

3-3-2000

IBPP Research Associates: Ghana

William Fayorsey - The Ghanaian Times

Follow this and additional works at: <http://commons.erau.edu/ibpp>

 Part of the [African Studies Commons](#), [Ethics and Political Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Other Political Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

William Fayorsey - The Ghanaian Times (2000) "IBPP Research Associates: Ghana," *International Bulletin of Political Psychology*: Vol. 8 : Iss. 9, Article 2.

Available at: <http://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol8/iss9/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Bulletin of Political Psychology by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact commons@erau.edu.

International Bulletin of Political Psychology

Title: IBPP Research Associates: Ghana

Author: William Fayorsey

Volume: 8

Issue: 9

Date: 2000-03-03

Keywords: Ghana, Politics

From Ghanaian Times at <http://www.gtimes.com.gh>.

--Political Lessons Inside a Taxi Cab-Straight Talk--from William Fayorsey

Politics is the one and only subject universal in which everybody thinks he or she is an expert and knows best. It is a generous store-house of unlimited knowledge where both solicited and unsolicited, rare and banal postulations can be freely found with the fallacy of sometimes dangerous and absurd conclusions. For, unlike other professions and Issues, where people tread cautiously, politics is the only pastime, and a peculiar one at that, with almost always the majority seeing themselves as absolute authorities who can contribute wisely and abundantly. How wrongly these contributions can sometimes be. That is the beginning of the danger sign for what we always call dirty politics, perhaps.

I do not pretend to be an exception to this seeming malady, as indeed we are all mortals, not angels or saints yet. At one time or the other, politics inspires hope and despair, fear and courage, joy and sadness fall from grace to grass or vice versa. In the same way, steadfast friends turn into deadly foes and political power gained through the imposed, projected and emerged leadership. These three political attributes are the subject of my discourse as an active participant/observer in a taxi conversation. It occurred to me just last Saturday in a taxi from Sakumono Village to the Kwame Nkrumah Circle to write this piece. I was returning home after witnessing the branch inauguration of a political party as well as the launch of its newsletter called "The Forward".

The approaching taxi stopped just by me and I said casually "Circle". The driver beckoned me to sit down. I hesitated. Fear took the better part of me as I saw three well-built men seated at the back. My fear was based on the fact that the front seat of every taxi is the first choice of every passenger. How come that these men have left it empty? I managed, however, to occupy the seat with difficulty. Many ideas raced through my head as I strongly suspected the taxi's occupants to be associated with the draining of human blood and ritual murders. Quickly, I recalled the Karate lessons I had in the early 1970s. For a long, long time, I have not been practising so I am rusty. Taking a mental picture of the area in the taxi in case of any emergency, I consoled myself that as for the driver, it is "koko" for me if he made any false move.

But the immediate danger was the three men behind me. I offered a silent prayer to the Almighty. As the taxi was nearing the headquarters of the Jehovah Witnesses', one of the men at the back seat said something which chased away all my morbid fears and allowed my tense muscles to relax. He works at the Ministry of Communications. The same man asked me whether the magazine I was holding was one of those newly published products to which I replied in the negative. I told him it was the newsletter or the mouthpiece of a political party. Are you a politician? he acquired. I said no, but I am a worker. He probed further to know what type of worker I was; a civil or public servant? I kept quiet and remained pensive. That was where my problems began. By this time, the taxi had crossed the Accra-Tema check-point and had joined the long queue of snail-pace traffic on the Nungua-Accra route.

International Bulletin of Political Psychology

I was still thinking of what to tell the man. Well, I was in a state of confusion. The reason being that about two weeks ago, a five member Supreme Court panel ruled that those who work in the media are neither civil nor public servants due to the nature of their work. Before I could tell him what I had decided, that I am a general servant, another at the back seat asked the others for their opinion on which of the presidential candidates would win the December general elections. All, including the taxi driver, rooted for Vice-President Mills. "As for Professor, I like him paa, he is a very good man oh!" That was the taxi driver. "Do you know him at all"? I asked. "O yes, I know him well, well; that tall lanky Professor with the goatee beard". "Hei! Who told you the Vice-President wears a beard, and no other type than a goatee. Let's talk something better and sensible", the last of the three passengers somehow rebuked the driver and warned him not to open his mouth again.

"But that is not democracy", I protested. Oblivious to my protestation, the man said Professor Mills would make a fine President, but first, he must overcome certain problems with his party and the public. "What do you mean", I asked. He replied that there were some heavyweights within the NDC who did not take kindly to the President's Swedru Declaration, projecting Professor Mills as the party's flagbearer for the elections. The Vice-President, they argued, was a late addition to the inner circle of the party, whereas there were so many of the "old guards" who started with the President from the very beginning. Some of the NDC gurus preferred one of these who started with the President. Another of the passengers shot back at his friend and said he personally did not see anything wrong with the choice of the Vice-President to lead the nation since he is a Ghanaian and an experienced Professor with an impeccable service record.

The third passenger cleared his throat loudly, poised for interruption. To him, those NDC members had a point, in that experiences have shown that society or the public preferred an "emerged" leader to a "projected" leader. He said an emerged leader always came from among the masses of the people at a critical period and thus, provided a charismatic leadership. "He carries the entire people along and the masses support, the leader with a blind obedience that is reserved for only immortals". But in the case of a projected leader, the man continued, he might lack the charisma of an emerged leader, which would be a serious deficiency. A projected leader might also lack firmness, take a principled and resolute stand in times of crisis. "We are witnesses to this Issue of a projected leader during our Third Republic", he concluded.

What has the Third Republic got to do with projected leadership, the other friend queried. The first speaker shot back. "Plenty lessons. We haven't forgotten so soon that our late President of the Third Republic did not emerge from the people but rather was projected from the party and that was his undoing". "Almost, always, it was the party's heavyweights who dictated to him. In taking political decisions that affected the nation, he appeared not to be very firm and resolute. Remember how three of the party's top executives used the government and the nation to contract a loan from an Italian source only to share the money into their private accounts?" "The President was helpless, because, he feared them since they put him in the seat". Presently, that is the sympathy Ghanaians have for the Vice-President that the same calamity might befall him. Others too, are apprehensive.

Mr Taxi Driver would not be left out in the conversation. He interrupted by saying that Professor Mills would make a fine President because he is always clean-shaven. We were all confounded. This same taxi driver had earlier said he knew the Vice-President with a goatee. "Who do you think you are deceiving?", fumed one of the back seat passengers. "Oh! the first time I saw the Vice-President on the TV, he was wearing a beard. Or did I see moustache? You see, I like people with bushy moustache, because they are very, very brave", said the driver. "Nonsense! Who deceived you that bravery lies in

International Bulletin of Political Psychology

bushy moustache? You forget that a former Head of State who was an Army General with a fearsome cactus moustache ran to hide under the bed of a pastor when the junior ranks mutinied and later became a successful coup d'etat", the third passenger said. "Let's go back to our original topic", said the second passenger.

He resumed the talks by saying that the public's apprehension and sympathy for Professor Mills was based on the predicament suffered by Dr Limann. "And you think the Professor is not aware of this? Ghanaians see him as a strong character to rely on and he will surely surprise everybody, including skeptics, cynics and party tricksters", he concluded. "Sure, Professor Mills is our man", they said in unison. "Well," I said, "one of the wisdom of the elders says "he who has a wife with a hunch-back, only knows how he sleeps with her". (Keywords: Ghana, Politics.)