



Emmanuel Hyde explains the government and culture of Ghana to ninth-graders at Ogontz Junior High.

—The Sunday Bulletin (Philadelphia).

Bringing the World to the Classroom

By PETER H. BINZEN, *education writer, Philadelphia Bulletin.*

ONE recent snowy morning, Emmanuel A. Hyde, son of a schoolmaster in Accra, Ghana, and Akiko Matsuo MacLachlan, daughter of a World War II admiral in the Japanese Navy, took a train from Philadelphia to the nearby "bedroom" suburb of Cheltenham Township.

From the train station in the township's Elkins Park section, the Ghanaian and the young woman from Tokyo tramped a short distance past drifts of snow to the 535-pupil Ogontz Junior High School. A few minutes after ten o'clock, they entered the office of the principal, Franklin P. Gill, shook hands with him and some of his staff, checked their teaching rosters—each was to lecture to three social studies classes that

day—and then went their separate ways.

Hyde, a quick-smiling, handsome man who is studying for his doctorate in international relations at the University of Pennsylvania, soon was telling a class of ninth-graders why his native land believes in "nonalignment" and "positive neutralism."

"Ghana is a young country," he said. "To survive and remain politically stable, it cannot align itself with any of the great powers. And so it tries to be friendly with both sides in the cold war. I think this is very good diplomacy."

Turning to less controversial subjects, Hyde described Ghana's new system of compulsory education. He said the government has just adopted a policy of buying textbooks for the pupils instead of forcing their parents to purchase them, as was formerly the case.

Obviously enjoying himself, Hyde

that day gave Ogontz pupils intimate details about life in Ghana. He described the meals his mother used to cook. He told of scrambling up orange trees as a youngster and eating the fruit while playing hide and seek. He cited the many different uses of Ghanaian palm trees—palm leaves for skirts, palm branches for baskets, palm oil for cooking, palm nuts for blacksmith forge fires and fermented palm sap for a potent alcoholic beverage. Explaining that candies are dear in Ghana, he suddenly threw open his mouth to show a set of gleaming white teeth. "I'm thirty years old," he beamed, "and I still don't have a cavity."

While the eyes of pupils in Hyde's classes were riveted on this ebullient African, the other visitor, Akiko MacLachlan—who recently obtained her master's degree at the University of

Pennsylvania and whose husband, William, whom she met at Penn, is now working for his M.A.—spoke to seventh- and ninth-grade social studies classes about Japanese music and architecture.

She played records of traditional Japanese music. The strains of a love song filled the room. One could hear Japanese equivalents of the harp and the banjo and an occasional soft beat of a drum. She played one melancholy song that she said is generally heard only in the imperial court. She smiled and added that the Japanese also like classical music, modern music, jazz, the cha-cha, and rock-'n-roll.

Discussing architecture, she noted that since 60 per cent of Japan is covered with forest, most of its buildings are of wood. Architects strive for simplicity, not magnificence, she said. And religion plays an important part in Japanese architecture. She showed slides of exquisitely designed Japanese gardens and of shrines and temples with marvelous wood carvings and gently upturned roofs.

At noon, Hyde and Mrs. MacLachlan chatted with Ogontz Junior High teachers and students while lunching in the school cafeteria. And when Akiko—as the school staff refers to the twenty-five-year-old woman—started for her final class, a ninth-grade girl ran down the corridor with shining eyes, took her by the hand, and led her into the classroom.

It would be hard to find two individuals of more disparate temperaments than the outgoing, articulate Ghanian, completely at ease in the American classroom, with just enough of the “ham” to make him a superior teacher, and the quiet, shy Tokyo native, who seemed much less comfortable answering questions but who nevertheless commanded the absolute attention of her pupils.

Despite their differences, or perhaps because of them, Emmanuel Hyde and Akiko Matsuo MacLachlan made a strong impression on students and faculty at Ogontz Junior High School. Such impressions have been coming thick and fast at this school and others nearby. Hyde and Mrs. MacLachlan are just two of twenty foreign students at the University of Pennsylvania who are participating this school year in a program known as the “Ogontz Plan for Mutual International Education.”

Also teaching at Ogontz Junior High are Dr. Abdul-Hamid Shawkat, a dentist from Cairo who is now attending Penn's Graduate School of Medicine; Hart Emeruwa, a Nigerian student at the university's Graduate School of Education; and Reginald Rajapakse, of Ceylon, who is studying for his Ph.D. in American history.

Foreign students from Iran, Japan, West Germany, Ghana, and India are lecturing at Cheltenham High School. Elkins Park Junior High is hearing a Liberian, an Indian, a Turk, a Swede, and a Japanese, while a Ghanian, a Chinese, a Frenchman, a Yugoslav, and a Pakistani are speaking at Shoemaker Elementary School.

There is, of course, nothing unusual about American public schools inviting unusual guests to address assemblies or classes. In several respects, however, the Ogontz Plan is believed to be unique. First, the foreign students and the public school children are exposed to each other on a fixed schedule. Each school signs up five foreign students. Each student teaches one-half day a week for three weeks. One follows another so that each school's program runs fifteen weeks. (Hyde and Mrs. MacLachlan happened to be at Ogontz Junior High on the same day because of a cancellation and schedule change.)

THIS extended period of teaching gives the school children a better chance to explore the thinking of the foreign students than would be possible if the visitors made the customary one-shot appearances. In addition, under the Ogontz Plan, foreign students meet with teachers and pupils after school and often are invited into homes for dinner.

Careful planning is another mark of the project. In recruiting foreign students, university officials work closely with the participating schools. Before starting to teach, the foreign students

are given thorough briefings on what is expected of them.

Their contributions are then integrated into existing social studies and history courses. Hyde's comments on “positive neutralism” were fitted into a ninth-grade social studies unit on the cold war. His description of life in Ghana and Mrs. MacLachlan's remarks about Japanese music and architecture were delivered to classes studying world cultures.

One other feature sets the Ogontz Plan apart. The “international lecturers” are paid for the work. The rate is \$10 per half day, or \$30 altogether for each student.

The rationale behind the program is simple. According to the Institute of International Education in New York there were, in 1963, a total of 64,705 foreign students in this country. They came from 149 countries and they were enrolled at 1,798 institutions of higher learning in the United States.

These students represent the leadership class of their respective nations. Obviously, it is important for the U.S. to gain their goodwill. We want them to respect our culture. We want them to discover for themselves that the Hollywood image of America is invalid.

The acts of Congress that encourage such foreign visits state flatly that they should “promote a better understanding of the United States in other countries.” Another aim is to “increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.”

All too often, however, foreign stu-



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Akiko MacLachlan introduces a world history class to the culture of Japan.

dents spend long periods at American colleges and universities without ever getting a good glimpse of off-campus life. Immersed in their studies, uninvited, or perhaps unwilling, to participate in community projects, they seldom rub elbows with the man in the street or the kid in the classroom. Thus they may very well go home with the same mistaken notions they arrived with.

For their part, American school children are frequently misinformed about people and nations outside the continental United States. Much of what they learn about other lands comes from textbooks that are often fuzzily written. Their classes may visit the United Nations but few ever engage in extended give-and-take with Asians or Africans or South Americans or Europeans.

BACKERS of the Ogontz Plan therefore see it as a two-way street. For the schoolchildren, it provides the golden opportunity of learning about the shrinking twentieth-century world from the lips of "resource persons"—in educational jargon—representing the four corners of the earth. And for the international visitors, it opens the door to person-to-person contacts with American pupils, teachers, and parents and, thus, to a whole new look at American life.

Carl Stenzler, co-founder of the Ogontz Plan, thinks it can help provide the climate for world peace. "The youngsters of today," says Stenzler, "must be educated to understand and respect values that are different from their own. The absolute world of 'my way,' 'my God,' 'my government' can lead only to protracted dispute. The purpose, direction, and philosophy of the Ogontz Plan is to stress the sameness of all people while educating our youngsters to understand the differences that are the result of environment."

Stenzler, a Philadelphia businessman, and his sculptress wife, Erna, got the idea that led to development of the Ogontz Plan for Mutual International Education in the fall of 1959. They had attended a school meeting that dealt not with international relations but with one of the "modern mathematics" teaching techniques. The meeting was a great success. Parents left the school shaking their heads in awe.

Erna Stenzler left shaking her head—in exasperation. She was irked that with all the fine and needed gains in math and science, precious little was being done about the humanities. Everybody talked about international goodwill but not much was being done about it.

Soon after, Mrs. Stenzler telephoned International House, an agency that serves as a home away from home for

foreign students in the Philadelphia area. She arranged to have a foreign student spend Thanksgiving in her home at 8310 Roberts Road, Elkins Park. The student, a stunning young woman from Colombia, hit it off perfectly with the Stenzlers and their two daughters. She was the first of forty-two—at the last count—foreign visitors to stay with the Stenzlers. (Mrs. Stenzler has flown twice to Colombia to visit their first international guest. She is the godmother of a Colombian baby.)

With their own lives enriched by such friendships, the Stenzlers set out to "sell" schools on the importance of fostering global understanding. Dr. Gill, the Ogontz Junior High principal, was interested. Outside speakers soon were addressing assemblies at his school. A number of foreign consular and diplomatic representatives based in the Philadelphia area accepted invitations to appear.

Through Robert Dechert, a University of Pennsylvania trustee, Carl Stenzler met Dr. John F. Melby, who was then Penn's director of foreign students. Dr. Melby offered to find foreign students to lecture at Ogontz Junior High if the school wanted to go ahead. Gene D. Gisburne, Penn's vice president for student affairs, threw his support behind the program.

And so, last spring, the junior high school and the university entered into the cooperative arrangement. Penn students from Greece, India, Iran, Japan, and the Sudan were chosen to inaugurate the Ogontz Plan. At first the school faculty was skeptical. "I was very dubious of the merits of such a program," recalled John Weaver, Dr. Gill's assistant and chairman of the school's history department. "I had seen too many situations where an unexpected visitor was asked to tell about the history of his country in a forty-five-minute class period. Usually, the students were studying about one country and he would be from another."

BY anticipating these problems and planning schedules well in advance—not only of the days the lecturers would come but the material they would cover—the school got maximum value out of the special program, said Weaver. And the faculty reaction, reports Dr. Gill, "changed rapidly from skepticism to acceptance and then to enthusiasm."

Following last spring's success at Ogontz, the principals of Cheltenham High, Elkins Park Junior High and Shoemaker Elementary School decided to join in last fall. Dr. Gill thinks the program is now on a firm footing in Cheltenham Township. "This is a sophisticated community and more widely traveled than most," he said. "Yet

there is a basic ignorance about other peoples and other lands. What the foreign students teach is relatively unimportant. It's what they are as human beings that count. We want our students to see that people are pretty much the same the world over."

The foreign students themselves believe the program has great value for them and for their young charges as well. Many of them welcome the chance to make a little money, even if it is only \$30. Emmanuel Hyde for one. Married and with an infant son, he has, since coming to this country, taken odd jobs as a taxi driver, painter, janitor, camp counselor, and baby sitter to help make ends meet.

Aside from the financial inducement, Hyde thinks the lecturing is helpful in other ways. He was happy, for example, to clear up some misconceptions about Africa, including the notion, apparently widely held in this country, that the Dark Continent is overrun with wild animals. He saw his very first lion, said Hyde, in the Cleveland Zoo, and he'd never set eyes on a tiger or elephant either, until coming to the United States.

HYDE and the other foreign students were impressed by the intelligence of the American pupils, their self-confidence, their "outgoing" natures, and their eagerness to learn about foreign lands. (Cheltenham Township children are hardly typical American youngsters, however. It is an upper-middle-class community. About 70 per cent of its high school graduates attend college. The average I.Q. of pupils at Ogontz Junior High is close to 120.)

Many of the foreign students were initially surprised at the informality of classes here and the rapid-fire questioning to which they were subjected. The grilling that the Ogontz kids gave Dr. Shawkat, the dentist from the United Arab Republic, when he spoke to classes just before the holidays in December was, in his words, "quite something."

On the corridor walls that day, student-made posters proclaimed "Merry Christmas" and "Happy Hanukkah." The school's enrollment is predominantly Jewish; Dr. Shawkat is a Moslem. Religion seemed to be on the pupils' minds, and they got right to the point:

QUESTION (by an Ogontz pupil): You believe that Jesus Christ was a prophet, right?

ANSWER (by Dr. Shawkat): Yes.

Q: Do you believe He was the Son of God?

A: No. In order to be Moslem, you must believe in all those who led us to God. We believe that Jesus Christ was born in an 'unusual way.' He got something from the Holy Spirit. We believe

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Report from Hagerstown

In 1956, the Board of Education of Washington County, Maryland, established the nation's first large-scale closed circuit television network exclusively designed for classroom instruction. For the past eight years, nearly 20,000 students in forty-five elementary and secondary schools throughout the county have been receiving part of their daily instruction over television. The telecasts originate from Hagerstown, the county seat, and are transmitted to the schools over coaxial cable, which can carry six lessons simultaneously. Instruction has been offered at every grade level and in nearly every basic subject—music, art, reading, mathematics, science, French, Spanish, history, English, and physics. The studio teachers, recruited from the county's regular teaching staff, present part of the lesson over television, and the classroom teachers take over for the remainder of the period.

The first full report on the experiment was published this week. Single copies can be obtained without charge by writing directly to the Board of Education, Washington County, Hagerstown, Maryland. A summary of the principal findings and conclusions is presented below.

1. Pupil achievement can improve significantly when television is consistently used as a teaching aid.

Improvement can occur regardless of grade, subject, range of ability, or class size. Where television is used in a course year after year, higher achievement is generally maintained and improved upon in succeeding years, long after any novelty effect would have worn off.

2. Television accelerates the teacher's professional growth.

It provides an invaluable way for teachers to learn by observing the teaching of others. The classroom teacher is encouraged to study and comment on the studio teacher's lesson, and this leads to greater awareness of teaching methods. Ultimately, it leads to a general improvement in methods of instruction, for the studio teacher, relieved of classroom responsibilities, has time to plan and develop better lessons.

3. Television makes it possible to upgrade the curriculum and enrich the educational program more easily and economically than before.

It provides an effective way to introduce new courses and to bring special services to the classrooms—talks by scientists, poets, government leaders. It also focuses the attention of many teachers on courses and their content, thus easing the problem of curriculum improvement.

4. Television is especially useful as an instructional aid to add new learning experiences to the school program. It does not "replace" the teacher or "substitute" techniques and procedures that would eliminate regular classroom learning activities and personal teacher-pupil relationships.

The television lesson provides many opportunities for involving pupils in the learning process and for helping them accept responsibilities and develop important skills of self-teaching. The instructional value of television is directly related to the way it is used.

5. The operational costs of television can be met without increasing the normal school budget.

The television system can effect sufficient savings to pay for itself. These savings result from redeployment of teaching equipment, changed organization within schools, and altered scheduling of personnel. It may also be possible to develop enough savings through television to increase teacher's salaries.

6. The problem of finding and retaining top quality teachers is eased.

Teachers make their skills more widely available through

television. The challenge of teaching on television gives many good teachers an added reason for remaining in the profession. Since the use of television makes possible the scheduling of pupils in large, medium-sized, and small groups during the school day, increased enrollments do not require the number of additional teachers formerly needed. School systems can therefore be more selective in their recruitment and can encourage teachers by making more time available during the school day for them to plan, study, keep abreast of new developments, and work with individual pupils.

7. Television changes the role of the classroom teacher and makes him—along with the studio teacher—part of a teaching team.

Where he can use television as an aid, the classroom teacher has the opportunity to concentrate on planning related classroom activities. It also gives him far more time to provide special help for pupils who need it. His guidance role takes on new importance.

8. Television brings greater equality of opportunity for all pupils.

In an underprivileged area or the most cultured district, children participate in the same lessons and special events through television. Pupils in the small rural school have the same studio teachers and the same variety in courses as do children in larger schools. The small high school can offer courses that, without television, would be available only in the large high school.

9. Television increases vocational training opportunities.

Lessons with direct vocational application can be presented on television—in many cases with greater ease and effectiveness than in the classroom. In addition, in Washington County, Hagerstown Junior College students have had valuable experience working in the television studios. They supply most of the manpower needed to operate the school television network, and in the process they acquire knowledge of the techniques of production and transmission, as well as of maintenance, operation, and repair of equipment. For some, this work experience has been a steppingstone to a career.

10. School television facilities can serve the public in a variety of ways—for adult education, community projects, and the dissemination of many kinds of information.

Schools may be used as centers where interested adults may participate in special televised courses or receive information on topics of public interest. Community projects can be promoted in the regular schedule of televised lessons.