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MEREDITH'S ATAXIA: A CORRECTIVE NOTE

by

ARTHUR NETHAWAY COLLINS

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own sophism, and keep it on guard against the fallacies which it practices on others . . ."

If we understand publication in the light of these remarks, we may still reject the admonition of administrators to "publish or perish." But can we reject the same admonition when it is the voice of common sense and of the academic conscience?

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THE MIDDLE WAY

Arthur N. Collins*

I have undertaken to hold the middle ground on this panel, to represent the neutral and uncommitted who see the virtues of two conflicting ideologies. My answer to the question of whether or not the college professor is committed to publication is appropriately "Yes and No."

We hold two common conceptions of the professor. According to one, which we typically associate with university life and with European models, the major concern of the professor is to advance knowledge in his own specialty. He attracts to himself disciples and inspires anti-disciples. In the intellectual give-and-take of university life, Truth advances by a kind of dialectic. The professor ideally is one who grinds a new lens through which to survey his subject, or perhaps adds something new to the subject itself, either by an act of creation or by dogged research. His lectures offer him an opportunity to test his findings; the free spirits who congregate to hear him offer challenges and, finally, applause. After a period of developing his ideas and submitting them to the tests which the immediate academic community can devise, he is duty-bound to publish his mature, seasoned views. With luck, the trumpet sounds in far-off places to signal his battle won; otherwise he faces new challenges, further tests. For this professor, publication is less a condition of employment than a condition of existence. It is his final and his formal cause.

But we also hold a second conception of the professor, one associated with "college" rather than "university" life. This second idea of the professor identifies him with his teaching. Instead of a radical, reorganizing and innovating, he is the guardian, the interpreter, and the propagator of the cultural and scholarly heritage. His lectures, delivered in the classroom to those whose names are duly inscribed on a roster, advance the knowledge, or with luck the understanding—even perhaps the wisdom—of his students. No one expects that a lecture on Coleridge in a sophomore survey will break new ground for scholarship. Hired to teach, this professor deserves to be meas-

*Of State University, Albany.

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BACK FROM CONGO—Dr. Arthur N. Collins with his wife and family beside steps of their home at 151 South Allen Street, after returning this week from nine-month trip to Congo, where he taught. The children are, front to rear, Leslie and Nicholas, twins, 10, Amy, 12, and Edith, 15. (Times-Union Staff Photo by Joe Higgins)

Family Relates Ordeal During Congo Revolt

By ROY NEVILLE
Times-Union Staff Writer

A clampdown on communications, sealing of the borders and wildly spreading rumors posed terrors but no true danger in the Congo for Albany professor Arthur N. Collins and his family, who returned this week from a nine-month trip to that troubled land.

Dr. Collins, an English professor at Albany State University, his wife, Marion, an Albany High School teacher, and their four children, Edith, 15, Amy, 12, and Leslie Anne and Nicholas, 10-year-old twins, had lived in the Congo since last October, including a tense three weeks in July when mercenary-led troops rebelled in some parts of the country.

Although Lubumbashi (Elisabethville) in southeastern Katanga Province, where the Collins' lived, was spared fighting between loyal and rebel troops, the couple related how tensions there caused at least one known case of mutilation of a white settler, a mass slaying of whites by "trigger-happy" soldiers, and sabotage.

Tense Time

The period surrounding the July 5 uprising by rebel troops at Bukavu and Kindu, two cities far from Lubumbashi, was "tense—you never knew what was going on," said the professor. "The government controlled all communications, closed the borders, information was unreliable and you didn't know what to believe. Rumors spread wildly, some coming from our unsympathetic neighbors in South Africa."

A 6 p.m. curfew was imposed on whites in Lubumbashi, and about 14 persons caught violating it were shot in one case, said Mrs. Collins, even though the radio broadcast the curfew would start at 7 p.m., not 6. Collins said he couldn't tell whether the curfew was to safeguard the Europeans or pinpoint where they lived, since natives and Congolese troops were allowed to roam the streets at night.

"Once, about 40 white farmers were summoned to a meeting and when they attended, they were rounded up and jailed," he continued. "This might have been done for their own safety. But you couldn't tell."

Taught Literature

Collins, an English teacher at Albany State since 1951, taught American and English literature at the Official University of the Congo, in Lubumbashi, under a Fulbright scholarship he earned last year. The children attended a

Belgian-staffed school, with mostly white children.

The family found difficulties when it sought to leave the Congo last July 16, shortly after the disturbances started. Air travel had been closed to foreigners entering or leaving the country since July 5, but restrictions were lifted July 13 or 14 for Sabena, a Dutch airline, to fly out Europeans from Kinshasa (Leopoldville).

The backlog of about 900 Europeans seeking to leave delayed their exit until July 24, when they flew to Brussels. They have spent the last month touring Europe.

Mutilation

Sabotage in June in the Lubumbashi area preceded the July rebellion and apparently was tied to it, thought Collins. A bridge and power line were blown up, and a European who may have harbored two whites at about the same time in his home in the vicinity of the destruction was mutilated, he recalled.

The man's ears and fingers were cut off. Of reports that reached America of cannibalism in Katanga province, he said "this was not wholesale if there was any."

Mrs. Collins, calling the Katangese people "warm, good natured, and non-violent," noted that troops were quartered close to the family's house and occasionally she and her husband picked up one of them for a ride. "We had pleasant relations and were never personally threatened," she said. "But you couldn't get news in or out, and there was 'scare activity' by the government."

Iron Never Hot

Collins added he felt there were mercenaries in Lubumbashi ready to move if the rebellion hit there last July. "Groups in each of the major cities would have joined in the uprising, if the moment came," he ventured, "but the moment never came in Lubumbashi."

The mercenaries still hold a key town, Bukavu, in the Congo. But they are known to be trying to leave the country, and are running low on food and medical supplies, said Mrs. Collins. She said she thought the 150-180 mercenaries now believed in the Congo no longer posed a threat to the government.

The Congolese are fearful, trigger-happy and revenge-minded, she said.

"We learned about most of the terrors after the danger was past," her husband related. "But there are no regrets about our trip."

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ON THE CONGO LINE—Dr. Arthur N. Collins and his family get together around a map of Africa to check on Elisabethville in the Congo. Twins Nicholas and Leslie Anne and Amy are in front; seated with Dr. Collins are daughter Trece and his wife, Mrs. Marion B. Collins. (Times-Union Staff Photo by McKinney)

Albany Professor Congo-Bound '... To Do Something Significant'

By DOC RIVETT

Times-Union Staff Writer

A funny thing happened to Dr. Arthur N. Collins on his way to University of Strasbourg.

He found himself headed toward the Universite Officiel in Elisabethville, which is in Katanga Province of the Congo.

"And now it seems," he said "like the most natural thing to do."

Dr. Collins, a professor of English at Albany State University, thought he had run into too much competition for the Fulbright lectureship at Strasbourg.

"I probably wouldn't have thought of Elisabethville myself," Dr. Collins explained. "But the State Department asked if I'd be interested; I was. It's a way to do something significant for us and them."

At Elisabethville, where he'll teach American literature, Dr. Collins will be only the second Fulbright lecturer. The first—a comparative literature man who's there now — has corresponded with him.

"But he's not particularly interested in politics," said Dr. Collins, "so I don't know just what situation we'll encounter, except that it must be safe or Washington wouldn't send us."

at Albany High, and four children—expect to get some vacation en route and fly into Elisabethville. "It's the only reliable way to get there," said Dr. Collins. "At least, that's my impression from a TV special I saw. We're to have a briefing in June in Washington and I'll have a better idea then."

The children will attend school in Elisabethville, although the only English school in the Congo is at Leopoldville, 1,000 miles away. Dr. Collins feels they'll adjust to the French school and get a lot out of it.

Dr. Collins, originally from Cobleskill, graduated from Albany State with high honors and earned his graduate degrees at University of Minnesota. He has been on the Albany faculty since 1951 and is now chairman of the university honors committee.

Did he have any troubles with French?

"So far I've satisfied the State Department of my fluency," he answered, "although that was on the strength of one telephone conversation."

He expects to find students at Elisabethville "on the same level" as at Albany. "The Uni-

versity was devised to meet standards of Belgium from the start," he explained. "The enrollment is small because so few students are qualified."

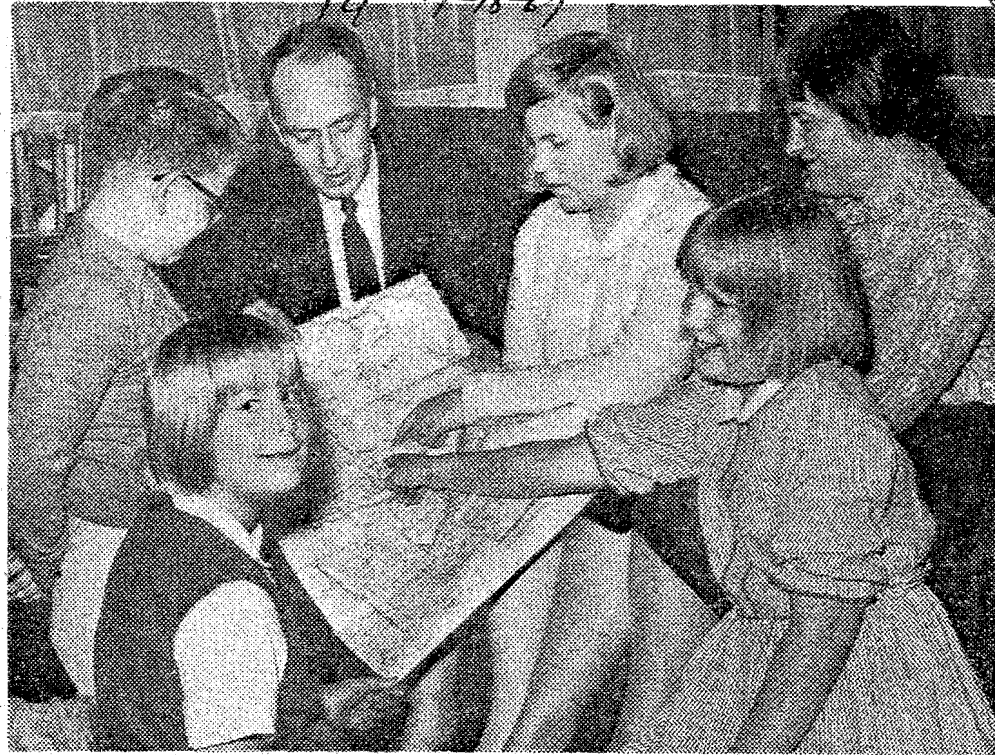
Elisabethville parallels the University of Brussels; the university at Leopoldville was modeled on the University of Louvain.

Dr. Collins knows that Elisabethville is the only African city with street lights (to accommodate around the clock mining activity), has dial telephones, a pleasant climate, and a cultural level installed by Belgians who "made themselves at home." But there are gaps in his knowledge, because there is little literature about Elisabethville.

"I'm interested in the whole crucial situation of trying to bring Western education into Africa," he said. "I'm interested in finding out what they're trying to do."

Dr. Collins, who has never taught abroad before, hopes he'll be able to visit other parts of Africa as a sort of free-lance cultural anthropology study.

"I'll run the risk of diverting my interest," he commented.



APPARENTLY SAFE—Albany State University English professor Arthur N. Collins, his wife, Marion, an Albany High School English teacher, and their four children, clockwise from left, Leslie Anne, Nicholas, Trece and Amy, are said to be safe in Elisabethville, The Congo. However, no word has been heard from them by relatives. Photo was taken before they left for The Congo in May 1966.

6 in Albany Family Said Safe in Congo

An Albany State University professor and his family are reported safe, with all other Americans, in The Congo, according to the State Department Monday, but relatives have not heard from the family since the day hostilities broke July 5.

Dr. Arthur N. Collins, his wife, Marion, an Albany High School teacher, and their four children, Trace, 16, Amy, 12, Leslie Anne, and Nicholas, 10, twins, have been in Lubumbashi (Elisabethville), for the past year, where he is a Fulbright lecturer at the University of the Congo.

The city, in Southeastern Katanga Province, is a current trouble spot since mercenary troops led a rebellion against the Congolese government.

Mrs. H.W. Buetow, of Burnt Hills, Mrs. Collins' mother, said the State Department's Congo Task office "assured me that they and all the Americans are safe." They were scheduled to leave the Congo Sunday for Geneva, but it wasn't known by Washington whether they had made the flight, she added. Mrs. Buetow said she listened to news reports and had some apprehension as to their safety.

Dr. Collins and his family were to spend the next few weeks visiting Europe before returning to Albany on Aug. 27.

Meanwhile, both Mrs. Buetow and Mrs. Foster Collins, of Sharon Springs, the professor's mother, said they have received no news from the family since last June 19, when a letter reached a friend, Charles Milham of Albany, dated July 5.

In that letter, Collins said he was "disappointed at not being able to leave the city," that he "shared everyone else's fears," and "the political events have cast a blot on our last weeks here." He told Milham not to write, since mail was "so confusing."

Colleagues of Dr. Collins at Albany State said they have not heard from him in some time. Collins has taught at the school since 1951.