

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

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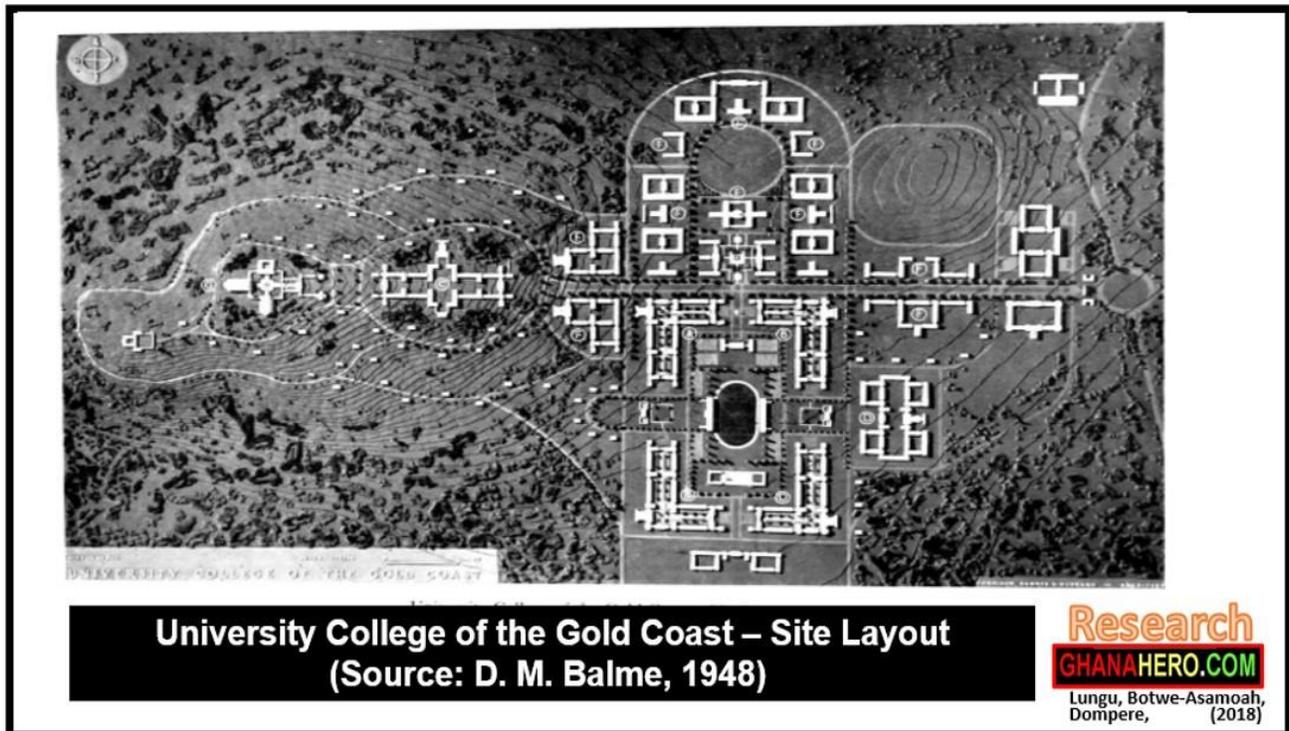
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"...Part 1 of the paper introduced several questions and advanced our argument contesting the idea that J. B. Danquah was the central figure in the construction of the University College of the Gold Coast. We made sharply visible pioneering advocates 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 Cyril Asquith and the Walter 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 should be developed into university colleges in the respective countries. That Report was separate and out of odds with a "Minority Report" 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 of the Gold Coast, at "La Goon":

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 Goon”.



(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," (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).

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," (Mwauwa).

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," (Mwauwa).

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 (Mwauwa), assuredly with the support and goodwill of that community.

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

Persuaded by what 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," (Mwauwa).

As Mwauwa 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," (Mwauwa).

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" (Mwauwa).

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.

Cost of Establishing and Operating Gold Coast University College: Fund Sources (1948-1954)			
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	Total	6,562,000.00	100.00
NOTES			
*	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	
		ELMI 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):

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%. A portion went for building Akuafu 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).

NOTE: In contrast to the funds appropriated by various tracks for the establishment of University College of Gold Coast cited above, as of 1944, 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. Just about "one-sixth" of expenses at that college was being spent on "post secondary education", (Asquith - Report of the Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies, 1945).

NOTE: The significance of the Bourret reports we cite in this paper with respect to the development and construction of the University College of Gold Coast, now Legon, is that they were practically contemporaneous accounts, written as events were occurring in the Gold Coast. (They were not commissioned by any entity with an interest, however narrow, nor were they written a quarter of a century or more, after the founding of that institution in the Gold Coast, now Ghana.

To be continued.....

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

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