

Hotline

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

No. 8, January, 1987, \$2.50

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SIR AHMADU BELLO

Is He Betrayed?

**GIWA: THE
UNANSWERED
QUESTIONS**



Hotline

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THE ADVERT. MANAGER,
Hotline Publishing Co. Ltd.,
C3 Ja'afaru Road,
Barnawa New Extension,
P.O. Box 8198, Kaduna.
Tel: 062 — 213903

Hotline

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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HOTLINE International Newsmagazine is
Published monthly by HOTLINE PUB-
LISHING CO. LTD., C3 Ja'afaru Road,
Barnawa New Extension, P. O. Box 8198,
Kaduna. All Correspondence to P. O. Box
8198, Kaduna, Nigeria.

Printed in Nigeria by Baraka Press and Pub-
lishers Limited, Kaduna.

TOPS OF THE MONTH

Tribute to Sir Ahmadu Bello



The Northernisation policy of Sardauna was a giant stride; but the beneficiaries seem to have abandoned the vision of the author of the policy 21 years after his transition. Is he betrayed? Page 10

The Search for Giwa's Killers

Dele Giwa has come and gone. But many questions remain unanswered. His killers are yet to be unmasked, but Hotline joins the search with insight into possible clues. Page 15



Reagan and his tenure of violence



Reagan's tenancy at the White House looks like an epitome of contradictions, turbulence and violent repression. From Pretoria through Tel Aviv to Managua, he stretches his tentacles and stores the heads of blacks. Page 29

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Cover Design by
Gabriel T. Gwajime

Reduce Bride Price

Sir,
Bride price is getting to an extent of the abnormal especially among the Ibos in Nigeria. I therefore feel some comments are necessary to show the disadvantages in this practice.

Bride price should be reduced so that young men can marry women of their choice. Some parents do not reason before stating the bride price payable on their daughters. If the girl is educated, they might ask for as much as N5,000,000. Why?

Although the parents will have much money at that time, but soon it will be finished. The disadvantages are many — it prevents poor people from getting married thereby making our young ladies and men to wonder about. Instead of getting married and settling down to responsible family life, they engage themselves in friendship and sometimes it results in unwanted pregnancy. It is because the bride price is so high that many young men cannot afford it.

Prostitution is also encouraged in the country; since a girl is not married what is she expected to do? And now that unemployment is blowing around the country, she has to do something to cater for her needs; because parents can do just a little nowadays. She may join the prostitutes around.

High bride price could lead to maltreating of the bride; when a young man marries a girl for about N3,000.00 (and he happens to pay the money instalmentally) at the slightest provocation he may ask the wife to go back to her father's house. The father would force her back because he would not be in position to refund the dowry.

If love had been used as the primary reason for marriage, money would have taken secondary place. A man who pays N5,000.00 on a wife has actually bought a property, not a wife. He will treat the wife accordingly.

*Adaobi Unachukwu,
Ogidi, Anambra State.*

More Good Roads Please

Sir,
The government of Kaduna State should be commended for repairing many roads in Kaduna metropolis. It has reduced traffic congestion and allowed free movement of vehicles within the town. It has also made life easier for the inhabitants of Kaduna township.

However, there are still many roads that are yet to be repaired, these old roads are full of pot holes which damage vehicles. During the rainy season, movement of cars and people on the muddy roads is always with difficulty. We hope the Kaduna State Urban Planning and Development Authority will see to this problem before the return of the rains.

*Rapheal Ogwuche,
Kaduna.*

Enlighten us on SFEM

Sir,
About three months ago, the government of Nigeria introduced the Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Market, which majority of Nigerians do not understand how it operates. A decree was promulgated and so many other things were done to protect the market. But to the common man who does not understand, it is another waste of time and scarce resources. One begins to wonder whether the government cannot properly enlighten the people on this programme which is already beginning to have an adverse effect on them.

Through this medium, I advise the government to properly enlighten the Nigerian populace so as to obtain their support.

*Charles Akhigbe,
Benin City.*

I defend Co-education

Sir, It is surprising to note that even as the 20th century is going to an end, we still practice segregation of boys and girls in the education system. I therefore want to present a case for co-education in all Nigerian schools.

The opponents of co-education say that it encourages immorality and lowers academic performances. In real life, do we isolate men from women simply because a few men and women misbehave? Similarly, it would be very unnatural and unrealistic to condemn co-education simply because a few boys and girls misbehave.

Students in mixed school are often exposed to healthy rivalry; boys and girls want to excel either academically or in sports so as to earn the praises and admiration of their friends.

Also, for obvious reasons, students in a mixed school are often neater and more tidy in their dresses, habits than those who are not in mixed schools.

If education is a preparation for the life ahead, then it must mirror the real life as much as possible. If boys and girls, men and women are not segregated in real life, why in schools and colleges? No wonder boys and girls from mixed schools are usually respectful and confident in their attitude to life whereas boys and girls who are from segregated schools are often shy and diffident.

What a woeful failure when boys and girls are unnatural, shy and diffident! To prevent such an embarrassing failure why not raise your hand and voice in support of co-education?

*Toytin Adeniji,
Kaduna.*

Hotline Not Regular

The few editions of your magazine that I came across made interesting reading to me. Your only problem is that you are not regular on the streets. What is the matter with you? I wish you would be constant in your production and even bolder in reflecting the views of our people up here.

*Ibrahim K. Mohammed
Kaduna*

'Thank you for your interest. Hotline has become regular since last month — Editor.'

Madaki knew the rules

The dismissal of Madaki from the Nigerian Army generated a lot of criticism against the Babangida regime. But in my opinion, Madaki knew the outcome of his political utterances. This is because despite the happenings in Gongola State and Madaki's subsequent re-employment to Benue State, Madaki continued his political speeches. He arrogated to himself the role of spokesman of the Northern Minority and Middle Belt. He failed to see that this regime is a minority outfit. He refused to limit himself to the politics of his state. He also knew that Military Rules and Regulations forbid a military officer from making political speeches. The punishment for political utterances by a military officer is dismissal, and as a lawyer, he ought to know the punishment. So his dismissal was both fair and in line with Military Rules and Regulations.

*Joseph Sule
Pankshin.*

Babangida Beware

Since climbing the mantle of leadership of this country, you took bold decisions which affected the interests of powerful citizens of this country both outside and within the military. These include, movement to Abuja re-organisation of the Police and the NSO, implementation of National Policy on Education and release of political detainees.

Other areas of controversy with your government are O.I.C. and Dele Giwa issues. But as bold as your administration is, you should have solved the O.I.C. issue once and for all. Your continued silence is not helping matters. That is why you should beware of your detractors and saboteurs both within and outside the military, especially corrupt police and security officials retired by your administration. They may engage in subversive activities.

*Godwin E. Nludubisi
Nsukka.*

Hotline

The Stand Of Hotline

The media in Nigeria has unfortunately been associated with a seemingly developed culture of mis-information and negative propaganda for over a period of time. However, this is only as represented by a section of the Nigerian Press.

Individuals in or out of government have been made subjects of character assassination either because of what they represent or for reasons not unconnected with their places of origin.

A country as Nigeria that is determined to become developed within the shortest possible time cannot allow this to continue. A genuine effort has to be made to disseminate only true information within the confines of what is responsible, moral and ethical.

The Hotline is all out to do that. We will unflinchingly focus our search-lights on any systems or policies likely to be repugnant to natural justice, the rules of morality and the conventions of a responsible society. In the course of so doing however, we will neither employ character assassination nor witch-hunting of individuals but with incisive professional skill, we will expose these systems and policies; thereby allowing the "informed public" to pass the appropriate judgement.

We shall at the same time not abdicate our responsibility of being the voice of the voiceless, the defender of the defenceless and the conscience of the people.

HAS
ALLEN RABBARAFI BOWTONGBA

Of Contracts

Government, in a capitalist society such as ours, is by its very nature the store house of selective riches. It is a granary from where the barons of society feed fat. That is why it is difficult to make a distinction between private and public enterprises in terms of their sources of financing.

The generally held view that private enterprises are sourced and developed from the inner pockets of share holders is quite imaginary and devoid of economic truth.

Share holders or company owners may give birth to companies; yes. But they do not have the singular capacity to nourish and develop that company without sourcing from public purse. Show us a company that prospered exclusively on its own without undue government patronage, and I will show you a man that will not die.

It is illusory to talk of privacy in the sourcing of the so-called private companies. On individual basis, they benefit more from public funds than the public for which these funds are intended.

This is more the case with, particularly, the distributive and construction industries in Nigeria. The success of such giants like Julius Berger, ITT and others, is the mark of their success in attracting excessive government patronage. To us, no construction company has the capacity to grow and develop without heavy leanings on government and it agencies.

We are for instance aware of how a book distribution company made huge profits to the tune of millions, out of Usman Faruk's Sokoto State Government. Quite a successful businessman he was you might say. But was he? Yes, to the extent that he was in the good books of government. That is the surest way to economic fortunes without tears in our society today. It is the order of things.

After all, the pursuit of money, decent or dirty is the main objective of the capitalist order. That is for certain. Of course, we call it legitimate in a competitive society. Only that we have refused to accept how uncompetitive the society is. It is a society firmly closed to many and opened to a few.

The few who control the socio-economic order do not in the main

take kindly to disruptions in the sources of their huge profits. This goes with top brass functionaries, who because they are used to patterned conduct, hardly take kindly to changes and innovations.

Such was the reaction to Umar's (of Kaduna's) decision to go direct labour in the prosecution of a few fat on public coffers to the detriment of the vast majority of the people. The four million Naira saved by Umar might have found outlet into private pockets. For nothing? Oh yes.

The dictate of our present economic predicament is such that we have to cut down on waste. And one way of doing so is to discard the contract system as it affects some projects that could be executed by government workers.

Technocrats abound in some of our technically oriented ministries like that of works, who have the intellectual capacity to handle some of these projects we give out on contract. For some obscure reasons, we do not ask them to handle them. They rot there shifting files, only to invite their subordinates to handle the job.

Indeed, some of the projects do not need technical know-how to handle. What of supplies? What justification is there for government to contract out the supply of office materials while they could be purchased directly from source?

It is silly for any governments, having shares in a given industry, like the Ashaka Cement, to contract out the supply of cement for their projects. This is a deliberate attempt to enrich a few, for almost doing nothing all in the name of laid-down rules.

Government must review such outdated rules to fall in line with the realities of the time. We cannot continue to operate laws designed 100 years ago to achieve our objective in this age of scarcity of cash.

Of course, there is the funny argument that civil servant would become the new contractor since he is likely going to inflate his

Contd. on P 17

Appraisal of the military in Nigeria's political administration

The life of the people of Africa is extremely diverse. So were the systems of governments here. There were kingdoms, empires and caliphates.

The influence of those systems and the expertise of those at the head of those geo-political entities formed the basis of "governments" that dominated the affairs of this part of the world until when the whitemen came.

The departure of the colonial masters mostly in the late fifties and early sixties was called political Independence. This resulted in the sons of the soil taking-over the mantle of leadership via the power of the ballot.

The idea of ascending to power through electoral processes was not altogether alien to Africa but the system of registering adults, going to the polling booths and casting votes was essentially a convention of the Europeans.

The British, who were of course Nigeria's colonial masters introduced this method of electing leaders in this country. They called it the "Westminster system" of government otherwise referred to as parliamentary democracy.

Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa who was the first indigenous head of the Nigerian government took office via this democratic system.

On the first of January, 1966 this method of ascending power was changed in Nigeria. Before then there was a similar change in the North African, Arab State of Egypt by Gamel Abdul Nasser and some of his compatriots in the Egyptian Army. Blood was shed and the soldiers through the power of the gun took over the leadership of the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

That significant albeit sad development in the political and constitutional history of Nigeria marked the beginning of the involvement of the military in the politics of the country. By 1967, another coup d'etat has taken place. It gave birth to the regime of the longest serving head of the federal government. During his tenancy at Dodan Barracks which is the seat of government in Lagos, General Yakubu Gowon fought a war to unite his country against the background of a threat to secession well carried out by Nigerians of Igbo origin under the umbrella of the "Biafran Army". He substituted the country's currency, the pound for the Naira and life continued in the wake of the oil boom. By July, 1975 when the third coup d'etat took place in Nigeria, Gowon left behind a legacy of inept

leadership with highly corrupt proteges and an equally corrupt civil service. Those were the days of "super permanent secretaries" and powerful "indispensable military governors".

General Murtala Mohammed the federal commissioner for communications under the Gowon administration succeeded Gowon as the new leader. Before he was gunned-down by assassins in broad day light on the streets of Lagos on the Thirteenth of February, 1976 Murtala has made a mark of honesty and accountability in Nigeria's public life. He made civil servants to sit-up and led Nigerians on an anti-corruption crusade.

Leutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo, Murtala's second-in-command took-over the reigns of power. His reluctance in accepting the leadership of the federal military government gave Nigerians an insight into what turned out to be his unimpressive tenure of office. Major development projects initiated by his predecessor took-off with a new corruption syndrome of "ten percent" gaining ground in our public life. The worst financial scandals like the missing (N2.8 billion naira) oil money were witnessed during Obasanjo's era. Malam Aminu Kano's wise counsel for the administration then, to account for its tenure fell on deaf ears as Obasanjo conspired with the politicians he handed over power to, in respect of accountability regarding his uneventful tenure. This more than anything else laid the foundation for the collapse of the Second Republic. The end of Obasanjo's rule in 1979 marked thirteen years of military rule in Nigeria. Not quite unexpectedly, the soldiers staged a come-back on December, 31st 1983. Thus terminating the term of Shagari's presidency.

Major General Muhammadu Buhari was named as the new leader. Leaders of the government including Buhari himself claimed that the regime was an off-shoot of the Murtala Mohammed's administration. That gave Nigerians a ray of hope that a messiah has come.

General Buhari's government detained the bulk of the country's politicians particularly those who served in the second republic, accusing them of mismanagement and corruption. Many of them were put on trial and bagged substantial jail terms. The government banned progressive unions like the Nigerian Medical Association and the National Association of Nigerian Students. It also promulgated a decree which placed severe restrictions on the newsmedia. Eventually the press was silenced and by the indiscriminate arrest of people fear was created in the minds of the civilian population.

Although the Buhari's government had forced down the prices of basic commodities, the repressive tendencies of the administration as represented by forces such as the defunct Nigeria Security Organisation N.S.O. made many Nigerians to doubt whether the leadership was not being unnecessarily vindictive.

Eventually, Nigerians, renowned for their love for freedom became disillusioned by the dictatorial tendencies of a government they popularly welcomed at the initial stage.

On July 27th, 1985 Major General Ibrahim Babangida the Army Chief of Staff in the Buhari administration replaced General Buhari in another coup. He is the current tenant at the Dodan Barracks, ruling the country with a unique style of military governance. Of the twenty-six years of Nigeria as an independent nation the military has ruled the country first for a consecutive period of thirteen years and then from December 31st 1983 to date. Thus, the military ruled the country for sixteen of those years.

Significantly, the first thirteen years of military rule in Nigeria saw Nigeria as a rich country for that was when the oil money was flowing. Whatever development, progress or lack of it witnessed in the country could therefore be rightly attributed to the leadership of those thirteen years.

The fact that today Nigeria is bedeviled by a number of socio-economic problems is in itself an indictment of the leadership of the country that had all the opportunity to plan

"The involvement of the military in the politics of this country, except for Murtala Mohammed's dynamism, was to a large extent a yet-to-be justified intervention".

Nigeria

well for us, but woefully failed.

The involvement of the military in the politics of this country except for Murtala Mohammed's dynamism was to a large extent a yet-to-be-justified intervention.

However, President Ibrahim Babangida the present head of the federal military government appears to be on the path of consolidating the gains recorded by his former boss and close associate — late General Murtala Muhammed. He is quietly but boldly, pursuing similar goals and objectives with a unique style of military governance. The difference in *modus operandi* was necessitated by the rapid changes in Nigerian Society and of course the state of the nation's economy. Differences in style of administration however would be immaterial when "the end justifies the means".

General Babangida's Liberalism in exercising his powers as head of the federal government has eliminated fear in the civilian population of a possible abuse of human rights associated with military regimes in the past.

His government encouraged greater consultation and participation in the general administration of the country. Criticisms were tolerated on the virtues of a democratic society within the context of a military leadership were recognised. No wonder Nobel prize winner and social critic Professor Wole Soyinka told newsmen after he was conferred with the national award of the C.F.R. on Tuesday December the 2nd "President Babangida cares and listens both in practice and in action" That came from one of the firmest of all social critics ever known in this country since independence.

Babangida's liberal approach to state's administration is not without a negative side. It has created an atmosphere of sub-versive activities including unrests; i.e. (many students disturbances) respect for constituted authorities was trivialized and a general decline in the standard of discipline was recorded; the Environmental Sanitation Campaign was not altogether a success.

All these notwithstanding, the president has expressly showed a desire for a return to civil rule. He has indeed admitted that a military regime is an abbreviation; no matter how benevolent. He instituted a debate for Nigerians to decide their own political future against the background of a pledge to end military rule by 1990.

However, President Ibrahim Babangida's ability to successfully go through the SFEM and resuscitate our economy as well as the rural development drive which the administration initiated and if well executed, could eventually restore to the military its lost glory. Ultimately this will make him go down in history as one military ruler who strengthened the credibility of the armed forces. It is with that strengthened credibility that the soldiers should stay in their exclusive barracks and be distanced from the art of governance as from 1990.

Religion

Time and Tide of Christmas

By SHOLA OYEDELE

As the first card bearing the Christmas peace message from a most loving friend drops on my laps, the thought of an infant, sweetly cuddled by the new mother and symbolising all that peace could mean springs to my mind. The baby Christ, whose birth is celebrated during Christmas is the founder of the christian religion. Yuletide was first observed by the Church of Rome in the year 336 A.D. Later the tradition made incursion into the East and West. It is incontrovertible that Christmas is the most famous among christian festivals.

The chilly harrodd of the time, the hustle and bustle of buyers and sellers and the appearance of the Christmas flower give the time its pleasant significance. There seems to be a general consensus among people of diverse faiths and beliefs that Christmas time has assumed a socio-cultural significance. Dates of weddings, anniversaries and family meetings are usually fixed to fall in line with the Christmas time. The exodus of people from their places of abode to their birth places ensures the coming together of kith and kin, old school mates and long lost friends. Acquaintances are renewed at this time.

The postal services usually have a great time during Christmas; tons of letters are conveyed to nooks and crannies of nations.

These letters are messages of goodwill, best wishes and loving feelings sent to the dear ones. The first Christmas card was created by a rather unknown English illustrator, John Calcott Horsely. The message on the card read "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You". Though only a thousand of Horsely's card were sold when he created it in 1843, billions of cards bearing Christmas wishes and feelings fly across the globe today. Gifts change hands as well.

The shopping spree of Christmas period is almost unparalleled by that of any other time of the year. It is a period of brisk business for textile dealers and departmental stores. Prices of goods especially cloths and shoes skyrocket; yet buyers do not heat a retreat because they had anticipated the phenomenal increase. Many even make their purchases as early as October so as to avoid the unreasonable price tags usually worn by goods at Christmas. Today, Nuremberg in West Germany witnesses the busiest Christmas market in the world. It was Martin Luther, the great reformer, who went through the streets of Nuremberg at the Christmas of 1545 and distributed gifts to the town's children in the name of baby Christ. Today, the town has 5,500 hotels which are

usually fully booked in advance, months before Christmas. Buying and selling of toys, carvings, decorations, wine go on at a breathtaking pace. In a nutshell, Luther's idea has been turned into what some inhabitants of Nuremberg themselves call a "commercialised farce". That is Christmas for you!

The rate at which road accidents escalate at this period is disheartening. Commercial vehicle drivers in an attempt to cash in on the mass movement of commuters at this time of the year allow the speedometer on the dashboard to read maximum; it is all in an attempt to make as many trips as possible so as to maximise profit. But somewhere somehow, the driver miscalculates and before you can say "Oh! mine", lives have been lost; some might spend the first quarter of the anticipated new year on hospital beds after having sustained serious injuries.

Lastly, as gaily children are being led to the grotto of the avuncular Santa Claus with expectations of a harvest of gifts, may we pause to reflect on what we have contributed to Christmas. Perhaps you have made immoral gains off others in the name of sales; perhaps you have sent someone to an untimely death. Perhaps, who knows.



Symbol of Xmas

The Sadness Of Aminu

Quite youthful, energetic and determined he is in the manner and style he goes about his job. He is committed to it in the typical manner he carries out his military assignment.

As if he was trained an educationist, he puts his whole efforts towards uplifting the educational standard of his people. To him, education is an instrument for the total development of man. He sees in it, a tool for the cultivation of the true ideals of man.

Governor Abdul Mumini Aminu of Borno State, whose middle name means peace, seems to believe in the saying: "don't give the child a kobo, spend one thousand Naira on his education and you have given him a million".

That belief spurred him to launch the state Education Endowment Fund. And he experienced a resounding success. I do remember him wearing a smiling look when he was in Kaduna for the launching of the Fund. He looked every inch a happy man. Time was to prove that this was to be short-lived. And it was, for some good measure of reason too.

For over thirty percent of a budget to go into the life-wire sector of the economy without much results is insulting to achievement and performance. And when you spend a fortune helping a child to grow into useful manhood, but with the child wasting away his youthful years, a father is bound to shiver with disgusting anger. That is the source of Governor Aminu's sadness.

All along, he has been preaching the ideals and virtues of education. To him, the shortage of manpower in the state should and ought to be traced to the low level of education of the indigenes. He is right.

No wonder then that he puts his total gubernatorial life into lifting the educational standard in Borno State. Unfortunately however, his commitment is not bearing the desired fruits.

And so, the poor hard working governor is sad and angry. His tour of various establishments in his domain opened his military eyes to the utter "hopelessness" of the educational

system in the state.

To his anguish, in most of the places he went, including even Biu of all places, the reports were not very refreshing and juicy. Three weeks or so into the academic term, more than 60% of the student population are yet to refer to school! Some are in town but prefer break-dancing exercises to bookish activities.

But that was not all he saw or was told. Some 300 plus classes are exercising their brains under the shadow of drought-beaten trees! Three hundred classes is quite a number. The only consolation for Aminu, I presume is that at least they are on to some academic exercises.

And this is by far better than yet another deplorable situation where parents, for some obscure reasons, are pulling out their kids and wards from schools.

Thus when Aminu gave out threatening orders that he might be forced to close down all schools in the state, one could appreciate his concern; it is one of helplessness; it is also one of total concern for the danger the people are inflicting on themselves. That is the greatest sadness for which he deserves some sympathy.

Poor Aminu, he has other problems to contend with: mischief and rumour mongers, not in short supply in Nigeria, are once more up to their trade dishing out calculated innuendos as to the manner the endowment fund committee, of which he was chairman, was disbursing the amount realized so far.

They peddled rumours, which they found to be more interesting and lucrative than sending their children to school, consequently tying down the committee to endless explanations and defences.

The result: the governor resigned his chairmanship of the committee. The rumour mongers must have triumphed! That was a victory for them though not necessarily for sound judgement.

Fifty million or so is chicken feed compared to Borno's yearly budget over which the



Lt. Col. Aminu: target of rumour peddlers.

governor presides. If he could be trusted with managing N300 million or so, what is so sneaky about N50 million?

Besides, he has the absolute power to decide how public funds should be spent in the best interest of the public. Furthermore, members of the committee are his appointees; he could therefore order them to follow laid down rules as fashioned out by him.

At any rate, what reasons are there for the mongers to think that they would prefer to entrust public funds to a committee in which the governor and his commissioners are not represented than to a committee of which he is chairman? I plead for an answer.

Pity that only those holding public offices in this country are being seen as imbued with corrupt tendencies whereas an equal volume of corruption is being carried out outside the perimeters of the corridors of power.

With such punitive attitude, time would come when the affairs of our nation would be left at the disposal of crooks for decent men would distance themselves from the affairs of state for fear of acquiring a badge of public distrust and ridicule.

Aminu's withdrawal from that committee is indicative of this prediction even if on a limited scale. Governor Umar of Kaduna's warning that he might throw in the towel if a stop is not put to such unfounded rumours is also a growing sign of not wishing to associate with public matters. We must guard against losing the best of our human material on the altar of sentimental rumours.

They peddled rumours, which they found to be more interesting than sending their children to school, consequently tying down the committee to endless explanations and defences.

Nigeria

Sick University Education: Babangida to the Rescue

Shola Oyedele

Education has been described as the enhancement of the innate potentials of man. It involves exploiting the dormant resources embedded at birth in the mental man. These resources are systematically and gradually developed to the point where the raw mind is transformed into an individual participating in the improvement of the society in which nature has thrown him. Having acquired education which could be formal or otherwise, the man is expected by the society to perform certain roles; failure to live up to expectations might result in his being branded passive. The implication is that his indifference might make society look down on him. To which much is given, much is going to be expected; the dues to be paid to the society by the individual therefore depends on the level of education afforded him.

The rat race for education in Nigeria of our time has assumed a great dimension. Even though await their results are sure they would not meet the requirements when the results are out still buy the forms and expect miracles somewhere somehow. It is like going to a battle which one is sure to lose.

The educational system as it is in Nigeria today is in a deplorable state. The haphazard manner in which policy makers carry out their duties is unfortunate. Unqualified personnel saunter in classrooms while the qualified are left to roam the streets and waste away. Myriads of irregularities also abound.

Appointments are predicated upon patronage rather than merit. Absence of guidance counsellors in post-primary institutions prevents students from picking the right combination of subjects. The teachers engage in other revenue-yielding activities to keep body and soul together especially when salaries are not forthcoming. The students on their part prefer truancy, disco parties, "break dancing" and other unprofitable activities to studies. Gone

then, sublime as the dimension seems, it has not yet attained a saturation point. All conceivable and incredible avenues continue to be explored in the quest for education. The attainment of university education which is considered the zenith of knowledge is still regarded, in spite of the uncomfortable dearth of jobs for graduates, a the point of arrival. The graduate cuts a figure of one who after conquering the hitherto unknown, stands on



*Prof. Aminu: deserving
a pat and a hug.*

the threshold of respect and dignity. The beehive typifies a typical graduation ground. The academic gown, mortar board and the hood symbolise an achievement of the highest level. The degree is a sure meal ticket.

These facts underscore the rush for university education. The rush is so mad that even those who do not possess the requisite qualifications still buy the application forms, and that at prohibitive costs. Similarly, those who

are the good days when a student would bury his head in shame for having failed to make the number of credits at first attempt. He dared not repeat the fifth form in the same school for fear of being derided by his erstwhile juniors. That was those days before these days, and it is now part of history.

The university education does not escape the spill-over effect of these negative trends. However, the ivory tower is anxious to maintain a tradition of excellence in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Finance however, is the bane of the universities. Shortage of funds pins down the projections of these citadels of learning to an embryonic stage. It is on this score that the recent 100 million Naira grant to Nigerian's universities deserves being viewed as a commendable gesture by the Federal Military Government. Speaking through his Oyo State Subordinate at the University of Ibadan 38th Convocation ceremony, President Babangida said that the grant was a gesture aimed at demonstrating his "government's commitment to the provision of qualitative education at all levels in the country".

Interestingly, the grant is given the tag of rehabilitation. It is meant to rehabilitate the decrepit university education in Nigeria. Anyone who is familiar with the dearth of almost every factor designed to make university education a smooth undertaking will agree that the right tag has been placed on the grant. The efforts of the government to salvage a deplorable system from the quagmire of hopelessness should be commended by those who mean well for Nigeria. It is my considered opinion that the President and his education minister deserve a hug and a pat to the back. One hopes the fund will be equitably shared and judiciously utilised.

But perhaps one should ask: for how long will the government continue to play Father Christmas in the manner it has done now? Such a gesture, no doubt, cannot be indiscriminate because government's resources are limited. There must have been some forgone alternatives arising from the grant. Universities therefore are expected to embark on revenue-yielding activities to supplement government's grants. I have expressed the hope somewhere else that those who felt fortified within the ivory tower citadel would see themselves as instruments worthy of being used for economic emancipation. The universities could provide guidelines for and embark on consultancy services for the general benefit of the societies in which they exist. They could also do lots and lots more.



Graduating students: at the threshold of respect and dignity.

SARDAUNA BETRAYED?



Sardauna: Is he betrayed?

January 15th 1987 marked the 21st year of the assassination of Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto and Premier of Northern Nigeria. He was born in Rabah (in the present Sokoto State) in 1910. Sir Ahmadu Bello served between 1954 and 1966. He was trained in Katsina and the United Kingdom as a teacher and administrator. It was with exemplary commitment and deep sense of responsibility that the Sardauna played his part.

Those who assassinated him gave varying reasons for so doing. Chief among them was the introduction of the Northernisation Policy.

However there is hardly no adult Northern Nigerian who has not benefited directly from the policies of the late Sir Ahmadu Bello. In the post-independence period, and of course even before then, the Sardauna was pre-occupied with the protection of the interest of the North as dictated by the politics of the time. In the later part of his tenure, he intensified his Islamisation campaign.

The Sardauna gave particular attention to the education of the younger citizens of this part of the country and subsequently the Northernisation of the Public Service and the gradual indigenisation of Commerce and In-

"Those who benefitted most from the Northernisation policy are those Northerners who attained the peak of their careers and professions in the last few years. Some of them are still in public service, the Armed Forces and other agencies".

dustry. In the course of Northernising the Public Service, the government of the Northern Region was non-discriminatory. It was evidently clear that it was neither guided by reason of creed nor tribe. The important thing was for one to be a Northerner. This was demonstrated in the composition of the Sardauna's cabinet and later in appointments spread of social amenities and provision of Education including specialised training. Genuine efforts were made to reflect the diversity of the region. All these are now history.

We are not so much concerned with a review of history save where necessary to shed light on the present. Today, twenty one years after Sardauna's assassination, the North is not as it should be, Sardauna's Northern Nigeria.

His vision of a "New North" is no longer shared by those "Young Men and Women" whom he entrenched in positions of responsibility. They were neither armed with vast experience nor intellectual attainments to justify their placements under the policy of "Northernisation" so vehemently opposed and criticised by Nigerians of Southern origin. He went ahead and encouraged his appointees in the hope that they would carry on with the protection of the Northern interest within the confines of larger national interest.

Sardauna saw the Northernisation Policy as the only guarantee to true national unity; for that was "when the North could catch up with the South and keep Nigeria one". He explained the aim of this policy in April, 1960 on the floor of the Northern Nigeria's House of Assembly. The General Policy of the Government on Northernisation is to Northernise the Northern Region Public Service as soon as possible; to ensure for Northerners a reasonable proportion of posts in the Public Service;



Former Governor Kashim Ibrahim



Shagari



Waziri Ibrahim



Sardaua: Laying the Foundation Stone for the A.B.U.

to secure for Northerners a reasonable proportion of posts in all Statutory Corporations; to increase the number of Northerners in Commercial, Industrial, Banking and Trading concerns in the region, to expand as necessary the educational, training and scholarship schemes of the region in order to provide the qualified personnel required for the Northernisation Policy". The above was also reported by the Nigerian Citizen of April, 16th 1960.

Those who benefited most from the Northernisation Policy are those "Northerners" who attained the peak of their careers and professions in the last few years. Some of them are still in Public Service, the Armed Forces and other agencies. To them Northernisation, now nationally accepted in spirit and broadly defined as "Federal Character", ends with an appointment either as a minister, a chairman or chief executive. They have apparently forgotten all the sacrifices made by others for them to be what they are today. Rather, they selfishly and shamelessly chose to care and struggle only for their children and immediate family members. They now wear new faces as nationalists leaving the vast majority of our people uneducated, unemployed and impoverished in hunger and disease. At the height of criticisms and castigations of our leaders both dead and aged, nobody could speak up for they dread losing their so-called "National recognition" and endangering their political future. When the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) issue became a "Ready for War" affair they pretended as if they have not heard or read the negative propaganda and scandalous insinuations. Those are the people Sardaua left behind. Sardaua's assassination, it now appears, marked the death of the struggle for equal opportunities in the Federation of Nigeria. This is true as far as the protection of Northern interest is concerned. No wonder Chief Awolowo found it convenient and easy

"They have apparently forgotten all the sacrifices made by others for them to be what they are today. Rather they selfishly and shamelessly choose to care and struggle only for their children and immediate family members".



David Lot

to consolidate his people's control of the economy by the use of his office as Federal Commissioner for Finance and Vice-Chairman of the Federal Executive Council during the Gowon Administration. Already, bureaucratic power resides with them, so is the monopoly of the greater section of the media, the control of pressure groups like the Bar Association, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), N.M.A., and equal share of political power.

Recent events in the country lend credence to the theory that the Yorubas have had, and are having more than enough share of power arrangements in this country.

The failure of Northern Political Leaders of the Second Republic to play politics and differ as reasonably democratic as possible while at the same time, maintaining the age-old solidarity on issues and programmes crucial to the unity and progress of the Northern peoples, dealt a severe blow on the disarable cohesion of the geo-political entity. The polarization of Sardaua's colleagues and proteges in the politics of the Second Republic largely for selfish reasons, was all the more annoying and despicable.

Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, Sardaua's protege and federal minister in the First Republic established his own political party. He was backed by his father-in-law, Sardaua's friend and first indigenous Governor of the Northern Region, Sir Kashim Ibrahim.

Late Alhaji Ahyu Makaman Bida, Finance Minister in the then Northern Region who often acted as Premier in Sardaua's absence led former President Shehu Shagari. Alhaji Yusuf Maitama Sule, Jolly Tanko Yusuf, Michael Audu Buba and Adamu Chiroma among others to form the National Party of Nigeria (NPN).

Late Mallam Aminu Kano, as distinct as ever, established and led the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), while other notable Northern politicians like Solomon Lar teamed up with the Igbo-dominated Nigeria Peoples



Aminu Kano

Party (NPP) for religious reasons. Throughout the period, it was Mallam Aminu Kano's wisdom that formed the basis of "Checks and Balances" in the protection of Northern interest.

By January, 1986, when "The Northern Leaders" converged in Kaduna and launched Sir Ahmadu Bello's Biography to mark two decades of his assassination, many felt a sigh of relief that at last they are rallying round for a noble cause. This however, is yet to be expressly demonstrated.

Be that as it may, some individuals within the Babangida administration have remained unperturbed in their pursuit of the policy of equal opportunities or Federal Character, the criticisms and character assassination by a section of the Nigerian press notwithstanding. Notable among them is Professor Jubril Aminu, the Minister of Education. Aminu, a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Maiduguri, has also introduced a scheme to cater for the education of Nomadic Fulanis. This is a commendable move aimed at redressing educational imbalance; an issue that attracted the attention of the then Northern Region Premier. The bold step taken by the young newly-appointed Trade Minister, Alhaji Isma'ila Mamma to speed-up, the movement of the Federal Capital to Abuja in defiance of anti-Abuja campaigners equally deserve commendation.

The same negative elements who championed the criticisms of Sardaua's Northernisation Policy are at it again; using press campaigners to slow down the movement of a new federal capital largely for sectional reasons and more significantly, because the movement out of Lagos per se, would have devastating effect on their economic interests.

Narrowing our search inwardly, it could be seen that for no just cause, Sardaua's contemporaries i.e. older colleagues in government and those immediately following them in the bureaucracy together with those opportunistic to serve in the Gowon administration abdicated their responsibility and obligation, of providing the required leadership as dictated by the changes of time.

Instead, they, and they alone, laid the

foundation of this theory. "Everybody to himself and his children and Northern interest to those who want blame".

By 1990 when democracy should have been restored in this country, Sardauna's assassination would mark its twenty fourth year. The fear of the average Northerner is that basic things of life would continue to elude the majority of our rural folk as the Northern elites may still remain divided in their struggle for political power.

To make matters worse, young Northern intellectuals in our universities have failed to take-up the challenge of mobilising our people to be politically-functional citizens, a necessary pre-requisite for economic emancipation from the clutches of Southern domination.

They rather have narrowly and mischievously focused attention on the so-called "Feudal and Capitalist Elements" in our midst, in a renewed style of character assassination.

At least as demonstrated by the few vocal ones among them, they are not using their education for the benefit of the people but they are proudly using it for the formulation of lies and creation of confusion.

Sardauna himself was not unaware of how mischievous elements in the society capitalised on "low intelligence" of the masses of our people to make serious and damaging allegations. No wonder he remarked at a press conference in Kaduna on April 27th, 1961:

"Fortunately or unfortunately, that is what some politicians in this country are good for. They have a habit of making very wild allegations. But how to win the confidence of the people they know not. That is what I should expect from them. For most of them are mere upstarts in the game of administration".

On the crucial issue of national unity which regrettably is still fraught with a lot of questions twenty six years after our independence, the emphasis of the late Premier was for the foundation of unity to be laid primarily. Let Nigerians understand and accept the realities



Makaman Bida, Sardauna, Late Emir of Katsina Usman Nagogo.

of our differences in religion and culture as a basis for national unity. However, his commitment to true national unity may be better expressed by some of his remarks in an address to Nigerians as leader of the then ruling party. "Again and again politicians from one camp have preached disunity. They have made unwise and impossible demands. They insist they must carry out their selfish ambitions to the full or the federation must go. These demands are not only selfish but disloyal to our constitution. They are being made by men who only talk of unity but do not want to accept its implications, foremost among which is a spirit of give and take". That was a look at the problems of national unity in a broader perspective.

But it has often been argued and rightly too, that the unity of Nigeria rests to a large extent on the unity of the vast and diverse Northern Nigeria. Twenty-eight years ago, precisely February 5th, 1958, Sardauna opposed the divisive agitations of some self-styled

"Champions of the Minorities" in an address delivered to the Minorities Commission in Kaduna. The demands then were for the creation a middle Belt State and the merger of the Ilorin Province with the Western Region. Sardauna told the Commission "We will not abandon the Nupes of Pategi and Lafagi; We will not abandon the people of Borgu. We dispute that there is any justice in the demand for a transfer of any part of this Province from outside the jurisdiction of my government".

As for the creation of a Middle Belt State, the Sardauna submitted "I must, in fact, here point out that I and my Ministers are being subjected to increasing criticism from some areas in the 'Far North' for spending such a high percentage of the funds available to the region in developing the Middle Belt. Those of us who came from the Far North are continually being accused of neglecting our own areas, whose contribution to the revenue is so much greater than is that of the Middle Belt".

Today, twenty-one years after the assassination of the Premier, the divisive agitations of those "Self-styled Champions" who are in reality elites struggling for social status is continuing in another fashion. The North having been divided into ten states to allay the fears of "Minorities" is nonetheless a witness to renewed hues and cries of domination. We now hear and read about silly talks of "Hausa-Fulani oligarchy" versus the Middle Belt — now used to describe the Christian dominated areas of the Savannah region of Nigeria. Underneath this exaggerated squabble are localised intra-state conflicts centred around the former Northern province.

This is a summary of events that culminated in the strong suspicion well established in the minds of many that "Alas! Sardauna has been betrayed".

How true is this? and who are those behind the destruction?

By HAMZA BALA



Sardauna with Sami Kontogora (late veteran Broadcaster and Diplomat) at a Maiden Telecast of Buhai Television, Kaduna.

Sardauna: The man and his legacy

The leadership of the highly intelligent Northern aristocracy is, in response to the dramatic of scientific world advancement, being replaced today by a crop of intellectuals who are equally products of their own epochs. This development, however, doesn't provide an explanation for anyone to deride those who have played that role before now and of which the Sardauna was a central personality.

The man's outlook is again a vortex of controversy. D. J. Muffet wrote in his book "Let the Truth be Told": "To some, he appeared vain and arrogant, dictatorial and dubious; someone to be feared and appeased to be crossed only at direct risk and imminent peril; a caesar whose attitude would necessarily conjure up an inevitable Brutus. To others, he was a man of strange moods and strange inconsistencies of magnanimous impulse; one who could be served with pride and who responded with dignity, but whose reactions could never be predicted with exactitude".

To those who were very close to him, who earned his trust and confidence he was a simple man of warmth and affection, open and giving, generous and fair, compassionate and loyal. Children adored him. Like Churchill, whom he greatly admired, his vices were as large as his virtues were enormous. Quick to affront, he was not less quick to repent, proud of his ancestry, he was no less humble for his failings, which only too clearly he fully discerned. He had a peculiar sense both of an underlying inadequacy which was reflected in an intense gaucherie and of a manifest destiny which carried with it an enormous presence and a commanding appearance. He hated public functions, unless they brought him into contact with the common people.

Amongst his own people in his own land, his charisma was huge and his stature overpowering. But to the outsider, he really did seem like a Roman emperor, a man without whose consent nothing could be accomplished.

This view was shared both by his adherents and adversaries; the former spent most of their time looking over their shoulders at the shadow which he cast and the latter most of their scheming was how to circumvent the webs of intrigue which they were certain he was weaving, but of which in fact, he was as innocent as a baby.

Had he, as his talents certainly would have permitted him, chosen to challenge the southern nationalists by moving to the theoretical centre of power in Lagos, the result would almost certainly have been in his favour, and he could have appeared as a world leader of considerable attainment, possibly in Africa the one charismatic figure of moderate conservative bent ever to emerge a traditionalist. Such therefore, was the man whose elimina-

tion was the aim of many varied plots which were conceived, either politically — and therefore relatively openly — or militaristically — and therefore clandestinely — between independence in 1960 and the friction in 1966. To some, his elimination was merely a means to an end. To others, it was assuredly an end in itself.

The flood-lit imagery of the Sardauna's death reached across the generations especially in the defunct Northern Region, and stuck with nearly everyone then alive. Even, according to the results of one study, children as young as four remembered him as the gallant who inspired our youths and cared about working. People stood up to the challenge of bridging the education between the north and southern Nigeria, and brought a touch of style and glamour to the government. And if the effect of it all was inconclusive at his death, he remains in the popular view beyond blame.

What his idolators and even some of his detractors have missed most of all, then and still, was his flair, his penance, his aspiration to great deeds and his contagious confidence that they could be done.

His death put an end to all the promises and hopes for a developed Northern Region that was to be the model of other regions. In the national psyche, it was a myth torn "The Golden Bough", a regicide, that bloodied our soil and plunged us into a plague season of war, crime, riot, rebellion, private hedonism and public misconduct.

In the Hotline public opinion poll, 2 northerners in every 3 felt that our society would have been much different had the Sardauna lived, and one after another of the accompanying interviewees asserts a similar view, often in the most operative terms. It was "hope" that died with the Sardauna, or innocence, or confidence of purpose, or our sense of invulnerability, or our trust in the honour and the efficacy of our government.

"It seems to me like that's about the time Northern Nigeria in particular and Nigeria in general started going downhill", says Alhaji Tanko Abdullahi a souvenir shop-keeper in Zaria. Worst of all, the death of the Sardauna, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa had brought Nigeria's public life under the shadow of the gun. What was a freak occurrence then has become in these years as sad commonplace of our contemporary history.

One coup after the other has left many of our great leaders fired or murdered. The bloodletting has brought a sense of fragility to our national polity and even to our private life, as Nigerian citizens have become permanently pregnant with the expectation for the next gun shot.

Like every other Northern leader who has sought the greatness of the Sardauna since his death on January 15, 1966, Alhaji Shehu Shagari was running under the shade of his political mentor. But he did not measure up because the standard of measurement was a myth.

The memory of Sir Ahmadu Bello, has thus, transformed the face of Nigerian politics more than its heart as a result of his untimely death. The politics of nostalgia has made his successors look dull and provincial by comparison. It has pulled our subsequent elections and our election-year journalism with open partisanship, contributed to the steady diminution of voting, to a point where one-fourth of the registered eligible voters now elect their leaders due to lack of interest. It has retired part of a generation to the sidelines; to wait for the next Sardauna or merely to grieve for the last one, as the citizens of the defunct Northern Region in particular, are still imprisoned in home-sickness for the past. They seem not to have buried the dead yet.

By Lawrence Obaje



Sardauna: an enviable legacy behind him.

Politics in Nigeria — 1990 and beyond (II)

By Hassan Sani Kontagora

I therefore wish to emphatically submit that the presidency of this great country should be decided by the mass of the Nigerian citizenry and not ever through the use of any undemocratic device.

Proponents of the rotational presidency have consistently been tending the hollow argument that it will help in the elimination of the dominant posture of one so-called majority group.

Talking about majority, in the North for instance, no single ethnic group deserves the label "majority". Others mistakenly refer to the Hausas as the dominant group in this part of the country. In reality, Hausa has only a linguistic prevalence especially if its geographical spread is considered.

The Hausas, I would like all of us to understand, only exist in Kano and some parts of Kaduna and Sokoto States. If you go to Sokoto for instance, apart from finding the Fulanis, you also find the Haakarkaris from Zuru, the Zabarmawas etc. In Niger State we have the Nupes and the Gwaris who constitute a very significant proportion of the state's population. In Borno, we have the Kanuris and the Bahurawas. The Buras are the most dominant, then the Shuwa Arabs. In Bense you find the Igalas and the Tiv who are linguistically unrelated to the Hausas. This characteristic has transcended all the Northern States.

So from where does this question of the Hausa majority emanate? Hausa, we must all agree, is only a cohesive linguistic force and its spread is not even restricted to the Nigerian borders because one can find the language widely spoken in many African countries like Niger, the Camerouns, Benin Republic, Chad, Ghana and some parts of Sudan, Burkina Faso etc. It is really unfortunate that a number of Nigerians in their attempt to categorize the country into tribes make the fallacious assumption that Northern Nigeria is predominantly Hausa. It is only Hausa-speaking and nothing else.

The most important thing I feel Nigerians, irrespective of where they come from, should advocate for is equality in the distribution of resources and other development stimulation inputs rather than the rotation of the presidency. Additionally, I wish to state that the presidency should be left open and the most popular person should get it and this is the only way we can conform to democratic practices.

CONFEDERATION

Behind the genesis of this idea is the belief that a section of the country is monopolising the leadership of the country. The idea behind suggesting confederation in Nigeria is actually

based on the egotistic desire of some Nigerians to effect a monopolising hold on some sections of the country. To my mind the proponents of confederation are only exhibiting their inability to ascend to leadership within the national political context.

I also wish to strongly state that such advocacy can be equated to signing Nigeria's death warrant in that the idea is non-cohesive and above all divisive. Such calls we must understand are just a degree below the call for the disintegration of Nigeria. I believe that the confederation strategy is disintegrationist in its entirety.

To further back my total disapproval for a confederal set up, I would like to make a flash-back to the days of the Nigerian civil war when the whole nation rose to fight against its disunity and disintegration when the Biafran rebellion emerged. The blood of Nigerians spilled at the battle front should not be in any way for nothing. So anybody who opined or seek to champion the course of confederation is doing nothing but calling for the disintegra-

tion of Nigeria — a policy that has today become the envy of imperialism and forces of racism. We cannot afford to see Nigeria split into mini empires under the leadership of egocentric persons and groups.

TRADITIONAL RULERS

I cannot in anyway call for the politicisation of the institution as agitated by some. The ceremonial status of traditional rulers should be maintained but the only notable change that I will like us to effect is to make the institution more functional, by this I mean traditional rulers should partake in local government administration and even play advisory role when it comes to issues of great importance at both state and national levels.

For instance, traditional rulers could adequately tackle the problem of influx of illegal aliens because as grass-root based leaders, any strange person within their area of jurisdiction can easily be noticed. A little more recognition is therefore needed to make them play the ascribed role of fathers of the people thus making their position illuminated and unambiguous.

Politicization of the institution of traditional rulers can only breed further political divisions within the society and this could also go a long way in eroding the honour and respect of the institution. Political neutrality must therefore be maintained by traditional rulers.

On the basis of these observations therefore, I would like to suggest that appointments and dismissal of judicial officers should be an in-house kind of affair. The appointments should be effected by a body to be headed by the Chief Justice of the country who would take into consideration the probity, integrity, and intellect of potential appointees with very little executive control. The president should however appoint the Chief Justice of the Federation. The need to provide the judiciary with a high degree of financial autonomy is also vital in ensuring the independence of the judiciary especially in relation to the dispensation of justice.

Another area that I feel we should discuss is that of the colonial outlook of the Nigeria legal system. I strongly maintain that the Nigeria legal system is more or less an untouched and preserved colonial legacy specifically fashioned to entrench its perpetual control over the Nigerian peoples.

Here I would like to strongly suggest that the plurality of law should be emphasised over and above the unhealthy dominance of the colonially inherited English Common Law.

With the introduction of legal plurality, the cultures, beliefs and aspirations of the people could be easily reflected in the judicial structure of our country.



Kontagora: "Confederation means disintegration"

Giwa: The Unanswered Questions

After the dust thrown up by the death of Dele Giwa, the late Chief Executive of Newswatch and the spate of suspicion engendered have died down considerably, one thinks it is high time some conjectures were done if only to give expression to the voice on the other side. As it is, the barrage of theories adduced for the veteran journalist's abrupt and unusual demise emanate from only a section of the nation's media. Put differently, the practitioners of the pen profession across the Niger River seem to stay aloof so far sincerely maintaining a golden silence of some sort. This does not amount to insinuating that journalists on this side of the Niger are any less patriotic than their southern colleagues. They are not bereft of inquisitive and objective reasoning. It also hardly means that the intuitive power is lacking in them. Perhaps, they are practising what could be regarded as a tacit consensus on a maxim which advises that utmost caution should be exercised in pointing accusing fingers. Common sense and the dignity of silence demand it.

Circumstantial evidence which some are raking together to give a dog a bad name are not helping. They have only helped to compound issues. The image of complexity given to the whole sordid episode seems to be growing wings and soaring high there in the void, out of the reach of human reasoning and manipulation. With these unvetting circumstances that could only have unsettling effects on all and sundry, it is not far from being likely that the murder of Dele Giwa might be swept under the carpet especially if the current Police investigations prove inconclusive. And God forbid! It looks proper then that one starts ticking off the factors that though appear innocuous, are nevertheless likely to provide clues to the unprecedented murder of the late journalist.

Letter bombs are usually activated by the rush of air which accompanies the opening of the envelope. If it is true as the evidence of Kayode Soyinka, Newswatch's London Bureau Chief shows, that Dele Giwa never opened the envelope, how did the bomb in the letter get activated? Subsequent upon this reasoning is a strong suspicion that the bomb that killed Giwa was a remote control bomb and not a letter bomb. The letter which was handed to Dele Giwa was only an unfortunate coincidence which has succeeded in complicating issues. It has achieved the effect desired by the perpetrators of the despicable murder: the diversion of attention from the possibility of a time bomb skillfully planted under the chair on which Giwa sat or the table on which breakfast was placed. Suspicion tilts strongly towards the chair because, granted that the proximity of Dele's chair to the table is the same as Soyinka's, since they were taking breakfast together, the bomb would have had the same effect on both men.

Also, that the bomb was under the chair becomes a more meaningful guess when it is noticed that it was the lower part of Dele's

body that was most affected by the explosion. A letter being held up with one hand while the other is poised to open it will, if it contains a bomb, only explode to the face and chest of the victim. That Dele's face was only scratched by shrapnel from the bomb goes to reinforce the possibility of the explosion emanating from under the chair on which he sat. One other thing that has not stopped nagging at one's curiosity is that Giwa and Soyinka were wearing the same type of pyjamas on the fateful day.

When Soyinka regained his senses and could comprehend, he spoke on telephone to British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and refused to disclose his location for security reasons. The question is: who called who between Soyinka and BBC? If it was the latter, how did they get Soyinka's phone number? Perhaps it was Soyinka who called, why did he make that call at all if he was anxious to maintain secrecy of his whereabouts? One is also taken aback by Soyinka's assertion that he would return to London as soon as possible. He sounded too certain to be taken seriously. He was so unemotional about the whole grisly affair when he complained of not knowing where his glasses went. Perhaps there is more to it than meets the eye.

Since it made its debut, Newswatch has done many stories on big time frauds and rip-offs by multinationals with international connections and powerful network. One wonders if it is not just normal to conclude that any of these expose would have angered some powerful business magnates who feel threatened by Newswatch type of investigative journalism. The Johnson Matthey Bankers fraud which drained Nigeria of a staggering N6b (Six billion Naira) was a scoop of Newswatch that bank is now no more because it has been swindled of billions. It went bankrupt and had to be taken over by the Bank of England. Newswatch did not precipitate the closing of the bank but it exposed those involved in the fraud.

The government and some of its functionaries have been taking the batterings left and right. Circumstantial implications are being exploited to bring the government to disrepute. One was left with the firm conclusion that those who point accusing fingers at the government are either deliberately trivialising the whole despicable issue or they are exhibiting a crass naivety and crude ignorance. The Director of Military Intelligence, Col. Halilu Akilu was said to have phoned Giwa's house a day before the grisly occurrence. That was after the late Newswatch boss has had a brush with the authorities. Is it not just sensible to conclude that a prospective murderer will not invade his quarry's house with persistent phone calls so as to avoid whipping up suspicion? A trained man like Akilu will not do that. Why the witchhunting then? However, one should mention that in the prevailing circumstances, those who brought the information that led to the interrogation of Dele Giwa on allegations of gun-running should be



Giwa: who killed him?

invited for questioning. This the government should do to exonerate itself. It will not amount to being stampeded into taking decisions.

"They have killed me" were Giwa's last words. The preface to that was "Look O! These people want to kill me". They wanted to and "They" did. How unfortunate! If the traditional rites said to have been performed on Dele's corpse with the belief that his spirit would visit vengeance on his killers are yet to show any efficacy after almost two months, then perhaps the gods have also joined to collaborate in shielding the culprits. But who are these faceless "they"? Who are they? It is this overwhelming desire that prompted Alhaji Hassan Sani Kontagora to issue a notice of his intention to institute a legal action against Kayode Soyinka for complicity in Giwa's murder. Alhaji Hassan, like all well-meaning Nigerians, also wants to know: Who are they?

The way we see it

Kayode Soyinka, Newswatch's London Bureau Chief arrived in the country two days before the explosion. At that time Dan Aghese, then Managing Editor, was spending part of his vacation in London. Soji Akinnade, Newswatch's Senior Associate Editor, was also on a short course there. The question is what was so important that Soyinka could not reveal or discuss with Aghese except Giwa in Lagos? What sort of "briefing" was it Soyinka came for that lasted up to that fateful Sunday in Giwa's house?

If Soyinka could not discuss anything related to the "briefing" in London with Aghese who unlike Akinnade was not on course, then there could be a communication gap in the hierarchy of Newswatch.

Going by Soyinka's contradictory account of the incident which had marked difference from Funnmi's (Giwa's wife) and his subsequent interview with BBC from an undisclosed "place in Lagos" for security reasons, one is left with no alternative than to hold to a well-established suspicion that Soyinka more

Nigeria



Funmi: Giwa's widow

than any "insider" knows more than the nation and perhaps the police investigators. He said to the BBC "so when we got back in, we had to drag Dele out of the room".

But in November 3rd edition of Newswatch it reported that as the explosion occurred, Funmi screamed "Billy too was screaming. She dragged Giwa on the floor". No mention was made of Soyinka who had set on a kilometre journey to Muhammad's house. Why the lie?

Significantly questionable is Soyinka lodging in Giwa's house from the time he came in from London? Is it his tradition to lodge in Giwa's house? Is it for lack of accommodation in Lagos? Or how? Why?

In Newswatch edition of November 3rd, 1986, (Vol.4, No.18) it was alleged that the letter to Dele Giwa was marked "from the Office of the C-in-C.....(Commander-in-Chief) and the typed address read "Chief Dele Giwa". Although Giwa was not a chief. Newswatch also published that an instruction on the letter said nobody should open the parcel except Giwa himself.

According to Newswatch, "Late Giwa was not surprised for he had received letters from President Ibrahim Babangida before". The question now is: Were the previous letters from the President to Dele Giwa marked "Chief Dele Giwa" or had instructions on them that only the addressee could open them?

Also, if there was a bomb in the alleged letter from the president, would it have been marked "from the Office of the C-in-C"?

What kind of letters does late Dele Giwa normally receive from the president that he is not surprised when he received this one? How were they normally addressed to him? As this not the first time he would be addressed as "Chief Dele Giwa"?

"According to Soyinka", Newswatch went on, Giwa placed the parcel on his lap, and he to open it with his right hand. And there was an explosion". Soyinka did not confirm that the explosion was from the letter.

"The house shook and smoke filled the room", Soyinka, who was in blue pyjamas with white stripes like Giwa, was thrown on floor". He went further to say, "the writer was mangled, the table simply tipped, he (Soyinka) staggered out in a

state of shock..... walked to the corner of the room. Muhammad asked me to accompany him to the corner of the explosion, and also accompanied him to the letter's house in Newswatch office calling Associate Editor Dele Giwa. When he was passing from and the two immediately met him and he narrated the tragedy.

Under his continued state, how was Soyinka able to walk a distance of over one kilometre from the scene of the incident? How was it that a man who staggered out of the house in a state of confusion could see exactly what had happened to Giwa in the room?

How do we have breakfast with Giwa, how do we escape the bomb if the table on which they were having breakfast dissolved? And if he could walk up to a kilometre, why did he not together with Funmi and Billy remove Dele Giwa out of the room?

"Akilu's reason why he telephoned Giwa's house differs markedly from Funmi's", reported Newswatch. "According to Funmi, Akilu told her when he telephoned the third time on Saturday, October 19th, that he wanted to inform Giwa that he should expect a message "from the ADC". From this, it might be inferred that some groups who planned to murder Giwa might have been behind some of the phone calls. But Akilu has denied the message story narrated by Funmi. Granted he told her that "Giwa should expect a message from the A-D-C" it is only sensible that Giwa on phoning Akilu (which he did) would have sought to know what "message to expect from the A-D-C". This is if Funmi, as she claimed, had told Giwa Akilu exact message. Or was it that she narrated "expect a message from the A-D-C" to corroborate Kayode Soyinka's submission that Giwa said on receiving the parcel "this must be from the President"?

On the other hand could it be that some mischief makers bent on implicating and discrediting the Federal Government inscribed "from the Office of C-in-C on the parcel they sent? Then could that have been what prompted Giwa to have told Soyinka "this must be from the president"?

In THISWEEK of November 10th, 1986, Peter Turtill, the Briton who first revealed the scale of the IMB fraud was quoted as having told West Africa that he received a phone call on the morning of October 22nd, a day after Giwa was killed, from a man who claimed to be Peter Evans, who told him (Turtill): "I think you will like to know that Dele Giwa is dead".

"On Turtill's "disclosure", THISWEEK went on, "Kayode Soyinka told THISWEEK: "It is not always good to just take the words of a single man just like that. They need to be investigated further. Peter Turtill has his own personal vendetta to settle with his former Nigerian employers. I have no new document whatsoever on the IMB". So how can we rely on Soyinka as he seems to have the same view with "Peter Evans"?

Also, lack of confidence seems to have cropped up between Kayode Soyinka, and Turtill. This assertion is based on the premise that if as the London Bureau Chief of Newswatch, the magazine got wind of the IMB fraud through him, why did Turtill bypass him and phone Giwa directly to ascertain if the latter had received some confidential

documents on the alleged IMB affair?

One other interesting contradiction is given in the account of the accident in a conversation of Soyinka that he walked about in a state of confusion. It is however noted that this was after Dele Giwa had been dragged out. If you wish to do so, see direct quote in the Foundation Medical Centre where Giwa is being kept instead of allowing him to go to Giwa's house again. On the other hand, it is claimed that Soyinka walked to Muhammad's house before Giwa was dragged out, very close to the telephone interview to prove BBC that he was present when Giwa's mangled body was being dragged out.

Then if one considers Turtill's claim that he has passed certain documents on ABC to Giwa and Newswatch details of same, some explanation are perhaps needed on why a telling lie now, Turtill or Newswatch? How long do Giwa usually keep such secret documents before turning them over to his co-accused? Could it be that Giwa had actually got the documents but had not disclosed it to his colleagues? Could Turtill be telling such a shameful and immoral lie to claim to have done such a thing without actually having done so? Could the phone call from one faceless Peter Evans to Turtill be seen as corroborating Turtill's especially if the phone call was true and not a cock and bull story of Turtill himself? Many questions unanswered you might say.

Holline is not alone in the line of thought on which it based its argument and the questions raised on Dele Giwa's murder.

THISWEEK 10 November, 1986 edition published inter-alia that: "said a high ranking Police source: We are looking into all possible angles. This includes what may appear as very remote to the lay man, that a bomb may have been planted under Giwa's desk before the parcel of Sunday, October 19th was delivered".

If this clue turns out to be a reliable one, then the search for Giwa's corroborated though unintentionally by Kayode Soyinka's eye witness account to the BBC on Wednesday October 22nd. Said he: "Dele was holding the parcel with his left hand. He was just going to use his right hand after showing it to me to open it. He hadn't opened it before the



Soyinka: does he know more?

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explosion took place" This could be interpreted to mean that the delivery of the parcel might have only coincided with explosion. It could also be inferred that the supposed "bomb planted under Giwa's table" might have been remotely controlled. Newswatch had itself reported that "it was not a time bomb". Then who held the remote control?

Fundamental to the continued search for Giwa's killers is the issue of late Gloria Okon. She was arrested at the Aminu Kano Airport as a suspected drug courier. Gloria later died in detention. The autopsy revealed that she had died of food poisoning.

Of late there was this theory that the inmate that died in Kano was a 'fake' Gloria Okon. The "real" one is alive and living in London. She had reportedly been interviewed by Kayode Soyinka who had come with documents and tapes two days to the bomb explosion. That wives of some top military men were linked by some documents in Giwa's possession to the cocaine courier business. How true are these theories?

Assuming that the "living Gloria Okon is well in London, two things are obvious: That not only Newswatch executives would know



Gambo: promises to unravel the mystery

about her existence; and that a friend or her relation might equally know. This means the Nigerian public or at least security agencies would have known. But the Customs and the Police in Kano including hospital authorities have ruled out such a possibility. They insisted that as far as they are concerned the Gloria Okon arrested at the airport and kept in custody had died of food poisoning. The onus of proving that Gloria, the suspected drug courier is living lies on those who originated the theory and the Newswatch that is said to be in possession of tapes of an alleged interview with her.

The police on the other hand should speed-up the investigations, identify those responsible for the cowardly act, for them to pay the appropriate price. This and this alone could put an end to spectacular and expensive rumours circulating within the polity. Delay may appear a temporary victory to the perpetrators of rumour and an enormous undoing to the credibility of the Babangida Administration.

Shola Oyedele with

Abdullahi Waziri Tambawal

Note: The search for Giwa's killers continues. In the next edition, *Hotline* examines the role of Giwa's closest associates and comes up with technical explanations and analysis on parcel bomb blasts and bomb explosions generally.

Cont. from page 5

Of Contracts

quotation figure. The question is who should the government trust more; its own workers or contractors?

At any rate, the volume of waste as a direct consequence of the activities of a few within the civil service is nothing near cash rain by our various contractors, indigenous and foreign.

Recent study by Dr Yusuf Bala Usman shows that about 80% of our foreign exchange crisis was as a result of the fraudulent activities of the multinationals and their indigenous collaborators. Furthermore, the level of inflated cost of Nigeria's contract job is about five times what obtains in other countries. And only recently, the Borno State Government discovered that it was duped of about 600,000 00 pounds sterling (about N3.6 million black market rate) by some foreign contractors.

We should not therefore cash in on a minor negative aspect of happenings to justify a clearly fraudulent practice for contract job in Nigeria is a fraud, a huge avenue for defrauding government.

True, our technical know-how is such that we cannot discard completely the system of contract award. But we should not continue to depend on foreign technology for the execution of simple office structures, supply of material etc. To say the least, to do this is financially criminal.

The business of a contractor is to make huge earnings. That is his orientation. He has no sympathy for government position. The more he squeezes out of government, the better he is financially. Government should not therefore allow this unreasonable and un-worked-for financial squeeze.

Letters

Religious Fanaticism

Your August edition's 'Fanaticism The Bane of Religions' made an interesting reading. The cases the author mentioned therein are factual. These are daily happenings.

The way religion is practised in this country is unfortunate. Many religions have been commercialised. I believe like the author of that article that the difference between a religion and a commercial company is that while the latter is registered with the Federal Ministry of Trade and Industry, the former is registered with the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The Bible itself has told us not to condemn others. Jesus told us in the Gospel

of St. Luke how a pharisee and a tax collector (publican) went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee who claimed to be an honest man only thanked God for making him a good man. On the other hand, the tax collector, without lifting up his eyes, begged God for forgiveness as he knew he was a sinner. The result was that the Pharisee was rejected by God. The tax collector who was referred to as a sinner was acceptable to God.

This is a lesson our 'religious people' should learn.

Sunday Onyame,
Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Pork-Barrel Politics

Albashir's 'Pork-Barrel Politics' (*Hotline*, Vol. 1, No. 4) couldn't have been more revealing. It has clearly shown how the north has all along been tolerant of excessive and relentless insinuations

But these insinuations are only a tool in an indecent anti-north campaign war launched by a group of hard-line and fanatical ethnocentrics. Regrettably, in this group are found intellectuals and journalists of high repute such as Chief Adun. Balaji Labanji, Rny Ekpku who have stooped so low as to give into ethnic and sectional prejudices and whose words are authority in their respective professions and parts of the country.

With this syndrome still hanging on after twenty five years of Nigeria's nationhood, there are doubts as to the whole question of national unity. The north cannot go on being tolerant either, for in an indecent war, tolerance is usually misconstrued as weakness. It is high time the north started campaigning, not against the south but against the anti-north campaigners. *Hotline* has certainly taken the lead in this.

Abubakar Shekara,
Sokoto, Nigeria.

Nigeria: Taking On The Desert?

By Abubakar Ika

are gradually replacing the sparse savannah of the northern tips of Nigeria. Indeed, these features of the desert are increasingly becoming the dominant characteristics of the landscape of the extreme northern parts of some Nigerian states like Borno, Bauchi, Sokoto, Zambo and Kaduna. Available data indicate that about 20,000 square kilometres of land in these states are seriously affected by drought and the threat of desert.

In these desert-encroached parts of Nigeria, it had not rained for a number of years, while for those under the threat of drought, rainfall, where at all it is witnessed, comes late and sporadically like epileptic attacks. In fact, this year, most northern states of Nigeria did not witness rainfall until late May. The late arrival of rains has further hastened the threat of imminent hunger and starvation: the spectre of which continues to stare the faces of the inhabitants of the Sahelian region of Africa by each passing day.

Clouds of sand-storms (usually mistaken for clouds of rain) constantly hovers in the sky; having got dark and thick enough as to make visibility almost impossible, it sweeps across towns and villages of the northern tips of Nigeria day in day out thereby destroying the living hope for rains nursed by the desert-ary inhabitants. As rains fail to come, the prices of foodstuffs and livestock sky-rocket. Livestock are lost in thousands; the few rivers available dry up. Man and animal struggle for survival at the few lakes available. In fact, life and livelihood in the northern tips of Nigeria are today in order the immediate threat of extinction; the threat is as real as it is frightening.

It has been generally accepted that in the Sahelian region, the desert is moving southwards at the rate of 0.5 kilometres to 0.8 metres or 500-800 metres per year. The location is therefore chronic; each of the states that are on the northern borders of Nigeria lies between 100 kilometres to 200 kilometres of fertile land to the desert each year.

The consequences are that food and crop production would continue to fall — as the desert is not checked — with all attendant economic and social implications. In some States, the total food and millet produced by

Gudam, Kondaga, Kakawa, Nguru, Monguno, Fata, Madaguri, Kaga, Gajala and Damboa local governments, the ten affected by desert encroachment, fell from 90,075 tonnes previously to a paltry 263,974 tonnes in 1984. A fall of 546,127 tonnes or 41 per cent. In fact, the decline in agricultural output of some local governments like Nguru, Monguno, Gudam and Kakawa was about 25,000 tonnes between 1984 and 1985. This is a frightening figure in any part of the developing world where protein-deficiency-related diseases continue to devastate the populace. Similar stories are emanating from other northern frontier states.

A rainfall decrease from about 900 millimetres as one moves north-wards, to 200 millimetres of rainfall is lost in all parts of desert-encroached northern parts of Nigeria.

What are the Nigerian governments, both Federal and States, doing about the desert threat? What strategies have they come up with to combat the threat of desert-encroachment? How relevant are these approaches? And could these alter the worsening conditions of the ordinary villagers living under desert conditions? Can policies stem the desert tide?

Several factors are responsible, for desert threat, some human others nature induced. Though natural factors can be predictable but they could not be controlled. Human-induced factors on the other hand could not only be determined but even controlled: unplanned clearing for agriculture, uncontrolled grazing, over-exploitation of forest resources for emergency energy purposes indiscriminate bush burning, commercial exploitation of the forest without adequate reinvestment and poor water and land management amongst several other factors. The natural factor is chiefly poor, inadequate and irregular rainfall.

Previously various Nigerian governments since 1960, routinely launched tree-planting campaigns every year at the only comfort of Abuja and respective state capitals. These became not only ritual propaganda-seeking blitz but a caricature of anti-desert campaigns.

The Babangida regime with a desire to perhaps break away from this mock syndrome decided and indeed did launch its own cam-



Barbargida: "abuses of forestry to be checked".

pany in villages at the thick of the desert. The President himself launched the Central government's campaign tagged: "Mass Mobilization Campaign Phase" at the desert-encroached village of Gubio in Borno State. Other state governments equally launched their campaigns in villages surrounded by sand-dunes, with thick sand-storms raging at the background for necessary dramatic effects. The President after the usual exhortations on the dangers of desert encroachment to man and animal, along with its own strategies "dished" out N14.5 million from the Ecological Problems Funds to give teeth to government's ideas. It is our intention therefore to have a look at the government's ideas and see their relevance or otherwise in our efforts to roll back the desert.

First, its launching of this year's campaign away from the customary Abuja to Gubio village in desert-ravaged Borno State, is more symbolic than anything else. For it is tough and genuine follow-up measures are quickly adopted, the whole thing would end up being a charade, at best or even a mockery of the conditions of the villagers. As for tagging the campaign as "A Mass Mobilization Campaign Phase", it is in line with the regime's long-known populist posture. If no genuine efforts are made to link up with the desert — weary peasants and tough action taken against rural kulaks who are marginalising the peasants and further exacerbating our already poor ecological conditions in the rural areas, the whole thing could end up at best being a mere propaganda blitz. The president has shown a clear grasp of the human and natural factors responsible for the desert problem. What needs to be done is to simply check these factors. He himself told the nation from Gubio on July 7th 1986 that: "It is the determination of the Federal Military Government to check the abuses of our forestry, as well as encour-

fact, life and livelihood in the northern tips of Nigeria are imminent threat of extinction.

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age practices which will check the advance of desertification".

However, when it comes to measures to give teeth to this determination, we find out that some are inadequate, while others even contradict some of the aims of the regime.

Second, the President called on the state governments to appoint forest guards. This does not seem feasible as most of the states are already cash-stripped and laying off some of their workers, one wonders how much guards we require to adequately man our vast forests in the middle-belt areas and in the southern part of Nigeria. Perhaps thousands. It is only the central government that can afford to employ such a large number of people and to provide any necessary decisive central co-ordination. In any case, how do we ensure that these guards do not fall prey to Nigeria's endemic social cancer: corruption by collaborating with the privileged to plunder the forest resources?

Third, the President talked of a programme by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation to encourage the use of oil and gas as substitutes to wood as sources of energy: while we agree with the President's lamentation that the present over-reliance on forests as source of energy is inconsistent with our status as an oil-producing state, we equally find his exhortations on shifting to the use of oil and gas instead of wood as inconsistent with his regime's withdrawal — by 80 per cent — subsidies on petroleum products. Oil and gas are of course in the front line. If a government is honestly interested in halting the over-reliance on the forest by its citizens for energy purposes, it would subsidise gas and oil even if it is not producing them. It therefore defies logic that, an oil-producing state would withdraw subsidies on its most primary products and at the same time expect the citizens not to look for cheaper sources of energy. They have to eat, and in the process they have to use energy, and since gas and oil are out of their reach, they have to go to the forest. Very simple and very logical. For the government to

Enunciating programmes, sound policies is one thing, their implementation is another thing all together.

dissuade people from using wood as sources of energy, it should bring back the subsidies it withdrew on petroleum products. Else the whole exhortations may be ignored as mere gimmick and perhaps regarded as playing to the gallery.

Fourth, according to President Babangida, the government has embarked on programmes intended to recapture degraded lands, such as rehabilitation-eroded areas, shelter-belts, farm forestry, village woodlots, agro-forestry, pulpwood project and schools forestry programme. Since no specific programme has been cited and explained in detail one could hardly say anything on the ideas beyond the need for a comprehensive policy package and intensive co-ordination. Enunciating programmes, sound policies on paper as our experience in Africa has shown is one thing, their implementation is another thing all together. The Nigerian government policies must not fall a victim of this contradiction, for the stakes are too high.

Fifth, certain international agencies have equally assisted the government and the President had publicly acknowledged their efforts. A World Bank assistance in establishing a 15,000 hectare of pulpwood plantations in Ogun, Ondo and Anambra states; European Economic Community assistance in evaluating the rate of growth of our high forest; UNDP/FAO help in training high level man-power in forestry cartography.

Six, exhortations were made by the President for the planting of trees, creating of forests, shelter-belts, woodlots etc, in Federal, state and local government offices, schools, individuals communities. This is obviously going to cost money. A lot of money. In fact, besides the 14.5 million set aside by the central government, who would foot the other bills? People living under desert conditions appreciate the amount (obviously token) more so since it is far above the original amount envisaged. But if the central government is to really identify with them and their suffering; beyond symbolic gestures of solidarity, the amount needs to be greatly increased. About 70 million to 80 million naira would be close to being enough. Obviously the states are too poor to allocate any amount for any particular project beyond the normal budgetary allocations. The government in Lagos needs to extend its concern. Here are some ideas in such respect.

First, the whole desert encroachment zones of northern Nigeria should be declared as disaster areas. Emergency relief of food and water tankers should be sent up to them.

Second, bore-holes and artificial lakes should be sunk. Third, man production of tree seedlings should be employed to oversee the distribution, planting and management of forest and shelter-belts in the whole of northern Nigeria. Fourth, a ministry or an authority should be created to be in charge of drought and desert management in the country. Fifth, the articulation of a comprehensive energy policy aimed at replacing the use of wood in favour of gas, coal and oil. Towards this end, the withdrawn subsidies on petroleum products should be brought back, and infact increased. Sixth, the setting up of an appropriate machinery to explore and advance the possibility of an inter-basin water transfer within and outside the country. And finally, since the desert phenomenon is an international one there is a clear and urgent need for the Nigerian government to further consolidate and advance its multi-lateral links with other desert-encroached countries in Africa. We can start with our immediate northern neighbours: Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. They face the same problem with us: desert encroachment. We should jointly comprehensively study the desert phenomenon and come up with realistic and well-organised strategies to counter the desert threat. We should follow the strategies up with concerted and well organised joint actions. The Niger river basin commission, and ECOWAS fora could be a good starting point.

The desert threat could no longer be ignored or wished away in Nigeria. It has not only arrived but intends to stay for a long time to come. We cannot afford to be complacent any more and wish that it does not exist for the simple fact that the desert does not appear to be contented with mere arriving and hanging around; it intends to move downwards. Must we wait till it first touch the shores of the Atlantic? Perhaps, the most painful aspect of this tragedy is that the Nigerian press has not given it the deserved attention. Understandably, they prefer to only focus on soil erosion. This may not be accidental however, as the bulk of the Nigerian press establishments and journalists are in the south where soil erosion is causing havoc. This lopsided media attention ought to be altered. We can start by first appropriately sizing up the desert threat. Then we can successfully take it on. The Nigerian press and governments, should lead the way, it is only after that that the Nigerian masses would follow.

ABUBAKAR JIKA, is a contributing Editor with the HOTLINE.



Agriculture Minister Maj. Gen. Gado Nasko

The Philosophy Of Moral Decadence In Post-Primary Institutions In Nigeria

By J. A. M. Agbonika

Jurisprudentially speaking, positive morality is made up of the actual standards which are adopted in the life of any particular society. Moral laxity which is a cankerworm eating into the fabric of Nigerian society today is nowhere more apparent than in our post-primary institutions where negative morality prevails. This national phenomenon has attracted the attention of many eminent and right-thinking Nigerians. The Federal and State governments have on many occasions abundantly expressed their concern on the issue both implicitly and explicitly.

In the "TRUST" of December, 1976, page 19, Mr. AIR IYARE, a lecturer of the University of Benin said:

"In this country the standard of morality is so low that I think we are presently in the era of Sodom and Gomorrah The average Nigerian woman of today is proud of her 'bottom power' ... a euphemism for sex which can undo our society. The serpentine Nigerian man who would first suck the divine of a woman before doing anything practically for her is also to blame. Today, our women are getting what they want but losing what they need. If our women are morally and spiritually educated as to have moral value for themselves, they will begin to fill a gap in our national outlook because the greatness of a nation is as strong as the moral strength of its women. The vitality of any country depends on that country's morality"

Also in the October "TRUST", 1976, Madam HANNAL OBASEKI observed:

"The young generation should be prayed for constantly, so that the wrath of God will not fall on them. They are reckless in everything. Go to the Church on Sunday, you can count how few turn up. They instead go to hotels and disco joints. They think life is all music, sex and alcohol. They grow into a world of moral laxity. No child with the right home discipline will go astray".

The above quotations indicate that moral decadence in our society is a national calamity and does not only confine itself to post-primary institutions. However, the rate at which our students are taking 'over-dose' of this national 'pill' is unprecedented. Undesirable behaviours such as rudeness to teachers, absenteeism from classes, destruction of school property, disrespect to elders, indolence, fornication, smoking, unreasonable parties and discos, taking of alcohol and drugs are some of the vices prostituting our schools and colleges today. Even those in universities and other institutions of higher learning are not left out. The causes for these pathetic maladies are not far-fetched. Children today

are being born into a culture and social pattern quite unlike any previous generation. The existing population explosion, social mobility, sub-urban living, the transition of formerly stable rural and semi-rural communities, the emerging new roles for male and female, the development and use of communication media, the free expression of literature and the arts, and the availability of automobile have brought about a new way of life. It is not easy today to control and direct the influences which affect the lives of young people as it was a generation ago. Our brothers and sisters are learning from their contemporaries rather than from parents and elders, culminating in confusing ideologies - the "new morality" and the exciting way of life which gives them the 'come on'. Our young boys and girls in post-primary institutions are being caught in the current of change and trended in this swift current is a turbulence over sex. Romantic and erotic love has become a new 'it' in the lives of our students. A new standard for this new emphasis on love has been established by the combined impact of the screen, the novel and T.V. set thereby aggravating the existing situation.

In the "AFRICAN SPARK", June 1976, late DR. OBAROGIE OHONBAMU, a one-time Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law, University of Lagos, outlined some factors which contribute to moral decadence in our youths in his article, "TOWARDS MORAL DEGENERATIONS". These include, inter alia, foreigners who take the pictures of our budding daughters in the nude and sell them at staggering amounts to foreign cinema houses; influx of debasing magazines and books giving a touch of religiosity to obscene pictures in form of local imitations such as "LAGOS WEEK-END", "LAGOS LIFE" and "CAR-TOONS" for our children to consume and maybe to copy and thereby be deculturised. In schools, the teacher-student and student-student relationship have degenerated to abnormal level beyond anybody's imagination. Many of our girls are found in rural and urban areas all over the country in different

ages, shapes and sizes. They paint the eye-lashes, lips and finger-nails and dress in provocative outfits to attract men. These are the whores who are always ready for a pick-up. Many of them go to bed even with the so-called "Sugar Daddies". It is no longer a misnomer to label them as prostitute since they fall within dictionary meaning of that word which is "a woman who offers her body to indiscriminate sexual intercourse especially for hire". Our girls who flirt about and agree to sexual relationship for material gains are no better than whores living in brothels. Our students have no regard for tradition and unfortunately do not appreciate the real value of their education.

Drugs are menacing our students. Bad companies goaded many students into smoking hemp. Getting to the scene of parties and discos, one hears young and old, male and female, talk about 'stone', 'pin', 'tab', 'milo', 'harsh', 'kwaya', 'pot', 'grass', cocaine, etc. What they mean is one form of drug or another. When they take them, 'they are high and feel real good'. The influence of these drugs baffles many concerned Nigerian patriots. Drug-taking has generated a heat-wave of controversies in respect of its virtues and vices. Getting hooked on drugs is like graduating from drinking beer to drinking spirits. Drug addiction is not uncommon these days among youths in schools. An insidious compulsion to drugs usually starts in an innocent way. It is just like gambling. A gambler comes into a casino and starts with an initial bet of N4.00, N20.00, N30.00 and after a few weeks N50.00 and so on. This habit continues until the fellow falls into serious financial and health problems. The chronic use of marijuana leads to such a deterioration of bodily function that is difficult to reverse. Heavy 'pot-smokers' lose their appetite; they have trouble sleeping at regular hours; they can also become sexually impotent and even more serious, a seeming permanent loss of mental ability might result. The assertions that it heightens one's awareness of particular experiences are simply not true - they are mere induced illusions. The pathological form of thinking of drug addicts become paranoid.

Today, our women are getting what they want but losing what they need.

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Students in classroom

Heavy users lose the will to do anything and become vulnerable to the lures of easy solutions to personal and social problems. They lose the ability to think logically, and develop a tendency to speak in clichés and suffer temporary loss of memory and hence are unable to foresee the natural consequence of their acts.

A female undergraduate at the University of Leeds once confessed that anytime she smoked only two to three rolls of Indian hemp, she heard strange voices and had to be treated in a hospital in order to regain self-control. Medical examinations and experiments have also revealed the adverse effects of drug-addiction on the youths.

According to a research finding of Dr. Harvey Powerlson, in males, drug addiction can lead to sterility and bring about cancerous alterations in lung tissue. Drugs like LSD interfere with body's function and weakens resistance to diseases.

Psychologically, early 'pot-smokers' are enraptured by the illusion of warm feelings that they are unable to sense the deterioration of their own mental and psychological process. It is not easy to convince a user against his belief due to the psychological root which the drug has gained. The hue and cry about drugs in Nigeria is not "a storm in a tea-cup" as some have postulated. All the obnoxious activities resulting from drug addiction deviate the

attention of our students from their academic pursuits, while at the same time they face legal repercussions. The failure rate gallops every year.

Our parents also deserve a certain degree of blame. They cannot be totally exonerated. They are responsible for aiding and abetting this unwholesome number one national malady. In the "Nigerian Herald" of 21st July, 1977, page 7, Professor Babs Fafunwa renowned for his original educational thoughts and one of the few Nigerian educationists of international repute in his analysis of the roots of indiscipline in schools and society defines education as "the aggregate of all the process by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of positive and sometimes negative values in the society in which that individual lives". From this definition, it can be seen that the leaders of the society as well as the generality of the citizens - parents, employers, teachers, civil servants, members of the private and public sectors and, a fortiori every member of the society must accept full responsibility for the present deplorable state of education in our society. The school is only a part of the educational machinery. The home, and the social, political and economic organisations also constitute part of the educational system. Consequently, the problem of indiscipline cannot and should not be left to the schools alone to solve. All authorities - parental,

academic, religious and governmental should bestir themselves to wage war against immorality in our post-primary institutions.

As an intellectual and erudite scholar with global reputation, Professor Babs Fafunwa has diagnosed the ills of moral decadence in our schools and society. To him, among the causes are nepotism, tribalism, favouritism, bribery, corruption, victimisation, dishonesty, influence, timidity, bossism, reckless spending or conspicuous consumption. To him, "What Nigeria of today needs more than anything else are men and women of courage, citizens whom the love of money cannot corrupt; who can stand by courage of conviction and who will not lie even when confronted with bullets or a million naira" This quotation serves as 'food for thought' to parents and teachers. They must be more dedicated and exemplary. There is need for them to infuse a new spirit of selfless service.

The principal and his teaching and non-teaching staff must be self-disciplined otherwise they will inevitably lose the right to discipline others. Genuine grievances of the students must be looked into. Moral and religious instructions should be enshrined in the school curricular where none exists. There must be free communication between the principal, the teachers and the taught.

On the occasion of the Nigerian Principals' Seminar on Discipline in Schools, Professor Bas Fafunwa also outlined the qualities and attributes of a school principal or head by observing thus:

"A modern educational drama takes place in a world of reality, for there are traditions to observe, and usually friendly, but very often critical audience watches the action unfold as the play is repeated year after year".

There is a principal to direct the production, but often he is called upon to the role of master tricala". The principal, or school head must discipline himself before he can discipline others and expect positive results. He must know himself in terms of strength and weakness; he must know his job in terms of what an executive school administration is all about and finally he must know the situation or the environment within which he works in terms of the children, the homes from where they come, the staff and the public at large. The principal as the head of the instructional team should be up-to-date by keeping abreast in his own field and in general administrative practices in education.

In a nutshell, for the maintenance of discipline and eradication of moral decadence in our post-primary institutions, the parents, the principals, the teachers and the taught must re-examine their virtues and vices with a view to improving the standard of education in Nigeria.

J.A.M. Agbonika,
A contributing Editor with Hotline

The home and the social, political and economic organisations also constitute part of the educational system.

Fuel shortage

— The need for effective planning

A fortnight ago, in the heat of the fuel crunch that hit the northern parts of this country, I was trapped in Kano trying to get back to Zaria at all cost, without drop of fuel in my car. Despite the ban on selling petrol in jerry-cans someone had managed to acquire some and he was trying to sell a 25 litre can to me for N65.00. When I was bargaining, a Lebanese boy braked, and asked how much it was. They told him N80 only. He promptly paid, poured the content into his Mercedes Benz sports, and drove off.

What was annoying was not the ease with which the semi-literate chap, whose parents I am almost certain came to Nigeria penniless, paid so much for so little. The most painful aspect is really that there was no reason why we should suffer the shortage in the first place.

During the second development plan period (1975—1980) this nation devoted about N42 million "to build additional strategic depots throughout the country so as to ensure at any time that 90 days' stock of petroleum products are held in the country" (Second National Development Plan, 1975—80 Volume II, P152.) Two years later, by 1977, we were told that N23 million had already been spent on the construction of these strategic depots. By the year 1980 these strategic depots, together with a 3,001 kilometres of crude oil/petroleum product pipeline were completed. Additional storage depots were approved for Gongola and Niger States, the only two states that had by then not been covered and a further N46 million voted for improvements and security at these depots.

Technically then, there exists adequate storage and distribution capacity. Why should a two weeks shut-down at the Kaduna Refinery cause any scarcity at all? Someone in NNPC must be made to answer this question. Even more shocking however is that given the sharp decline in local consumption of petroleum products (from over 10.7 million metric tons in 1983 to about 8.7 million metric tons in 1985

— and undoubtedly much lower in 1986 after the price hike announced in the Budget) we must now be virtually self-sufficient in refined products. Furthermore, the price of crude — and subsequently of the refined products — is falling globally.

Part of the answer lies in what the Manheaters are saying: The NNPC has allowed its stock to be depleted below the 90 days margin. The distributors themselves not only smuggle the products out, especially Kerosene, but also have illegal petrol dumps in villages and border towns.

Real Crisis

But there are more problems. First of all it is not only petrol (i.e. motor spirit) that is scarce. Cooking gas (LPG) is also getting scarce. A medium N5 cylinder is now about N20, if you can get it at all. And Kerosene is even more scarce and more expensive, so much so that it is now dubbed white gold. The price of firewood has gone up by 150—200% as a result, with serious implications for desertification and aridity.

Secondly, the price of these products are getting out of hand. The IMF experts and voodoo economists that harp on "removal of subsidies" should do well to change their tune. Unless incomes are increased one cannot keep on pushing the prices of essential items, like fuels, on and on. Peoples income cannot afford that additional burden. And people are suffering, whatever the people in power are being told. The additional revenue that will accrue from a further rise in the price of petroleum products must be weighed against the social and political implications.

Security implications

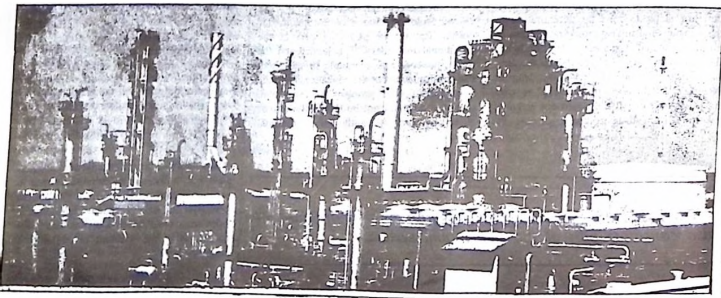
One must add another warning. Serious fuel crisis has security implications. Not only that people can create a shortage to discredit an incumbent government, but others can use it

to effect a change of regime. Which is what government cannot afford the luxury of allowing inefficient technocrats and corrupt distributors and transporters to embarrass it and cause unnecessary hardship to people.

Future plans

Effectively, our present-day potential refining capacity has been put at 260,000 barrels per day (b/d). With the \$470 million additional Refinery signed in February, 1985 with consortium of four companies (JCM Marubeni (both of Japan) and Spibaf Nigeria or Spibat of France and Spibat Nigeria Ltd.) scheduled for completion in 1977, we should be able to even export refined products. That project should boost our refining capacity to 410,000 b/d on completion. We would still need a couple of more things done. One, we must expedite the evolving of a national energy plan to include the use of coal, solar power, biomass etc. The plan must also regulate and rationalise the use of petroleum, kerosene, firewood, and of course, gas. Two, the pricing policy for gas, kerosene and coal must take into account not only potential government revenue but socio-economic and environmental implications. Three, additional depots must be created to enable us survive for at least two or three years in case of an emergency (a) Iran has been able to survive in its war with Iraq, mostly thanks to its storage capacity and mobile (community) refineries. Four, existing depots and pipelines should be properly protected as the consequences of any serious disruption or sabotage are too ominous to be contemplated. Energy is central to life, both now and in the future. We cannot afford to continue haphazardly and selfishly.

Sanusi Abubakar is of the Centre for Social & Economic Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.



Southern Africa after Samora Machel

By Abdullahi Waziri Tambawal

Dr. Patrick Wilmot, freedom fighter and more appropriately, lecturer in the Faculty of Arts and Social Science of The Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, is hardly an unknown figure in this country.

He has all along been a darling of many a Nigerian associated or concerned with public mobilisation against apartheid. Dr Wilmot is never tired of his condemnation of apartheid in South Africa, (of course he shouldn't be), enlightening Nigerians on the South African question generally and at the same time not mincing words in his criticism of African governments including Nigeria's, who either by commission or omission failed to respond as adequately as expected to the liberation struggle.

Dr. Wilmot moved more into the limelight when the last civilian administration made attempts to deport the Jamaican born university teacher.

On Friday November the twenty eight he delivered a lecture at the Durbar Hotel in Kaduna with the theme "Southern Africa after Samora", under the auspices of the Alumni Association of the University of Ibadan.

Dr. Wilmot paid glowing tribute to the late Mozambican president Samora Machel who died in a plane crash around the mountains of South Africa. He traced the probable cause of the crash and spoke of the "smooth leadership transition" in Maputo.

He spoke at length (as he always does) on the history of the liberation struggle in Angola and Mozambique and intelligently exposed, both African and western collaborators with apartheid forces.

Dr. Wilmot then analysed the position of each of the frontline states regarding the liberation struggle and reiterated Prime Minister Robert Mugabe's declaration that "Zimbabwe would fight to the last man to prevent Mozambique from falling into the hands of apartheid-backed terrorists".

On Tanzania, which shares a long border with Malawi (an ally of South Africa) Wilmot said "Tanzania would be less than happy with a neighbour beholden to apartheid to the extent of aiding in the overthrow of a fellow socialist country".

As for Angola, he said the country "and its Cuban allies continue to be steadfast in the face of apartheid terrorist attacks".

Dr. Wilmot did not however spare Zambia and its leader Kenneth Kaunda. He said of them "Zambia is a country in a perpetual state of confusion. Its leadership groups are soft, corrupt and useless. Its president sincerely believes that crying in public into silk handkerchiefs is a credible substitute for policy. It is not even now clear whether the president has realised that playing the game of western imperialism is not guarantee of salvation from

apartheid destruction".

Nigeria, he said, is regarded as a frontline state on the basis of the role played by late General Murtala Mohammed's government during the struggle for Angolan independence. But Wilmot submitted rather sadly "It now seems that Nigeria has forgotten this important lesson vis-a-vis racist South Africa, the key to all the problems in the region".

Malawi and Zaire got the sharpest criticisms from him. Dr. Wilmot said, they are landlocked countries that need to be taught an unforgettable lesson for their treachery by being allies of Pretoria and collaborators in the destabilization of their neighbours.

"All neighbouring countries should close borders and airspace with Zaire and Malawi till the bankrupt regimes of Mobutu and Banda are overthrown". In addition he called for their suspension from the Q.A.U. and isolation from other international fora.

Dr. Wilmot almost back-pedalled when he reasoned: "despite the anger we justifiably feel at these wretched regimes, we should not blind ourselves to the fact that our principal enemy is the regime in Pretoria".

"The South African economy and armed forces dwarf the economy and armed forces of any African country, including Zimbabwe's", he stated.

Coming to the main subject of the lecture, Dr. Wilmot warned: "Given the brutal assassination of Samora and his thirty-three comrades, no African country can afford to sit on its hands and mouth sentimental platitudes against racism". He said even the gains recorded by the progressive forces of Africa

led by Murtala Mohammed in 1976, are now at risk ten years after.

Dr. Wilmot then concluded "Africa must, without sentimentality, have the courage to give full backing to the A.N.C. the only movement capable of liberating the apartheid enclave and hence the rest of the continent. To do otherwise would be betrayal, a betrayal the history will not forgive".

Then came a question and answer session introduced by chairman of the occasion Colonel Ahmadu Ah (Rtd.), Former Federal Commissioner for Education and Senator in the second republic. In an answer to one of the questions Wilmot stunned his audience when he replied "In Jewish theology Jesus Christ was regarded as a bastard" hence the Jews

He was asked why Nigeria should not normalise relations with Israel. Wilmot wondered why many Nigerians linked the restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel to the significance of Israel to the Christian faith. He told an already shocked gathering that the Jews are no respecters of Christianity. Hence let there be no more ecclesiastical interpretation to a purely diplomatic and ideological question.

Wilmot did not stop there. Aided by facts and figures he spoke on the trade links between Pretoria and Tel-Aviv. He argued that Israel supplies South Africa with intelligence reports on the military strategy of African freedom fighters mostly trained in Arab countries. Zionism and racism are birds of the same father? Oh yes.



Machel: A luta continua.



Wilmot: "Our principal enemy is Pretoria".

The Non-Aligned Movement: A Balance Sheet

By Abubakar Jika

"Without the policy of non-alignment, the world would doubtless look different today"
— late President Tito of Yugoslavia, at the 1979 Belgrade Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Non-aligned Movement.

On 18th and 19th June, 1956; the otherwise "sleepy" Yugoslavian Island of Brioni hosted three world leaders: Indian Prime Minister Nehru, President Nasser of Egypt, and their host Yugoslavian President Tito. Brioni, the Yugoslavian resort, which gained global attention lately as a result of the successful OPEC meeting which took place there this year and which was chaired by Nigeria's Rabwanu Lukman, was indeed at the throes of a historic breakthrough three decades ago. For the declarations by the three leaders from three continents represented the foundation of the ideas and practice of what later turned out to be the second largest international movement after the United Nations.

Four events of global significance preceded the Brioni conference. First, India's independence, which was largely seen as a catalyst for the intensification of the struggle against colonialism in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Second, the visit to India by Yugoslavian President, the late Josef Tito in 1954. The meeting in New Delhi between Nehru and Tito, both of who opposed the bi-polarization of the world, set the tone to a third pillar doctrine of non-alignment. Third, the formation of the Warsaw Pact in 1955 by socialist countries as an effective response to NATO, formed in 1949 by western capitalist countries led by the United States. That singular event formalized the bi-polarization of the globe into two rigid groupings: the capitalist economies led by the U.S. and the socialist countries headed by the USSR. Finally, the Bandung Conference of 1955 erroneously regarded by some people as the genesis of the non-aligned ideology. For a year preceding the Indonesian meeting, there was one at Brioni which Sukarno did not attend but which outlined five principles of peaceful co-existence that later formed the basis of the Non-Aligned Movement.

These momentous events culminated in the summit of world leaders at Belgrade in 1961. The Belgrade meeting, which attracted notable international figures like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Josef Tito of Yugoslavia, Sukarno of Indonesia, Nehru of India and

Gamel Abdul Nasser of Egypt formalized the creation of a third-tier bloc in global relations: The Non-Aligned Movement.

The fundamental principles of the movement, which were enunciated in Belgrade and which were reiterated at the Sixth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Havana (Cuba) in 1979 were: "the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, racism (including Zionism) and all forms of foreign aggression... as well as independence from great power or bloc policies tending to perpetuate the division of the world into blocs".

Ironically, a year after the Havana summit, which was largely regarded as a turning point in the history of the non-alignment movement — for reasons we would later see — Burma left the movement in protest (1980) criticising it for failing to maintain genuine neutrality. In other words, more than two decades after the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement, one of its members was questioning the very reason for its creation: its neutrality in a bi-polar world.

Six years later, two summits after Burma stormed out of the movement and with 101 members, another member country, this time Libya raised serious questions as to the genuineness of the ideological posture of non-alignment as claimed by the movement.

At the last summit of the movement held in Harare in the first week of September this year, Libyan strong-man Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, just emerging from his confrontation with one of the blocs (NATO) while bidding farewell to the largely toothless movement delivered a scathing denunciation against it, accusing it of aligning itself with imperialism. Qadhafi cited the membership of well-known imperialism puppets such as Ivory Coast, Gabon, Zaïre, Egypt etc. who while hosting the imperialist war-machines in their countries, have stained their hands with the blood of their peoples. The Libyan leader pointed out — quite succinctly — that the movement was a mere cloak, an ego-boosting device, which has failed to respond to the challenges posed by imperialism. Libya should know better. For some months preceding the Harare Jambooree, America unleashed its war machine on sleeping and defenceless Libya, massacring hundreds of its citizens and destroying its property worth millions of dollars. The latest American show of arrogance and disrespect to international law was a culmination of a series of terrorist acts against weaker nations: U.S. involvements in Nicaragua and El Salvador, the Grenada invasion, the Camp David Accord, tacit support to Israeli terrorism in the Middle East, and that of the racist South Africa, Namibia and the failed American rescue attempt in Iran. In all these, the Non-Aligned Movement did nothing beyond condemnations. And of course, words hurt



Mugabe: holding the NOM chairmanship.

nobody.

Thus then, the Libyan blow against the movement ought to be seen within the context of the principles underlining the formation of the movement, its ability to prae-realize its goals and rising imperialist terrorism of the third world's peoples.

Indeed, the dilemma of the Non-Alignment Movement is obvious. It faces a paradox: while professing ideological neutrality, the bulk of the movement's membership toe along one or the other of the two known ideological lines. Despite political independence, majority of non-aligned countries are economically aligned, most of them being poor. They thump noses against imperialism but run to Western financial houses for loans and aids. This has turned into a farce, their supposed independence. Of course global capital does not mind verbal condemnation, empty hot air as long as it remains just that: empty daylight hot air. In the cover of darkness and sometimes even during day light, the same virulent abusers of imperialism go cap in hand either begging for loans from IMF and World Bank or seeking for aid from Western donors.

To be fair, the non-aligned movement is just that — movement. It has no binding legal sanctions or instrument of coercion to compel obedience to its declarations either from its members or others. The movement could only appeal to the collective conscience of the world. It possesses only moral force. Being an organization of sovereign nations, it is inhibited by its lack of binding force. However, even its moral force is greatly hindered by the hypocrisy of some of its members, a point Qadhafi cited and which was earlier raised by Burma. Most of the members are puppets of either of the power blocs. In addition, some of the members while hobnobbing with global capital completely auctioned the interest of their peoples. People were maimed, slaughtered and detained in the altar of defence of the status quo across

Africa

the neo-colonial economies.

Snubbed by NATO countries and regarded with amusement by the Warsaw Pact countries, the movement wobbled from one summit to the next, muttering radical rhetoric and not taken seriously even by itself, let alone by others.

However, two events that took place in 1979 very nearly gave the movement a sense of direction and could have halted its drift. First, the Iranian revolution of 1979 which ushered in genuine neutrality, predicated upon Islamic conviction and adopting neither East nor West posture. The Iranian case is that of genuine non-alignment. Second, the ascendancy of Cuban leader, Fidel Castro as President of the Non-Aligned Movement, also in 1979. Castro promoted the "radical thesis" that recognised the socialist bloc as non-alignment's "natural friend" while attacking NATO aggression. That marked a watershed in the history of the movement. It marked an era of redefinition of what non-alignment meant: not ideological neutrality, but the sovereign right to take decisions including alignment and realignment. In a world characterized by aggression, dominance and inequality, it recognized the fact that to refuse to take decision, to vacillate on matters of principles is to help the powerful, to assist imperialism.

Since 1979, the movement has stepped up its denunciation of imperialism. Imperialism has long been identified as antithetical to the goals of the movement. But the movement harbours within its fold some of the most renowned imperialist lackeys living.

Some of the problems confronting the world and in which the movement persistently addressed itself without noticeable results are: New International Economic and Fiscal Order, crippling debt, armed race and threat of nuclear holocaust, tension in South East Asia, Central America and the Middle East, repression in South Africa and Namibia, U.S. belligerence towards Angola, Libya, Nicaragua and other frontline anti-imperialist states and South African destabilization of the frontline states. These are the leading global problems which defy solutions so far. To be fair, these are problems to which even the United Nations has addressed itself for decades without appreciable progress.

The Non-Aligned Movement could not therefore be expected to solve these issues overnight. But being unencumbered — presumably — by bloc considerations and comprising of more than 100 states, the movement should have at least broken some frontiers in solving these dilemmas.

The greatest challenge confronting the movement and on which it appears handicapped is global economic crisis which the bulk of its members are enmeshed in. Inequality heralds greater global inter-dependence, leading to dependency of the Third World on the developed economies. At their New Delhi summit three years ago, the members of the movement faced a 150 billion dollar drop in export-earnings and a 37 billion dollar rise in debt servicing cost while bank loans to poor countries fell by 25 billion. These problems have since exacerbated, leading to the call by Cuba for unilateral debt moratorium, asserting that the poor economies would never pay its debts. With threats from Mexico, Panama

and Argentina that they would default in settling their debts due to deterioration in commodity markets, collapse of tin, fall in the volume of global transactions, and famine of major proportions confronting Africa, the non-aligned movement is at its wits end. The movement could only call for global negotiations and New International Economic Order. Beyond these calls, the movement also suggested the pegging of debt servicing ceilings at a percentage of export earnings, easing of I.M.F. conditionalities and special treatment of the least-developed countries by lending agencies. No concrete achievement beyond declarations was however registered by the NOM. In fact, lack of cohesion has continued to ensure that most of the members go back on their declarations to come to agreements (to their disfavour) with global financial institutions.

Thus, as the Non-Aligned Movement braced up to enter its fourth decade amidst global tension of armed race, potential nuclear war, rising mass poverty, indebtedness in the Third World, repression and rising dictatorship in developing countries, its balance

sheet for the past three decades has more in the debit than credit. Even on issues of virtual consensus such as the Israeli aggression in the Middle East and apartheid repression in South Africa, Namibia and the debt threat, the movement has not been able to leave its permanent legacy of achievement. While some of its members including Egypt and Morocco dine with the Israeli Zionists. Others including black African states such as Ivory Coast and Malawi hob-nobbed with the racist in Pretoria. The movement itself could not come out with a blue-print in defending its members against the crippling debt burden. By and large therefore, a critical assessment of the performance of the Non-Aligned Movement since the idea was mooted in 1954 at Brioni shows red. The path towards greater credit on its balance sheet as we brace up for the next century is for the movement to engage in self-criticism and purge itself of some of its members who profess one thing and do another; a situation which was exposed by Libyan strongman Colonel Qadhafi in Harare, (Zimbabwe) at their last meeting. Only history would tell.

Botswana accuses Pretoria over locust swarm

Botswana has accused South Africa at an international conference at Ivory Coast of failing to prevent a major invasion of its territory by brown locusts, swarming across the common border from breeding grounds in the arid Karoo area.

Geoffrey Oteng, Botswana's assistant director of agriculture told a United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation — sponsored conference held to discuss the African food crisis — that the South African authorities had been unable to check the infestation of these crop-eating locusts within its own borders, and so had only taken steps to guard the valuable maize crop in the so-called "maize triangle" of the northern Cape Province and the Orange Free State in South Africa.

Oteng told the delegates from 47 African states meeting in this Ivorian town that only last week the first batch of brown locusts hatched out this year had invaded the capital of Gaborone. There have been other reports from aircraft pilots of large swarms being spotted in the Shoshong area of central Botswana, and the situation will, it is feared, become much more serious by the end of the year.

Although South Africa is no longer a member of the FAO and does not exchange information with this international body, diplomatic sources here indicated that brown locusts have already infested 30 million hectares (79 million acres) of land within South Africa, and the authorities in Pretoria have admitted the situation is out of control.

Unlike most African countries to the north which have plant protection units alerted to cope with the latest locust threat, South Africa is believed to have disbanded its state-run body for combating locusts and control measures have been handed over to individual

farmers.

But the farmers are only protecting their own maize crops from being ravaged by locusts, and so swarms have been crossing unchecked into Botswana where that country's fairly effective anti-locust organisation has been overwhelmed.

With some two dozen African states throughout the continent currently experiencing attacks, or imminent threats from locusts and grasshoppers, the FAO regional food conference has made special arrangements for co-ordination between African states, locust control organisations and overseas donors. The director of the newly-formed Emergency Locust Control Centre at FAO headquarters in Rome, Dr Lukas Brader, of Holland, has flown to Ivory Coast for these discussions.

Half of Namibia is already infested along with a large part of South Africa and present indications are that the locusts could also infest South-East Angola, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Zambia and even Mozambique later next year.

"It would be quite impossible to spray such a vast area," Brader says.

Botswana is now seeking international aid to cover the cost of anti-locust operations, and an Angolan delegate urges that more cash should be allocated now for aerial spraying against locusts, rather than on hiring transport planes later to fly in large quantities of food for Angolans facing starvation.

Meanwhile, reports from the Sahel — the semi-arid, sub-Sahara desert zone — indicate that in addition to the depredation caused by grasshoppers and further threats from locusts, the northern areas are suffering from an invasion of rats and other grain-eating rodents as well as nocturnal insects of a hitherto unknown species.

Life of the Soviet Prisoner

For all the rhetoric of the past about new and even revolutionary rehabilitation regimes—at least for criminal as opposed to political convicts—Soviet prisons are readily recognisable to anyone familiar with old, over-crowded maximum security institutions throughout much of the world.

However, in general terms, foreigners can expect an easier time in prison than can Soviet citizens. And prisoners awaiting trial in the Soviet Union enjoy a somewhat easier regime than those serving sentences.

Prisoners awaiting trial are liable to be two in a cell (at least in the annexe of the Lefortovo prison in Moscow where United States journalist Nicholas Daniloff was held. The cell is about nine feet by 12 (3 metres x 4 metres).

The four monotonous prison meals a day are pushed through a trap in the cell door. And the food itself is of poor nutritional value, consisting mainly of kasha, a kind of buckwheat porridge, and cabbage soup.

Keeping prisoners under lock and key is the principal activity of the warders who allow only one hour of exercise a day. The light in each occupied cell is also kept burning all night and prisoners are observed through the apparently internationally standard peephole in the door, usually at quarter-hour intervals.

In another internationally common measure, prisoners are deprived of belts, braces and shoe laces, supposedly as a precaution against suicide.

But it is in the area of visits that the Soviet prison regime seems much tougher (unless, like 'Nick' Daniloff, one is a foreign prisoner whose case is very much in the public eye).

Usually, only close relatives, such as spouses or children, are allowed the one visit a month. Daniloff's wife was allowed much freer access.

Relatives may bring food for the prisoners, and this is closely inspected. For example, smoked sausage—a favourite because of its high nutritional value—must be sliced lengthways into four to show that it contains no escape aid or other device.

But guards frequently allow only one or two segments to be passed to the prisoner, and visitors nearly always have to take some part of their food gift back home with them.

A relative may also bring a prisoner warmer clothing—the cells tend to be cold in winter. But much depends on the intelligence and background knowledge of the relatives.

Even while awaiting trial—innocent until proven guilty—all prisoners are permitted one shower and two shaves by the prison barber each month.

After sentencing, conditions are tougher—more prisoners to each cell and the visits of relatives less frequent. Relatives of political prisoners are frequently 'messed about', being told they must come on another day and so on—when they have often travelled vast distances.

For convicted prisoners with longer sentences—above three years—most of the time is served in work camps, where conditions may be slightly easier (prisoners earn a little money which they can spend on food and small luxuries). But the outdoor work can be very tough and painful in winter.

— ANDREW WILSON

and Langi tribal groupings control large areas of countryside surrounding the regional capital of Kitgum, 300km (180 miles) north of Kampala.

Accurate reports are difficult to come by, but it seems certain that the UPDM troops are being given support from their peasant kinsmen in the region whose loyalties have never really spread beyond clan and tribe. The estimated 1,200 rebel soldiers who initially crossed back into Uganda from Sudan also appear to have been able to boost their numbers by local recruitment.

With Kampala and Khartoum inching closer together since the recent Harare summit of non-aligned nations, rebel commanders obviously want to establish a strong presence within Uganda in case they are cut off from their Sudan bases by a deal between President Yoweri Museveni and Premier Al-Mahdi.

Whether they can do it is still an open question. But one that cannot be discounted. The NRA remains, as it has been from the start, a southern phenomenon.

Even the reinforcements that have moved north over the past week have been southerners almost to a man. In terms of language and background they are foreigners to the rural Acholi and Langi and smaller tribal allies.

Yet, despite the obvious tribal alignments, the struggle has not yet taken on an overtly tribal aspect. Both the NRM and the UPDM lay claim to being 'national' movements, the logical home for all Ugandans. Neither is likely to change this stance, which means that the overall direction will be aimed at winning hearts and minds as well as military victory. So long as this persists, it should help to balance the naked tribalism at grassroots level.

It may also be possible for the opposing movements to do a deal, which may be what the UPDM leadership is aiming for. They are in no way secessionist and, given the wide-ranging support of the NRM throughout much of the country, cannot seriously hope to be accepted as an alternative government.

With backing from Sudan in terms of bases as well as the return of confiscated arms and ammunition, the UPDM were able to make forays into northern Uganda, even attacking Gulu on 20 August. But this sudden upsurge in military activity almost certainly has as much to do with fears of an end to Sudanese aid as it has to do with any other tactical or strategic considerations. The UPDM appears intent on having itself accepted by Kampala as a serious force.

William Norris

Rebels Stake a Claim to the North

Heavily armed troops, made up of soldiers from the former Uganda National Liberation Army which was routed in the civil war which swept the present National Resistance Movement government to power in January, are attempting to set up bases in northern Uganda.

Twice during the past week, the rebels, believed to be part of the Sudan-based Uganda People's Democratic Move-

ment, have clashed with National Resistance Army units on the outskirts of the towns of Gulu and Kitgum. The town of Oroi in the Paraa Park was also reportedly attacked (eds: 11 Sept), but NRA sources claim that all attacks have been repulsed and that a quantity of weapons, including an anti-aircraft gun, were seized.

However, it appears that the rebels, most of them from the northern Acholi

"Blackman And The West"

A comparative study of Nelson's *Lonely Londoners* and Wright's *Black Boy*.

By Egidio Gilman

Black Boy by Richard Wright and Lonely Londoners of Samuel Selvon, respectively, portray the dehumanizing self-projection of the blacks all over America, particularly in the north as well as in Britain. In these two novels the blackman finds himself in a society that rejects him. He is thus faced with the problem of survival through dehumanization. The very existence of a man is threatened and he is reduced to a "man" man not for any other reason apart from the colour of his skin.

In the *Black Boy* which is an autobiography of Richard Wright we see a gradual self-awareness of a four-year-old boy to the stark realities of his environment which has denied him all amenities as a human being including the right of life. His major preoccupation at such a tender age is thus revealed in what he says: "I want to understand these two sets of people who live side by side and never contact except in chicken". His awareness gradually grows into anger as he now sees the degrading effects of dehumanization as imposed by the whites on him. One sees hunger and starvation facing the people. The blackman has to survive under these conditions already set and controlled by the racist whiteman.

The blacks are moved to where the whites want them. The West Indians are moved from Trinidad to the war supporting industries during the European war of 1939-45. The blacks fought, defending the British empire against the fellow white's racist aggression. After the war, the social system rejects them and they are faced with the same survival issue that drives the black Americans to the plantation in the South. They have to use their wit to survive. In the *Lonely Londoners* we see the oppressive relationship between whites and blacks. All bad things are attributed to the blacks. Gabriel is so interested in the theory of Black that he goes to Moses and says: "I notice we that the people don't like, is the colour black". The coming together of the boys on Sundays in Moses' house to discuss their social and economic plight gives us the picture of Britain as regards the white-black relationship. The black colour is looked down upon by the whites with contempt; and their white colour as a passport to oppress the coloured blacks who unfortunately see themselves within a system that has refused to absorb them.

On its own, *Black Boy* is a comprehensive catalogue of racial segregation and discrimination. The black families are disorganised

through the conditions of labour existing in the north of Britain. The successful blacks are called the outsiders to the full-time job. Typical example is Jack Christie. But a new threat because he is allegedly dealing with white prostitutes. Says Richard Wright: "But the boss thought by his white teeth, the threat of which hung on every white black in the south".

In Britain as well as in America, the black man is reduced to a pre-consciousness. When Gabriel is needed in the toilet he is moved and he says in the usual West Indian English: "Colour, a you find causing all this, you know why the hell you can't be white. You know is you that cause a lot of misery in the world. Is not me, you know is you! I can't do anything to entertain the people... Look at you, so black and innocent, and the time so you are causing misery all over the world".

The black man is gradually but systematically pushed in both environments to take refuge in abolitionism, sex, crime and above all, religion, which Wright outrightly rejects and argues against: "Whenever I found religion in my life, I found strife, the attempt by one individual or group to rule another in the name of God. The colored will to power seemed always to walk in the wake of hymn".

The blacks have to adopt series of techniques to survive. Some could not even get a job to make a living. A few like Richard Wright himself are able to escape to the north where the conditions are fairly better. In London, we therefore see Captain, a Nigerian using his wit to cope with the harsh and wicked society that detests him. Says Selvon: "Yet day by day, Cap still alive, defying all logic and reason and convention, living without working, smoking the best cigarettes, never without



Reagan

dream!

These moves are to enable various types of degeneration to take place in London. He tells his reporter that they cannot get any more white and they get the worst of both Britain in these two countries. Britain and America, the black man is treated as an inferior being. The whiteman refuses to believe that there is human dignity for the blackman. When a whiteman's dog bites a blackman, the man replies that he could not remember if the white man was in America or Nigeria, but to be moved away from the hospital after an operation because there is no admission facilities for blacks.

The experiences of the blacks in both Britain and America clearly depict the feelings of the whites about the blacks as exemplified in Joyce Cary's *Novels of Africa* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. All the white, the whites continue to think that the blackman is an inferior being and their behaviours are dictated by such very callous feelings.

In conclusion, the experiences of the blacks in these communities are clear indications of the arrogant absurdity of white hypocritical diplomacy that they love their former colonial territories especially the Third World countries.

"When a whiteman's dog bites a blackman, the whiteman replies that he could not remember if dog-bites can be dangerous to niggers".



Mandela

Reagan's Tenure: an epitome of violence

By Al-Bashir

In 1982 he bubbled in the warm waters of victory; momentarily preached human rights (hardly believing his own voice) as he lectured the press corps. He lost the meaning of the phrase as the naughty press boys reminded him of South Africa, Nicaragua, Marcos Philippines, etc. He fired back: "Those who are critical of my policies should do well to understand that my victory is the approval of my policies by the American people". He didn't forget to add "it was also a victory for the free world". So does he see his tenure today.

Not quite wrong you might say Euro-America in the past six years witnessed a swing to the extreme right of right. The giants starting with Thatcher in Britain, Schmidt in Germany and Reagan in U.S. combine to make a complete ring of pure conservatism in that part of the globe.

France might be left out but only to the extent of Mitterand's rhetorics. Paris contributions to Pretoria's nuclear build-up and the new legislation supporting colour bar in that country do not make "Socialist" Mitterand a lover boy of the socialist camp. He might be less of the Reaganite but certainly not more of the Castros. He isn't a middle-roader either. He only tilts slightly left of the extreme right.

Meanwhile, Reagan has, to the extent of his himself, good reasons to bask in the glory of his policies. But what are the hallmarks of these policies? Foremost is the militant posture, better posture at that, he has carved out both for himself and his country.

His star-war programme, U.S. interventionist posture, support for dictators as in Marcos Philippines, South Africa etc. are essentially the basic ingredients of the Reagan-doctrine. Huge military spending, unprecedented in American history, the deployment of war machines in Europe, the invasion of Lebanon and Grenada, C.I.A. destructive activities in Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique etc. have, in the Reagan years, been the preoccupation of the White House. Thus, if these are the policies in which he prides himself, then his presidency is one for the escalation of world tension and violence. It is a tenure capable of drifting the world to the centre of catastrophe. That is the import of his recent speech on South Africa.

Undoubtedly, the next years might witness more of American mounting militaristic war balloons. Already the start of his second term victory parade was marked with troops build up for the Grenada-style invasion of Nicaragua. Soviet's quick response that Nicaragua was not Grenada and China's strong condemnation of Washington's victimisation of smaller nations are only pointers to the aggravation of world tension fanned by U.S.

Libya has been Reagan's worst enemy because Ghaddafi spit in his face. He mur-

dered the Libyans. The world bowed to him.

U.S. Navy has been frighteningly battle-ready in the waters of Nicaragua. Washington's meddlings in the affairs of that country has a long standing history. It dates back to 1841 but escalated in 1911 when she forcefully got the right to control Nicaragua's customs affairs. In furtherance of that treaty, she stationed her Marines there in 1912 pulling out only in 1925. Another treaty in 1916 allowed the U.S. to construct the Nicaraguan canal.

A few years after the 1923 pull out, Managua witnessed a more direct military intervention when Washington despatched troops to enforce the supervision of elections there in 1933. To perpetuate her dominance, U.S. installed the dreaded Somoza family in power in 1939. The last of the Somozas, Major General Anastasio Somoza got himself crowned life President in 1967. America did it.

The next stage was the Nation Guard's use of American weapons to massacre the opposition in their thousands. Under Somoza, the whole country became a torture den second only to Iran under the Shah. America was delighted. Human rights was no longer a catch phrase so long as the action was intended to "stop communist infiltration into Latin America".

This was exactly the picture and the prevailing situation which gave rise to the birth of the "FRENTE SANDINISTA DO LABERACION NACIONAL (FSLN) otherwise simply known as "The Sandinistas". The composition of the leadership, the fighting force, and followership were brightly coloured with various ideological posturings. Ideology was never the force that gave rise to the movement. Rather it was the repressive character of the Somoza regime. And like a pack of cards the regime collapsed in 1979.

Washington was furious, branding the movement a communist organ. The fact is, the Somoza regime did not need a communist to push it off the power seat. Its internal contradictions were in themselves enough impetus for his demise. Indeed that the FSLN was not per se a communist movement, as America would have us believe, is supported by the fact that prominent figures like the foreign Minister were respected reverend gentlemen of the church, and this institution is never known to be an ideological friend of communism.

The Reaganites however do not see it this way. To them there's too much Soviet and Cuban communist fingers in the Sandinista dish. Thus mercenaries under U.S. tutelage were organised from Honduras in 1982 to invade Nicaragua. In March of the following year they successfully pushed in to cause considerable damage to vital economic institutions.

Believing that the Somozas were still a force, Washington kept pressing for general elections. The Sandinistas agreed and fixed one for 4th November 1984, two days to that

of America. The results; 60% victory for President Daniel Ortega Saavodra of the FSLN.

Reagan was stunned. While hailing his own victory in that year as "the expression of the free will of the American people", he was at the same time denouncing the Nicaraguans for expressing the same free will. "The results" he went on "do not represent the firm expression of the people". Mighty Reagan! reigning world dictator!

His press and diplomatic observers disagreed with him. "This was the best that the opposition could have given their low level of popularity" was the conclusion of independent observers. But Reagan is not known to be amiable to such comments. He sacked his ambassador there for urging him to plead friendship with the Sandinistas.

The pretext for the rejection of the Nicaraguan election had been set earlier on. Sensing imminent defeat at the polls, Washington got three opposition leaders, Arturo Cruz, Godoy Royers and Bishop Pablo Antonio Vega, to pull out of the race on the pretext that the atmosphere for free campaign and free press was not there. The truth however was that the mixture of the lot cannot defeat the popular appeal of President Ortega Saavodra.

Then came yet another pretext: Soviet arms deliver to Managua. Reagan sits at the White House swelling in his presidential chair telling Latin American countries who and who should be or not be their friends. While he sees it as legitimate for the opposition and dictatorial forces, symbolized by the Somoza Nation Guard, to acquire arms from U.S., he on the other hand coins a crime for the



Reagan: his tenure epitomises violence.

International

legitimate government of Nicaragua to obtain arms from outside Washington's orbit.

To him, arms outside U.S. would undermine human rights whatever that means. Between 1939—79 the Somoza regime murdered thousands under the human rights eyes of the United States. The late Shah of Iran delighted himself in having the record of the highest mass murderer in history America the mass killing of Palestinians in Lebanon at the Shittala refugee camp.

Here in Africa the terrorist — racists of South Africa became the historical friends of the Reaganites.

Washington never winked a blink at all these atrocities committed by these agents of death. Respect for human rights do not count so long as America's dictatorial friends perpetuated crime against humanity. This has always been the logic. Washington denounced Soviet invasion of Afghanistan but glorified her own invasion of Grenada. Afghanistan was a communist sin and Grenada a capitalist glory.

So is it with us here in Africa. South African mass murder is justified as a legitimate defence of the free world. Angola on the other hand is a criminal communist haven. That is Reaganism, a theory of terrorism and repression.

The meaning of Reagan's tenure for us in Africa was lucidly put by the OAU Ambassador to the UN Mr. Oumaren G. Youssoufou. "Since we expect Reagan to be re-elected, we don't hope for much progress on South African issues. The United States didn't help any African country to achieve independence, so we are not hoping for any assistance over Namibia. After the little backing we got from Carter — we have been set back ten years stronger than it was before. This was in 1982. And today Reagan is hunting for our black necks all over Southern Africa."

Thus, when Chester Croker, Reagan's chief advocate on African issues flew to Pretoria recently, we knew the objective was to strengthen Botswana's resolve to be more adamant in his racist policies and not to negotiate Namibia's independence. For as Mr. Youssoufou said, if four years of Reagan took us ten years back, eight years would put us back to 1964 almost the time we had only 30 independent African nations as against the present 51. That's the meaning of the results of the 1984 American elections for us in the developing world of Africa.

For America, they make good choice in the exercise of their collective right. It is indeed their legitimate right to install any comedian at the White House. What however is not their right, is their belief that others should not exercise equal right in determining their own fate except if expressed in consonance with the wishes and aspirations of the American people. America doesn't have that right.

Reagan's determination to bully others for determining their own destiny would certainly be the trade-mark of his remaining years, a trade-mark that might kindle world flame. The film-star president has 76 full years to his credit. Unfortunately, he does not believe that others have the desire to live that long too. That is the vision inherent in Reagan's tenure, a tenure having danger signals as its epitome.

Health

Diet can influence cancer risks

By John F. Webb

Mothers telling young daughters to eat up all their food may be bad advice. It is now thought that overeating is bringing forward the start of menstruation and an increased risk of breast cancer.

Professor Malcolm Pike from the UK Imperial Cancer Research Fund's epidemiological and clinical trials unit, in Oxford told a London conference recently: "Be happy to throw the food your daughter doesn't eat down the drain. You don't want fat children because you want to put the onset of their menstruation off as much as possible."

In some parts of the world girls do not start to menstruate until they are 18 but in Britain and other industrialised countries the onset of menarche has advanced, over the last 100 years, from 15 to 13.

Professor Pike, who was speaking at the launch of a new book on cancer research to which he contributed, says: "Epidemiological research has established that early menarche, late age at first birth and late menopause are three major risk factors for breast cancer."

"A delay of two to three years in age at menarche has been found to reduce breast cancer risk by up to a half. The earlier a woman gives birth to her first child, the greater the reduction in breast cancer risk, women with a first birth under 20 have about one half the risk of a woman who has not borne children. But the latter women do not have as high a risk as women whose first birth is after the age of 35."

The earlier a woman had her menopause the greater the reduction in breast cancer risk. For instance, women with natural menopause before the age of 45 had only half the risk of those whose menopause occurred after 55.

Later Life

He also warned that excess weight was not only undesirable in speeding the arrival of first menstruation but also increased the breast cancer risk in later life. A 20 kilogramme increase in post-menopausal weight produced something like a 40 per cent increase in the chance of developing breast cancer.

Professor Pike said that because an early baby provided "enormous protection" against the disease, scientists would have to learn how to trick the breast into thinking the body had had a baby.

He concluded: "The association of breast cancer with age at menarche and age at menopause almost certainly implies that ovarian activity is an important determinant of breast cancer risk, and detailed study of ovarian hormones and how they may be affected by diet offers a most exciting challenge with the hope of discovering facts that may be truly useful in preventing breast cancer."

The new book, called "Introduction to the cellular and molecular biology of cancer", reveals optimism that the cause of the disease may soon start to emerge as new techniques are used to understand the basic mechanisms that control the growth of both cancer and normal body cells.

Dr. Leonard Franks, one of the editors, says in a preface: "The development of molecular biology opened up a major new approach to the molecular analysis of normal and tumour cells. We can now ask and begin to answer questions particularly about the genetic control of cell growth and behaviour, that have a bearing on our understanding not only of the family of diseases that we know as cancer but of the whole process of life itself."

Importance of Geography

On October 28, Associated Press spread the news that one of the Soviet regiments return home from Afghanistan had allegedly been attacked by "rebels" on the Salang pass high up in the mountains. But the editors who had released this ill-intended lie did not even take the trouble of thoroughly reading the report which, as usual, came from diplomats in Islamabad who preferred not to be named. Here is the exact quotation:

"The diplomats, who declined to be identified by name, said the guerillas attached when the regiment reached the southern end of the (Salang) tunnel, which joins Afghanistan and the Soviet Union."

Anyone who takes the trouble of looking at a geographical map will see that the Salang pass across the Hindu Kush mountains is situated almost in the very centre of Afghanistan, some 300 km. from the Soviet-Afghan border and for this reason alone cannot be

"joining" the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. Besides the authors of the falsity had forgotten that the Soviet Union is situated to the north of Afghanistan, and not the other way round. That is why the returning regiment could not have moved from north to south, as the report claims.

This canard spread by AP is not the first attempt to belittle the importance of the step taken by the USSR and the DRA to normalize the situation in the region. Earlier, US Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger declared that the Russians had allegedly brought additional troops into Afghanistan to make up for the six regiments that were returning home. This lie has been exposed. The facts show that the White House is obviously concerned about the prospect of an early political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan, the road to which is opened by the Soviet Union's positive initiative.

Tackling the mysteries of migration

by Dr David Aidley, School of Biological Sciences, University of East Anglia, Norwich

Many animals migrate. The list contains a few surprises, for they range from wildebeest, whales and white storks to locusts, aphids and even parasitic filarial worms that travel in a daily cycle within the body. Why do they do it? How do they know where to go, navigate across vast distances and recognise their destinations when they get there? And why do only some members of certain groups migrate, not others? Scientists do not yet have all the answers to these questions, but the information they are gradually compiling will be invaluable to conservation and pest control.

From earliest times, Man has been intrigued by the large-scale migration of animals, which often travel in large numbers and over long distances from one place to another. In recent years scientists have been showing a growing interest in this phenomenon, for there are many interesting questions to be answered.

One straightforward example of such behaviour is that of the sedge warbler. The bird breeds during the summer in large areas of Europe and western Asia, between latitudes 40°N and 70°N, it migrates South in autumn to spend the winter in Africa, South of the Sahara, and in the spring it returns to its breeding grounds.

Other insectivorous birds such as swallows, flycatchers and different kinds of warbler make similar migrations. The summer and winter ranges do not overlap and the whole population takes part.

In birds of a different kind the pattern may not be so definite. Many chaffinches, for example, leave Scandinavia in the autumn to winter in Britain, but others stay behind. So the winter and summer ranges overlap and we cannot predict whether an individual bird will migrate. Even less predictable are the irregular movements of crossbills out of the pine forests of northern Europe or the nomadic movement of quercas in the savannahs of tropical Africa.

When we come to look at other animal groups the ideas used in bird migration studies have to be extended. In the mass movements of aphids and locusts, for example, there is little likelihood of the population returning to its starting place. Certainly no particular individual will return, for its life is less than the seasonal cycle.

The term migration is also applied to certain daily movements, such as vertical migration of planktonic crustaceans in the sea and the nightly migration of parasitic filarial worms from deep tissues to just under the skin (which enables them to be taken up by night-biting mosquitoes).

The first task in studying any particular group of migrants is to find out where they go and where they come from on their migratory journeys. There are various ways

of going about it.

Changes in population density of a species often give clues. The occurrence of swallows in Africa in the northern winter suggests that they have migrated there from their breeding grounds in Europe. The movements of fish we harvest from the sea, most of which are migratory, have been estimated from seasonal variations in the catches in different areas.

Animal movements can sometimes be observed visually. Examples are white storks on their way to Africa, wildebeest in the Serengeti, and grey whales off the California coast. Movements of birds at night have been seen by watching them cross the face of the Moon, and they have been tracked by radar. Radar has also been used to track flying insect pests such as armyworm moths in east Africa, by Dr J. R. Riley of the UK Tropical Development and Research Institute, and spruce budworm moths in Canada, by Professor G. Schaefer of Cranfield Institute of Technology, central England. Sonar, too, has been used to track fish.

Labelling

Migrants have often been traced by marking them in some way and recapturing them later. For example, a fin can be removed from fish and various insects have been dyed, made radioactive or fed on rubidium at their larval stage. Such techniques label the members of a population, but they do not identify them individually.

Birds can be labelled individually by metal rings attached to their legs. Each ring has its own number and carries an address for its return by the finder. Bird ringing schemes are now used throughout the world. The British Trust for Ornithology now rings about 750 000 birds each year, and recovers amount to about 15 000.

Individual tagging systems have also been used for bats, fish, whales, seals, turtles, frogs and butterflies. One example of accidental marking was recently discovered by Tony Martin of the Sea Mammals Research Unit at Cambridge. He was able to show that a hand harpoon

discovered in a sperm whale in Iceland had been put there a year earlier by open-boat whalers in the Azores.

The results of these endeavours are often fascinating and sometimes dramatic. Swallows from different parts of Europe winter in different parts of Africa. Sedge warblers wintering in a reed bed in Nigeria may return to the same reed bed the following year. Pacific salmon, after spending most of their lives in the open ocean, return to the river where they were born. Individual monarch butterflies may fly over 2500 km from Canada to Mexico.

Energy for Migration

A migrant setting out on a long journey obviously has to be assured of its energy supply. To meet that need, many birds put on large amounts of fat just before they migrate. Dr R. Wilkinson and I were recently able to measure the weights of ringed sedge warblers during their wintering period in northern Nigeria. During the months October to February their weights were in the range 10 to 13 g, but in March, April and early May, just before their departure for Europe, we found birds weighing up to 20 g. Measurements of recaptured birds in these three months showed an increase in weight (which we can attribute almost entirely to extra fat) of about 0.3 g per day. Using formulae developed by Dr C. J. Pennycuik at Bristol University, we can calculate that a sedge warbler with 8 g of fat has enough fuel for a flight of over 3000 km, easily enough to cross the Sahara desert.

Some migrants use the energy already provided by the environment in the form of air or water currents to assist them on their way. Aphids and other small insects fly simply to remain aloft to ride on the winds. Larger ones such as moths and locusts, which may be capable of appreciable speeds in still air, usually move downwind too.

Big birds such as eagles and storks are not able to carry the large amounts of extra fat that they would need for powered flight over long distances. They solve this problem by making use of rising currents

of air shown in thermals generated by irregular heating of the ground. A bird may soar round and round in one of these columns of rising air until it has gained enough height to glide downwards, and along to the base of the next thermal. But thermals occur only over land, so we find that birds of this type avoid crossing the open sea. White storks, for example, cross the Mediterranean at the Bosphorus in the East and the Straits of Gibraltar in the West.

Work by Dr F. R. Harden Jones, Dr G. P. Arnold and Dr M. Greer Walker at the Lowestoft Fisheries laboratory in East Anglia has shown how plaice selectively use tidal currents in the North Sea. When a fish has an acoustic transponder attached to it, a device which emits a pulse of sound in response to the sound pulse from a sector scanning sonar system on board the research vessel, it can be tracked for several days as it travels about. Results have shown how the plaice uses the tidal current: for example, a fish bound North stays on or near the bottom during a South-flowing tide, but it rises into midwater during the North-flowing tide.

Goal-Finding

To find its goal from a distant place an animal must possess certain sensory systems and have certain decision-making programmes to govern its behaviour. A migrating aphid, for example, needs to have sensory equipment to detect a suitable habitat and a built-in behavioural programme to make it descend at the right time from the airstream carrying it. Professor J. S. Kennedy of Imperial College, London, demonstrated that such a response occurs when the aphid detects that yellow light (and not blue light) is reflected from the ground. European swallows migrating to Africa in autumn must have the ability to pick a southerly direction and some means of recognising their winter quarters when they eventually arrive there.

The ability to take up a particular direction with respect to some feature or property of the environment is called orientation. The orientating animal is rather like a man who has a compass and an instruction to proceed in a specific direction. Animals may orient with respect to features or phenomena on Earth (possible examples are coastal profiles for grey whales and thunderstorms for wildebeest), to the Sun or stars, or to the Earth's magnetic field, all of which are by birds. They may sense odours (salmon return to the river in which they were born by detecting its smell), directions of water current flow and so on. Furthermore, they may use more than one of these sources of information simultaneously and may use different ones at different times.

Navigation usually implies rather more than orientation. It is as if we had given our man with the compass a map which enabled him to see where he was and where he wanted to go. Homing experiments have clearly shown that many animals are

capable of some form of navigation, but attempts to find out how the animal establishes the relative positions of its starting point and its goal have been much less successful. The nature of the map turns out to be much more elusive than the nature of the compass.

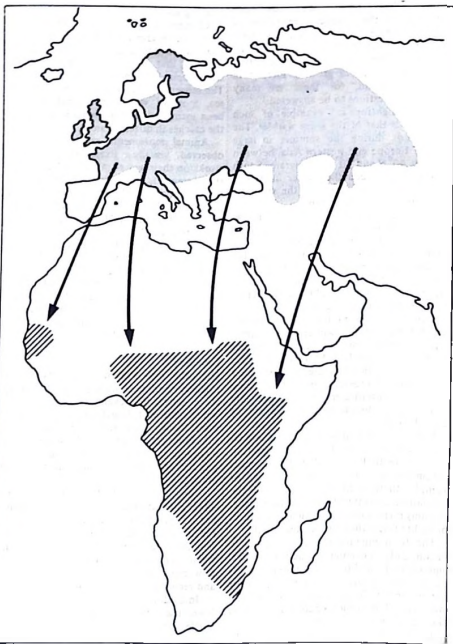
One possibility, emphasised by Dr R. R. Baker of Manchester University, is that animals may build up knowledge of a familiar area through exploratory activity: the map is then based on the animal's personal experience, supplemented by knowledge of what can be detected outside the familiar area by the use of distance senses such as sight and hearing.

Modern biologists explain animal behaviour in terms of evolution by natural selection. So migrants migrate because

their migrating ancestors left more descendants than did other members of their species which did not migrate. But what circumstances would lead to such success in the struggle for existence?

Migration allows animals to exploit the resources of habitats which are not permanently suitable for their way of life. The Arctic summer, for example, with its long days and brief abundance of invertebrate life, is highly suited for the breeding of a variety of birds, notably waders. They would be quite unable to survive the Arctic winter and therefore have to migrate over medium or long distances.

Another example is the swallow family. There are 31 species of swallows resident in sub-Saharan Africa, though many of these migrate within the continent. Two species migrate there from the Mediterranean



Autumn migration of the sedge warbler from its breeding range in Europe and western Asia to its winter quarters in Africa.



A fat sedge warbler near Kano, northern Nigeria, in April, long flight North across the body weight in a little over a month and is ready to make its

This bird has nearly...
the crop provides...
for only part of...
the crop provides...
for only part of...

region and three (the European swallow, the house martin and the sand martin) from almost the whole of Europe and western Asia.

The aerial insect population in the northern winter is negligible, so it is reasonable to suppose that these three species evolved from populations which originally bred in Africa. By migrating northwards for breeding they would have found regions where there was less competition for flying insects, more day-light hours in which to catch them, and fewer predators of eggs and nestlings. So it seems likely that the populations of the migratory swallows are appreciably greater than those of the resident African species.

When the variation in environmental resources is less predictable than the changes linked to the seasons in the North temperate zone, we may expect to see less regular migrations. The migrations of queleas and locusts vary more from year to year than those of European swallows. Nevertheless, their ability to migrate enables them to exploit food resources that may be only irregular and temporary.

Migrants and Man

From Man's point of view migrants may be either good ones, whose populations we want to conserve or encourage to grow, or bad ones, whose populations we want to reduce. Most people would regard swallows as good migrants (they make Europeans more cheerful and eat some of their aphids) and locusts as bad ones. Sometimes these categories overlap, and so conflict the black-tailed godwit, for example, is one of the wading birds for which reserves are provided in western Europe, but it eats rice seedlings in West Africa.

It is not surprising that many pests of agricultural crops are migratory, because

the resource the crop provides is well adapted to Migrants are well adapted to the African armyworm moth and crops of wheat, rice and maize. In most years pest sometimes devastates them. Scientists from the Centre for Overseas Development and Research (now the Institute) suggested that the adult moths

It is not surprising that many of the crops are migratory because the year. Migrants are well adapted to the conditions for their survival. The questions to be answered are: political frontiers are greatly human activities are greatly northern Europe are shot for profit in Mediterranean countries which have closed their borders with each other may find it difficult impossible to co-ordinate their pest plans. Nevertheless, given time, good and hard work, it may be possible overcome such problems, our children will thank us if we do.

migratory and that most outbreaks of caterpillars arose from eggs laid by moths that had flown in from distant places. Some years ago I did some laboratory experiments on the flight capability of the moths by attaching them to a small round- about, some moths flew continuously for several hours for distances up to 100 km, so the migration idea is certainly feasible. Working with government agricultural departments in East Africa, the COPR (TDRI) team set up a network of traps to monitor armyworm moth populations throughout the region. With our knowledge of armyworm migrations and life history, it

Shedding Light on Acid Rain

British scientists are treating trees with pollutants, creating artificial frosts and studying invertebrate life in streams in a bid to establish the causes of increases of acidity in the soil in some areas and in some watercourses.

At Lancaster University, in north-west England, scientists supported by the Department of the Environment are testing a theory that air pollutants do not kill plants directly but weaken their defence mechanisms against other harmful factors such as severe frosts and droughts.

Common air pollutants such as sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and ozone are being used in the experiments, but scientists have so far been unable to reproduce under experimental conditions the devastation reported in some forests across Europe.

In another project, Britain's Central Electricity Board (CEGB) has launched a large-scale outdoor fumigation experiment at Liphook in southern England to examine the effects of sulphur dioxide and ozone on forests. The gases will be fed through pipes, maintaining a constant recorded level of pollution round thousands of young trees—in an experiment expected to last as long as five years.

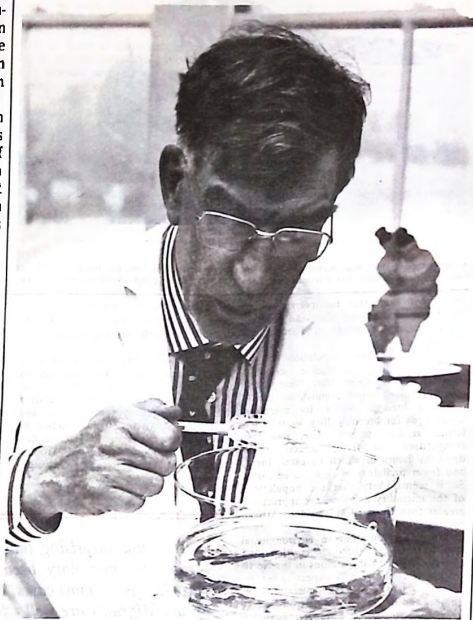
Dangers of acidification of lakes, streams and rivers have been studied at Britain's Freshwater Biological Association, on the shores of Lake Windermere, where acidity measurements have been taken since 1954. The streams which have lacked natural concentrations of alkalinity—or concentrations of bicarbonate ions—have been those most likely to be acid.

PHOTO SHOWS: A scientist studying the effects of acid water on invertebrate animals which form a substantial food source for freshwater fish. In naturally acid streams, there are few fish and few invertebrates for them to feed on. It is not yet known whether this is due to acidity, other chemical factors or a deficiency in the food chain which supports them. The Freshwater

Biological Association hopes to disentangle these aspects, leading to a better assessment of the biological effects of acidity in fresh water.

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