "inestimable work" really lead to the founding of the University of Ghana? When did Dr. Danquah conceptualize the University College of the Gold Coast? What resources, in terms of monies, land acquisition, human capital (such as the faculty) etc., did Dr. Danquah actually mobilize for the University College of the Gold Coast project? If he mobilized funds, did he do it by his solitary self? What role did he play in the structuring and design of the curricular of the University College of the Gold Coast as an affiliate of the University of London? Finally, what convocational and inaugural speeches did Dr. J. B. Danquah deliver at the grand opening of the University College of the Gold Coast on 11th August 1948, or at any other time, if indeed he was the founder?

Fair, objective, and historically-bounded answers to questions above instruct us that Dr. J. B. Danquah, "Kantian Philosopher", he called himself, was never the chief campaigner for the University College of the Gold Coast, now University of Ghana, at Legon, let alone its founder.

The discourse that follows in this 3-part series establishes historical facts about the founding of the University College of the Gold Coast. We utilize more than one "commissioned" source to establish that it was the foresight, sense of purpose, and uncommon toil of Sir Arku Korsah (the sole Gold Coaster on the Elliot Commission), the work of many, many, committees and individuals, letters by diverse groups to colonial British authorities, public rallies organized by people rallying call to action on radio by Dr. Frederick Victor Nanka-Bruce, a leading member of Governor Burn's Committee, that eventually compelled the Secretary of State for the Colonies to agree to the creation of the University College of Gold Coast. Dr. Danquah later joined the crusade and became one of its important forces, but did not play the chiefly role in any of the organizations that campaigned for the University of the Ghana.

## **Pioneering Advocates for British West-African University:**

The "facts" of history instructs us that the first advocate of significance for a West-African higher education system in the British colonies was Dr. James Africanus Beale Horton (1835-1883) of Sierra Leone. In his will, he stated that his house in Freetown should become the nucleus of a university" (Ashby).

The second pioneer was Edward Blyden (1832-1912) an emigrant from the US Virgin, who first settled in Liberia, and finally moved to Sierra Leone. Edward Blyden introduced a new dimension to the idea of an African university. He desired an African university which would eliminate the existing "educational system from the clutch of the "despotic Europeanising influences which had warped and crushed the African mind" (Ashby).

The third notable West-African advocate for an African university was J. E. Casely Hayford (1866-1930) of the Gold Coast. In 1911, J. E. Casely Hayford, like, Edward Blyden, campaigned for an African-centered university, in the Gold Coast, in which instruction would be done in African languages. His proposals appeared in his celebrated "Ethiopian Unbound", published in 1911, in which he argued that an African university must not be a mere foreign imitation (Ashby, Botwe-Asamoah, Esedebe and Hayford). Hayford's long campaign, which began in 1911, reached its climax in 1920 at the 'First Conference of British West Africa" in Accra. In a paper memorial addressed to the colonial government and King George V, Hayford submitted that the time had come "to found a British West-African University on such lines as would preserve in the students a sense of African Nationalism."

## **Challenges to Universities in British West Africa:**

The historical record shows that later in 1935, James Currie, one of the most experienced and imaginative members of an Advisory Committee set up in 1924 by the colonial administration, produced a report which favoured, as an urgent matter, the founding of universities in tropical Africa. In fact, the Currie Committee proposed that five existing colleges should be developed into universities. Surprisingly, the governors in Nigeria and the Gold Coast showed reluctance to force the pace of higher education. For instance, the existing facilities in the Gold Coast were adequate for higher education, but the governor feared that it would lead to an overproduction of graduates. As the wheels of time turned, a conference on West Africa held in Lagos in 1939 agreed that as a long-term project, there should be a West-African university that would award its own degrees. Then came the Second World

War and those educational plans and proposals of West-Africans were put aside.

And so, despite the pioneering pressures for West-African universities by notable Africans, there were still just two publicly-financed institutions by the end of the second world war engaged in higher education in British West Africa, namely, Prince of Wales' College/Achimota and Yaba College (near Lagos). Nonetheless, the Currie Advisory Committee continued its meetings, after the conference in Lagos (Ashby).

## **The Road to the University of College the Gold Coast and Funding Sources:**

Towards the end of the 2nd World War, a fresh and vigorous policy for higher education was on the way. Professor H.J. Channon of the advisory committee prepared a memorandum calling for a resumption of the argument for universities in the colonies. At his prompting, two commissions were set up in July 1943. These were Cyril Asquith Commission whose task was to investigate at large into higher education in the colonies, and Walter Elliot Commission responsible for making recommendations precisely on a Higher Education in British West Africa (namely, Nigeria, Gold Coast and Sierra Leone). There was an overlap of the membership of the two commissions, as their works were a combined (Ashby).

Members of the Elliot Commission were divided as to the methods to be used in realizing their objectives. Accordingly, one report included a proposal signed by the Majority, and another signed by the Minority group. The Majority Report proposed that the existing colleges in Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, and Nigeria should be developed to university colleges, while the Minority Report recommended the concentration of resources on a single university to be located in Nigeria.

For our purpose, it is important to point out that (1) J. B. Danquah was never a member of Elliot Commission either and (2) Sir Arku Korsah, the only Gold Coaster member of the commission signed the Majority Report for a university in the Gold Coast (as did the other African members, E. H. Taylor-Cummings of Sierra Leone, and I. O. Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria); and for this, he (Sir Korsah) was fully supported by public opinion in the Gold Coast (Bourret).

Still in 1945, soon after the publication of the Asquith and Elliot Reports (under the Chairmanship of Rt. Hon. Walter Elliot), the Secretary of State for the Colonies, George Hall, sent a dispatch to the governors of Nigeria, the

Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Gambia, regarding his approval of the Minority Report of a single West-African University in Nigeria. In the dispatch, he urged the governors to use appropriate means to disseminate his decision in order 'to ascertain the trend of public opinion and reactions' (Nwauwa).

Apparently, the Gold Coast people, especially the educated class, were appalled by the content of George Hall's dispatch from the office of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Therefore, in October of 1945, the Gold Coast Central Committee on Education formally began reviewing the Majority and Minority Reports. Its members overwhelmingly supported the Majority recommendation championed by Sir Arku Korsah and West-African delegation. The next month (November, of 1945), they issued a statement protesting that: "Irreparable harm would be done by denying work began at Achimota..... ..which is ready to take off and which is urgently necessary to it and to the Gold Coast," (Mwauwa).

"...(T)he majority felt that the emerging trend of territorialism and nationalism would prove an unsurmountable obstacle to the success of unitary West-African University college sited in any one colony. Undoubtedly, the Majority group was more farsighted than the Minority, as subsequent events would prove", (Mwauwa).

**To be continued....**

**SUBJ**: J. B. Danquah was Never Chief Campaigner or Founder of University of Ghana (Part 1).

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# **J. B. Danquah was Never Chief Campaigner or Founder of University of Ghana (2)**

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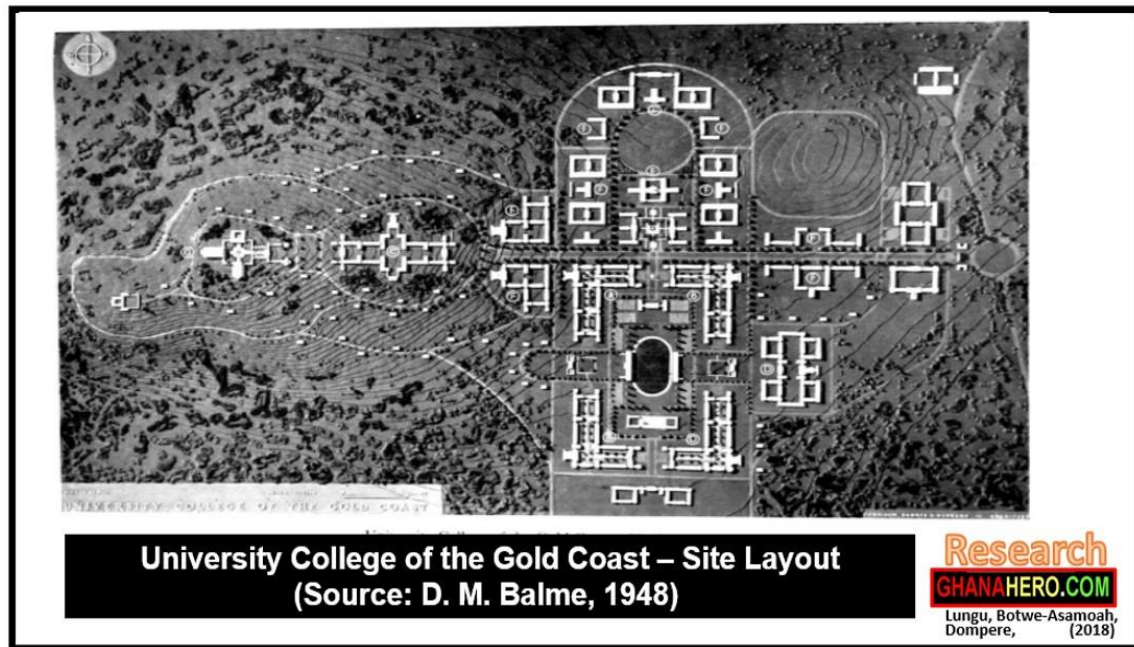
(Cite as: Lungu, Botwe-Asamoah, & Dompere, 2019).

***"...Part 1 of the paper introduced several questions and advanced our argument contesting the idea that J. B. Danquah was the central figure in the construction of the University College of the Gold Coast. We made sharply visible pioneering advocates for British West-African University, among them Dr. J. Africanus Beale Horton, James Currie, Edward Blyden, J. E. Casely Hayford and Sir Arku Korsah, both of the Gold Coast, etc... We also discussed the several commissions spurred in part by the work of Professor H.J. Channon near the end of the 2nd World War, including the Asquith and the Elliot commissions. The later commission produced a "Majority Report" signed by West-Africans on that Commission, including Sir Arku Korsah, that proposed that existing colleges in Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, and Nigeria ought to be developed into university colleges in the respective countries. That Report was separate and at odds with a "Minority Report" later endorsed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies... J. B. Danquah was never a member of any of the multiple university commissions..."***, (Lungu, Botwe-Asamoah, & Dompere, 2019).

## **The Road to Realization of the University College of the Gold Coast, at "NI-LEY GON/ "La Goon"/Legon:**

Due to the importance of the work of the education commissions and the crucial role of the African members of the Elliot Commission, in particular, we will double-down a little with respect to the results of those efforts, and

the road to the realization of the University of the Gold Coast, at “La Gon” / “La Goon”, Legon.



(Above - photo): University College of the Gold Coast – Site Layout, 1948)

In 1945, soon after the publication of the Asquith and Elliot Reports, George Hall, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, sent a dispatch to the Governors of Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Gambia endorsing the “Minority Report”, and a single West-African University in Nigeria. In the dispatch, Hall urged the governors to use appropriate means to disseminate his decision in order ‘to ascertain the trend of public opinion and reactions’ (Nwauwa).

The people of the Gold Coast, especially the educated class, were appalled by the content of George Hall’s dispatch. Therefore, in October of 1945, the Gold Coast Central Committee on Education formally began reviewing the Majority and Minority Reports. Its members overwhelmingly supported the Majority recommendation championed by Sir Arku Korsah and the West-African delegation. The next month (November, of 1945), the Gold Coast Central Committee on Education issued a statement protesting that: “Irreparable harm would be done by denying work began at Achimota..... ..which is ready to take off and which is urgently necessary to it and to the Gold Coast,” (Nwauwa).

"...(T)he majority felt that the emerging trend of territorialism and nationalism would prove an unsurmountable obstacle to the success of unitary West-African University college sited in any one colony. Undoubtedly, the Majority group was more farsighted than the Minority, as subsequent events would prove", (Nwauwa).

## **Informed Public Opinion & Verdict on Radio Station ZOY:**

The ensuing debates about the two sharply different reports took on interesting dimensions.

In 1946, Governor Arthur Richards of Nigeria who had declared his inclination towards the Minority Report, "pointed out that the desire of the people of the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone was natural and reasonable" (Nwauwa).

The Nigerian Teachers Union, for their part, called on the Secretary of States for the Colonies to implement the Majority recommendation of the Elliot Commission without further delay. They opposed any decision that might result in obstruction of the "progress of the University College at Fourah Bay and Achimota College which had for seventy and twenty years respectively pioneered higher education in West Africa".

Significantly, in the Gold Coast, there was mounting cry for the implementation of the Majority Report through declarations of memoranda to the colonial government from several educational, political and social organizations, and interest groups. They included: Gold Coast Teachers Union, the Gold Coast Bar Association, the Old Boys of Achimota, etc., which were all firmly in support of the of the Majority decision. As well, the Joint Provisional Council of Chiefs (JPCC) submitted a declaration to the governor in which they unanimously expressed their support of the Majority Report.

Stressing the harmful effect the Minority Report, if implemented, would have on the regional educational achievement of both Gold Coast and Sierra Leone, the JPCC concluded that:

"...to reduce Achimota and Fourah College which have done so much preparatory work in Higher Education in British West Africa to the status of Territorial Colleges as contained in the Minority report would be to frustrate the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone," (Nwauwa).



Clearly, this statement coming from the JPCC (which was part of the British colonial indirect rule system) was very significant. It signified a collective ethos for the implementation of the Majority proposal. This united front demonstrated that the people in the Gold Coast, as a commonwealth and body, were more determined than ever that Achimota be developed to the level of a full-fledged university.

To this end, the Gold Coast intelligentsia, under the leadership of Sir Arku Korsah, sponsored a public rally at the Roger Club in Accra in December 1945 to ascertain the strength of public opinion. As expected, they unanimously endorsed the Majority Report of the Elliot Commission. The success of this rally led to another public meeting on December 14 convened at the Hudson Club that same month. At the second event, it was affirmed that:

“...(N)o university or university college could ignore the natural divisions and affiliations of the people for whom it is intended to serve... (that)... democratic principles of self-determination would be applied in deciding the type of institution (the Gold Coast) require,’...This time, Dr. J.B. Danquah attended the December 1945 meeting, which played into his hands as it turned out to be a sort of leadership colloquialism,” (Nwauwa).

In fact, subsequent to the 14 December 1945 rally, Dr. Danquah submitted his own memorandum to the Secretary of State supporting the call for a Gold Coast university college previously identified and championed by Sir Arku Korsah and the West-African delegation of the Elliot Commission. On the heels of those efforts, he (Dr. Danquah), together with Prof. Baeta, and Sir Asafu-Adjae of the Gold Coast Legislative Council, played notable roles in the Legislative Council by urging the governor and other Englishmen to side with the Gold Coast people’s demand for a university college of their own.

The churning of public opinion on the two reports would continue unabated throughout the mid-1940s, both in Britain and all throughout the colonies. As a result, in 1946, Governor Alan Burns appointed another yet committee composed of esteemed leaders of the Gold Coast to study the whole question of the colony’s higher education.

NOTE: J. B. Danquah was never a member of the committee.

More significantly, in October of 1947, the spokesperson of the committee, Dr. Frederick Victor Nanka-Bruce, physician, journalist and politician, outlined the general findings of the committee. The findings were announced

to the People of the Gold Coast in a rallying call to action by the public and colonial authorities on the only radio station in the Gold Coast, Radio Station ZOY.

In his Radio Station ZOY address, Dr. Nanka-Bruce stated that in the view of the committee, "the Gold Coast should eventually have its own university college on a site separate from Achimota, which would remain a secondary school, to elaborate:

"... the committee believed the Gold Coast should eventually have its own university college on a site separate from Achimota, which would remain a secondary school. Owing to construction difficulties, however, it would be necessary to use the Achimota buildings until new ones would be available. In the meantime, the intermediate courses at Achimota should be developed to a degree level as quickly as possible. As for the college courses for which Achimota had no facilities, such as medicine, agriculture, and forestry, local students should avail themselves of those given in Nigeria until the Gold Coast institution was further developed (Bourret).

Dr. Nanka-Bruce concluded his radio address to the Gold Coast by reminding everyone that plans should be pragmatic so as "to provide trained African men and women to carry out the big task of development which lie ahead of the country", (Bourret).

As history recalls, Dr. Nanka-Bruce's radio address was very well received by the public: If necessary, the People of the Gold Coast were prepared to bear the greater part of the expenses involved in the development of Achimota to a degree level (Bourret).

To cut to the chase, Dr. Nanka-Bruce's radio address reinforced the strong and united Gold Coast public opinion. That speech constituted a major inflexion point in the agitation for the creation of a university college in the Gold Coast. As Bourret notes, the Nanka-Bruce radio address was largely instrumental in influencing the Secretary of State for the Colonies finally to give his consent early in 1947, for the establishment of a Gold Coast university college (Bourret).

Meanwhile, the Bradley Committee echoed the determination of the people of the Gold Coast to have a university of its own. It too recommended immediate establishment of a Gold Coast university college that would evolve from the existing course at Achimota. The committee identified a permanent site for the university college around "Legon," that is La Hill, "La Goon" in Ga (Nwauwa), assuredly with the support and goodwill of the La

community of Accra. (Another interpretation of the name revolves around "Knowledge" and "Hill", as in "NI-LEY GON (NI-LEY means KNOWLEDGE and GON means HILL) therefore 'Hill of Knowledge'", in the Ga language.

NOTE: J. B. Danquah was never a member of the Bradley Committee.

Persuaded by what by he heard and saw as 'Strength of the public opinion,' Governor Burns dispatched a letter to the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, Arthur Creech Jones, conveying the public opinion in the Gold Coast. Clearly impressed by the high level of discussions in the press and resolutions and memoranda in support of the "Majority Report", Governor Burns stressed:

"...The people of the Gold Coast would wish their government to do everything in its power to ensure an uninterrupted development of Achimota on lines recommended by the Majority Commission, even if this would mean a heavy contribution from the funds at the disposal of the Gold Coast capital and recurrent costs of these developments...and that there would be strong opposition to the voting of public funds for any development of higher education in West Africa which did include the immediate development of Achimota on lines with the Majority Report," (Nwauwa).

As Nwauwa observes, "the turn of events in the Gold Coast overwhelmed the Colonial Office in London." Either London would accept a second university in the Gold Coast or the Colonial government of the Gold Coast would establish one, as the Bradley Committee had earlier suggested.

The 1946 Inter-University Council for Higher Education (IUC) was set up initially to (1) investigate the situation in each colony and (2) identify the necessary actions required to implement the Secretary of States' decision on the Elliot Report as outlined in Hall's dispatch. As history would have it, the IUC ended up endorsing the "Majority Report" of the Elliot Commission.

Under the leadership of William Hamilton Fyle, the IUC went further to advise the Secretary of State to approve a second university for the Gold Coast. Subsequently, Arthur Creech Jones, in his dispatch of 16 August 1947, agreed in principle to the recommendation for a new university to be established in the Gold Coast, noting:

"...I recognize, however, that any successful educational advance must depend on active and informed popular support and, in view of the

strong public demand in the Gold Coast for the establishment of a university college there and of the necessary financial support, I have agreed in principle that a university should be established in the Gold Coast," (Nwauwa).

The informed public opinion Creech Jones spoke about included: Sir Arku Korsah, Dr. Nanka-Bruce, Rev. Prof. C.G. Baeta, Dr. J. B. Danquah, the Asantehene Otumfuor Agyemang Prempeh II, Sir E. Asafo Adjaye and many other notable people in the Gold Coast.

But, as Bourret points out, and we must now emphasize, the strong and united opinion expressed by Dr. Nanka-Bruce in the Radio Station Zoy address in October 1947 "was largely instrumental in influencing the Secretary of State for the colonies" to finally give his consent in 1947, "for the establishment of a Gold Coast university college."

NOTE: The support of Asantehene Otumfuor Agyemang Prempeh II for the University College of the Gold Coast at Legon was contingent in part on the establishment of a second university in the then Gold Coast, in Kumasi, as advanced by the Bradley Committee.

And so, as a result, two British colonial University Colleges, by separate ordinances, were established in October of 1948: one in Ibadan, and the other in Achimota. Subsequently, 104 students enrolled in the University College at Ibadan, while 90 students (taken from Achimota College's post-secondary programme) enrolled at the University College of Gold Coast, for the first time.

Englishmen were appointed as principals for the two university colleges, namely Eric Ashby (for Ibadan) and David Balm (for the University College of the Gold Coast), as academic programmes as ambitious as those in British universities were introduced (Ashby).

In addition, a good number of academic staff were recruited from British universities.

Though established by ordinances, the two university colleges were set up as affiliates of the University of London in terms of entry requirements, curricula, approval of examinations by external examiners, awarding of degrees, academic year, and so on.

NOTE: It is worth pointing out that records indicate Governor Frederick Gordon Guggisberg envisioned Prince of Wales' College (now Achimota College) would become a university as far back as 1923. His appointment of

Dr. Kwegir Aggrey as Assistant Principal at the college was in line with the former's vision. To this end Dr. Aggrey invited Dr. J. B. Danquah to join the faculty at Achimota. Danquah turned down that offer. Yet again, in 1927, Dr. Danquah was offered a mastership at the same institution, to succeed Dr. Aggrey. But, once again, Dr. Danquah "declined the offer" and rather chose to go into private legal practice" (Nwauwa).

## Funding Sources for the University College of the Gold Coast:

Because the Secretary of State for the Colonies did not promise significant financial resources to support the University College of the Gold Coast, the bulk of the cost for the initial and subsequent funds required for the establishment was largely borne by the colonial government and the People the Gold Coast.

<b>Cost of Establishing and Operating Gold Coast University College: Fund Sources (1948-1954)</b>			
Item	Fund Source	Amount: Pounds Sterling (£)	Percent of Total (%)
1	Gold Coast Government (Internally-Generated)	3,765,000.00	57.38
2	Gold Coast Cocoa Marketing Board (Reserves) / Government*	1,000,000.00	15.24
3	Cocoa Funds (OTHER)**	897,000.00	13.67
4	Colonial Welfare and Development Fund (Grant)***	400,000.00	6.10
5	Annual Advances (from 1948)****	500,000.00	7.62
6	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,562,000.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>NOTES</b>			
*	Portion for Endowment of University College; Research at West African Cocoa Research Institute at Tafo; Rehabilitation of Cocoa "Industry"; Scholarships for Children of Cocoa Farmers.		
**	Variously cited as £900,000 by some sources. Portion for Akuaffo Hall, 2nd Residence Hall.		
***	Governor's Grant.		
****	Annual Grant Beginning Circa 1949, to cover operating expenses, up to 1954 (thereafter replaced by £2,000,000.00 endowment fund.		
Sources:	(1) F. M. Bourret, Ghana: The Road to Independence, 1949.	(2) Colonial Office: Report on the Gold Coast for the Year 1950.	
K. Botwe-Asamoah, Ph.D.		GHANAHERO.COM	
		EUM PROF LUNGU & Associates, 2018	

Above (Graphic/Table): We describe information captured by above graphic as follows with respect to funding for University College of the Gold Coast (1948 – 1954):

## **Six-plus Key Take-Aways From the Funding Table:**

1. In all, the Gold Coast Government provided a grant of approximately £3,765,000.00, representing 57.38% of all the initial funding commitments.

2. Cocoa Fund provided £897,000.00 in initial grant (variously cited as £900,000.00 by some sources), representing 13.67%. When the Bradley Committee determined, based on vocal local support, that the People of the Gold Coast should have their own university college, the committee pressed to make sure "financial resources could be found locally", that the Asantehene was on-board:

"....The idea was to levy cocoa farmers to accumulate funds for building the university college. Two members of the Legislative Council - Dr J. B. Danquah and Prof. Christian Baeta on their own volition worked on the question of securing funds for the project. Danquah, for instance, was seen educating farmers around the country on the issue so that they might willingly contribute to the project. With the background work done, it was possible for the Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB) to levy and collect 2s 6d (two shillings and six pence) per load of the following cocoa season's crop. The total money thus collected amounted to approximately £897,000, which the CMB gave, on behalf of the farmers and people of the Gold Coast, as a contribution towards the establishment of the university college...", (Agbodeka).

NOTE: A portion of the £897,000 in CMB funds went for building Akafo Hall in 1955 (under the CPP internal self-government.

3. The Gold Coast Cocoa Marketing Board Reserves made available additional £1,000,000.00 in grant towards teaching and research Department of Agriculture and associated sciences, representing 15.24%. (Portions of this amount went into research at the West African Cocoa research Institute at Akyem Tafo, Rehabilitation of Cocoa industry"; and Scholarships for Children of Cocoa Farmers).

4. Colonial Welfare and Development Fund/grant provided £400,000.00, representing 6.10%. (Records indicate an amount of £400,000.00 was spent on Drainage and Sewer improvements during that time. We believe that was the purpose of the Colonial Welfare and Development grant appropriated to the University College of the Gold Coast).

5. Annual Advances was £5000.000.00 representing 7.62% of initial funds. This was Annual Grants beginning in 1949 and covering operating expenses up to 1954; thereafter was replaced by £2,000.000.00 by the CPP through its internal self-government funding facilities for the Gold Coast.

6. Total cost from 1948 - 1955: £6,562.000.00  
(Bourret; Gold Coast Colonial Office Report-1950).

7. From our Item 6 above, in contrast to the funds appropriated through various tracks to establish the University College of Gold Coast from 1948 up to 1954, as of 1944, more than 2 decades after its founding, the Prince of Wales' College at Achimota had been financed to the tune of £617,000 in capital expenditure, and an annual grant of £54,000 directly by the Gold Coast Government. At the end of that period, just about "one-sixth" of expenses at that college was being spent on "post secondary education", (Data Source: Asquith - Report of the Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies, 1945).

NOTE: The significance of the Bourret reports cited in this paper regarding the establishment and construction of the University College of the Gold Coast, now Legon, is that the reports were practically contemporaneous accounts, written as events were occurring in the Gold Coast. (They were not commissioned by any entity with a parochial interest, however narrow. The accounts were not written a quarter of a century or more after the founding of that institution in the Gold Coast, or after the Gold Coast was already "Ghana" and partisan political interests had already developed. (Needless to point out also that Bourret had absolutely no kinship to the extended J. B. Danquah family, no self-interest (political, economic, etc.) to protect; and no axe to grind, in reverse).

To be continued.....

**SUBJ:** J. B. Danquah was Never Chief Campaigner or Founder of University of Ghana (Part 2).

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# **J. B. Danquah was Never Chief Campaigner or Founder of University of Ghana (3)**

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***"...In Part 3, the final paper, we provide additional information about funding arrangements for the University of the Gold Coast (and KNUST), and compare the importance of key players using multiple sources and accounts. We provide a critique of the "Danquah the Founder" propaganda and fallacy, such as we saw with the multi-false premises and conclusions of Mr. Paul Adom-Otchere in his May, 2018, paper; and an assessment of President Akufo Addo's statements on the matter. President Akufo Addo's statements are in our opinion indicative of intentions to grievously and wrongly assign shared Ghanaian cultural values, ideas, symbols, to one of his kin, his uncle. But, those values, the University of Ghana in this case, were created by all the Peoples and is owned by the collective, the commonwealth. The objective historical records do not show that Dr. J. B. Danquah's "inestimable work" mobilized the people of the Gold Coast to insist on building the University of Ghana. In fact, we show that at one point, Dr. J. B. Danquah's commercial interests were at odds with the Gold Coast national interest with respect to the important questions in this matter. Dr. J. B. Danquah was never the chief campaigner for the University College of the Gold Coast (UCGC). Many notable figures did a lot more to help establish the University of Ghana. Dr. J. B. Danquah did not found the University of Ghana... All Ghanaians, including those in the NPP who truly care for a unitary Ghana, ought to resist any attempt to re-name Ghana's premiere university after any individual", (Lungu, Botwe-Asamoah, & Dompere, 2019).***



## **A Critical Assessment of the “Danquah the Founder” Fallacy:**

There are two questions to be resolved here. First, was it Dr. J. B. Danquah’s inestimable work that mobilized the people of the Gold Coast to insist on building the University of Ghana? Secondly, was he the founder of the University of Ghana? Based on the preceding deliberations, the answer to both questions is unambiguously NO. It is therefore a delusion to assert that Dr. J. B. Danquah was the chief campaigner for the establishment of the University of Ghana, and its founder, to boot.

The establishment of the University of Ghana, based on the Elliot Commission’s Majority Report (championed by Sir Arku Korsah,) was the culmination of immense work of several organizations, committees, institutions, and prominent individuals, at home and abroad. Among some of the most prominent Ghanaians, members of organizations and civil society groups that campaigned and agitated for the establishment of the University of College of the Gold Coast/Ghana, were Sir Arku Korsah, Dr. Nanka-Bruce, Rev. Prof. Baeta, and Sir E. Asafu-Adjaye, often conveniently ignored by acolytes of Dr. J. B. Danquah.

It is in this context that we examined “political science student” Paul Adom-Otchere’s article on renaming the University of Ghana at Legon after Dr. Danquah. In his piece, he made several historical blunders, for instance, by omitting the names of some of the prominent people cited above, historical figures who played foremost roles in many capacities to get the University of Ghana/University College of the Gold Coast, established.

### ***Paul Adom-Otchere, “Political Science Student”, Journey’s with Multiple False Premises and Arrives at Wrong Destination:***

We must point out that Mr. Paul Adom-Otchere’s Danquah-romancing essay published on Ghanaweb.com on 15 May, 2018, about the “actual history” of the University of Ghana was in fact culled from a single source, in anti-intellectual fashion, uninformed and neglectful, about the vast and consequential literature on the matter. He appears to have totally, purposely, neglected to sufficiently calibrate his intellectual compass as “science” and ethos of historical analysis and discovery demands.

And so, his readers (and listeners) were the poorer for it.

The central premise of Mr. Paul Adom-Otchere's campaign for renaming the University of Ghana after Danquah is that the argument for the university college preceded the significant role the cocoa farmers and the Asantehene played by providing certain funds (13% by our calculation) for the new university; and that it was the convincing argument and pivoting work of Dr. Danquah among the "farmers" that eventually led to the establishment of the University College of the Gold Coast.

Additionally, Adom-Otchere advanced a predisposed case (in support of renaming after Dr. Danquah) when he said that:

"...the cocoa farmers were responsible for both Legon and UST (instead of KNUST)..., but we have named UST after Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who played no actual role in its formative thoughts." If therefore, he continued, "we have to credit any individual for the work done towards our first university; it was "the thought leader and active campaigner Dr. J.B. Danquah," (Adom-Otchere).

Again, it is worth noting that the Asantehene Otumfuor Agyemeng Prempeh II agreed to Bradley's recommendation that the premier university of the country would be located in Accra provided that another university would be established in Kumasi in the future. At the time, a substantial amount of the cocoa revenue came from the Ashanti region where most of the famers lived.

To wit: Helping to obtain pledges for funds for a university building or two does not make one a key player in the founding, let alone the founder of that institution nearly 72 years after that founding. As we show below, somebody had to set up a scheme for the collection and accounting of the funds beyond just naming the entity (Cocoa Marketing Board), and then follow through with the transfer for the purpose approved by law.

### ***Other Pioneers and Notable Figure Qualified as "Founders" of the University College of the Gold Coast:***

As deliberated above, the campaign for the implementation of the Majority Report was carried out by several prominent people, civic organizations, and many other entities such that if we were to attempt to credit any prominent Ghanaians for the work done towards the founding of the University of the

Gold Coast, Dr. J. B. Danquah will surely be far behind several notable personalities.

The credit could easily go to Sir Arku Korsah, the only Gold Coaster member on the Elliot Commission who signed the Majority Report and played the role of chief campaigner. In fact, it was Sir Arku Korsah who also signed "the land documents...(as)...second chairman of the University College Council...on behalf of Council", an agreement negotiated between the College, the Government of the Gold Coast, and the Chiefs (and People of La), "through notification by civil servants" (Agbodeka).

Following Sir Arku Korsah would be Dr. Frederick Nanka-Bruce, whose radio address, as F.M. Bourret points out, most influenced the Secretary Jones to finally agree to the founding of the University College of Gold Coast/Ghana.

The suggestion that it was Dr. J. B. Danquah who travelled across the Gold Coast colony to mobilize cocoa farmers to give up a percentage of their sales to finance the establishment of the University of Ghana is one-sided, if we must be charitable.

Further, if "two members of the legislative council, Dr. Danquah and Prof Baeta, on their own volition worked on this question of securing funds for the project" from farmers in the Ashanti Region, how come Paul Adom-Otchere discriminates against "Prof Baeta" and credits all the funds raised, all "897, 000 pounds sterling", as "raised through Danquah's effort" alone?

Rev. Professor Baeta played an equally prominent role in raising monies for the university by traveling on his own to meet with the Asantehene and cocoa farmers in the Ashanti province. In fact, biographical data on Rev. Prof Baeta also indicates that it was his initial efforts that led to the capital contribution of £897,000.00 (which other sources cited as £900,000.00), from donations by cocoa farmers, represented by the Gold Coast Cocoa Marketing Board.

But, Mr. Paul Adom-Otchere would rather have his readers (and listeners) believe that all the credit and valor for the contribution of £897,000.00 (and other future Cocoa Marketing Board funds, £2million by historical account), granted for express/specific purposes, belongs to Dr. J. B. Danquah. (As we've shown already, some of those funds went elsewhere, geographically, to fund programs outside the boundaries of the University College of the Gold Coast).

Unfortunately for Adom-Otchere, Professor Francis Agbodeka's book, the only source he uses to buttress his erroneous claim that J. B. Danquah is for

all practical purposes the founder of the University College of the Gold Coast, and thus deserves to have his name replace "University of Ghana", mentions J. B. Danquah's name on just 2 pages (13 and 105) in his 384-page book, notations excluded.

Compounding the problem further for Adom-Otchere, Agbodeka claims in his book that J. B. Danquah "...was seen educating farmers around the country on the issue so that they might willingly contribute to the project...", with respect to the £897,000 raised through the Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB). However, in his very well-documented book, Agbodeka neglects to source that particular statement.

Who did see?

What did they also miss?

Granting J. B. Danquah "credit", the critical Ghanaian would want to know what Professor Baeta did for the University College of the Gold Coast when out of his own volition he also went out to secure funds for the University College of the Gold Coast, like J. B. Danquah, as reported.

Agbodeka lays it all out in a personal statement for all of us to "see". It confirms our finding that Rev. Professor Baeta played no less a prominent role in raising monies for the project.

Actually, the Reverend C. G. Baeta was a "senior member()" on the Academic Board from the "1949/50 session", practically from the beginning. More significantly, according to Agbodeka, Professor Baeta was:

"...(O)ne of the founders of the UCGC through...campaign in the Legislative Council for a university college...", (Agbodeka).

### ***Government was Primary Funder During Establishment of the University College of the Gold Coast:***

This brings us to the role of the Government of the Gold Coast in the establishment of the UCGC given that the Secretary of State for the Colonies would not significantly assist financially through endowment or direct funding, after payment of £400,000.00, in initial development funds.

READ:

"...The people who worked hard to make the College's financial administration smooth-going included the Principal, Balme, who had numerous meetings with officials of the Gold Coast Government....Governor Arden Clark and the Prime Minister, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, also supported the University College...(and)...Mr. Armitage....and Hon. K. A. Gbedemah who, as Minister of Finance and the Government's representative on the College Council, communicated the cabinet decisions to the University College," (Agbodeka).

And so, at this point, we must point out that the apparent attempt to downplay Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's policies that actually constructed and/or established the two universities, as Adom-Otchere made in his piece, deserves clarification here. It is true that Nkrumah was out of the country during the campaign for the implementation of the Majority Report and its attendant arrangements. Even so, Nkrumah's internal self-government deserves great credit for following through on the agreement between the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Creech Jones, and the Asantehene, with respect to the establishment of the Kumasi College of Technology in 1952, following the establishment of the UCGC, at Legon, in 1947/1948.

"...When the Gold Coast decided to have a university college, they were thinking of government financing it. It so happened that the Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB), the richest agency in the country, came to supplement government grants,....The Colonial Office...asserted that the Gold Coast was not at present a poor territory and that funds might be forthcoming from the reserves built up in the country from government trading in cocoa...(In 1949)... four main sources of funding for the UCGC were agreed upon. The first was the government grant which was to be given quinquennially i.e. from 1948-53,1953-1958...(on a 5-Year schedule). For the second quinquennium 1953-58 the emerging African government led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah caused the amount to be doubled to £4 million,' so as to speed up the training of graduates for the government's Africanization programme. The year 1954 also saw the establishment of the second source of finance, an Endowment Fund, into which the Government paid £2million...The CMB was the other source of finance for the UCGC...Lastly the undergraduates paid fees out of their government bursaries and this formed a source of funding for the College. The fees were for tuition,

board and lodging. For the 1949-50 session, they were £63 for Intermediate Courses and £90 for Degree Courses..." (Agbodeka).

At this point, it is very important for every Ghanaian (and African) to understand what the Colonial Office in London meant by "reserves built up in the country from government trading in cocoa."

Those monies referred to as "reserves" were not accrued by the Colonial Office operating from London.

One of the first laws the Nkrumah internal self-government accomplished was the Amendment in the Gold Coast Cocoa Marketing Board (GCCMB) Ordinance of 1951, which made "cocoa revenue [a] common national property" controlled by the national government. Subsequently, the internal self-government under the Convention Peoples Party (CPP), increased the price of cocoa beans for the cocoa farmers.

Dr. Danquah vehemently opposed the GCCMB Amendment/Ordinance of 1951, saying that "funds of the GCCMB were not 'profits' accruing to government" (Kwame Ninsin).

But it was the profits accruing from the nationalization of the cocoa industry, as well as the extractive (mining) industry, that formed the basis of the CPP Five-Year Development Plan (1951-1955). It was within the framework of this Development Plan that work on the current campus of the University of Ghana truly began, in 1951. As well, it was also in the context of the Plan that Kumasi College of Technology was established.

Significantly, the "reserves" were built from the profits accruing from the nationalization of the cocoa industry, and the extractive industry. Henceforth, European cocoa buyers, for instance, would not be another layer in the cocoa marketing chain collecting "profits" when they themselves were not farming the land or own those resources in the first place, even as cocoa farmers themselves were contributing to the Gold Coast national development agenda within their means.

The construction of the first dormitory, Legon Hall, began in September 1951 and was completed in 1952. The second dormitory, Akafo Hall, was built by the CPP government and opened by Dr. Nkrumah in 1955, and not 1953, as Otchere would want us to believe. It is also a fact of Ghanaian history that Nkrumah became Prime Minister on 5 March, 1952. He was not

the Leader of Government Business in 1953, as Otchere again exposed his naiveté about Ghana's political history.

We should bear in mind that the funding of the University of the Gold Coast was a process occurring between 1948 and 1954. Even so, it was during the period between 1951 and 1955 that the greater part of the cocoa revenue, following the nationalization of the cocoa industry by the 1951 Ordinance (vehemently resisted by Dr. Danquah), was partly generated for the Five-Year Development, that made it possible to liberally fund university education, among other social needs and values in the Gold Coast, then Ghana.

Still on "Financial Administration", Agbodeka thought it was important to provide additional details for the purpose of history in the University of Ghana-commissioned book:

"...The estimates referred to earlier were prepared to cover a scheme to be carried out in two stages. Stage one was to provide for a college of about 600 students. Stage two was to provide for a university for 3,000 to 4,000 students. Although the funds for this scheme were to be given out quinquennially, there was enough latitude for additional grants... Thus a deficit on the first set of recurrent expenditure amounting to £400,000 as well as an unforeseen capital expenditure of £151,500 were quickly made good over and above the original 1948-53 quinquennium (by government). The same principle was extended to a number of departments or schools which did not form part of the original estimates... Thus from about mid-1949 to 1956, the Department (later Institute) of Extra-Mural Studies enjoyed a separate earmarked grant from government," and in November 1949 the CMB gave the UCGC the first of its £1million (with the second to follow soon) for a Faculty of Agriculture outside the current quinquennium. Another example was the National Museum which enjoyed a separate vote from government until it left the University College for its present premises in Accra. Special educational services provided on campus for government sponsored courses attracted grants-in-aid, and for the 1952/53 session the UCGC was expecting grants in respect of various projects outside the quinquennium. Later, several institutes were to attract ear-marked grants direct from government...". (Agbodeka).

Komla Agbeli Gbedemah, who would later become the CPP's Finance Minister after independence, was the "Government Representative on the University College Council (1955-1960", (Agbodeka) during the period the UCGC was

physically established, without doubt appointed by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to ensure a smooth funding scheme and continued government support for the UCGC.

The establishment of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in 1961 was the result of Kwame Nkrumah's vision of science and technology as a requisite for Ghana's industrialization. It was with this in mind that Nkrumah's government formulated the Seven-Year Development Plan, with education as the hub.

In 1960, Nkrumah appointed an International Commission under Kojo Botsio's Chairmanship to advise the government on the future of the University of Ghana and the conversion of the Kumasi College Technology into a full-fledged university. The Commission submitted its report in May of 1961, and Parliament enacted it into law on July 1, 1961 (Botwe-Asamoah).

The law unbound the University of Ghana from the jurisdiction of London University. In this arrangement, Nkrumah became the Chancellor of the University of Ghana. The law also converted the Kumasi College of Technology into a full university, now named Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

The financial sources for the establishment of KNUST came from a portion of the \$500 million reserves that the CPP internal self-government "accumulated between 1951 and 1956, in long-term low interest British securities," (Richard D. Mahoney) from cocoa revenue, extracted (mining) industry and other sources. As pointed out earlier, Dr. J.B. Danquah strongly opposed the 1951 Gold Coast Cocoa Marketing Board Amendment Bill in the Legislative Assembly, saying that it was in violation of the full enjoyment of private property (the root of the NPP's ideology of "Property Owing Democracy").

NOTE: At the time, in 1951, Dr. Danquah had a vested interest in A. G. Leventis & Company Limited, one of the private cocoa-purchasing agencies.

Moving on further, we must stress that the physical establishment of the KNUST was Kwame Nkrumah government policy, notably the Seven-Year Development Plan. In the Plan, Nkrumah viewed science and technology as an instrument for Ghana's industrialization.

Also, we need to know about Sir Asafu-Adjaye, the 1946 elected representative of the University College Council from the Ashanti Confederacy on the Legislative Council during the time Dr. J.B. Danquah and



Rev. Prof. Beata traveled to Asanteman to appeal to the Asantehene and cocoa farmers to make financial contributions (through the CMB) towards the establishment of the university college with proceeds from cocoa sales.

Sir Asafu-Adjaye was a member of the University College Council right at its first meeting, on 8 February, 1949 (Agbodeka).

On balance, given that through the efforts of Dr. J. B. Danquah, Rev. Prof. C.G. Baeta, and conceivably Sir Edward Asafu-Adjaye (all on the Legislative Council), the Cocoa Fund generated £897,000.00, representing just 13.67 % of the initial cost of establishing and operating the Gold Coast University College, it is a mighty stretch for anyone to propose that Dr. J. B. Danquah was the founder of that institution and that ought to be the basis for renaming the University of Ghana after Danquah.

We've noted that Dr. J. B. Danquah turned down several opportunities to formally serve in important educational leadership positions in the Gold Coast, the UCGC, in particular, and could have risen to higher heights quickly, if he wanted. But, Danquah declined.

Dr. J. B. Danquah was never a member of any of the several educational commissions. He was not a member of the Gold Coast University Council when it first met in 1949, as crucial decisions were being made to establish that institution. You see, according to Agbodeka, in addition to three (3) members from the Academic Staff of the University College, Principal/Balme, and Secretary/Registrar (5 officials):

- Three (3) members were appointed by the "Governor in Council"
- One (1) member was appointed by the African Unofficial Members of the Gold Coast Legislative Council
- One (1) member was appointed by the Joint Provincial Council
- One (1) member was appointed by the Ashanti Confederacy Council (Sir Asafu-Adjaye, as we've already noted)
- Two (2) members were appointed by the Inter-University Council

Dr. J. B. Danquah never volunteered and was never appointed by any of those entities to serve on the University College Council in the crucial year, in 1949; and during 1949 and 1954.

In our humble opinion, Paul Adom-Otchere's piece on renaming the University of Ghana after Dr. Danquah is not unintentional. His article appeared on Ghanaweb.com on 15 May 2018, seven (7) days after President Akufo Addo's address at the "Lunch of the University of Ghana's Endowment Fund," 7th May 2018.

Paul Adom-Otchere's arrived at the wrong destination with a political agenda that is totally at odds with the true history of the founding on the University College of the Gold Coast, now the University of Ghana.

## **Conclusions:**

Ghanaians are not fools.

The series of public lectures and debates in the media about the incomprehensible "Founding Fathers" by President Akufo Addo and some members of the NPP in 2017 leading to the "Founding Fathers" as a public holiday are fresh in our memories. So, the president attributing the implementation of the Elliot Commission's Majority Report to Dr. Danquah, as well as portraying him as the founder of the University of Ghana is certainly a recast of history to rename the University of Ghana after Dr. Danquah.

There is absolutely no objective, historical basis for that belief.

For us, the president's current campaign of renaming public institutions after some Ghanaians of repute are dress rehearsals for what appears to be an impulse-driven resolve to rename the University of Ghana after his uncle, Dr. J. B. Danquah. That is why the president's appointment, almost 1 year ago, on 31st July 2018, of Mrs. Mary Chinery-Hesse, a former Chief Advisor to the President in the Cabinet of former President J.K. Kufuor, as Chancellor of the University of Ghana, has become a major concern to many Ghanaians and supporters of Ghana inside and outside Ghana, among them many Diasporans.

In closing, we must note that the other premier universities created by ordinances under British colonial rule at the time, namely, the University of Ibadan, the University of Khartoum, Makerere University, and the University of the West Indies have not been renamed after any individual. Each one of those institutions stand for all the Peoples in their respective countries. The attempt to rename the University of Ghana after Dr. J. B. Danquah, which

appears to underscore the President Akufo Addo's address on May 7, 2018 at Legon, is a grave travesty in the making.

All Ghanaians, including those in the NPP who truly care for a unitary Ghana, ought to resist any attempt to re-name Ghana's premiere university after any individual.

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**SUBJ:** J. B. Danquah was Never Chief Campaigner or Founder of University of Ghana (Part 3).

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