

## Monkey Dey Work AMissah Attas Dey Chop!



responsibility in Ghana, today.

In our 22 February, 2015, essay on Ghanaweb and available on GhanaHero.com titled, Mr. Mahama is Loving Vain Okro-Mouths and the Fur Dress!, we spoke about persons who flatly neglected public policy to talk about a "fur dress". You will remember that was the attire worn by Mr. Asiedu Nketiah, the General Secretary of the NDC, on a recent trip to Angela Merkel's Germany, on official Government of Ghana (GOG) business. This essay will as well attempt to put that matter and recent events and deficiencies in policy in their proper context in an attempt to further tease out their relevance to governance and administrative

Mr. Nketia's "fur dress" was just a monkey show, with zero policy relevance!

### **BIG SHOTS, CRONIES & KIN DON'T DRINK WATER FROM ROCKS, BUY CHALK OR TALK TOILETS:**

In our "Okro-Mouths" essay, we take pains to address the fact that ethics and good governance requirements did not support the NDC General Secretary's appointment as Chairman of the Board of Bui Power Authority (BPA). As we elaborate in that essay, just as Mr. Nketiah has been profiting from BPA in salaries and other payments we do not know about, Jabesh Amissah-Arthur, Vice President Kwesi Amissah-Arthur's brother, is sitting in the top dog chair at BPA, as Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Jabesh Amissah-Arthur has been the subject of a great many Bui Power Authority worker complaints, some of it as odd as they come, complaints Chairman Nketia reportedly ignored for the longest.

Jabesh Amissah-Arthur, as the Daily Guide reported, has created a culture of silence and cronyism at BPA. In particular, Jabesh prevented BPA workers from talking to Trades Union representatives. In addition, Jabesh Amissah-Arthur denied promotions earned by qualified personnel because "there were no funds to pay them as senior staff officers." In a cruel situation that wickedly mimics France's Marie Antionette of "Let Them Eat Cake" infamy in 1879, but in reverse, Jabesh Amissah-Arthur sat unconcerned about the health and safety of the BPA workers, and neglected to ensure workers had a safe water source to drink while on duty at the water

power plant on the BPA campus. Instead, the only water available for employees to drink at the time we wrote our essay was water from "some rocks" on the BPA grounds.

Then, there were the complaints by the workers that Jabesh was actually personally monitoring all employee movements on all corners of the BPA campus on his personal wrist watches, including lunch rooms and even the privacy of their motor vehicles. We pointed out then that these activities were, and still are, potentially a violation of employee privacy rights. In all these cases, Mr. Nketiah, as Chairman of the BPA, neglected to address in a professional manner, even as he and Jabesh continued drawing their full salaries and other benefits on the tab of the tax payers of Ghana.

Now, comes the latest news addressed by writers too numerous to bother to fully detail. The wife of Vice President Amissah-Arthur, Matilda Amissah-Arthur, has sprung wildly unto the front pages of the news. In a strikingly callous abuse of Kukurantumi teachers who actually pay taxes on their incomes, the "head teacher", employing one of the more culturally useful Asante linguistic devices, "spoke by the wind" and asked "about chalk" for their classrooms. As reported in the media, Mrs. Amissah-Arthur scolded the entire school and towns people gathered in the public forum:

“...The head teacher has shocked me...she said you lack chalk and log books...I am very shocked that you are today asking me about chalk...How much is a box of chalk...I won't give you chalk today, I won't give you chalk tomorrow...”.

The reader will notice a continuing troubling pattern of behavior on the part of the Amissah-Arthurs, and by extension, Mr. Mahama, and the government of which he is the head.

## **TAKE BENEFITS YOU CAN GET FROM PUTRID WART-INFESTED RAWLINGSIAN CONSTITUTION:**

For the past 12 years and more, many Ghanaians and Ghana supporters, including Prof Lungu, have demanded that sitting governments (NPP, NDC), amend the Ghana Constitution(s) to remove much of the Rawlingsian warts. Among them is the provision of the 1992 Constitution that says high public officials such as Mr. Mahama, his Vice President, erstwhile president Mr. Kuffour, and over 340 others have no legal responsibility to pay income taxes on their salaries, no matter how much they take from the public till.

Today, in 2015, and for the longest, the President of Ghana and his Vice-President, DO NOT pay taxes on their incomes.

As well, the Speaker of Parliament, all the Ministers of State, all the Deputy Ministers of State and all Members of Parliament (MPs) do not pay incomes taxes on their salaries. In addition, the Chief Justice and all Justices of the Supreme Court do not pay incomes taxes. As well, the Chairman and all members of the Council of State, do not pay a pesewa in income taxes.

Dear reader, as a group, you are looking at over 84 high public officials, plus possibly another 240 MPs without portfolios, who as a group do not pay a pesewa in income taxes, whilst Ghanaian children sit under trees, or in decrepit school buildings, if they are lucky to attend school in the first place.

We will repeat: Over 320 of the highest paid Ghanaian public officials do not pay taxes on the high incomes and per diems they take from the people every passing month. Not to be outdone, Mr. Mahama and his Ministers receive additional benefits, including the use of two cars plus free gasoline and drivers, free housing with staff, and a \$4,770 entertainment allowance.

But, now, and for the longest, Mr. Mahama, his high government cronies, and siblings, want teachers who pay taxes on their meager salaries to also buy school supplies like chalk, repair school furniture, and contribute other financial resources to the schools in their communities, as second-class public servants.

Imagine Mr. Mahama and his Vice, Mr. Amissah Arthur, each take home every month more than \$5,000, tax free, before other benefits (free housing, free staff, free transportation, per diem extra, etc). Still not to be outdone, every minister also takes home more than \$4,000 as salary, plus similar benefits. Then the Members of Parliament, each receiving more than \$3,200 a month, with benefits, round out the putrid Rawlingsian theft of Ghana's resources.

From our back of envelop calculation, we get a tax free salary income alone of over \$1,240,000 every month, or \$14,900,000, every year, for Mr. Mahama, his ministers and Ghana's MPs.

## **SORRY, SALARY INCREMENTS & BENEFITS DON'T PAY FOR CHALK:**

So, while the average "high" public official in Mr. Mahama's government receives about \$4,000 each month, free of taxes, it is the Ghanaian teacher who earns approximately \$500 a month who pays taxes on their income.

In addition, it is those teachers who must buy school supplies for other peoples' children learning in their classrooms.

In fact, in 2012, Mr. Mahama approved a 33% pay hike for himself and nearly similar amount of increases for all those officials. Then, in the face of strident public opposition, in November of 2013, he decreed that all the officials, himself included, would donate 10% of their salaries into a separate fund for "...the construction of Community Health Program and Service (CHPS) compounds in the rural communities to help in the efforts to curb maternal mortality and promote neo-natal health care..."

By that ploy, Mr. Mahama and his Vice got to keep about \$1,400 in additional income, or nearly 70% of the raise he decreed for himself, his Vice, and the rest of the gang of "high" GOG officials.

So, one wonders how much of that rebate in public funds have in more than 1.5 years been collected by Mr. Terpker, his Finance Minister, for those specified public purposes, where, and when, and for what use!

At this point, we must now ask of what benefit, really, are all these "high" public officials to Ghana when they still do not pay taxes on their high incomes?

Of what benefit are these officials when:

- (1) More than 40% of Ghanaian children (about 300,000) aged between 4-5 years old don't attend Kindergartens (KG) due to lack of capacity
- (2) More than 45% of Kindergarten, Primary School and JHS teachers are untrained
- (3) More than 2,000 basic schools take place under trees and sheds
- (4) Many children must walk many miles or actually swim to get to school, a situation that recently resulted in the deaths of 3 (three) 3-year olds as they attempted to swim across the mighty River Densu, at New Asuoayaa in the Eastern Region, just to get to school.
- (5) Ghanaian children were ranked at the bottom of all children in the world in the just-released global math and science test scores of children in grade school, globally
- (6) More than 11,000 public school teachers who in theory report to their classrooms every day have not been paid in over 2 months because Mr. Mahama's Ghana Education Service (GES) cannot find time to determine the authenticity of their "social security numbers"
- (7) Mr. Mahama himself cannot be bothered to talk about toilets and sanitation in communities like Bekwai, and Kukurantumi, and other "lesser" locales hundreds of miles from Accra.

## **STOP ALL THAT MONKEY DEY WORK, BAMBOO DEY CHOP:**

Mrs. Matilda Amissah-Arthur is not an elected or appointed official of the GOG. Her faux pas and misspoken words, though absented-minded and disrespectful of the community, has no public policy relevance!

But, when Ghanaian officials take pan in hand and roam all over the Western and Chinese capitals begging for funds and grants for development, we would expect that they would pay their fair share of the piece and pain.

But, they don't!

Since 1966, they have been making lousy plans and signing foolish agreements that only cheat Ghanaians on every drawing board. These officials never go according to any plans they have developed when they show these plans. They will hide everything to benefit themselves and their kith and kin through employment, contract padding, education of their ward in foreign countries, and sundry dark, unapproved banking accounts.

But, Wabesh, Matilda, Asiedu Nketiah, and Mr. Mahama himself are exposing themselves!

Our record on the NPP is available for all who care to know. We are not saying that the NPP did a superior job the last time around. But the government of the day, is the government of the day!

Mr. Mahama and his group have the power to do right by Ghana, transparently. When they fail, we must remind them of their duty to all the people who pay their salaries and are ultimately responsible for their commissions and omission, including the \$96 billion in loans (and counting) owed by Ghana now on the books of the IMF, the World Bank, the US and China Import-Export Banks, and the millions of treasury account holder inside Ghana, etc.

As far as we are concerned, these are all part of the culture of corruption.

They are loud!

They are putrid!

And they are silent at the same time!

But, they are within the power of Mr. Mahama, as head of the powerful executive to reign in. But Mr. Mahama must want to do that, transparently.

In that context, we are certainly not in the camp of Professor George Ayittey, who not too long ago attempted to lecture the world that "...it is not the business of the president to chase after corrupt officials...(because)...Such matters are best left to the country's institutions...You don't get the president involved in these things."

That is a rather ridiculous and unfortunate statement!

Good grief, on what planet does Professor Ayittey dwell?

Does Professor Ayittey not know that the Presidency is an integral part of the "country's institutions"?

Did Professor Ayittey forget the background and context of the Ghanaian situations? How is the Ghana case similar to the US or the UK, when the President in Ghana can by executive fiat approve salaries of all his Ministers and himself; but Barack Obama, for instance cannot approve his own salary?

That, we all know, is how it is done in Ghana under the wart-infested Rawlingsian Constitution(s)! You know, the one(s) Mr. Mahama has never bothered to expend any useful energy, em! an iota of his capital, to revise; to weed corruption out of; to barnish abuse of power and theft of public resources from; to curtail the wanton and dangerous estrangement of the public's patience and good will.

It is time to stop all that monkey dey work, amissah attas dey chop!

So it goes, Ghana!

### **SOURCES:**

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