

# University Report

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## UNIVERSITY REPORT

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COSMO PIETERSE: This week we go to the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon, to hear of some work of breathtaking scope, namely research that's been done there in what we may all-embracingly call sociology. But first as we promised last week, to East Africa, to Kenya, to hear more from Mr. Jorgen Petersen, Head of the new School of Journalism at Nairobi University. Last week as you remember Mr. Petersen talked of the importance of training journalists and of the special problems his students face. Well, this week he discusses with Ahmed Salim the whys and wherefores of the course itself.

For its first year the school took twenty-nine students from eight countries in East, Central and Southern Africa. In future four more countries will be represented. Now, apart from the normal educational qualifications needed for admission to the University itself, students for the School of Journalism must be sponsored by a newspaper or by a broadcasting organization, or by a government agency. A fact, which I think, underlines the practical nature, the practical purpose of the school. So given this, how does the course operate, and as Ahmed Salim put it to Mr. Petersen - how do he and his colleagues proceed:

MR. PETERSEN:

We start by doing a lot of practical work, ordinary journalistic work. I, for one, believe that it is an advantage even if you are a broadcaster or a television producer, it's an advantage to have a journalistic background. So we try to teach the students to write better English, we have a British former sub-editor, as a senior lecturer, we have a very good British tutor in English to take care of this side, so that your listeners shan't believe that I am teaching English! And when you have done this for six months - gone to the courts, to the airport, to fires, followed police work, etc, etc, etc., then we start turning towards academic subjects, starting with a seminar on political systems which is followed by a seminar on African history. From there we moved on to a seminar in Agriculture, and our last seminar in the first year was on the Middle East. This year we will start with a number of courses in mass communication, psychology, economics, press law. Our first seminar will be on world history and these seminars we try to arrange in a way I don't think has been tried, at least not in Africa, before. We make the students responsible for the seminar and the lecturers are only there to offer their services when required to do so by the students.

AHMEND SALIM:

In other words a student would write a paper for the seminar? Students would do most of the discussion?

MR. PETERSEN:

Yes, that's how we've had the seminars so far. Each seminar, each student wrote a paper and each paper was different of course so that at each seminar we had twenty-nine papers to discuss which were all relevant to the subject of course but from various aspects. What we are trying to do was to tell the students "you organise this, what kind of papers you want to write you decide, how they should be written you decide."

MR. PETERSEN:

So far we have demanded journalistic treatment you see, it is not essay writers we are trying to build up, it's journalists, so we have demanded even of somebody who has been say, writing about the Japanese Constitution, we asked him to write in such a way that the article could be used as a background article, say in connection with an election in Japan. Now we are leaving this entirely to the students, we are saying we have made arrangements with these and these lecturers of the Department of History, they are at your disposal, the staff of the School of Journalism is at your disposal, now please what do you want to make of it. We have set aside, I think, a hundred hours, or something like that, you fill them and come and tell us how the timetable should look. We don't know whether it will work, but I think that it is a worthwhile experiment.

AHMED SALIM:

But then you are around, you will attend, in fact, the seminars. Now what is it you want to happen at the end of the seminars - that the students should be really immersed in the subject, become authoritative about it, or do you want to judge or test his ability to get the facts and other things across?

MR. PETERSEN:

The modern journalist is the equivalent of the fifteenth century philosopher. He must know all sciences, and his tragedy, of course, is that he knows very little about everything, and nothing about anything. No, we are not trying to make our students specialists, neither in political systems, nor in agriculture. We are trying to teach them how to analyse fact material and turn fact material into readable articles. We are trying to teach them where you can find, at the shortest possible notice, the facts that you need in order to present any story well. In other words, we are trying to give the

MR. PETERSEN: the student a background, say in agriculture, so that if he is required to write an article on agriculture in Kenya, he will know what authorities are available, what people to contact, which books to get out of the shelves.

AHMED SALIM: And his friends during the seminar try to point out all the witnesses that he didn't get - all the things he missed?

MR. PETERSEN: Exactly. We have an official opponent on each seminar paper. In other words at the same time as the students are given a paper to write they are also given another paper to oppose, so that the student is not only forced to look for the facts behind his own material, he is also forced to look at one of his fellow student's work with the same eyes to a sub-editor would use, saying why haven't you got this, the most important bit you have hidden on the third page, why haven't you taken it into your lead, that's really your story, etc. So that we get this combination of, you not only write, but you are also trained to criticize the work of others, in a constructive way of course.

COSMO PIETERSE: Mr. Jorgen Petersen, Head of the School of Journalism at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, talking to Ahmed Salim. Now there's one point that Mr. Jorgen Petersen made, namely that the journalist is a philosopher, a man that knows a little of all the sciences.

And we are going to hear next from a man who is a virtual polymath who has done research in philosophical, in historical and in the sociological fields in Ghana.

COSMO PIETERSE: Mr. George Hagan, research fellow with the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, has carried on researches in various areas of Ghana, and is currently working in a fishing town, the town of Winneba, thirty miles west of Accra. It has a population of twenty-five thousand people, mainly of the Efutu group. To the west of Winneba are areas where the communities are predominately Fanti-Ashanti, to the east, people are mainly Ga and Ewe. The first question that Christine Oppong asked Mr. Hagan was why he had chosen Winneba.

GEORGE HAGAN: Winneba and the other Efutu states of Seriku and Awutubereku suggested themselves to me as an interesting field for study, first of all because very little is known about this coastal Wares speaking people. The Fanti's to the west and the Ga's and Ewe's to the east have been written about quite extensively, but to date no major work has been done among the Efutu's. Secondly, as I was to discover during my initial probes into the field, Winneba and her two sister states have certain peculiar institutions which are quite fascinating from the purely theoretical point of view.

CHRISTINE OPPONG: What discovered have you been able to make so far?

GEORGE HAGAN: In terms of their history it is well known that the Wares were some of the earliest people have arrived in what is the present-day Ghana. It has been generally accepted that all the Ware speaking people had come from the north along the Volta and spread out from there in a westerly direction. In Winneba however, the peoples own legends or origin suggest that at least a section of the Efutu people came down to the coast along the

GEORGE HAGAN:

River Pra and spread out on the coast from Shalma eastward. This might lead to new interest in the origins of these peoples. In connection with the social organisation I have discovered that these people have an age set system which acts as the basis for political military and ritual action. The main organisation incorporating this system is the Asafo and this makes the Asafo in Winneba quite distinct from the Asafo as we know it among the Fant's and even other Wang speaking peoples. In these other places the Ashafu is not based on age differentiation, at least not formerly. There is finally what I have called the dual system of inheritance, whereby a man has entitlement to property and office both on the father's side and on the mother's side, and this relatively rare practise has lead to the evolution of a system wherby the kingship of Winneba, alternates between two families, one resting its claim on patri-lineal succession and the other claiming the stool by maternal succession.

CHRISTINE OPPONG: Could you tell us something about the family and household patterns. For instance how do they compare with the rest of Southern Ghana?

GEORGE HAGAN:

As a traditional institution in Winneba the nuclear family of a man, his wife and children is not a co-resident group. A man when he took a wife stayed in his fathers house, and the woman, or wife, stayed in her mothers house. There is in Winneba two types of household; the residence of the father and his sons and grandsons and the residence of the mother her daughters and grand-daughters. Except for the very young all boys of ten years or more stayed with their father and girls, at any age, stayed stayed with their mother. This creates what I have called the spilt nuclear family

GEORGE HAGAN: because at no point in the history of the group of the nuclear family would you, in this system, see a couple and their common offspring residing together.

CHRISTINE OPPONG: What have been some of the major social changes which have occurred in Winneba recently and in the past?

GEORGE HAGAN: Of the major changes which have taken place in Winneba, two are, I think, of particular significance for the future development of the town. The first is that Winneba has lost to Swedru its position as a commercial centre. A position it held by virtue of having a port which has now closed down, and by virtue of being the district administrative centre. Winneba has now become almost entirely dependant on Swedru for all the technical services which it used to give to Swedru. The second most important change is taking place in the pattern of family life. The nuclear family is gradually becoming a unitary. Parents are beginning to live together and train their children in a single household.

CHRISTINE OPPONG: One last word George, there has been considerable discussion recently about the differences and similarities between anthropologists on the one hand, and sociologists on the other. How do you describe the kind of work you're doing yourself or the technique of field work and the kinds of data you are handling?

GEORGE HAGAN: I see this question as an entirely academic one. As you know it used to be accepted that the distinction between the two disciplines was in the subject matter of the respective disciplines. Social anthropology was thought to be a study of primitive or exotic societies, sociology, the study of complex advanced societies. Of course now that distinction is untenable because all societies have become slightly more complex

GEORGE HAGAN:

than the European explorers and early anthropologists discovered them. At the same time some people maintained that the difference was to be found in the techniques of study. Social anthropology proceeded by what was called participant observation, and sociology by the superior but impersonal techniques of statistics and theoretical conjecture. Of late social anthropologists have been using the techniques of sociologists, and sociologists have found it more regarding to back their projections with some personal experience in the field of social studies they have been engaged in. So that here to, for all practical purposes, the distinction has vanished. The distinction if it exists now must be accepted for what it is. It exists as a personality issue when individual social anthropologists meet individual sociologists. My own work can't be described as entirely social anthropological in the traditional sense of it, because I have used statistics and theory, social theory, to explain certain issues; kinship, the family, political institutions, religion and the like. So I wouldn't put myself in any pigeon hole

COSMO PIETERSE:

Mr. George Hagan, research fellow with the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon, talking to Christine Oppong.