



# The Decree

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## Africa.. Poverty or Prosperity?

by Robin Coller

How would you like to spend 6½ weeks touring four countries in West Africa? Well, that is exactly what Richard L. Watson, Associate Professor of History here at North Carolina Wesleyan College did this past summer.

Dr. Watson, who acquired his B.A. from Duke University and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Boston University, was one of eighteen college professors from colleges throughout the southeast who visited Africa from June 26th to August 11th of this year. This trip was coordinated by the Southern Atlantic States Association of Asian and African Studies and was funded by a grant from the federal government's Office of Education.

The purpose of this trip was to study the economic development of Africa. It is well known that Africa is a very poor country. How poor, and why they are so poor were the two main questions to be answered.

Senegal, Mali, Upper Volta, and the Ivory Coast were the four countries visited. Included in this trip was a twenty-eight hour train ride. Fortunately, the professors travelled first class. Second class included goats and chickens, among other things.

According to Dr. Watson, the economic problems stem from two major factors. First is the environment. These countries border on the Sahara Desert which results in very erratic rainfall and poor soil conditions. In addition there is always the problem with disease that accompanies high populations. Malaria, for example, affects nearly everyone in one way or another. The dams which are built to increase the water supply also increase the mosquito population which in turn increases the number of people infected with malaria.

As Dr. Watson described it, "By building dams more people get sick and die of malaria, but you have to have more water for crops. A vicious cycle."

Secondly, and perhaps most important is the Africans dependency on foreign aid. Much of African aid comes from France.

However, many French businessmen have moved into the Ivory Coast, for example, and are capitalizing on the situation. This inhibits the African businessmen from moving into the business world and makes it very

difficult for them to get control of their economy. Naturally, the French businessmen pay taxes to France, and as a result it can be assumed that "A lot of foreign aid helps the countries who are giving it more than it helps the countries who are receiving it." This dependency and domination increases the poverty of African countries.

Dr. Watson explained that while they were in the cities they stayed in "hotels of moderate quality." They received \$7.50 a day from the government for food. However, while they were in the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta, they stayed in villages with families. These families lived under what we would probably consider "primitive conditions" with no electricity and no running water. However, Dr. Watson considered this to be the highlight of the trip, because "we were as close as we could get to the social and economic problems."

"We were treated with extraordinary hospitality and courtesy all the way across Africa. The Africans were extremely friendly, and delighted to talk about their situation once they discovered we were Americans," explained Dr. Watson.

He concluded that the most remarkable thing about the African people was their lack of bitterness. Upper Volta is one of the poorest countries in the world, but this doesn't affect their "joy for living." They know how to be happy, and the overall impression is that they truly enjoy life. Even in extreme poverty, the Africans have not forgotten how to laugh. At least in this respect, they may be richer than the countries who are sending them aid.



Mosque in the ancient city of Djenné, Mali



Blacksmith shop in Upper Volta

## College or a Coliseum?

by Jean Goolsby

What is North Carolina Wesleyan College? Is it a school for the students' development of knowledge in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences, or is it a big playground for the athletic department?

Out of about 200 freshmen, twenty-six of them are presently declared as physical education majors in one form or another. This doesn't sound like many, but when one looks at the list of team members, one notices that about ninety percent of the teams are composed of freshmen. What does this mean? Does it mean

that the freshmen class is just more active in sports, or does it mean that the majority of the recruiting done last year was done by the athletic department?

North Carolina Wesleyan College offers approximately twenty-four majors which are equally distributed among the humanities, natural, and social sciences. Unfortunately most of the emphasis here is not in directing students to these areas. Instead, many if not most of N.C.W.C.'s staff and faculty cater to the athletic department's needs.

How many more years will pass by before the proposed auditorium will be

built. While the college is catering to the athletic department, what happens to the theater department and the music department who both need such a facility? Are they going to be continually ignored? These two departments are a very important part of the arts. Until this year, even most high schools had a more tasteful place for dramatic productions. Finally this year some additions are happening in the theater department. What about the music department? The miserable little space offered to them is overflowing with things that don't belong there. Now that

some of the rooms are being used for storage, there are no offices for faculty members.

There is also the threat of loss of present practice rooms.

This is just a mild spattering of the inequality that exists among different departments. Other departments have similar if not worse problems. So I challenge the other departments to stand up for their "rights" and return N.C.W.C.

to its original state as a liberal arts college, instead of a playground for the athletic department.