

SUMMIT

"My Opponents are only cutting corners."

- Sha'aba Lajagi

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Hotline

NIGERIAN INTERNATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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End of the Road?

Earth was first a jungle before man began to trod her surface. Man descended and discovered desire. Soon, footpaths developed and with them basic reason: for every purpose there is an approach. The road can be as tiny as a vein or an artery or as narrow as an alley or footpath. It can be as quiet as a lane or street or as busy as a canal or a highway. It can be in the abstract, as in method, plan, process or means or it can be in the concrete, as in railroads and roadways.

Thus are roads universal and not original though necessary to man. Earth itself has its roads as the Sun and stars and planetary bodies or as light and wind and water travel on fixed courses of rays and gusts and waves. There are, however, good as well as bad roads. The artery may be clogged leading to blocking of blood or heart failure, the river on its course may be killed by obstacles and sometimes the planetary bodies themselves come into one another's orbit obstructing the order and rank. In human endeavour, no path is fool-proof and all life is a series of trial and error and modification. "Every stage man reaches" wrote Lewis Mumford "is the beginning of a new goal" and all existence becomes a continuous journey on series of paths and ways and stations.

But it is for man on earth that roads both physical and metaphysical are crucial. Every human settlement is a network of roads or paths from one man's compound to the other. A city is merely a series of roads and streets leading from one location to another. The international order of modern times itself is an elaborate system of paths, roads, air-routes, sea-routes and wireless connections. All of progress or the optimum distribution of earthly resources including knowledge are predicated on the system and good order of such roads. A muddled world means a muddled network of interrelations. A muddled economy is the function of muddled or in-existent roads.

Since good roads mean excellent connections with optimum advantages, there is a direct relation between good roads and good anything. Added to political, social and gross economic problems, Nigeria like most countries of poor and average physical development suffers an acute crisis of roads. Our team of writers led by H.M. Balogun and Adamu Abdullahi sat long and went through much documents and data to produce the cover on roads. What was not certain after their own document was put in place was which are worse off: the physical roads connecting Nigeria's 106,590 communities or the metaphysical roads of human relation and understanding? But this is stuff for a cover of its own.

So, plus all the sizzling regulars like Discourse, Summit etc which at *Hotline* we always serve our readers, this edition promises much food for thought. It may well be the most philosophical and idea-oriented publication you will be reading for a long time to come. Welcome to every page of it.



Muhammad Hassan-Tom,
Acting Editor.

Hotline

NIGERIA'S INTERNATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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BARBAR

PEOPLE WAKE UP EVERY MORNING WITH THE IDEA THAT THEY MUST MAKE MORE MONEY.



IN THE MOSQUE AND CHURCH, THEY PREACH THAT THE LOVE OF MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL.



IN SCHOOL THEY TEACH THE YOUNG AND THE FOOLISH THAT WORK AND WORSHIP, LOVE AND JUSTICE ARE GREATER THAN WEALTH.



IN REAL LIFE THEY HOARD AND SQUANDER MONEY, BUT...



IN DEATH THEY LIVE THE WORLD IN NOTHING BUT A SIMPLE PIECE OF CLOTH.



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Top Agenda



Cover:

Good road network is a precondition for effective communication between man and man. But the condition of available road network in Nigerian today is a departure from that ideal. Read about the agony of millions of Nigerian road users

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Nigeria:

Here lies the dilemma of a nation in search of true development yet frustrated by personal aggrandisement, ethnic mistrust, coupled with super-power politicking and a culpable inability to arrest the pitiful situation. Read about the politics of steel at Ajaokuta...

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Summit:

Sha'aba Lafiagi, Social Democratic Party (SDP) gubernatorial aspirant in Kwara state bares his mind on Kwara state politics on *Hotline* Summit. Be our guest...

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On the Nigerian Arabs

I came across your write-up in your June edition *The Plight of one million Nigerian Arabs*. With this you have given every Nigerian a surprise to know about Arabs among themselves. Congratulations for your innovative journalism of bringing out such concrete news to national attention. Please keep up such focus.

*Khala Tijjani,
Kashim Ibrahim College,
of Education,
Maiduguri, Borno state.*

Allow me a space in your widely read international magazine, to air my views on your informative and educative piece- *The Plight of one million Nigerian Arabs*. Infact this article by its sheer brilliant and penetrating academic insight brought to light this hidden and obscured tribe. Now I believe I know more about my country than hitherto. Thanks a million keep it up.

*H. Hendricks,
7 Baronet,
N. 17 OLU, London.*

Thank you very much for that brilliant cover story on the plight of the Nigerian Arabs of whom before now very little or nothing was known by the rest of the people of this country. These are people looking back at the custom, who played a very important role by the defence and sustenance of the Kanem-Borno Empire and its Islamic civilisation. But first they will have to be provided with access to standard education. This I believe can be achieved by invigorating the already existing nomadic education scheme and making it more relevant to their ways of life and culture.

Once again, thanks and more ink to your pen

*Mohammed Faki Ahmed,
P.M.B. 1063,
Maiduguri.*

On Kontagora and Abiola

Your edition 76 was an interesting read and of particular concern was the

publisher's corner re: Question of concern where Chief M.K.O. Abiola was the subject of discussion. I was irked by the publisher's unceasing concern with the Bashorun's personal way of life.

I believe that in as much as the publisher has right to live life the way he deems it fit, so also has chief Abiola the right to the way he lives his life. It then beats my imagination why this right to a convenient life should be a topic for public debate. *Hotline* is reputed to be fearless in pointing out the ills of society but in this regard, it is one step towards the wrong direction. I hope that the publisher would understand this fact by



giving the chief a breathing space.

*Omololu Okoosi,
Iponri, Lagos.*

Prodigal Heirs

The story, "Sir Ahmadu Bello lives in death" in your edition 76 was one that pointed a very true picture of the hypocritical followers of the late Sardauna. These are people who shower the late sage with praises and profess to be his disciples, but all they succeed in displaying, is a complete opposite of the ideals which the great Sardauna was associated with. It is obvious that they are only fooling themselves. They say one thing in public in order to be seen to be part of a multitude that have said something while on the other hand they display opulence acquired dubiously with shameless alacrity. The sage must cringe with disgust in his grave at the

harvest of hypocrisy.

*Miss Kabiratu Gambo,
22 Ilorin Road, Kaduna.*

War of Bar and Bench

I read with a very keen interest the story on the War of Bar and Bench in your edition 76 and I realised with great displeasure, the confusion in which our legal system is enmeshed. Why, in the first place, should our court judges be allowed to exercise the kind of excessive powers the Area court judge in the story displayed. Why should an OND (law) holder be allowed to even hold such an esteemed office? This is why they see themselves as equivalent of higher judges and therefore wont to display such pomp of power in order to be acknowledged. This is bad for the seekers of justice, if it is allowed to thrive. The minister of justice must take prompt action to save the profession from decadence.

*Miss Rashidatu Bawa,
18 Lamido Road, Kaduna.*

Victimisation still here

Political victimisation as a sign of political immaturity is still very much around. After the recent local government elections in the country, there have been complaints of victimisation from one side or the other.

If it continues, when the military totally hands-over the reigns of power it will reach a magnitude that we shall be back to square one.

The military on its part must know that political victimisation is one of our failings as a nation. MAMSER and the mass media should rise to stem the drift.

However, I know victimisation happens the world over but the rate at which it happens in this country is alarming. The authorities should take all actions to reduce it to the barest minimum.

*Sani Mohammed Sisi,
P.O. Box 5,
Bida, Niger state.*

Reactions to our stories, which must be brief and precise, should be sent to Hotline Letters, P.O. Box 1365, Kaduna. Letters are subject to editing.

The Gold Rush

In recent years, materialism seems to be enjoying a steady but definite come-back in our society. The situation is so pathetic that today, respectability, responsibility and, to a large extent, justice, are all determined on the basis of material possession.

Marriages and friendships today are influenced by materialism. Men marry older women for material gain and vice-versa. People sacrifice fellow human beings in their quest for material well-being.

The age old adage "money is the root of all evils" has, perhaps never had more relevance to any society than the present-day Nigeria. Ours is a society in which money is the new god. You are nothing without it. People no longer bother about how you make your money, all they are interested in is, do you have it? If you don't you are nothing. If you do, you command respect no matter how undeserving you may be.

Money buys you "justice" from our courts. It earns for you respect from religious and traditional leaders alike. With money you are infallible, incapable of making mistakes. Most of those who struggle for leadership roles, today, do so in the belief that it is the surest way of getting rich. The desire to contribute to the development of the society is, where present, a secondary motivation.

Our leaders who ought to lead exemplary lives for the people to copy, exhibit opulence and extravagance. They lay credence to the power of material possessions. This therefore explains why the whole outlook of the Nigerian nation today is pitched towards materialism. The aim of most of us today, is not only to get rich but to do so within the shortest possible time and without working for it.

Thus the societal vices and other anti-social activities that are the hallmark of our nation are directly linked to these materialistic tendencies. The vogue in our youth, the leaders of tomorrow, is to follow short cut means of getting rich. Drug and currency trafficking have attained an alarming rate both within and outside the country.

The sharp increase in the rate of armed banditry, the new phenomenon of kidnapping and other criminal activities are all manifestations of these materialistic tendencies of our generation. Dupes, con-artists, fake prophets, mushroom companies etc. The list is endless.

To cap it all, government agencies and institutions, set up to combat some of the anti-social activities in the society have been turned to avenues for getting rich quickly. The Customs and Immigration Department are today gold-mines and joining them is a do or die affair to both the young and old. It is also significant that corrective private and government agencies such as the Directorate for Social Mobilisation and the courts of law have failed to live above dishonour.

Prostitution has assumed a frightening dimension even with the AIDS scare hanging over the nation. There isn't much

difference between the female hostels in our institutions of 'learning' and the uncountable brothels in our towns. Everybody seems to be involved in the cut-throat competition to get rich and too fast. Most alarming of course is that religious institutions and their leaders have abandoned the defence of propriety and spiritual excellence to join the money grabbing orgy.

The rise of a new crop of 'leaders' who loot public funds to build mansions and display opulence in the face of poverty, starting from 'FESTAC '77' extravaganzas to the prodigal spree of the second republic coupled with the ever-rising trend of inflation and diminishing income of the average Nigerian, are, directly or otherwise responsible for this rising wave of moral decadence.

Nothing short of a new orientation for the youth of this country can check this downward slope. New orientation in the sense that they be made to think in terms of how they can put in their best to contribute to the development of the nation for the benefit of all, rather than how to attain individual success.

This can only be achieved if our leaders live up to their responsibilities. Attention must be turned towards provision of essential services to the people. Nigeria has enough resources at its disposal to provide effective health care system, education, drinking water and food to the populace if only our resources will be used judiciously.

As long as leaders in every sector of society both past and present, and their families 'live' while majority of the citizens struggle to 'exist', then people will continue to devise means of escaping the real and the imagined vicious circle.

Lest I Forget

Once more, the season of fertiliser distribution is on Nigerian farmers are unfortunately facing the usual cut-throat exploitation. A bag of fertiliser which government has subsidised to N40 is openly sold for N80. This most serious of all evils of course has a way of coming right back to affect all segments of society.

Here is a case therefore where disaster is wished away but is courted by some people's greed.

May all those who have a hand in the rise of fertiliser prices not die well.

HASSANI

Ahaji Hassan Sani Kontagora
(Magajin Rafi)

Leaders of Tomorrow?

New, as in new book, is the opposite of old. We don't begin to talk of introducing something new unless the old one has outlived its usefulness or there is a dire need for something different.

It is no news that generally, Nigerian leadership in the past 30 years has been uninspiring. What did these politicians and 'militaricians' do that just weren't right? Quite a catalogue, as millions will testify. They cheated and they stole. They bored big holes in our national treasury. They fed fat while we became thinner. They had surplus while we scrounged from dustbins. They became richer and richer and our poverty was inversely proportional.

These leaders were mean if you know what I mean. Some of them we elected, others shot their way to power. But they were our rulers no less. In an ideal society—which Nigeria hardly is—the elected clique should cater for the electing citizenry. Failing to do this, they were sure to attract the odium of the people and so lose a subsequent chance to serve.

The fact that right thinking citizens of this country have been looking for an alternative to this kind of inept, corrupt, and unpatriotic leadership has never been in doubt. In this search for people of vision, vitality and foresight, the searchlight has been beamed on the youths who are seen to constitute the soul, the future of a prosperous Nigeria. Thus the current myth that a so-called new breed of unsoiled leaders represents the ultimate hope for good government.

The fact that right thinking citizens of this country have been looking for an alternative to this kind of inept, corrupt, and unpatriotic leadership has never been in doubt.

Whether the youths are vindicating that trust is another matter altogether. One does not need a witch-doctor or sorcerer to know that this group of Nigerians, bursting, as it were, with energy, are doing every thing to frustrate those who have reposed such trust in them.

Coming in repeated bursts have been the news of the bestiality that goes on in the campuses of institutions of higher learning. Young men and women brimming with ideas that are supposed to help our fledgling nation make a grand entry into the 21st century are busy committing atrocities under many guises like cults and secret societies which only a few years ago would not have been thought possible.

Every little disagreement is worth a fight. There's got to be violent demonstrations over unverified rumours. Students have to take up arms against the school authorities over lack of water in their schools. A disagreement on a religious matter would not be seen to have been effectively resolved unless an inferno engulfs some buildings.

Does it surprise anybody then that our schools have become ganglands where rape, theft, occultism, lesbianism, homosexuality, drug addiction, etc., holds sway? The school, a place where a man's being is supposed to undergo some refinement now does little other than churning out budding nihilists, anarchists and accomplished drug addicts. These disreputable people are unleashed on society and are called upon to take on responsible positions!



By Onuwa L. Joseph

And they have the nerve! Every other day, one student leader or somebody claiming to represent that nebulous group called youths berates the old brigade for bringing us to grief by their mediocre manner of handling national issues. Go to these same schools and it may surprise you to learn that were it not for an extensive network of rigging, tribal or sectional appeal and godfatherism they wouldn't be laying claim to any leadership in the first place.

And here lies my contention that these youths cannot be tomorrow's leaders. If they can do these today, worse things cannot be ruled out if they get the slightest opportunity to rule the nation. It seems they are fixated on violence, body, mind and all I don't advise giving them any chance to government since that might turn out to be a very bloody gamble.

Or could I be wrong? Are these young men and women mere pawns in the hands of the old politicians? Left to choose for themselves, would they turn out to be all the good things we expect them to be? Do we beg the puppeteers to remove the strings from the youths' necks so that they can do only what they want to do? In other words how much of the youths' ineptitude is due to wrong training and how much is personal failing?

In the interim, the safest bet is to placate and concretise a national vision, ethics and goal-plan for the guidance of your old.

The appalling state of Nigerian roads

The importance of good transportation for a developing nation like Nigeria cannot be over-emphasised. It is vital not only for the movement of people from one place to another, but also for economic and industrial activities; the transportation of foodstuff and raw materials as well as for the much needed national stability through constant interaction.

The government established the Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) in 1986 with an allocation of N700 million to, among other things, rehabilitate existing roads and construct a network of rural and feeder roads in efforts to improve transportation particularly in the rural areas of the country. Then in 1988, the Federal Roads Safety Commission (FRSC) was set up to curtail the increase in the number of fatal road accidents on Nigerian roads.

While most drivers these days adhere to speed limits, observe traffic rules and regulations and endeavour to keep their vehicles in good conditions, the number of fatal road accidents, instead of declining is on the increase.

Boitine has discovered that the deplorable and decrepit condition of Nigerian roads are largely responsible for the maiming and killing of innocent citizens as well as the loss of millions of Naira worth of properties.

Mankind as a species has existed from time immemorial and throughout every facet of human developmental undertakings and advancement, it is with the advent of roads that man began to forge lasting links with his fellow man living elsewhere. Roads are probably one of the greatest and oldest of human inventions. Both ancient and modern civilisa-

tions owed their rapid transformation, particularly environmental, initially to the making of paths to enable movement from one place to another. In modern times, these paths have generally given way to roads as a result of the radical changes which took place between man and his environment and as a matter of necessity. The need for more effective communication and the creation of vital links between man and man

ship amongst people of varied tribes, cultures and nationalities. Roads have cut across national barriers and serve as avenues of exchange of culture, tradition and customs, of business and commerce, and of pleasure and leisure.

Through roads therefore, man is connected to a variety of ties which are undeniably of enormous importance to the realisation of his inter-relationship and creative ability as proved by the invention of bicycles, motor-cycles, motor cars and other forms of road transportation which are the products of human creative mind. Thus, it is not by chance that man realised and identified himself with what he has created to promote easy understanding and interchange of ideas within its social and economic framework. This century has witnessed the designing and construction of many major roads and highways all over the world which could be further developed and enhanced. In the developed nations, huge sums have been expended to create, develop and modernise roads and highways that facilitate easier, safer, cheaper and more pleasurable means of transportation of goods and people.

was thus enhanced by roads. Today, roads serve essentially as universal system of links, thereby fostering relationships.

Ever since, roads have continued to serve as means of enhancing mobility, intercourse and inter-relationship



Major-Gen. Mamman Kontagora (rtd):
Minister of Works and Housing.

It is for these and many other reasons, that here in Nigeria, our roads should serve us for uses and link us with people both within and outside the country. Therefore, it is our responsibility both collectively and individually to cater for them.

The task of building standard roads and their inter-related development and maintenance is one that all the levels of government should now consider top priority. An indepth nationwide survey and inspection of our roads indicate that most of them are nothing better than what are condescendingly referred to as "roads only fit for third world countries." Most of the nation's roads are in abject neglect and shameful shape making driving and the need to travel not only uncomfortable but also hazardous. The situation is such that can be described as a "do or die" affair where only the strong survives as lorries, motor cars, motor cycles, bicycles and pedestrians hassle for the little space on which they can manoeuvre on our weather beaten roads and highways. The irony is that as the condition of our roads and highways, (initially constructed below standard) are steadily turning into death traps, the governments have remained silent about this sordid situation.

Carnage on Nigerian roads has become almost a routine. Although there are many other causes like poverty or inability of motorists to properly maintain their vehicles especially in these days of SAP, it seems that even our so-called good roads are likely to be death traps as the bad ones. Of course there are many causes of road accidents and these include overtaking at the crest of a hill; overtaking at busy intersections; negligence of the mechanical deficiencies of the vehicle; over-speeding and so on. However, the nature of Nigerian roads is still playing a big role in the carnage on our roads in spite of the existence of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC). The very nature of our roads, as mentioned earlier, coupled with the extreme climatic conditions which tend to have some effects on the rate of expansion or contraction of tyres greatly contribute to fatal acci-

dents particularly on our highways.

The exuberant luxuries that abound in our national wealth seem to be destroying the very idea underlying the splendour of national prosperity. Yet, morning, noon and night, thousands of our fellow citizens are either maimed or killed on our roads. Apprehension and uncertainty always accompanies any intention to undertake a journey, no matter how short the distance is, if it is by road. With the lack of an effective and reliable railway network and the high cost of travelling by air, majority of Nigerians can only rely on road transport. The sad thing is that transportation, whatever its nature, is intrinsically tied with daily and vital activities of man, and man cannot escape using the road if he is to survive.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the authorities' lukewarm attitude towards the condition and development of our roads did not take its ugly shape today. It is as a result of many years of negligence, curtailing of priorities and maladministration which has now reached its peak particularly in this period of SAP. Through these neglect and as a result of the numerous shortcomings of various administrations, an epitome of decadence and possible total collapse of our roads infrastructure has emerged and the means of alleviating these aberrations are not in sight.

For instance, the Federal Highway Department is given the responsibility for "the planning, design, construction and maintenance of all federal roads and bridges in the country." It is also responsible for "all matters relating to the administration, management and operation of these roads." One can at this juncture cite some positive achievements of the department which include the recently commissioned Kaduna-Kano highway. This highway should become the ideal standard upon which all new major roads are constructed and



Prof. Wole Soyinka: Chairman, FRSC.

on which the old ones should be reconstructed throughout the country. The construction of the Tuga-Kaoje road and that of the Tuga bridge at an estimated cost of N99.2 million were no mean feats. So were the Jamieson and Ethiopie river bridges which have also been completed as well as the construction work going on on the Warri-Benin road. Other road projects completed by the Department include the Potiskum-Bulkachuwa road; the Mayo-Selbe-Namatari road; the Ayamba-River Eruku road; the Citaba Keffi-Nassarawa road and the Calabar-Ikang road. Others are the Keffi-Akwanga and Bokani-Tegina road I and II. In addition, there are 50 on-going road and bridge projects at various stages of completion.

Although the foregoing achievements show the remarkable effort the present administration is making towards the provision of better roads for its citizenry, the paradox is that most of our highways remain in extremely deplorable condition making them not only death traps, but also extremely uncomfortable and strenuous to drive on. Such roads fraught with danger, include the Lagos-Kaduna, Kaduna-Jos, Ilorin-Minna, Okene-Kaduna, Kaduna-Katsina, Ondo-Benin, Ibadan-Lagos, and Benin-Enugu roads. Ply on any of these roads today, the numerous potholes and gullies on them would make your heart stay in your mouth for the

Fits and starts

Transportation in Nigeria today is a risky business. For the commuter it could mean loss of limb, the loss of life or in rare cases safe arrival at a destination. Only in few other situations can the axiom "survival of the fittest" be more relevant.

For hours on end, commuters wait in the sweltering sun or get soaked under the rain, while traders suffer the fate at market places and motor parks some of whose goods perish or are destroyed just waiting for taxis, buses or lorries to convey them and/or their goods. When eventually a vehicle comes along, more often than not a rickety contraption, the crowd jostles and shores, curses and prays just to secure a seat. The vehicle, often packed to twice its capacity, then plods along painfully and often recklessly on roads littered with potholes.

Because of the strategic role transportation plays in matters of both national and individual development, private investors in this sector of economy mercilessly exploit this situation to their own advantage.

To some extent, this attitude could be justified in the sense that the condition of most Nigerian roads is not only such that it is fraught with hazards, but also largely contribute to reducing the life span of the vehicles. And because they (transporters) spend large chunks of the

money they make by hiring out their vehicles on repairs and replacement of parts caused by the presence of potholes and other obstacles on our roads, they charge high fares and give the hapless passengers the option of either paying up or remaining stranded.

Government has not been unaware of this fact because right after the civil war in 1970, state governments tried to alleviate the suffering of the people by setting up transport corporations alongside the private entrepreneurs. If the intention of starting such projects as the state mass transit programme was good, the same cannot be said of its execution. Bureaucratic bottlenecks, financial mismanagement and an outright display of non challenge by the operators of the vehicles ensured the grounding of the scheme. And, of course, the pathetic and deplorable condition of Nigerian roads played a prominent role in the grounding of the vehicles.

The situation became unbearable with the introduction of the Second Tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM) under the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The devalued Naira could no longer hold its own against the hard currencies and this resulted in skyrocketing prices for vehicles, spare parts and other components which were

necessarily imported from abroad. And again, this affected the maintenance of the existing shoddily-constructed and poorly maintained roads and bridges especially on our highways.

The recurring transportation problems and the resultant dent on the image and credibility of the government, especially as regards the shameful condition of our roads and highways, must have informed governments' special attention to the transport sector in the 1988 budget. The government voted a total of N700 million for the mass Transit Programme. This became necessary because, according to the President, "government is deeply concerned about the state of the nation's transportation system". Allocations for 1990 and 1991 were N50 million and N212 million respectively. As at today this problem has not been solved.

Back in 1986, the government established the Directorate for Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) with an allocation of some N700 million ostensibly, again as the president said for, among others, "the purpose of rehabilitating various categories of roads in the country and especially for the development of a national network of rural and feeder roads...". But what is the situation now? No improvement.

duration of the journey no matter how

long it is. In a number of cases, it is the

efforts of drivers to avoid these holes that cause these accidents. A driver might be trying to avoid a pothole at a curve and before he realises it, there is collision with an on coming vehicle whose driver might also be trying to avoid potholes. If a collision is averted one or both the

vehicles might veer off the road and somersault or crash into a tree. And many victims of fatal accidents that survived have testified to this. Thus it is imperative for the authorities at the federal, state and local government levels, to further intensify efforts to create optimum maintenance culture, while at the same time designing and constructing more highways and bridges.

With the construction of Toll Plazas along the existing four-lane highways and three/four-lane bridges over major rivers, the Government is definitely generating a lot of revenue to supplement the amount being spent on the construction of new ones and the maintenance of the existing ones. Strangely



AVM Larry Kolnyan: DFRRI Chairman.



Bad Road: Death traps.

enough it appears that the revenue being collected from the various toll plazas all over the country are directed into other projects rather than on the maintenance of existing highways.

Coming closer home, we must acknowledge the painful truth that the roads within our urban centres, that is to say in the cities and towns, are in lamentable conditions. Nearly all the roads are unmotorable particularly during the rainy season. Two-thirds of the length of any of these urban roads is littered with potholes, while large segments have been washed away by erosion due to the poor design or even complete absence of drainage system. Hardly does one find thoroughly good roads anywhere in the country. The question is if the decrepit number of roads is so widespread, why then have the state and local government authorities not done something realistic to remedy this national disgrace? The country seems to be suffering from what is commonly termed under-development syndrome because government must be aware that the stage of advancement and development of any nation must be reflected on the design and construction as well as the condition of its roads.

One of the reasons why industrial nations are regarded as advanced is partially because of the design, construc-

tion and maintenance of their township roads. It is the perfect condition of roads and their design that give a town or a city one of its most noticeable characteristics as well as its uniqueness, beauty and importance. Nothing contributes so much to the

commercial and business success of a city as the design and condition of its roads. These facts, the states and local governments all over the Federation need to digest. The town planners too have failed woefully in their duties to ensure that road constructions are standardised and inspected continuously for better and more effective maintenance.

The roads in the rural areas are not better off because in most villages roads do not even exist. The few that are available are over-utilized despite being untarred and virtually unmotorable. In 1986, the federal government estimated that the savings from the petroleum subsidy reduction will yield a total of about N900 million. The government decided not to pass this sum to its general revenue, but "rather use it for education and for the purpose of rehabilitating various categories of roads in the country and especially for the development of a national network of rural and feeder roads in order to strengthen the massive effort for food and agricultural self-sufficiency in the shortest possible period, hence, the establishment of the Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI). The Directorate was charged to work closely with the state governments in order to reach the various communities in each of the local government areas throughout the fed-

eration.

It was expected that under the programme, rehabilitation of some 90,000 km of rural and feeder roads would be undertaken. The Directorate, since its establishment some four years ago, however concentrated mainly on two activities namely the provision of physical infrastructure and promotion of productive activities. Areas covered by the former ostensibly include the construction of rural feeder and roads. This in reality means the need to improve the quality of life and standard of living of the majority of the people in the rural areas as well as creating greater opportunities for human development and employment and to ensure the distribution of goods and services. These projected goals could only be successfully implemented with the construction of more and standard feeder roads but, there still exist a yawning gap in the construction of such feeder roads by DFRRI in virtually all the rural areas of the country.

In the light of the foregoing, it is imperative to stress the need for constructive endeavour and speedy recovery plans by all levels of government to ensure that all our roads are properly reconstructed and maintained. We have abundant resources that are easily accessible and we have the manpower which we can employ to renovate our neglected roads. The government should now focus attention on the mobilisation of its citizenry by creating employment opportunities whereby the unemployed could be used en masse to carry out this important national assignment. Good roads are not only necessary for the health, comfort and well-being of the people, they would also enhance productivity, commercial success and visible national prosperity and progress in all their ramifications. The people need to communicate across tribal, rural, local and state boundaries and roads are the vehicle to make this possible.

*By H.M. Balogun,
with Adamu Abdullahi,
Onuwa Joseph, James Bello
and Diane Marcus.*

Rising Militancy of the Northern Christian Elements

The rising militancy of the northern christian elements in Nigeria has its historical background. Since colonial days, the christian missions, who converted some of the pagans of Northern Nigeria into Christianity, had poisoned their minds against the predominantly Muslim community by distortion and falsification of history.

With independence, Islam faced its first major post-colonial trial from southern Igbo Christians who assassinated the Muslim political and military leadership in January 1966 and plunged Nigeria into a four-year civil war at high cost of lives and properties.

The civil war provided the northern christian elements the opportunity to penetrate deep into the Nigerian army under the guise of "northern fraternity". This was organised easily especially when a northern christian, Gen. Yakubu Gowon, was Head of State. It could be recalled that Gowon was installed as Head of State to convince the then secessionist Igbos that their fellow christian brother was the Head of State and as such assure them to stay in a "united" Nigeria.

The wide spread corruption, embezzlement and nepotism which engulfed the Gowon regime made its removal a necessity and Gen. Murtala Muhammad became Head of State in 1975. Murtala's regime was one of the most popular administrations Nigeria ever had. The northern christian elements in the army were, however, not satisfied for no justifiable reason except possibly that Murtala was not one of them. Under the leadership of Bisalla and Dimka, they hatched and launched their first military coup in February 1976, hardly 201 days after Murtala's bloodless takeover. They too assassinated the Muslim leadership notably Gen. Murtala and Col. Ibrahim Taiwo. Their evil plot was, however, only partially successful for they failed to take full control of the government and a southern christian, the second in command, Gen. Obasanjo, became head of state.

About five years after their first military strike against Islam, the northern christian elements decided to move to the political lime-light with the launching of the Christian Association of

Nigeria (CAN) in the early 1980's. The CAN was an extension of their militancy in the army which was then being opened up to involve civilians.

It was, therefore, not a mere coincidence that with the birth of CAN, especially its northern states' chapter, were witnessing rising tension in the Nigeria



Jolly Tanko Yusuf: Leading a splinter

nan social fabric, division of society along religious line, increased anti-Islamism in the Christian controlled Nigerian press and a new phenomenon: inter-religious riots between Muslims and Christians, especially in the northern states. Demonstrations and campaign of blackmail have now become their new religious tenets. In the last five years, CAN has organised three major religious riots, all of them sharing similar trends and strategies as follows:

1. The first stage starts with a quarrel in one of the Christian enclaves and this leads to mass killings of the Muslims living in that locality including the local Imam, the chief and so on.
2. Stage two consist of waiting for the larger Muslim population outside the enclave to react, which in some places, may lead to the burning of some christian buildings, especially the churches, in the absence of government's prompt action. The northern christian elements then instigate their men in the army and police to open fire on defenseless Muslims.
3. The third stage is the manipulation of the press to distract attention from the more serious offence of murder of Muslims to the issue of the burning of building (churches) by the "fanatics"

portraying the latter as the main crime. Thus when government finally intervenes, Kangaroo courts, such as the Karby-white Tribunal in 1987, are set up which find no one guilty of the murder of what was, in this case, officially declared as 19 Muslims who were killed, but ended up adding more salt to injury by jailing many innocent Muslims for hundreds of years for "burning churches".

This was the trend of what happened in the three religious riots which started in Kafanchan (1987), Tigno (1988), and more recently Tafawa Balewa (1991). The northern chapter of CAN has now got its private army, the CAN-militia, consisting mostly of ex-service men, recruited under the guise of protecting church buildings, who take active part in these massacres. The recovery of hand grenades, live ammunitions, old army uniforms and so on, at the site of the Tigno massacre in Gongola states, is evidence of the activities of this militia.

Some eye-witness accounts of the Bauchi massacre, in which about 500 people were killed, indicated that the CAN militia participated actively.

The northern Christian elements, now under CAN's umbrella, have continued to be actively involved in sponsoring and organising coup d'etat when ever they find themselves not at an advantage. For example, when the northern christian elements felt they were not getting as much as they had wanted, they decided to take full control of the government by launching, in April 1990, one of the bloodiest coups in the history of Nigeria. For political reasons, the northern Christians elements allied with a few misguided southern Christians.

Let it be known that the "transition programme", about which the present government is so much concerned, would be a futile exercise because the civilian regime they are trying to install would hold this nation to ransom. For surely democracy means majority in Nigeria, the civilian leadership would undoubtedly be Muslim as it happened in all the previous elections and surely this will not go down well with CAN. We should also not expect the massacre of Muslims in northern Christian enclaves to stop as long as CAN continues to maintain a private militia in addition to its control over members of the armed forces.

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Too Steely To Bend

Politics of North/South and ideological conflict over Ajaokuta Steel Project, ASP, takes a new dimension as media propaganda war is declared.

The consequences of failure of Ajaokuta Steel Project are too grim to contemplate." Those were the words of Nigeria's president, General Ibrahim Babangida on September 27, 1990 while commissioning the project's Engineering Repair Shop Complex. On the same occasion, President Babangida stated that, for domestic confidence to be expressed in the economy, industries must grow and be seen to attain an appreciable degree of capacity utilisation.

Speaking on the importance of the Ajaokuta Steel Project, President Babangida declared that the unique role of steel in the growth of an industrial economy had never been in doubt and the Ajaokuta Steel Project, he said, represents a deliberate and bold attempt by Nigeria to acquire integrated steel production facilities primarily conceived to provide a simple ancillary down stream and spin-off industries dependent on steel and its by-products.

While he was emphatic about government commitment to complete Ajaokuta Project by 1992, Babangida pleaded with Nigerian industrialists, armed forces and spare parts stockists to support and patronise the Engineering Repair Shop Complex because "it is now the turn of the citizenry to show the world that we also can do it."

If those presidential words were meant to arouse the interest of Nigerians in their country's march to economic, technological and industrial self-reliance, some Nigerians aptly described as "profiteers of the country's dependency syndrome on imported goods and agents of the Western capitalist economies" are hell-bent to ensure that Ajaokuta Steel Project remained a pipe-dream.

To achieve their desired objective, detractors of Ajaokuta Steel Project have persistently chronicled that the

project is economically unenviable and therefore, it should be abandoned after it has gulped N4.8 billion (according to the recent figure released by the Federal Ministry of Mines, Steel and Power). The most potent weapon being used by

Ajaokuta cannot compete favourably with products from other advanced and "more cost effective technology from Europe, Japan and America." The Soviet technology according to *The President report* "is a product of a failed



Ajaokuta Steel Project: To be abandoned?

such detractors is media propaganda which involves sponsored feature articles and news reports in newspapers and magazines.

The recent in their series of media propaganda was the story entitled *Federal Government May Abandon Ajaokuta* published at page 19 of *The President* newsmagazine of May 20, 1991, a sister publication of *Newbreed* magazine. The story filed in by a faceless reporter raised an alarm that the "government's intention to scrap the project at Ajaokuta, Kwara state, is based upon the background of escalating costs and the project's unprofitability." Quoting some unnamed Western diplomats, the report said, the project was initially estimated to cost \$4bn and an additional \$2bn is already required to complete it.

According to *The President* experts, the project is being set up on Soviet technology which "is outdated and costlier to run" and that the products from

economy." Calling for the abandoning of Ajaokuta Steel Project in favour of imported finished steel products, *The President* wrote, "the country's annual steel requirements could be served 20 times over if the \$6bn required to complete the Ajaokuta plant is used to import finished products from other producer nations."

On the viability of the project, *The President* report stated that "the siting of the project at Ajaokuta is not economically informed. Instead, political considerations were given preference over economic reasoning", because the iron ingots necessary as raw materials are not available in large quantity and that the energy needs of the plant cannot be adequately served by the National Electric Power Authority, NEPA.

The report also questioned the rationale for constructing 150 km railway line to link Ajaokuta with the national network. The cost of transportation, *The President* reported would have been un-



Sani Yakubu: Forward not backward integration

necessary if the project is sited in the south because of proximity to raw materials.

While proffering two options of either abandoning the project so as to cut further losses or for more funds to be thrown into the project, *The President* maintained that, even if the second option is made, the project cannot be ready in the next 4 years.

Reacting to *The President* report, a former director of Ajaokuta Steel Project, Alhaji Sani Yakubu said the writer demonstrated crass ignorance and is uninformed about what the project is all about. According to Sani Yakubu, anybody calling for the abandoning of Ajaokuta Steel Project has never visited Ajaokuta and does not know how much the government has invested in it and what objective the project is set up to achieve. Such a person could as well call for the closure of NNPC refineries because it has not succeeded in tapping the natural gas being flared away and the Nigeria Newsprint Manufacturing Company at Oku-Ibokun since it has not been able to satisfy the needs of newspaper houses in the country. He also described the notion that the iron ore raw materials needed for Ajaokuta's operations are in the south as a disinformation because, the project itself sits prettily on iron ore deposit. "Are Itakpe in Okene, Kwara state, Agejukolo in Benue state and Lafia in Plateau state where iron ore deposits are found in the south?" Sani Yakubu queried. He concluded that Ajaokuta Steel Project is now too steely



Dr Farouk: The government has not been serious

to be bent. It is therefore even more naive to say that the money spent to construct railway line at Ajaokuta was a waste, he said.

Describing Ajaokuta Steel Project as a victim of politics of North-South dichotomy in Nigeria and ideological conflict between the eastern and western imperialist economies, Sani Yakubu said these problems led to the delay in the completion of the project. "When you are delaying a project, the cost escalates as a result of changing economic fortunes," he further stated reiterating that, right from inception, every step taken with respect to Ajaokuta has been a false one. Rather than adopting forward-integration strategy like the Bilaid of India, he posited, Nigeria adopted backward integration.

Expatriating, Sani Yakubu said that, forward-integration strategy involves phasing of a project so that it could be self-financing overtime while backward-integration means the project has to be completed before it starts production. The Bilaid of India he said, started with 1.3 million metric tonnes of steel products and over time, it generated enough revenue to expand to 5.2 million metric tons per annum "because the raw materials were already there." In the case of Ajaokuta, the former director said, Nigeria started answering a question before it was asked.

The first step to have been taken according to Sani Yakubu was to make the Itakpe (iron ore mining company) a captive mine or division of Ajaokuta

Steel Project and not an autonomous company. Itakpe should have been completed first since it is the source of raw materials for Ajaokuta before embarking on the steel project itself. "How can you set up a company without raw materials for its consumption?" Sani Yakubu questioned.

Other problems militating against the completion of Ajaokuta Steel Project identified by Sani Yakubu are the high turn-over of the project's chief executive officers and such frequent changes he said, were based on pettiness and the settling of personal scores. He disclosed that, there was an instance when the chief executive officer of the company was made to serve under his erstwhile subordinate who was catapulted to ministerial position ironically in-charge of steel. Inadequate funding is another problem of Ajaokuta Steel Project. Sani Yakubu disclosed to *Holline* that, there has never been a year the government met 50 percent of its annual subventions to the project.

Dr Farouk AbdulAzeez, a presidential aspirant in the Social Democratic Party told *Holline* that, the shoddy handling and lukewarm attitude of the government to Ajaokuta Steel Project have all along given leeway to the project's detractors to have field day of blackmail. If the government had been serious, the project would have been completed by now, Dr Farouk asserted adding that, since the exit of the civilian government in December, 1983, Ajaokuta Steel Project has been having financial problem. The military govern-



Haruna: That magazine lied!



Babangida: Holds the ace

ments he said, have got themselves enmeshed in politics of dichotomy and deceit which previously were akin to civilian governments.

Farouk justified his position by citing the inability of the Task Force Management Committee on Ajaokuta Steel Project set up by the present military government, to achieve its set objectives. According to him, the task force was to achieve tripod objectives: to provide meaningful management structure; to access the problems of the project; and to recommend lasting solutions to these problems. All these were intended to make Ajaokuta more viable and to increase its capital base.

To the surprise of all Nigerians, Farouk said, the problems of Ajaokuta steel were compounded by reducing its status from a limited liability company to a project. Project implementation he reiterated is influenced by time and not priority. Farouk told *Hotline* that, since the management problem of Ajaokuta is a protracted one and seems insurmountable, the only plausible solution to Ajaokuta's numerous problems is to privatise the project rather than abandoning it. Nigerian entrepreneurs, he averred, are ready and willing to take up the challenge. His words: "outright privatisation is the only solution as no Nigerian would like so much public funds running into billions of Naira to be wasted".

Speaking to *Hotline* on the same issue in Lagos June 17, Alhaji Mohammed Sha'aba Lafiagi said it is ill-informed to call for the abandoning of Ajaokuta



Nura Imam: Trouble in hand



Atanmo: How committed?

Steel Project rather, the federal government should be prevailed upon to complete the project in earnest. Sha'aba who is a governorship aspirant in the Social Democratic Party, SDP, in Kwara state praised Atlas Nigeria Limited proposal to establish downstream companies to produce knots and bolts at Ajaokuta and enjoined individuals and other companies to establish similar ventures that will make use of flat sheet to be produced at Ajaokuta. He said Ajaokuta Steel Project is one of the cardinal programmes of the SDP citing Article 6.2 of the party's constitution to buttress his point. The article states inter alia: "The completion and continuous operations of the steel complexes, other subsidiary rolling mills and Itakpe Ore Mining projects shall be top priority."

The councillor representing Ajaokuta in the Okene local government council, Malam Yusuf Ramat Haruna dismissed

The President report and others before it as uninformed, unintelligible and flagrant display of ignorance about the project. He described the reports as a machination of the capitalist economies "that never wished us well". Haruna disclosed that the federal government is yet to resettle the people of Ajaokuta and Geregu whose lands were acquired for the steel project and they have not been fully compensated too. Early this year (March, 1991), only N31.9 million was paid as compensation out of the previous estimate of N65 million. Even the N65 million is inadequate, according to Haruna because the estimate was done several years ago before the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme, SAP.

Efforts to get the project director, Dr Philip Atanmo to talk proved abortive as he was said to have travelled to Lagos to confer with the Minister of Steel, Air Vice Marshal Nura Imam (rtd) on the recent 9-day strike action by Ajaokuta Steel workers over the non-implementation of the new minimum wage approved by the federal government in January this year. The public relations manager, Malam Ibrahim Argungu and his deputy, Mohammed Ibrahim could also not be reached as they were said to have travelled to their respective states of Sokoto and Benue for the Eid-E-Kabir festival. Some of the project staff who spoke to *Hotline* however described *The President* report and similar others in the past "as rubbish, good only for the garbage bin." They blame the public relations department of the company as weak and lacking in orientation and dynamism. The department they disclosed has never at anytime reacted to such publications. They are not contributing anything meaningful to the project's survival. They further stated that, Ajaokuta Steel Project no longer depend on NEPA for its energy needs since the commissioning of its thermal power plant by President Babangida in September last year. Rather, the excess power generates from the thermal plant is fed to NEPA's national grid. *Hotline* gathered that NEPA paid about N7 million to

Flash Back

Ajaokuta Steel Project in May this year for the excess power fed to the national grid.

It should be noted that, *Hotline* in its August 8-21, 1988 edition identified all these problems bedevilling Ajaokuta Steel Project. In the said *Hotline* report, it was explained that the problem of ASCL was compounded by the politics of North-South divide. Between 1958 and 1967 when the idea of establishing iron and steel industry in Nigeria was conceived, *Hotline* reported, both the west and the east wanted it sited in their regions. The eastern lobby group took the issue as a do or die affair and wanted it in Onitsha and that its being sited at Ajaokuta was considered as the property of the northerners and must be frustrated.

During the second republic, Chief Okumagba from Bendel state headed the board of directors of Ajaokuta Steel Project (then Ajaokuta Steel Company Limited). On February 17, 1982, a member of the board, Alhaji Tanko Abdullahi wrote the minister of steel stating that ethnic considerations always take preference at board meetings while vested interests were protected at all cost. He accused Chief Okumagba of divided loyalty to the company, the board of which he was chairman and that Okumagba always expressed the wish to see Delta Steel Company, Aladja, Bendel state expanded "even when the issue at stake was Ajaokuta Steel Company". It was at a time Dr Ezenmari, an Ibo was the company's general manager.

Alhaji Mahmood Atta also wrote a petition dated July 21, 1982 demanding to know from the minister of steel the criteria used in appointing board members of Ajaokuta Steel Company. Atta wrote: "I am aware that the Nigerian constitution provides for federal character in appointments into government and parastatals. All the same, I do not believe that this is to the detriment of localities where such federal institutions/projects are sited." Mahmood Atta was to become the board's chairman in 1988 but for only eight months.

By Mohammed Momoh Otu

"Hotline investigations revealed that there is international conspiracy to frustrate the 1989 target date for the commissioning of the first phase of the steel complex. Two of the three major civil works contractors, Messrs Dumez Nigeria Limited and Fougerole Fougerole Nigeria (FFN) have demobilised and laid off about 2,000 Nigerian workers in the first week of June this year. Inside sources disclosed to *Hotline* that all these are gimmicks and attempts to frustrate the project from taking off the ground. About 87 percent of both civil and erection works have been completed while the remaining 13 percent could be finished within three months if the Russian technical partners are given the necessary encouragement and where withal," but international politics would not allow that".

end of his visit that, "the site be closed down" because it is technically non-viable. A team of representatives was in between July 13 and 14 this team made the same unco remark.

There is no doubt that world has been embittered when the Russians started and technological exploration mine the resources and the local raw materials required for the plant iron dust was 1958 1960 the emn prop UK, man and that was caused

Between 1960 and 1967, the federal government called for proposals from UK, USA, Germany, Canada and USSR, but that of the USSR was accepted because it was more realistic than others."

The last time Dumez and Fougerole demobilised, that was last year, it cost the nation about N500 million to recall them to the site. Dumez is a West German company while Fougerole is French and in connivance with the United States of America (USA) and the World Bank are not ready to see Nigeria's premier iron and steel industry become a reality particularly as it is being handle by the Soviet Union.

Four months ago, a World Bank representative was in Ajaokuta to appraise the steel complex and he insisted on spending not more than one hour. It took him fifteen minutes to drive from Adogo air strip to Ajaokuta and an equal amount of time back to the air strip leaving him with only thirty minutes for his assignment. The World Bank representative who spent most of his time at the administrative block remarked at the

realistic than others. This- the western countries par which considered the Russian proposal as another communist world. On to frustrate the Russians they (the Russians) did consultancy aspect of which was given to PAC India. Ironically, the R- Indians to build their industry but the Indians Russian works at Ajaokuta

The first phase of the steel complex was to be commissioned in 1989. The commissioning date was later shifted to 1985, then 1987 and now from grapevine, *Hotline* is unrealistic".

Hotline, August 8-21 The commissioning date shifted to 1992. How realistic is it still a matter of

Going, going, go...?

A midst rumours of its disbandment by the eleven owner state governments, our correspondent looks at the New Nigeria Development Corporation, NNDC.

To many, the New Nigeria Development Company Limited (NNDC) is simply a name. Just the name of a ten storey building on Ahmadu Bello way Kaduna.

The NNDC has more to it than just the name. It is the brain child of the defunct Northern Region government of late Sir Ahmadu Bello. It started as a statutory corporation in 1949 with the name Northern Regional Production Development Board (N.R.P.D.B.)

The purpose of the board was to promote industrial and economic development of the defunct Northern Region. With the attainment of political autonomy in 1956 by the region, the NRPDB was reconstituted into the Northern Regional Development Corporation (NRDC). In 1960, the name was again changed to Northern Nigeria Development Corporation, reflecting the new nationalism achieved at independence.

With the establishment of a new political structure in 1967 which gave rise to the politics of states creation, the dissolution of the Northern Nigeria Development Corporation was decided and in its stead a limited liability company was incorporated in 1968 by the name New Nigeria Development Company (NNDC Limited). This was done to catch up with the new nationalism politics of independence and to also preserve the corporate identity created by the letters "NNDC".

NNDC Limited is today a development finance institution, wholly-owned by the Governments of the eleven northern states of Nigeria in varying proportions. The owner states and their share holdings are as follows. Bauchi 8.43%, Gongola 8.29%, Katsina 7.42%, Plateau 8.62%, Benue 7.61%, Kaduna 6.58%, Kwara 5.77%, Sokoto 12.35%, Borno 9.28%, Kano 19.00% and Niger 6.65%.

The NNDC is reputed as a giant hold-

ing company, the largest owned conglomerate of its kind in Africa. It is basically a holding company whose prin-



**Maj. Gen Muhammadu Jega (Rtd):
Chairman, NNDC.**

cipal activity includes the operation of selected viable businesses. It has equity and loan investments in about 110 companies spread throughout Nigeria.

Sectorally, the NNDC is involved in prominent sectors of the Nigerian political economy than any other organisation of its kind in the country. Some of the more prominent sectors in which NNDC has investment include: 1. Agriculture and agro-allied; 2. Banking and finance; 3. Building and construction; 4. Commerce; 5. Hotels; 6. Insurance; 7. Manufacturing; 8. Medical/Pharmaceuticals.

The NNDC does not fly on the investment promotion and supervision plane alone. It also has a stake on the managerial plane. The NNDC manages several enterprises particularly in the hospital-ity industry.

For instance, Arewa Hotels (Developments) Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the NNDC, remains the leading company in the Hotel management industry in Nigeria.

The company presently manages a total of 16 Hotel Units spread all over

the federation. Some of these are Durbar Hotel, Ltd., Lagos; Durbar Hotel Ltd., Kaduna; Kano State Hotels Ltd., Daula and Bagauda/Rock Castle, in Kano; Ginginya Hotel Ltd., Sokoto; Shukuma Hotel Ltd., Sokoto and Gusau Hotel Ltd., Gusau. In Arewa Hotels (Dev) Ltd Kaduna and Kaduna Hotels Ltd. (Hamdala) Kaduna, the NNDC has 100% holding.

In the banking sector, the NNDC has partial holding, an example is the New African Merchant Bank Ltd where it has 35% holding. The other 65% holding is shared among private individuals 44%; Bank of the North Ltd 16% and employees of the bank 5%.

Hotline gathered that the bank was incorporated with an authorised share capital of twenty million Naira (N20,000,000.00) which has been fully paid. Also apart from securities where it has 100% holding in Northern Nigeria Investments Ltd. Kaduna and Newdevco Finance Services Ltd, Lagos, in other sectors it only has partial holding. Some of these are construction and agro-allied services (Home Developments Ltd, Kaduna 51% and John Holt Agric. Ltd, Zaria 40%).

The reason for these selective investments, *Hotline* gathered is the fact that "NNDC invests only in viable projects". A project is considered viable if (a) its returns on investment is at least 5% above the minimum rediscount rate of the Central Bank of Nigeria (currently at 18.75%), and (b) if dividends are payable within three years of post commissioning. NNDC also gives preference to projects where inputs can be sourced locally and where the final product(s) can be exported.

An NNDC source disclosed to *Hotline* that the company also invests in projects sponsored by individuals and organisations whose integrity and reputation are not in doubt. It also pursues a policy of non-investment in certain industries (e.g tobacco and brewery) on moral grounds.

Generally, priority is given to industries with competitive advantage. The typical attributes which make any industry attractive to the NNDC include the following: minimum competitive

...sistency, reasonable entry/exit barriers, minimum regulatory influence, local source of raw materials, and existence of wide supply gap for products/services. A project is said to meet NNDC's standard when the total project cost is between N500,000 and N50 million.

An NNDC source also revealed to *Hotline* that "presently the company enjoys a \$35 million credit line from the European Investment Bank to finance off shore components of viable and profitable projects. "In addition, efforts are being stepped up to source additional investible funds from such sources like the African Development Bank (ADB) and some Danish and French financial institutions.

In view of the vast operational capabilities, development and organisational experience of the NNDC in its over forty (40) years of experience in project financing, the "big question" now is: will the NNDC fare better under the privatisation programme?

For answers to this question, *Hotline* went to town to conduct an opinion poll. This was at a time the Federal Government Technical Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation, TPCP was announcing profits(?) of N765 million from sale of government parastatals. Some of the opinions and views expressed were conservative and highly sentimental. There were those who insisted that privatisation as perceived by public and private thinking was essen-

tially a petit-bourgeois tendency, and that it was time to start thinking of delinking from the orbit of global capitalism. It was their contention that privatisation would amount to outright marginalisation of the masses. Such analysts say that this will go further to entrench the capitalist hold on the society and heighten the social problems of the marginalized poor.

One respondent at the NNDC drew the attention of this correspondent to the *The Punch* of December 15, 1985, as quoted in *Newswatch* of August 8, 1988. In it, one Timothy Olaleye, an industrialist, cautioned "Any attempt to privatise any of the government's parastatals will compound the social problems of the society". In the same document one Morgan Anigbo, a trade unionist argued; "It is not only against the dictates of conscience to privatise parastatals, it would also amount to direct steps aimed at silencing the masses of this country for ever". The NNDC source did not mince words when he went further to say that some of the amenities like "housing and to some extent job security they (staff) enjoy at NNDC will be a thing of the past when privatized".

Privatisation does have a record for enhancing productivity and efficiency but "Will privatisation work in Africa?" This was the question raised by Ernest J. Wilson, professor of Public Policy Studies, University of Michigan at Ann Harbour in the United States of America in a public lecture in Nigeria in March 1985. His answer; (according to *Newswatch* August 8, 1988) "If by privatisation we mean the widespread sale of publicly - owned assets to local private sector owners, the answer is almost certainly No". The reasons he went on "are complex but in a nutshell, those who might want to buy public enterprise equity haven't the money while those with the money haven't the interest, or local buyers are politically unacceptable to government."

Privatisation, a source at NNDC who preferred anonymity told *Hotline* "will open the floodgate of favouritism, sectionalism, and undue victimization. Above all, *Hotline* gathered that "the

high standards the NNDC currently maintains will be in serious jeopardy".

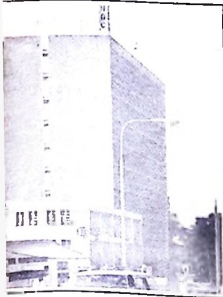
Mr. Perry Ohens, a financial expert based in Kaduna told *Hotline* that the equity investment and loan investment criteria which have optimum priority, will be relegated to the background when privatisation comes under focus. He feared that individual interests would then override the public interest.

Expressing a different opinion, another source at NNDC who is an economist and on secondment from the Benue State government told *Hotline* that the NNDC is a limited liability company. It buys shares and also invests in companies both private and public. And infact, it is privatised, when viewed technically. Moreover, most decisions are in the hands of management. "So what again are you saying when you talk of privatisation?" he asked.

On the 1991 annual statements of the NNDC and its subsidiaries, *Hotline* gathered that it was presently under consideration together with the auditor's report awaiting the governors' meeting. *Hotline*, reliably gathered from the Group Managing Director, Mr. D.U. Ugbabe that so far the NNDC has been doing very well, and that since he assumed office, the NNDC has not borrowed money from any organisation or persons. To support his position, he cited an instance when he was billed for suspension. But this idea was immediately dropped following an emergency meeting by the governors who reached a conclusion that the NNDC has performed creditably well.

On staff development and welfare, he told *Hotline* that NNDC will soon start off a development scheme that will cater for public needs, including NNDC's staff. So far so good and it is hoped that from which ever avenue the NNDC sees the privatisation drive, prime importance should be given to economic assistance of the weak and sourcing of small scale indigenous industries and also in areas like employment generation. A nation that is not industrially strong cannot be effective in other areas of human endeavour.

By Freddie A. Airohi.



The NNDC Head Office, Kaduna.
Hotline Newsmagazine July, 1991

Edge of Despair

The story of one man's desperate fight against financial ruin from the hands of the Police.

Alhaji Mohammed Baki looked into the reporter's face, opened his mouth to say something. Just then a little girl of about nine rushed into the room, towards Baki, waving a pupil's report card. "We are now on holidays, this is my report card, they said I should buy a new school uniform, I came fifth in my class..."

Alhaji Baki, flipped open the card. He looked into it and raised his head, to look into the reporter's eyes again. But whatever he did or did not want to say, the reporter had seen. "She has done excellently well, but she needs a new school uniform" was written in very cursive handwriting, as the teacher's comment.

Alhaji Baki's daughter told her father that her panties are usually seen through the dress. The initial embarrassment that enveloped Alhaji Baki faded. What he could not say, his daughter said.

Alhaji Baki's sitting room is not any better than the girl's uniform. But the tell-tale signs of having seen better days were there. Today Alhaji Baki, a building and supplies contractor, lives from hand to mouth. He can no longer pay his children's school fees. His car, a Honda Accord, has been grounded for more than one year now. He has been dragged to court once for insolvency. Yet he is owed a substantial amount of money by the Police Academy Annex, Kaduna for two years.

Baki's last hope seemed to have been the public Complaints Commission. To the Commission's Hospital road office, he went and duly narrated his ordeal and left a formal complaints letter. The Commission, through Ismaila Aliyu, wrote the Police Commissioner in charge of the Police Academy, informing him of the complaints laid by Alhaji Baki. That was on 3rd June, 1991. The Academy replied in a letter dated 11th June, 1991 and signed by C.E. Omorisi, Assistant Commis-

sioner of Police, Admin/Training, acknowledging the complaints commission letter.

When *Hotline* went to the Academy with Baki's case on Tuesday 18th June, Commissioner of Police of the Academy, Haliru Zakari, said he was not aware of any contractor being owed, neither was he aware of any letter from the complaints commission. According to him, "even if I got their (public complaints commission's) letter, I am not obliged to reply. We are a federal agency. We can only deal with the Federal Complaints Commission".

Alhaji Mohammed Baki's ordeal started in November 1989. He was contracted for electrical supplies and maintenance at the Academy. The contract was worth fifty seven thousand nine hundred naira, (N57,900). The contract involved rewiring jobs at the Academy buildings, supplying keys, flush doors, junction boxes and bulbs, replacing window frames and louvres, building a generator house and laying of pipes. For successfully doing all these, Alhaji Baki was paid twenty three thousand naira, (23,000) out of the whole. For some reasons, five thousand, three hundred naira (5,300) was cut, leaving an outstanding twenty nine thousand naira, (N29,000) for which he has expended so much energy, time and money to get.

Four times, his solicitors wrote to remind the Academy of their indebtedness to him and his pitiful plight. On one occasion he enclosed a summons for a law suit against him for failing to pay one of those who supplied him materials for the contract.

Alhaji Baki contacted Police Service Commission's former chairman, Alhaji Ahmadu Fateka, the *Sarkin Fadar Zazzau*, who chipped in a note to the Inspector General of Police on behalf of Alhaji Baki. This was to no avail. The Academy would not pay the petty contractor what they owed him. When all hope seemed lost, Alhaji Baki, father of five, sent by courier, a personal letter to

the Inspector General. From the Force Headquarters, Lagos, a letter dated 14th May, 1991 was dispatched to the Commissioner of Police, Police Academy, in respect of Baki. The Academy was "requested to arrange settlement of this debt with your own allocation". The letter was signed by A.B. Opayemi,



Alhaji Mohammed Baki

Commissioner of Police (Works), Lagos. Yet the Academy would not budge.

Baki's last hope was the Public Complaints Commission which has now written a letter to the Inspector General of Police reporting its observations resulting from the content of the letter received from Commissioner of Police, Police Academy Annex who "is trying to adopt deliberate delay tactics in solving this case despite your letter directing the Academy to arrange settlement of the bills".

Baki lamented that many other contractors have been paid "including those who did their's this year. My fear now is that the Academy will soon move to its permanent site in Kano. That will mean double expenses for going to Kano.

"I am not a thief. I did my own part of the contract. Why should they refuse to pay me?", asked Baki.

Though the Commissioner at the Academy told *Hotline* that he has spent just about one year in the office, it is believed that there is a lot he can do to alleviate the suffering of a faithful supplier. But this saga of unpaid debt raises more questions. Is someone sitting down on the payment, in spite of the directive from the I.G.'s office? Is somebody being insubordinate? What happens to allocations which the Commissioner said are usually "sent to pay bills?"

By Tony Inwalale.

A Tale of the Unexpected

The new Kaduna state carved from the larger old does not prove better management. A look at the educational system gives shocks.

When Kaduna state was recreated and Katsina state carved out of it on September 23, 1987, there was a series of halloos heralding great expectations and opportunities in all facets of life in the new Kaduna state. Those who were previously in the minority and felt shackled by the chain of subordination heaved the sigh of emancipation.

But ironically, Kaduna state, with the enviable credential of being the bastion of the northern region, commanding great respect, has pitifully remained a shadow of its former self and is only sustained by the glories of the past. Like the child displaying every characteristic of a stunted growth, the state has remained an unfulfilled dream. The hopes

vicissitudes of time without wavering in original conception, which have robbed the erstwhile giant of the North, the glories of the moment.

The minorities of yesteryear have now become the majorities of today and the tunes of old have also unexpectedly become the songs of today. And there is a continuous enactment of the disparity, marginalisation, bigotry, favouritism etc, that were the experiences of the pre-Katsina state era.

The fits and starts that have become the bane of educational system in Kaduna state is an obvious display of what some people might want to regard as the peculiar nature of politics in the state. But come to think of it, what makes the politics of Kaduna state so different from

say that of Katsina, Gongola or Bendel states? While we may want to continue to stamp the state with the stigma of peculiarity, it is also pertinent to note that it is one way of trying to escape from the burning issues of the day which are daily manifesting themselves in our lives. And this is particularly most pathetic in its ugly manifestation in our educational system.

The post-recreation era was an era that condoned an unprecedented festival of favouritism and downward trend in the educational scale through the introduction of arbitrary burdensome and discriminatory

fees on both indigene and non-indigene students of our public schools. Majority of the staff strength in most public schools witnessed a record breaking concentration of groups from particular sections of the state, the southern Zaria tribes.

Hotline carried out an investigation based on series of allegations on the anomalies in the

structure and composition of academic staff in most schools within Kaduna metropolis and found out that as much as it is true that there is an unjustifiable concentration, it also a concentration of the not too good.

Hotline further found out that even the few who are representative of the minority, are not the best the section could offer. Therefore, it is a concentration of mediocrity from all sections. This is why the educational standard within the state is nothing to write home about.

For instance, Hotline found out that in Government Girls Secondary School, Tudun Wada; (Maimuna Gwarzo), a very significant percentage of the staff in the school is from the southern part of the state. Starting from the Principal, Vice Principal I, Vice Principal II, Senior Mistress, Administration, Senior Master, Examination, to the Assistant Examination Officer. If there is a concentration like this in a school, the tendency is there that there will be fear from the minority of intimidation. There is also the possibility of a lacklustre attitude towards teaching by a number of the staff. Because they know they will always be protected no matter



Col. Tanko Ayuba: Kaduna state governor

of yesterday have remained vague; ideas have remained concealed, while laudies presented in the dreams have remained elusive.

The old hopes and ideals have remained a mirage and refused to crystallise into actual realities because of obvious absence of a strong conviction, stamina, faith, purposefulness, honesty dogged and aggressive pursuit and ability to absorb the shocks of fate and



Dr. Ahmadu Bello: Commissioner for education

EDUCATION

how wrong they are.

Hotline also found out that this is not an issue limited to GDSS Tudun Wada alone, but a tradition that obtains in other schools. For instance, in Government Day Secondary School, Tafawa Balewa, some of the teachers in this concentration could be said to belong to the group of the mediocre. Some of them who teach very sensitive subjects, like English Language, are as awful as

SSCE without being taught map reading? Or physics and chemistry without practicals?

Some of these teachers are so intellectually lazy that when they come to certain parts of the syllabus they find too difficult, they ask the students to skip that section. This is perhaps why, out of the hundreds of students that sat for the SSCE in GDSS Tafawa Balewa last year (1990), only one managed to have

schools. For instance, the S.S.S. 3 students of G.D.S.S Tafawa Balewa, were made to pay examination fee of N5.00 before sitting for their last mock examination. And it beats any sensible observer's imagination what the schools do with such money collected; for instance, students, during the same Mock examination, had to share question papers.

Let us assume for one moment that the Ministry of Education is not doing enough and this is the only way the schools could complement the ministry's efforts, why then are the students still allowed to suffer by not having enough of what they are made to pay for? How could there even be excellence in the examination when there is a cluster of students over one question paper?

Investigations further revealed that when incoming J.S.S. 1 students are getting into the schools, they are asked, as part of the numerous things they should buy, to bring a box of chalk, duster, duplicating papers etc. What do the schools do with the supplies from the ministry? Or is this one way of getting teachers reward here on earth without waiting to get to heaven?

The parents of the students are not left out of this extortion. Because whether they like or not, they must pay the sum of N10.00 as Parents Teachers Association (PTA) fee as part of their children's first term school fees. They are even made to pay the sum of N15.00 as registration fee for their children who are in JSS II to SS III which is not supposed to be the case as these students are not incoming students. Why, if one may ask are there all these arbitrary and exploitative levies? Where does the money go? These are some of the numerous questions the Ministry should address itself.

It should be understood that there are diverse interests in the state which must be taken into consideration in the scheme of things. Or else, the state shall continue to wallow in abject backwardness. And the hopes of a better educated tomorrow for today's people, shall continue to be elusive.

By Danjuma Bawa.



School in session: Still a wasted generation?

some of the students they teach. It is no wonder to note that they still teach final year students preparing for their SSCE, topics they are supposed to have been taught in JSS 1

It was further found out that there are a number of teachers in some of these schools who hang around their staff rooms all term round without teaching any subject. Yet they are paid for doing nothing at the end of the month. Efforts to get officials of the ministry to comment on why this is allowed to thrive proved abortive.

Some of the teachers, it was found out, are only interested in displaying their wardrobes, particularly among the female teachers in girls schools. They pose and perch around like monkeys on heat. The zeal and dedication is not there to put in their best because they unfortunately do not know how. How, for instance, could form six students be expected to pass Geography in the

enough credits. And the credits are not even at distinction levels.

Such is the woe that has betide the chapter of learning in our schools. And coupled with mediocrity is also the numerously investigated allegations of maladministration and impropriety in the schools. In GDSS, Tudun Wada, it was discovered that the Vice Principal 1, sometime in 1990, imposed a fine of N12.00 per student on all S.S. 1 students who were unable to register within two weeks of allocation of classes. The money it was also gathered, was collected illegally without the Ministry of Education's permission. Furthermore, **Hotline** investigations revealed that, the same Vice Principal 1, who is in charge of the issuance of transfer certificates; is in the habit of demanding for a down payment of N40.00 before certificates are issued.

Hotline investigations revealed that similar tradition obtains in some other



N.A.C.B. Headquarter, Kaduna.

A Decade of Small Farmer Credit Scheme in NACB

Our most recent economic experience as a nation has further confirmed the foremost place of agriculture amongst the components that inform the overall development of a nation. Put differently, self-sufficiency or near self-sufficiency in food and fibre production is a strong prerequisite for a credible economic take off of any nation.

In the Nigerian context, like most Third World countries, the small scale farmer literally constitutes the determinant of such self-sufficiency or otherwise. Why this is so is hardly shrouded in obscurity. In the first place, available records have it that subsistence or small holder farmers account for about 90% of the nation's farming population. In the second place they are responsible for about 95% of the aggregate food and fibre output in the country. It is only appropriate therefore to refer to this group of farmers as the backbone of the Nigerian Agriculture. Indeed their importance can only be neglected to the nation's peril.

The Nigerian Agriculture and Co-operative Bank Limited (NACB) realised this well over a decade ago and



decidedly embarked on far-sighted credit programmes that have been a tremendous source of happiness to a great number of small scale farmers in the country today. The Direct Small holder Loan scheme is one of such schemes. More light is shed on this in the write-up.

An apex development Bank, NACB came into existence in 1973 as a national credit institution charged with the responsibility of delivering credit to the nation's agricultural sector through the provision of loans to individual farmers, Co-operative organisations, limited liability companies, state and Federal Government's agencies.

The basic rationale behind this was hinged on the infallible fact that by doing this, the Bank will not only assist in improving the income and quality of life of the Nigerian farmers but also promote agricultural production and rural development thus contributing to the overall growth and development of the Nigerian economy.

Seventeen years after its establishment, evidence abound to show that the trust reposed in NACB was not misplaced. Indeed, the Bank has through foresight and efficiency made an indelible impact on the nation's agricultural scene especially in relation to the small scale farmers. Who then are the small scale farmers? For the purpose of this write-up, the small scale farmers are defined by their peculiar characteristics which are the following:

They are mostly residents of the nation's rural areas which are poorly served by basic public amenities; they are generally engaged in subsistence farming, working small plots of land either for themselves or as landless workers; - they are generally poor with static or at best declining standard of living; as a result of the above features

FOCUS ON N.A.C.B.



Dr. Shettima Mustapha:
Minister of Agriculture

their common denominator is low productivity low income, low saving and of course, low capital accumulation; - in most cases, they are unwilling to adopt new farming techniques due to ignorance and illiteracy.

NACB and Small Farmers Before 1981

At inception in 1973, NACB commenced operations with the Head Office in Kaduna and three years later, four (4) Area Offices were opened in Bauchi, Sokoto, Ibadan and Enugu. At this teething stage, the Bank's credit delivery operations were carried out mainly through two broad lending schemes namely: direct lending and on-lending schemes. And due to the lack of adequate infrastructure, personnel and facilities needed to sufficiently penetrate the rural areas at the time, the Bank's credit to the small scale farmers was being channelled through the On-lending agencies such as the Co-operative Societies, State and Federal Government agencies as well as the River Basin Authorities.

The primary aim, as it were, was for these established institutions to reach as many small-scale farmers as possible with the Bank's borrowed credit. As a matter of fact, between 1973 and 1980, a total sum of N178.1 million had been approved under the On-lending scheme for the small scale farmers.

As good as this strategy seemed to be, an appraisal carried out by the Bank shortly before 1981 revealed that the programme was not having its desired results. In the first place, a substantial chunk of the loan did not reach many of the small farmers. In the second place, loans, when given at all, were done off season which naturally led to endless cases of diversion of funds meant for agricultural production. Besides, the repayment rate was very low and worse still was the fact that the few small farmers that were lucky to benefit from the scheme hardly knew that NACB was the source of the

credit they were enjoying. Thus, if there was any praise at all, it went to the On-lending approach which evidently was not result-oriented.

The advent of the direct small holder loan scheme

As a result of the unsatisfactory scenario presented above, NACB geared all effort towards finding a better way of reaching the teeming population of the Nigerian small farmers. It was this genuine concern and preoccupation that gave birth to the establishment of the Direct Small holder Loan Scheme in 1981. As a bold and imaginative step, it touches on the practical need of the



Prof. M.B. Ajakaiye:
M. D. and Chief Executive



Alhaji Bashir Mohammed Dalhat:
Chairman

Nigerian small farmers. The scheme has the following characteristics: - any farmer could obtain a maximum loan of N10,000 under it (A fresh applicant is however eligible to obtain up to N5,000 at the first instance and then N10,000 after the first loan has been repaid);

- the requirement for collateral for the loan assistance is waived;
- all a farmer needs is to establish that he is resident in his locality or village;
- the applicant is a full - time farmer, or substantially a full time farmer;
- that the land on which he is farming belongs to him or belongs to his family or that he has permission to use it,
- that there would be two guarantors of good standing in his village or locality who are prepared to guarantee his good behaviour and the loan to be made to him.

The uniqueness of this scheme lies in its being the quintessence of the Bank's liberal lending policy. As a result of the successful operation of the scheme in the past one decade, NACB has become the leading source of financial strength to the nation's pool of small farmers.

4. Its growth and acceptability

In the last one decade, the operation of the Small Holder Scheme (SHS) by NACB has passed through a tremendous growth and improvement. As and when necessary, the scheme has been fine-tuned not only to keep up with the

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social and economic trend in the nation but also to make it more relevant and beneficial to its primary object- the small scale farmers. The steady growth of the scheme is therefore presented below in chronological order.

4.1 1981

Prior to 1981, NACB was having (4) Branch Offices at Enugu, Ibadan, Bauchi and Sokoto. But shortly before the take off of the Small Holder Scheme (SHS), offices were created in all other state capitals in Nigeria. So the stage was set for action.

At the take off of the scheme in March, 1981, it (the scheme) was planned to start off on a pilot scale. Thus a total sum of N1.9 million was made available by the Bank to all its 19 Branch Offices nationwide on a revolving basis. With each of them now operating the scheme with N100,000, an intense publicity campaign was mounted for the scheme in order to raise the awareness of more small scale farmers about it. Expectedly, the campaign yielded positive results and within a year of operating the scheme, it became apparent that more funds would be needed by the Bank's State Branch Offices for the scheme.

4.2 1982 and 1983

In 1982, another whopping sum of N3.8 million was released to the scheme and the 19 Branch Offices had N200,000 each. With a significant increase in the quantity and quality of its manpower, NACB used this period to actually consolidate the new innovative scheme. Not only were its projects well formulated, they were dispassionately appraised and honestly supervised. In fact, the liberal nature of the scheme was a welcome relief to the Nigerian small scale farmers who, as a result of past frustration, had already given up confidence in formal credit institutions.

4.3 1984 and 1985

Indeed by 1984, the remarkable success of the pilot scheme both in fund utilisation by farmers and loan recovery was clearly undisputable. And to say that the programme had to stay was to state the obvious. In the year, the scope of the scheme was decisively widened to make it more responsive to the nation's economic climate. For in-



Alhaji Isa Tahir:
Executive Director (Operations)

stance, as a way of responding to the prevailing economic hardship which led to massive retrenchments in 1984, the Bank widened the scope of the scheme to accommodate affected workers who liked to opt for farming as a source of livelihood. Not only this, the widening of the scheme was stretched to take care of employees in both the private and public sectors who were (are) interested in farming.

This bold step was immediately given a corresponding financial backing by the Bank when it injected another N2,150,000 into the scheme. BY this, each of the Branch Offices at the nation's 19 State Capitals was given N100,000 while N250,000 went to the Federal Capital Territory. To further reinforce the funding, NACB distrib-



Alhaji Garba Mohammed Bawa:
Executive Director (Services)

uted a fresh sum of N17.3 million to the Scheme in 1985.

4.4 1986 and 1987

By 1986, it was crystal clear that the viability and efficacy of the scheme (especially in supporting the Federal Government's agricultural development policy) were outstanding. Thus it was acknowledged that this type of scheme of delivering credit to the small farmers was most beneficial. Commercial banks were therefore directed by the Federal Government to adopt the scheme.

NACB records have it that as at 1986, about 31,000 small farmers had benefited from the scheme nationwide. Yet, the increasing surge in the number of applications being received by the Bank was amazing. It was therefore necessary for the Bank to find a far reaching solution to this so that more farmers could enjoy the scheme. To this end, two fundamental steps were taken.

The first one was that at a time, a total of 117 Representative Offices of NACB were opened in Local Governments Areas of the country. This meant that 6 offices were placed in each of the then 19 States while 3 were put in Abuja. The second step taken was in the area of improving the Bank's staffing position. The Bank introduced the use of capable and well trained officers at its Representative Offices. These officers are holders of National Diploma in various fields of agriculture. They were employed as Agricultural Credit Assistants (ACAs) but later have their designation changed to Assistant Supervisors Credit (ASCs).

The idea was (and still is) for these specialised officers to serve as immediate contact personnel for the rural farmers. In order to facilitate their assignments, they were deployed to their states of origin and their duties include amongst others, to assist farmers in obtaining and completing application forms and forward such completed forms to the relevant Branch Office for consideration. They also visit applicants' farms and carry out all that is required in the identification and analysis of viable small holder projects.

In order to make it possible for them to

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carry out all these duties without hindrance, they were provided with motorcycles with which they could easily penetrate the rural areas where the bulk of the small farmers reside. Suffice it to say that this twin step of creating Representative Offices and recruiting Assistant Supervisor Credit (ASCs) has gone a long way to give physical expression to the Bank's resolute drive to bring its services to the door steps of its target population - the small farmers.

In order to ensure a continuous flow of fund into the small holder older scheme, the revolving nature of the scheme was terminated in 1987; funds were therefore provided to each Branch Office on the basis if need.

4.5 1988 and 1989

Conscious of the spiralling prices of agricultural inputs occasioned by the

precedented. In fact, records have it that in 1988, alone a total of 44,000 Nigerian small holder farmers benefited from the scheme while in 1989 alone, the figure jumped to 50,964.

It is against this background that the Bank deemed it necessary to come out with a comprehensive Operating Manual for the popular scheme. This became a reality in 1989 when a "Manual of Operation for NACB small Holder Loan Scheme" was evolved. Not only that, an office known as the Small Holder Scheme Unit was created in the office of the Bank's Executive Director (Operations) to co-ordinate the scheme's activities nation wide; to collect and collate SHS returns and reports as well as assisting Management to review approaches to reaching small scale farmers.

Also, starting from 1989, NACB has been making loans available to state governments to procure tractors and implements for use in running tractor hire services to the small and medium scale farmers. The bottom line to this is that the small scale farmer, by virtue of his constraints, cannot afford the current astronomical cost of tractor head, yet his access to land preparation services is very essential to the optimal utilisation of the Small Holder Loan obtained by him.

4.6 1990 and 1991

The use of the SHS Manual of Operation commenced in 1990 and before long the needed uniformity in the administration of SHS was achieved.

This period also witnessed a massive funding of the scheme as well as the creation of more offices to sufficiently penetrate the rural areas. At the current count, NACB has opened about 276 representative offices in the Local Government Areas specifically for the Small Holder Loan operations. These offices are in addition to the five (5) Zonal Offices and 38 Branch Offices spread all over the federation.

Today, over 200,000 Nigerian farmers have benefited from this scheme and the Bank has committed a total of about N300 million. This figure is without prejudice to the ones still being made available under the On-lending

Schemes which has over the years been strengthened to be more result oriented.

It is evident today that with the Small Holder Scheme, NACB has made a laudable contribution to the national effort at improving agricultural financing and productivity. More importantly it has put smiles on the faces of most Nigerian farmers while at the same time giving hope to the hopeless amongst them.

It is therefore not surprising that the scheme has gained wide popularity and acceptability in the Nigerian agricultural and financing sectors. At no other time was this factually established than in 1986 when your Bank was adjudged by Nigerian farmers in an opinion poll as the most credible source of agricultural credit.

Since then the yearly number of appli-



Mr. P.C.O. Emenike:
Executive Director (Research & Dev.)

prevaling economic recession, NACB reviewed upward its loan ceiling under the Small Holder Loan Scheme from N5,000 to N10,000 in 1988. However, a fresh applicant may not obtain more than N5,000 at the first instance. Thereafter, he could be eligible to N10,000 after he must have repaid fully the first loan. In the same year, the Bank created 17 new Branch Offices in addition to the former 21 and ceded more power to them accordingly both in the areas of manpower and financial responsibility. It was therefore possible for them to approve, disburse and supervise all Small Holder Loans at the Branch Office level.

The positive result of this was un-



Alhaji Muhammad Gidado Bakari:
Executive Director (Finance)

cations received under the Small Holder Scheme has more than quadrupled. For instance, in 1988 alone, about 78,000 applications were received by the Bank under the scheme. A simple mathematics shows that this forms 43% of the cumulative 178,000 applications received for the 8 year period of the scheme operations (i.e. 1981-88). NACB has taken this trend as a challenge which it must live up to. Thus in recent times it has on one end embarked on an aggressive sourcing of funds especially from the international money market to adequately finance the scheme and on the other, it has stepped up its loan recovery efforts. Interestingly, these two ends have paid off

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Prof. Musa G. Yakubu:
Director

greatly.

Achievements of the Scheme

NACB has in fact, recorded some impressive achievements with its operation of the Direct Small Holder Loan Scheme in the last ten years.

On a macro level, the Bank has, through the scheme, made a laudable contribution to the changing face of the Nigerian agricultural credit delivery system. For one thing, the scheme has restored the lost confidence of the Nigerian farmers in formal credit institutions. For the other, the fact that loans under finance sector has eroded the popularity of the informal lending institutions such as the money lenders.

With this scheme, NACB has also played a leading role in permanently asserting the importance of the small scale farmers on the Nigerian agricultural scheme. This category of farmers had always been known for their industry, praised for their importance, but often neglected in relevant schemes of practical assistance. Undoubtedly, the successful operation of the NACB Small Holder Scheme filled this gap. Additionally it has gone a long way to change or at least, modify the apathy of most finance houses for agricultural lending.

Perhaps more satisfying to the Nigerian small farmers is the reality of a well packaged scheme of the Small Holder type being brought to their door-steps through the Bank's representative offices nationwide. This was unthinkable

some years past. It is indeed, a great achievement.

Even at the national level, the scheme gained the genuine recognition and conviction of the Federal Government so much so that it directed in 1986 that Commercial Banks should incorporate lending to small holders under the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS). The Scheme was consequently amended and given a legal backing by decree No. 18 of 14th June, 1988. In the same year the Federal government formally established the National Small farmers' Credit Scheme.

Prospect And Innovations In The Small Holder Loans Scheme

This policy measure is significant in the sense that it has made it possible for the Government to pump more money into agriculture as well as increase the access of rural farmers to farm credit.

Another notable achievement of the scheme is that it has given an incontrovertible credence to the Bank's (NACB) traditional policy of placing emphasis on the small scale farmers. For instance, available records show that 97% of all loans given in 1989 went to the small scale farmers, and besides the percentage increase in the Bank's small holder beneficiaries in the past 3 years is 126.28%.

By no means least amongst the enormous achievements recorded is that the scheme created jobs for about 300 ACAs and there is every cause to believe that more of such jobs would be created in the future.

Problems of the Scheme

The record of achievements of NACB in the operation of the Small Holder Scheme has never been without pains. In fact, some of the problems encountered, over the years, have threatened to vitiate the well meaning efforts of the Bank in this direction but the good story is that NACB has been able to weather the storm. Foremost amongst these problems was that of inadequate funds which is now fast becoming a thing of the past sequel to the increase in the Bank's capital base to N500 million. Additionally, the bank now has a free access to source funds at the international money market.

Another was that of inadequate staffing and high cost of administering loans under the scheme. This was tackled by the opening of 267 representative offices nationwide and the recruitment of ACAs.

And even though, the recovery rate under the scheme has been encouraging, the Bank is not resting on its oars for it has embarked on a series of actions in recent times to further step up its loan recovery rate.

Prospect of and innovations in the Small Holders Loans scheme

Against the background of the achievements made so far by the Bank, there is no doubt that the Small Holder scheme has a high prospect. Indeed, to a very large extent, it stands out as a prime solution to the nation's food problems especially if given the unreserved backing it deserves from other finance institutions.

NACB as an apex finance institution will always maintain its unwavering commitment to the scheme both now and in the future. Already ways of carrying out further invigoration of the scheme is already being looked into. In no distant future, emphasis may be placed on group-related approaches so that more farmers could benefit from the scheme.

One of such approaches already experimented by the Bank is its Outgrower Farmers Programme which turned out to be a great success in the Bank's Yola



Mr. Chuks Ezaugh:
Director

and Gombe Branch Offices. This is an approach that makes it possible for groups of farmer to use the Bank's credit facilities for specialised areas of production attached to particular industries. In other words, farmers already have a guaranteed market in a particular company even before they embark on production.

From the Bank's experience so far, this approach not only encourages backward integration (which is being encouraged by the government), it also makes credit available to a greater number of farmers, reduces the Bank's overhead costs of administering loans and guarantees almost a hundred per cent loan recovery rate.

In fact, from all indications, one can conveniently conclude that with more innovative ideas the NACB Small holder Scheme is set to significantly shake both the agricultural and the industrial sectors of the nation's economy



Mr. E.E. Eyo:
Director

for the better.

Conclusion:

From the foregoing, it is apparent and conclusive that NACB has by virtue of its national responsibility, seriousness and consistent dynamism, used the

Small Holder Scheme to place Nigerian small farmers on the centre stage of national recognition.

The effective operation of the scheme in the past ten years has not only changed the course of the nation's agricultural history but has also changed the lives of men directly and indirectly. Directly because over 200,000 small scale farmers have joyfully benefited from the scheme and indirectly because their improved income and quality of life have had a multiplier effect on their environments. Besides, the operation to the scheme led to the creation of more jobs, more offices and more facilities in the rural areas.

Finally, it is hoped that with the strong determination of NACB, support of other finance houses, Government and individuals, further pursuance of scheme will one day bring Nigeria to the realisation of its avowed dream of self-sufficiency in food production.

MD/CE Expatriates On The Small Holder Loan Scheme

NACB Managing Director and Chief Executive, Professor M.B. Ajakaiye in an interview with Hotline staff correspondent expatriates on the Small Holder Loan scheme. Below are the details of the interview:

Hotline: Is there any special concession to be given now or in the future to farmers who have successfully utilised and serviced loan given to them by the Bank under the Small Holder Loan Scheme especially if the farmer has drawn the maximum N10,000 over and over again?

Ajakaiye: First and foremost, the first concession we can give is that such farmers will be given priority over others in credit facilities at the beginning of every season because we have found them both reliable and credit worthy.

Another concession of course, is that since they have utilised the loans well and have been repaying, they deserve our support. And going by your question, it is obvious that N10,000 can no longer be enough for their expansion, more so, when we expect them to graduate from small-scale farmers to medium and large scale farmers, so we can allow

them to take more than N10,000 say, N15,000 or N20,000 and we take equitable mortgage, so the system could make it possible for them to take 50% or 100% more than what they have been taking before. But we will not give out a large sum of money without security.

Hotline: in view of the success so far experienced in the operation of the Out growers farmers programme, is there any plan by the Bank to globalise it?

Ajakaiye: Yes you are aware, the Gombe and Yola programmes of this Outgrower scheme were very successful. So we know now that there is a system which the bank can fully utilise to the advantage of all because what it means is that we now have a group of farmers in Nigeria that we can lend to and these farmers know that at the end of the season, there is an outfit to purchase their produce from them with full payment. It is therefore possible for NACB

to get its money back directly from source as soon as the produce is sold. We indeed plan to use this type of system all over Nigeria especially where the conditions are favourable.

Of course, you know that we had a very bad case in Zaria area where the system did not work; not that the system itself was faulty but because the procedure for giving the loan was circumvented. However, the management has taken disciplinary action against all the staff involved and the Board of the NACB has also taken a decision on the whole issue and legal action is in progress. But of course, this is a good experience for us because now we know how to block the holes in the administrative anomaly that caused this problem. So the answer is yes. We will apply the system all over the country.

Hotline: Is there any plan by the Bank to phase out the current individual approach to obtaining loans under the SHS in favour of group lending?

Ajakaiye: As a matter of fact, if we had an efficient way of reaching farmers through groups, we would not need to go to the individual Small Farmers directly face-to face. If you remember when the bank started operations, we

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were giving loans to the Co-operative Societies to give to their members. So we know only these Societies. The rest of the beneficiaries were more or less faceless to NACB except of course when we go to monitor how the funds had been given then we can take samples of beneficiaries that have taken the money and how they are faring, etc. But at the end of it all when it is time to have our loan paid back, the Co-operative Societies paid back our money. We really do not have any business with each individual beneficiary of such loans.

Similarly, we were giving such loans to the Ministry of Agriculture who will now give to their farmers, so our client will be the Ministry of Agriculture. The reason why we do this is because the Co-operative Societies and the Ministry of Agriculture know the farmers more than we know them and it is easier for them to reach these small scale farmers because they have their outfit - I mean their extension system through which they can reach these farmers. Our only reason for going into direct lending was that by 1981, we recognised that the Co-operative system actually broke down completely. In fact, the Co-operative system, as far as we know now in Nigeria, has collapsed. That was why we said that since our main mandate is to reach the farmers and particularly the small scale farmers being in the majority, we could as well find another way of reaching them. Also we decided to go to these small scale farmers directly.

This is in fact a revolutionary idea. Revolutionary in the sense that loans are granted to farmers on a one-to-one basis and then liberalising the conditions involved. NACB is the pioneer of this idea and we are proud of it. The government itself has acknowledged the goodness of the approach and that was why it directed the Agricultural Credit Guaranteed Scheme (ACGS) to do the same and that commercial banks should copy the idea.

The fact now is that the Co-operative system is revamped and we have farmers associations that are efficient, we would rather give money to these groups to reach their members than to



Dr. Ayinde Orafidiya:
Director



Mr. A. O. Adache:
Director

have NACB dealing directly with the nation's farmers on a one-to-one or face-me-I-face-you basis.

Hotline: Are you saying in other words that the bank would prefer On-lending to Direct Lending?

Ajakaiye: Yes of course. On-lending is much better than going direct because it is usually very expensive to go to farmers directly. Secondly, we cannot and we should not pretend that we can reach all Nigerian farmers directly because we don't have the executive capacity even if we have all the funds.

Hotline: Does the Bank have the plan to cede limited powers to its representative offices in the area of approval of loans?

Ajakaiye: It will be very dangerous to do so at this time because the Representa-

tative Offices are not yet equipped for that type of function and autonomy. The capacity is not just there for now. However, the answer can be yes only on the condition that a particular representative office has been transformed into a small Branch Office whereby it will now have the required powers. And of course, you should not forget that the ultimate aim of the Bank is to see its representative offices graduating into Branch Offices nationwide.

Hotline: From the experience you have acquired so far in the operation of the SHS, what are your advice to the Nigerian small scale farmers?

Ajakaiye: My advice to the small scale farmers is that they should not bite more than they can chew. Small scale farmers should not think they can handle 5 hectares when in actual fact, they can cannot handle more than 2 hectares. So it is better for them to learn to have the size of farm which they can manage properly and learn from mistakes and then expand little by little - year after year and soon they will master the intricacies of farming problems. But some people instead of starting with one hectare, they go into ten hectares and at the end, they find that they cannot manage it. This is one of the major problems that bedevil agriculture in Nigerian today. There is lack of competent management in agricultural production. This is a great problem facing our medium and large scale farmers.

Management is very important in agricultural production. Let me give you an example. If you have a farm and you have all the knowledge of what you want to plant, let us assume that your plan is to start planting say, on the 1st of June. If you don't put in effective management, you will find out that although you wrote everything down neatly on paper, it will not work out. You will discover that the people you put there to plant may start planting on the 15th of June and before you know what is happening, you've already lost 20% of your yields. And perhaps you instruct them to put 10 bags of fertilizer per hectare, some of them may feel that the application of 10 bags is too much and thus reduce it to 3. It is you that will lose your

yields. In fact, instead of putting the fertilizer in the ground, they may allow the plants to sprout before they apply the fertilizer. That is of course, a waste.

What all this means is that a good farmer cannot afford to be an absentee farmer. You have to be efficient and the best way to be is to make sure that you are a good manager who must see to his farm everyday and see things for himself. If you ask people to put 2 kilogramme of herbicides per hectare, you should make sure they put 2, not 5 and not 1. so that is how it is.

Management is the main issue the very moment the finance problem is solved.



Alhaji Mohammed Bala Shagari:
Director

Hotline: What other things would you like this class of farmers to look forward to from NACB?

Ajakaiye: One, is the fact the NACB is poised to continue to assist them and that we are putting machinery in place to be more efficient so that we could be attending to them faster than before. Now, our system is becoming more efficient to make it possible to advise them more than ever before and monitor them so that in the final analysis, the assistance of the Bank will see them meeting their objectives of improved food production and marketing of their surpluses.

Executive Director (Operations) Speaks On The Small Holder Loan Scheme

The NACB Executive Director (Operations), Alhaji Isa Tahir, speaks with **Hotline** Correspondent on the problems and prospects of the Small Holder Loan Scheme. Below is the full text of the interview:

Hotline: As a relatively new Executive Director (Operations), what are your personal thoughts on the problems of the Bank's Small Holder Loan Scheme?

Tahir: Thank you very much. I really wouldn't say I am new because I've already spent over two years here. But I'm that you used the word "relatively new" which is of course good. I would say that the Small Holder Loan Scheme to my mind is the most important component of our loan portfolio. The reason being that the Federal Government and the new Agricultural Policy for Nigeria have placed great emphasis on small holder activities. It is estimated that over 80% of our farmers are engaged in small scale farming and this constitutes over 70% of the nation's agricultural output. Therefore you can see the importance of this sub-sector. The sub-sector as far as the Bank lacks adequate funds to cater for the large number of applicants that troop to our branches looking for this kind of loan - I mean farmers looking for N10,000 and below. This category of clients constitutes the small holder applicants. Unless we are able to mobilise funds for this purpose, the problem will still remain for

some time to come.

However, as you are aware, the Bank is making effort to source funds from various sources and the intention is to devote a lot of these funds to this sub-sector.

Another problems associated with the implementation of this scheme is the fact that it is one of the most difficult functions of the Bank. This is a situation where you are dealing with hundreds of farmers cut across the country. Because of of this, we have some logistical problems in terms of manpower, mobility etc, because you have to go out and reach these small scale farmers individually. This is certainly not an easy task especially if you have to do it within a limited period of time. In other words, if the scheme is to be effective, you have make sure that you reach these farmers before the rain starts - that is when they are preparing their farms. Any delay will make nonsense of the loan because the farmer has to get the loan at the right time, procure inputs, pay for labour and all other requirements.

Now because of this logistical and timing problems, you find that the scheme requires much attention from

our staff. And this constitutes a very high overhead cost to the Bank because the people assigned to undertake this function have to move around and we have to pay their allowances and of course, this consumes a lot of money. I would say this is part of the problems.

Partly as I mentioned earlier, farmers are scattered all over the place. so in terms of coverage, we just have to work very hard and see that we reach as many of them as possible. We can do this in one or two ways. One way we can do this perhaps is to increase the number of staff especially the Assistant Supervisor of Credits and of course you know what this entails in terms of cost. another way of course, is to organise these farmers into groups like co-operatives and farmers groups. This approach had been adopted in the past and there were some problems. Some of the most difficult loans we are now battling with were given to these groups. However, we are now trying to evolve a system whereby group lending could be made more effective.

So from my experience so far, these are the problems associated with the Bank's Small Holder Loan Scheme.

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Hotline: Based on the issues identified, how do you think this programme can be improved upon?

Tahir: To answer this question I think we have to identify the solutions to so e of the problems that we have discussed earlier. The first one is that of inadequacy of funds. On this, the Federal government is being sympathetic to NACB knowing fully well that agriculture is one of the most difficult well that agriculture is one of the most difficult areas of lending. The Federal Government is responding to our approaches in terms of funds and we are grateful for this. Secondly, we try to cater for other classes of farmers even though we are not changing our orientation which places more emphasis on the small scale farmers. We also give out commercial loans and we hope to channel the interest accrued from these commercial loans to the small scale farmers.

The problem of coverage and that of administration could be tackled through increased decentralisation policy. If our plan to establish the State Agricultural

and Co-operative Banks (SACB) materialises, then NACB would go into whole sale banking whereby we would now channel funds through these other banks in the states which will now be in a better position to reach farmers at the grassroots. If the plan doesn't materialise, we would have to continue to pursue our in-house policy of reaching farmers by making sure that we recruit more Agricultural Credit Supervisors and post them to more Local Government Areas in the country. We could even increase the number from one to two in each Local Government Area. And of course, this will shoot up the administrative cost of the Bank. But these essentially are the ways of minimising the problems of the scheme.

Hotline: What in your opinion, are the prospects of the scheme?

Tahir: I think the scheme has a great potential. In the past, people didn't regard farming as a serious occupation but with the introduction of SAP and the limitation of avenues for making easy money, people are now seeing the need to go

into farming. And if you take the statistics, 90% of people who have gone into agriculture in recent years are small scale farmers. And there is now a growing tendency for people to be more serious.

Already, farmers' group such as the Nigerian Council of Farmers and other Co-operatives are already approaching us, and saying that they would want us to adopt the group lending approach. And they are promising that they

would guarantee the payment of such loans and in any event of default, they would contribute the money amongst themselves and pay back. So I think with this approach and this attitude, the scheme has a very great potential.

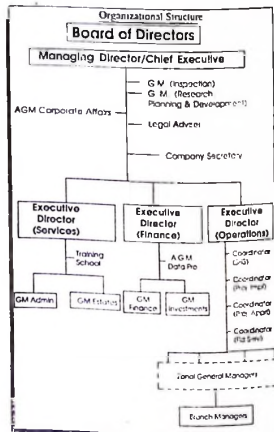
If you look at some countries like India and China, over 90% of their agricultural activities is small scale and they are doing very well. They are feeding themselves. Even if they borrow funds from any organisation like we do, they make sure that they pay back in good time. So with this change of attitude and more devotion on the part of Nigerian farmers, this scheme is going to ensure a greater productivity in the agricultural sector of the country.

Hotline: And finally Sir, could you tell us briefly how far NACB has gone in funding this Small Holders Loan Scheme?

Tahir: From the Bank's records, our total portfolio today is in the region of N2 billion and 40% of this has gone into the small holder operation while the balance has been invested in investment loans. The reason for this is clear. The Small Holder Loans as I mentioned earlier are loans of N10,000 and below whereas the medium and the large scale loan is N10,000 and above. If you look at the number of our projects, you will discover that the Small Holder Loan beneficiaries constitute over 80% of our total number of beneficiaries but in terms of resources committed to the Small Holder Loan Scheme. Well, I hope you understand the reason. In the large scale loan for instance, we can give a beneficiary over N20 million and this can be extended to may be over 100,000 farmers. With time we intend to increase our exposure to this class of farmers by increasing their number and of course, the amount of resources.

And perhaps, we may be accused of assisting the large scale loan beneficiaries. But if you look at the Nigerian Agricultural Policy, the decision requires that we support all categories of farmers - small, medium and large. So it is our duty to promote any agricultural activity as long as that activity will help to enhance greater productivity in the agricultural sector of our economy.

N.A.C.B. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



FOCUS ON N.A.C.B.

**NIGERIAN AGRICULTURAL AND COOPERATIVE BANK LIMITED
SMALL HOLDER DIRECT LOAN SCHEME
ALL THE STATISTICS NATIONWIDE
1981 — 1990**

| S/No. | NACB Branches | Number of Applications Received | Loan Volume Applied for | Number of Loans Approved | Loan Volume Approved | Amount Disbursed | Amount Repaid (Principal + Interest) |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Abuja | 5,045 | 7,399,500 | 2,019 | 3,912,723 | 4,182,108 | 990,293.74 |
| 2 | Abcokuta | 8,560 | 6,023,400 | 3,698 | 8,558,411 | 6,865,645 | 2,237,027.42 |
| 3 | Akure | 20,591 | 11,983,721 | 6,198 | 11,324,428 | 11,324,428 | 4,883,764.08 |
| 4 | Ayangba | 900 | 12,069,500 | 413 | 1,328,685 | 1,211,285 | 728,293.14 |
| 5 | Bauchi | 17,315 | 41,057,780 | 10,875 | 14,104,059 | 18,217,756 | 6,442,699.99 |
| 6 | Benin | 9,272 | 17,486,490 | 3,864 | 10,662,617 | 8,549,167 | 1,334,597.87 |
| 7 | Birnin Kebbi | 1,328 | 7,176,200 | 1,162 | 3,025,960 | 2,786,816 | 1,815,170.17 |
| 8 | Calabar | 11,761 | 2,317,280 | 7,968 | 17,696,047 | 12,541,382 | 3,260,871.41 |
| 9 | Enugu | 8,898 | 37,298,208 | 4,483 | 10,297,485 | 9,428,484 | 3,009,274.73 |
| 10 | Funtua | 19,963 | 10,241,100 | 8,945 | 20,897,307 | 22,048,007 | 5,654,160.80 |
| 11 | Ganye | 576 | 1,364,000 | 841 | 2,867,100 | 3,096,487 | 1,880,291.86 |
| 12 | Gombe | 2,622 | 9,226,500 | 1,777 | 5,077,871 | 4,538,596 | 3,884,444.24 |
| 13 | Gusau | 1,423 | 3,697,500 | 1,873 | 5,860,800 | 5,222,109 | 3,636,123.16 |
| 14 | Hadejia | 1,449 | 3,943,214 | 2,124 | 4,878,614 | 4,756,962 | 2,485,150.91 |
| 15 | Ibadan | 48,919 | 32,546,372 | 12,103 | 17,968,477 | 16,304,099 | 4,147,965.70 |
| 16 | Ilorin | 15,144 | 8,579,539 | 8,888 | 19,050,786 | 15,776,408 | 3,656,029.08 |
| 17 | Iseyin | 1,431 | 10,937,900 | 974 | 2,920,445 | 2,793,424 | 2,019,551.83 |
| 18 | Jalingo | 1,689 | 13,323,000 | 648 | 2,155,200 | 2,722,201 | 2,334,630.70 |
| 19 | Jos | 8,959 | 3,066,955 | 6,550 | 13,406,100 | 11,135,283 | 4,565,272.36 |
| 20 | Kabba | 882 | 3,849,900 | 812 | 2,216,280 | 2,360,926 | 1,214,419.14 |
| 21 | Kaduna | 1,525 | 765,500 | 1,216 | 3,532,500 | 3,163,893 | 1,144,509.64 |
| 22 | Kafanchan | 30,242 | 114,297,895 | 10,103 | 27,606,899 | 23,883,497 | 4,004,275.17 |
| 23 | Kano | 8,443 | 16,111,640 | 5,059 | 12,443,433 | 10,615,008 | 4,288,947.77 |
| 24 | Katsina | 2,614 | 18,480,400 | 1,228 | 3,815,140 | 4,471,902 | 4,032,400.57 |
| 25 | Keffi | 1,615 | 3,760,880 | 816 | 1,710,140 | 1,556,842 | 572,344.51 |
| 26 | Kontagora | 2,062 | 11,801,700 | 1,008 | 2,109,937 | 1,988,539 | 1,219,978.03 |
| 27 | Lagos | 2,591 | 5,709,300 | 2,015 | 6,127,009 | 5,060,529 | 1,617,375.39 |
| 28 | Maiduguri | 21,396 | 21,775,455 | 6,912 | 17,743,065 | 12,997,440 | 5,736,740.21 |
| 29 | Makurdi | 18,908 | 9,862,211 | 4,706 | 13,393,156 | 11,292,367 | 1,926,012.22 |
| 30 | Minna | 9,871 | 22,801,100 | 4,743 | 9,904,714 | 11,062,311 | 3,877,037.84 |
| 31 | Ogoja | 472 | 3,741,850 | 667 | 1,552,759 | 1,622,413 | 784,388.55 |
| 32 | Owerri | 18,265 | 72,047,015 | 6,194 | 16,543,597 | 14,897,666 | 3,447,857.99 |
| 33 | P/Harcourt | 8,576 | 20,524,390 | 4,418 | 12,641,513 | 8,573,622 | 1,357,717.14 |
| 34 | Potiskum | 1,323 | 3,525,560 | 1,361 | 3,163,555 | 3,070,696 | 1,944,765.91 |
| 35 | Sokoto | 13,064 | 41,763,182 | 7,746 | 16,271,840 | 15,553,528 | 4,699,568.09 |
| 36 | Uyo | 4,215 | 17,788,827 | 1,980 | 7,085,104 | 3,959,515 | 1,213,214.30 |
| 37 | Warri | 643 | 2,633,000 | 273 | 888,250 | 1,310,874 | 310,346.07 |
| 38 | Yola | 25,767 | 48,899,251 | 12,236 | 22,844,871 | 23,439,814 | 9,754,825.30 |
| TOTAL | | 328,317 | 718,900,795 | 158,896 | 358,301,123 | 324,307,709 | 114,168,497.77 |

Source: NACB Records

Note: (i) Recovery rate calculated against amount due is about 60—70%. This index is 94% in the livestock loans.
(ii) Amount disbursed is not due because of the gestation period of projects concerned.

Going through Fire

To while three glorious days in comfortable circumstances away from the walk-sleep frenzy of the office is a treat to the journalist any day. Even if the place is hot Maiduguri, extreme north-east Nigeria. Even if the season is broiling summer and at the end of three days was to be a passage through hell.

However my bohemianism was short-lived. Monday, June 10, 1991 in the post-dawn hours, I was on the convoy of Governor Muhammad Buba Marwa on the last lap of a statewide one year anniversary tour. The retinue was at least half a kilometre long and the destination spread over six local government areas, all of them spread out in the desert terrain.

The journey which was coordinated all through with the military precision of the governor's ADC, Lt. Tahir, supported by the experience of other able officials like the Press Secretary to the governor, Alhaji Muhammad Lawal Gangaran and the Director of Protocol began well enough. Early into the depth of the journey however, the non-military members of the 50-man entourage suffered defeat. But it was the press crew comprising representatives of the major national press who suffered the most. I changed cars several times and thus came to know people like Gwamna Mshelizza of the *Reporter*, Mohammed Tola of the News Agency of Nigeria, (NAN), Chris Mammah, Deputy Editor *The Punch*, Magdalene Ikhide of *Democrat*, and my friend and 'rival' Raymond Okiti of *The Champion*, and many others.

It was Governor Muhammad Buba Marwa who exhibited the greatest endurance. At every stop on the way, he jumps out of his car jauntily with his khaki neat and crisp and his posture erect and resilient. Like some of my colleagues noted at each stop at day or night, Governor Marwa would call for reporters and flash a speech as if he just woke up. All through the days, the sun was blazing without respite. At a stage,

I could barely cope with the rigours of this sun-scorched land and fell sick doing the shake-up over sand-duned roads. In Damasak, Mobbar local government for instance whilst the governor was opening the new Comprehensive Health Centre I was behind the counter to take the first drugs to be dispensed there. Further off in Geidam where three other projects were com-

grounded in the most hostile of terrains, we were moved. And moved we became reflective. These tribes lived on rough sand without any water or shrubs for kilometres on end except for a few oases. How harsh and miraculous nature can be? The only presence of the modern times are political posters - most of them of the Second Republic. Indeed in most of our ports of call, the project to be

commissioned appeared to be the first taste of government assistance to the community. These rural men, women and children were exultant over everything - whether a Rural Electrification Board Project in Magumeri in Kaga local government (one of 13 or half of the projects promised by Marwa's administration) or a community viewing centre at Mobbar, the excitement was the same. Yet these were places that had no light, water or adequate food and



Lt. Col. Mohammed Buba Marwa:
Borno state governor

missioned, I was hospitalised for six hours at the General Hospital in the town. The kindly and ever calm, Alhaji Gangaran the press secretary told the governor of my unique illness which was due to excessive fatigue. To complete the shame, I could not resist telling the governor that of all my colleagues, I was the one who came from that area.

On the whole, most members of this marathon tour did well. You could hear us excitedly talking of what an 'eye-opener' the whole trip had been. Nigerian journalists certainly moved together to discover the reality of their land. Seeing the rural Kanuri and Arab tribes of Borno

we all knew we will never agree to scuttle there.

Certainly, Governor Marwa's jaunt with journalists was a unique experiment in participatory learning and from the point of view of news-hunters one that ought to be emulated by all serious establishments and leaders too. My own personal triumph is that I have heard all my friends from the Lagos/Ibadan axis say that their perception of my peoples' plight has changed as a result. This will make my own job a lot easier and I can then find time to travel to Mammah's village near Koko in Bendel state to see the plight of his own people.

By Muhammad Hassan - Tom

All Meat, no Salt

The Political Transition Programmed is proceeding to the letter but stops short of generating enthusiasm

The transition to civil rule programmed entered another crucial stage on June 15, 1991 when the Social Democratic party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) held their second ward programme, saw the election of some 144,950 delegates to the local government and state congresses of both parties. Each party elected 10 delegates from each ward to the local government congress, and three delegates for the state congress, both of which are scheduled to hold before the August 24 Governorship primaries.

The importance of the ward congresses cannot be overemphasised. In the first place, the exercise was part of the activities preparatory to the conduct of primaries for the election of candidates for the gubernatorial and legislative elections coming up in December this year. The congresses would also enable the two parties to assess their continuous stability and ability to win the forthcoming elections. Both the two parties and the National Electoral Commission (NEC) seem to be very much aware of this importance hence it was to ensure that everything went in line with the parties' constitutions that NEC held two meetings within a week last month with the leadership of the two parties.

Also, the ward congresses were conducted by each party with NEC playing only supervisory role and it was the first true test of the parties' organisational abilities and cohesion since their creation by government two years ago. The first ward, local government, state and national congresses were organised by the NEC between July and August 1990 after which the leadership of the

two parties passed on from appointed administrative secretaries to elected party officials. Under electoral guidelines approved by NEC, only fully paid up financial members of each party are entitled to participate in the proceedings of the congresses.

Reports from parts of the country indicated that the ward congresses generally recorded a low turnout with some areas where attendance was below the expected quorum. In Kaduna, like in many others states, the exercise began with the ratification of membership list. Delegates to the local government then elected delegates to the Houses of Assembly while those in the state elected delegates for the governorship primaries.

Although the congresses were successfully conducted in almost all the 5,575 wards throughout the federation, the NEC should heed the appeals from various quarters to take over completely, the conduct of party primaries at least for the transition period. So far, the Commission has only accepted to supervise the primaries because it does not want to be accused of "interference". Whatever it means by supervision, NEC should realise that the machinations of banned politicians are without limits.

Evidence abound that in nearly all states, these politicians have openly conducted fake "gubernatorial primaries" where they have already hand-picked governorship aspirants for the states. It appears that they are only waiting for August 24 to have their decision ratified using the facilities of party machinery which apparently is also firmly in their control. There were also reports that these banned politicians are hoarding party membership cards with the aim of making them available only to their supporters because the party membership card is the passport for voting on August 24. In other words, the gubernatorial primaries have been rigged in most states even before they are conducted.

Therefore if the transition programmed is to succeed, NEC should be completely involved in the primaries. One way the Commission can do so is by appointing Returning Officers at each polling booth. This, probably, is the only effective supervision that NEC can provide to avoid rigging and possible physical violence at nomination centres. The employment of part-time staff by the Commission to monitor proceedings as was done during the ward congresses is just not enough. If the factions within each of the parties are allowed to appoint Returning Officers for the primaries, with the reports of violence and intimidation that are already going on, there is likely going to be a breakdown of law and order in most states. The rate with which party loyal-

ists bribed and connived elections should serve as enough signal of what to expect if party men (who are loyal to certain factions within the parties) are allowed to play the role of Returning Officers at the primaries.

This nation has suffered enough. Its citizens deserve the privilege of choosing their leaders for the Third Republic in a free and fair manner devoid of any form of political corruption, intimidation and surrogatism.



Professor Humphrey Nwosu: Chairman NEC

By Adamu Abdullahi

The richest pauper

Kano municipal council chairman denies his council's opulent posture.

Kano municipal local government, being a commercial centre of repute, paints a picture of opulence in the minds of the stranger and the indigene alike. In an interview with *Hotline*, however, the council's Chairman, Alhaji Yusuf Baita says that picture is misleading.

"Our greatest problem is finance" says Baita. Although he agreed that the council generates a lot of money, Alhaji Yusuf pointed out that "our revenue base is comparatively poor". To appreciate the problems of the council, according to him, one has to compare its revenue earnings with its expenditure. On assumption of office the burden of primary education was transferred to the local government. There was no provision in the local government budget for such a heavy burden. Similarly, in the health sector, there was an abrupt super promotion of junior staff from GL 01-06 again without provision in the budget.

The council generates about N1.1 million monthly. This according to the Chairman is made up of; N100,000. Locally generated revenue, N900,000 federal grant and N25,000 state grant to the local government. The council's expenditure however, stands at well over its revenue earnings.

The council spends a total of N520,000 on local government staff salaries while the education sector gulfs N900,000 monthly and these do not include other recurrent expenditure.

Although Alhaji Baita would not comment on it, *Hotline* sources revealed that the N25,000 state grant is not forthcoming. For the past five months, the municipal council, like many other councils in Kano state, have not received anything from the state government.

Asked how far he has justified the confidence reposed on him, Alhaji Yusuf Baita said "It is not me who should say that, those who elected me are in a better *Hotline* Newsmagazine July, 1991

position to judge me". He however recounted some of his achievements in office. These include payment of Teachers salaries and allowances, construction of drains in all the wards in the council, clearing and renovation of feeder roads in the wards outside the council's headquarters like Tarauni, Gandun Albasa, Gyadi-Gyadi etc. On health care, Alhaji Baita said there are seven clinics and three dispensaries in the council and all of them are well equipped to cater for the health needs of the people. About N20,000 was spent on relief assistance to various self-help organisations while working materials



Alh. Yusuf Baita, Chairman

were provided to others.

On agriculture, the council has spent about N1 million for the procurement of fertilizer for distribution to farmers at subsidized rate. The forestry and animal reserve section of the council was also equipped to tackle the problem of animal disease. The council has also embarked upon extension of pipes, and coordinates with the state DFRR to provide hand pumps to several areas. On capital projects, Alhaji Baita said the construction of Rimi Market is already half way and the council is negotiating with the state government to come to its aid. Here also, *Hotline* sources revealed that the state government's response to

the project is "not encouraging at all".

Alhaji Yusuf Baita then called on the state and federal governments to consider the plight of municipal councils in the country with a view to granting them "special assistance". This is because they have "more schools, more pupils, more teachers and therefore more commitments" due to their "social peculiarities and dense populations".

Born in 1960 at Agdasawa in Kano Municipal, Alhaji Yusuf Baita had his primary education at the Tudun Madat primary school between 1966 and 1972. He then proceeded to Government Arabic Teachers College, Kano from 1972 to 1977. Alhaji Baita then attended the Kano State Polytechnic (then Institute for higher education) from 1979 to 1983 where he obtained his OND and HND certificates.

Alhaji Baita started his working life as a teacher with the Kano State ministry of education. He taught in various primary schools between 1978 and 1979 and later, at the science secondary School, Rimgado from 1984 to 1985. He then resigned to join his family business as the General Manager, *Yusub Nigeria Limited*.

It was from here that Alhaji Baita resigned in 1987 to contest elections as a councillor for Zaitawa constituency on non-party basis. Later, (1989) when the Municipal local government was split into three, his co-councillors elected him chairman of the reconstituted municipal council.

Alhaji Baita's career in politics however, began during the second republic when he served as an assistant secretary in the Peoples Redemption Party (P.R.P.). He was also a member of the Peoples Solidarity Party (P.S.P.) from which he joined the Social Democratic Party (S.D.P.).

Asked what his future ambition is, Alhaji Yusuf Baita said "I'm not aiming for any particular post, whatever Allah makes me is o.k. with me". He said he never planned on becoming a chairman, or even a councillor but God decided to make him one. He however added that, "I'm doing my best not to be left behind in Nigerian politics".

By Is'haaq Alhassan Qauranmata.



No other profession has brought as much credit to Nigeria as the writing profession.

Writers also speak

Close to three decades of swampy and torturous journey to societal impact the Association of Nigerian Authors exhibits a dosier of beauty and ugliness. Its president **Mr. Kenule Beeson Saro Wiwa**, 49, businessman, publisher and author of eight novels and over 60 scripts, former administrator of Bonny (Rivers state), Commissioner on three occasions and former executive director of National Directorate for Social Mobilisation who is presently the Director of Nigerian Newsprint Manufacturing Company entertains questions from **Hotline's Sola Lawal** on wide ranging literary issues including the making of a writer, the seeming neglect of the north in awards, writers as critics and mobilisers, the cat and mouse coexistence between government and authors, and many more other points of controversy.

Hotline: What is your stance in the controversy on whether or not Wole Soyinka is a white-man's writer? Like some people believe he won the Nobel prize for being so.

Saro Wiwa: That he is a white-man's writer? How can he be a white-man's writer?

Hotline: Some people say that.

Saro Wiwa: No. All they are saying is that he writes for a small group of people because of the way he writes and because of the language he uses. That (his style) doesn't appeal to most English people. The style doesn't appeal to or even meant to be consumed by even the broad masses of the native speakers of English. On the other hand, his plays like *The Trials of Brother Jero* and the novel, *Ake*, are a beautiful realisation which everybody can read. So, it's a question of his style, and not whether he is a white man's writer.

Hotline: In other words do you consider his style too difficult?

Saro Wiwa: Hen! I find the style very difficult except in the

two works which I have mentioned I don't read him with ease. Not at all.

Hotline: Do you see him as having won the Nobel Prize because of his outstanding performance.

Saro Wiwa: It maybe. There are many reasons why people win Nobel Prize or any prize for that matter.

Hotline: Can you enumerate some of them?

Saro Wiwa: No! It is not necessary. Because the judges use different criteria. You have to go and read the citation which they made when they presented him with the prize. But there are always all sort of reasons for awarding prize. I was a judge of the BBC Short Stories Contest which was held sometime last year. I know the reason we awarded the prizes to whom we awarded them. So, it does not have to do just with excellence of creation. It may not have to do with excellence of creation but with all other reasons.

Hotline: What is ANA doing to encourage young authors? How do you overcome their problems?

Saro Wiwa: That is not our work. ANA is not set-up to bring young writers into the fold. ANA is setup to promote Nigerian literature and to promote the interest of writers. But, we have gone out of our ways because we find out that Nigerian literature is in a lot of difficulties and the educational system is not helping matters. So we have gone out of our ways to try to encourage others. Not only young people. Even old people. Because the definition of a 'young writer' is not determined by age. If you have not written anything before and you start writing, then you are a young writer.

Hotline You said Nigerian literature is saddled with a lot of problems. Can you list some of these problems?

Saro Wiwa: Yes. The reading culture is very poor. There are not many publishing houses. The economy is sapped. So, there isn't enough money for people to buy books. People are in a lot of distress. And when they are in financial difficulty, literature is not the first thing they run to. Everybody wants to eat first. They want to clothe themselves, house themselves, send their children to schools before anybody begins to think of buying books. So, all these have a lot of tremendous effects on literature.

Hotline How?

Saro Wiwa: Government does not support ANA at all. And it is very disgraceful, I should say. No other profession has brought as much credit to Nigeria as the writing profession. Writers, fiction writers, in particular from, Chinua Achebe, to Wole Soyinka to Gabriel Okara, to Niyi Osundare, to Tanure Ojaide, and so on are people who have contributed so much in projecting Nigeria on the world scene, in a very positive light in a way that nobody else has done. No other profession in Nigeria has been able to do that. And surely, if the government were conscious of this fact, it should do everything possible to promote ANA, the interest of ANA and the interest of writers. But it is just not doing that. So, we are left with an institution that has no money, that has no office. Even the office that we had in Abuja, some bandits came and threatened us out. And even when the minister gave the instruction that the place should be given back to us, his officials refused to comply. This was in January, this year. So up till now, ANA has no office there. But inspite of all the odds, we have refused to give up, because writers are always men of discipline and perseverance.

No matter the talent that God has given you, you must develop it, otherwise you are not going to succeed.



Hotline: Can you react to the insinuations that writers always criticise the government?

Saro Wiwa: Well, writers are supposed to criticise government because writers are of the opinion that no government can be good. How can a government be good? There are always things you find wrong in the society. It's not even so much the government. A writer talks about society all the time. A writer is looking for a better society. So, if you have a good government, that will be great. But you can not always have a good government, there must always be something to strive toward in the society. There must be something that is wrong with the society. And writers talk about these wrong things. And we also celebrate the things that are good. So, it's not right to say that writers always criticise.

Hotline: Some people believe that the creative writer is born. Others opine that he is made. Where do you belong?

Saro Wiwa: All genius is hard work. You may have talent, but you must develop it. You know the story of the Bible. People who were given talents. Some went and buried their own (laughter). And others invested talent and they got results. Some invested and got it. You know. So, it's a question of development. No matter the talent that God has given you, you must develop it, otherwise you are not going to succeed.

Hotline: Can you react to fears that if care is not taken, the present trend, whereby publishers go only for biographies of big and influential people may handicap not only established writers, but also, the up and coming ones.

Saro Wiwa: No, there is nothing wrong in publishing biographies. Everywhere else, that is usually the case. Biographies of politicians normally attract a lot of readership and there is no publishing industry that can afford to do without it. So, there is nothing wrong with that. I have been an opponent of the launching that go with these books because they militate against the reading culture. They do not help the growth of Nigerian literature.

Hotline: Most writers are said to be ignorant of the intricacies involved in deals between them and the publishers such that contracts are signed only to be revoked when writers discover irregularities

Saro Wiwa: Yes you are right: that is why ANA would have to teach writers their rights so that they understand the sort of agreement they are signing. In due course, during my time as president, we will be examining that. We will be teaching writers what is the meaning of the contract that they are signing. You know, I myself belong to the British Society of Authors. I know the sort of things that go into educating its members as to what their rights are under the agreement which they sign with the publishers. One of our tasks is to protect the interest of writers. So if any information comes to us we will investigate it.

Hotline: How do you assess the copy right law?

Saro Wiwa: It's very good. Very good. And a lot of work is being done by the ministry of culture to make it effective. It will need every body's help. The help of journalists, the help of the people themselves and the help of buyers of books. All

DISCOURSE

can help in their different ways to stop piracy.

Hotline: Which language do you consider most ideal for African Literature.

Saro Wiwa: It is whatever language the writer chooses. But I think the best is lucid English. Standard lucid English.

Hotline: But some people think that option is some how imperialistic.

Saro Wiwa: What's imperialistic about it?

Hotline: Like Ngugi Wa' thiongo at one time decided to write in his mother tongue, Swahili.

Saro Wiwa: Ngugi is just making a song and dance of it. Nigerians have been writing in their mother tongues for a long time. You know, there are Hausa novels, there are Yoruba novels, there are Igbo novels and Efik novels. So what Ngugi has done is no big deal.

Hotline: Some people have been arguing in support of the development of a continental language for African literature.

Saro Wiwa: That is rubbish, rubbish. What is a continental language? English is a continental language. Where else do you look for another language?

Hotline: Like Swahili for instance, which is being proposed by Soyinka.

Saro Wiwa: It is impracticable. That argument lacks political and intellectual merit. Because nobody is going to it's impossible. In fact where are the teachers going to come from? That's number one. Secondly, once a language is not your language, it's an alien language. So why go and study it. It's as good as English. It's as alien as English. Swahili would be as alien to you as a Yoruba speaker as English is. So, a language is not your mother tongue, it is an alien language to you. And so, there is no merit in the proposal. Why do you want one language in Africa? So that what would happen? (laughter) It's a nonsensical argument, actually. It doesn't arise at all. I mean those who are Yoruba people are not going to leave Yoruba to go and speak Swahili. Will they? (Laughter). Will they? So all these arguments people bring up because they... Sometimes I think they just want to be heard or they have not thought enough about it.

Hotline: Would you confirm an imbalance in the literary output between the North and the Southern writers in the country.

Ken Saro: Can we know which is north and which is South? Where do you draw the line? Where do you draw the line between north and south?

Hotline: You mean there is no demarcation of that kind?

Ken Saro: There is no north or south. Those are political ideas of first republic politics.

Hotline: You are as well in the south right now (Kaduna).

Ken Saro: Yes. Kaduna is south of Sokoto.

Hotline: Would you react to the opinion, that ANA ignores northern writers?

Ken Saro: Who are the northern writers? Like who? Which northern writer? Which north and which writer?

Hotline: Are you saying that ANA has been carrying all along?

Ken Saro: All what?



There is no North and South. Those are political ideas of first republic politics.

Hotline: All the factions....

Saro-Wiwa: What faction? there are no factions in writing.

Hotline: There are Yoruba writers, there are Ibos, as well as Hausa.

Saro-Wiwa: Well, if you write a book, you are qualified to be a member of ANA. But if you don't write a book, we are not going to quota it to you. We can't quota it to you. From my own ethnic group, there are only two members of ANA. From my ethnic group (laughter). Alright? Am I going to drag more into ANA or that they have to write books? Look at the book I am reading now, the author is Mohammed Sule. Literature doesn't know any bounds. There is no quota. In literature, you either produce a book or you don't.

Hotline: Is it not true to say that ANA neglects northern writers in awards.

Saro-Wiwa: Who is a northern writer? Which awards?

Hotline: ANA awards.

Saro-Wiwa: Awards are won for excellence. It's not a quota thing.

Hotline: Can you expatiate a bit further on that?

Saro-Wiwa: Well, if you go into a competition, and they are looking for the best; you prove yourself by writing a good book. There are some good books that have been written in this part of the country. Zainab Alkali's book, *The Last Man*, is a good book. Literature is one area where you cannot cheat. You can not quotanise, you cannot do anything. You are either good or you are not good. You either apply yourself or you do not apply yourself. Of course, good writers can come from any part of the country. It is for the government to encourage the people, through the educational system, to excel. And this will be good for all of us because writers are special people. They see differently. The more writers we have, the better the society is going to be.

Hotline: What do you consider to be the biggest problem of nurturing literature in society.

Saro-Wiwa: Well, first of all there must be a good product. Secondly, you must have the consumer of that product. Literature can only be consumed by people who can read and write. And also, it is a leisure activity. So, it is all tied up with the well-being of the society. If the society is not all right, good literature can not thrive. The welfare of the people is paramount. Good education and financial well-being. A hungry man can't think of reading books not to talk of buying them. He has no time to sit down for serious study or writing.

The Gathering of Africa

32 African Heads of Government representing more than 60 per cent of the continent dutifully gathered in Abuja, Nigeria and promptly resolved to be free. Below is a look into the possibility that this firm yea is resound more than the call.

The 28th summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) which was held in Abuja between June 3 and June 6 was unique in many aspects. It came at a time when the continent is in disarray. All the member nations are neck deep in foreign debt; our economies are in a pathetic state; the living standards of our people are deteriorating by the day; and even our relationship with the rest of the world is taking a downward trend.

Most Africans are openly skeptical about this and other summits because invariably the decisions that are taken do not in the least affect the position of the continent. What is required therefore is the implementation of resolutions that would solve the continent's problems and ensure the much-desired prosperity and glory that has eluded it for so long. In the first place, African leaders must realise that the current demand for democratisation all over the continent is an indication of our desire for progress and stability. It is time that those African leaders who have not yet realised the significance of these demands immediately do so and those leaders who still have secessionist and other sectarian conflicts on their hands should urgently seek solutions to them. Also, in countries where Muslims are in the majority as in the North, West and East Africa, Islam cannot be precluded from the political democratisation process and system if the desired objectives of peace, stability and progress are to be achieved.

When in the late fifties and early sixties the forerunners of African nationalism nurtured and brought to existence a continental body aimed at fostering continental unity, little did they anticipate that the very problems and issues which precipitated the formation of the Organisation will still be prevalent after

28 years of its existence. Africa today is in turmoil with civil wars and other forms of agitation spreading from one nation to another. In addition, famine, poverty, disease, squalor and homelessness are the lot of our people as Europe, America and Japan are making giant strides in technology and development. For the twenty eight years since OAU came into being, Africa has been experiencing serious conflicts, politically, socially and economically, that tend to undermine the much-desired unity and in cases, even threaten the existence of many African states.

One is tempted to ask why up till now the same problems of the fifties and the sixties are still present in the nineties? Does it mean no conscious and concerted attempts have been made to solve these problems once and for all? Or is it that the problems are just not solvable? In 1963 when the OAU was formed, about half of the continent was under direct colonial control. Fifty one independent African countries gathered at the June 1991 Abuja summit as a testimony to the tremendous achievement in African liberation. World bodies such as the UN, the WHO, the Commonwealth and the World Bank were also represented at the summit, an indication

that the Organisation has metamorphosed into a force to reckon with. However, where has political independence got us? Foreign political domination was replaced with local tyranny and anarchy. Human rights and true democracy are only on the pages of national constitutions. It is apparent that fundamental problems facing the continent, largely being economic, had defied solution because of the absence of genuine freedom to articulate alternative options and the mobilisation of all human resources towards development.

With this set up, it is not surprising that since the last OAU summit in Addis Ababa in June 1990, eight African leaders have fallen from power. The most recent (May 20, 1991) was Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia, who was forced to leave the country when rebels of the Ethiopia Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front took over the capital. Siad Barre of Somalia fled Mogadishu in January this year also as a result of pressure from rebels of the Somali Congress and, in Chad, rebels forces led by General Idris Deby drove out former President Hisen Habre. Worse fate befell Samuel Doe of Liberia in August 1990 when rebels captured and brutally murdered him. Both Mousa Traore of



OAU Summit in session

AFRICA

Mali and Justine Lekhaya of Lesotho were overthrown in coups while Mathew Kerekou of Benin Republic was defeated in multi-party elections.

About 12 or so other African countries are facing problems of instability. They include Liberia, where the bloody civil war is still raging and the country's factions are yet to reconcile their differences in spite of ECOMOG's spirited peace-keeping. Cameroon is in crisis over the call for multi-party elections. Togo is facing the challenge of pro-democracy protesters while in Algeria, the nationwide protests against re-drawing of election districts and for the holding of presidential elections all in disfavour of the Islamic Fundamentalist Party are causing sleepless nights. Multi-party supporters have been active for the past year in countries like Cote D'Ivoire, Zaire, Kenya, Gabon, Zambia, Congo and Niger Republic.

The most disheartening is the South African problem where the black townships are witnessing carnage because of the conflict between ANC supporters and the Inkatha. Amid evidence that black on black violence is the machination of the racist regime, it came as some sort of consolation when the current OAU Chairman, General Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria announced at a press conference after the Abuja Summit that African leaders have decided to maintain sanction against South Africa as a means of pressure against the obnoxious system of apartheid. The leaders' decision to encourage the formation of a patriotic front of anti-apartheid forces would in addition to accelerating changes in the region also probably put an end to the violence in that country. However, to achieve results, the OAU should be ready to review the situation in South Africa taking into account concrete steps by the Pretoria regime to remove all obstacles to negotiations. On the thorny question of foreign debt, the call by African leaders on the developed countries and creditors to show a better understanding of the continent's plight through enhanced debt write off and reduction is timely.

In 1988, African countries were in debted to the tune of 230 billion dollars and are believed to be currently owing some 280 billion dollars. Therefore, General Ibrahim Babangida, as the OAU Chairman, should continue to give top priority attention to the external debt issue because it is impossible for African countries to restructure their economies when they have to pay these debts. Now is the time for a collective and concrete decision since there is no way democracy can work in the face of poverty and debt. Our industrial and technological backwardness cannot be overcome without first solving the debt problem because payment of interest on debt alone could tie African countries down permanently.

immediate restoration of peace and security particularly in Liberia, Somalia, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone.

The summit also highlighted the issue of reparations and demanded for reparations for the wrongs done to the continent. Virtually all African nations experienced and fell victims of the brutal and exploitative colonial administrations. Colonialism was violently introduced and sustained by force and there was also the unholy incorporation of African economies into the international capitalist formation. While this incorporation brought retardation, subjugation and political decay and above all economic enslavement and disarticulation to the African economies, it also massively functioned to service the Eu-



President Ibrahim B. Babangida: OAU Chairman

On the wind of political changes sweeping across the continent, it came as welcome news the positive views on the issue of democracy expressed by the African leaders because they reflected the need to accept changes in the interest of peace and stability. According to General Babangida, the leaders have accepted the responsibility "to a democratic culture which would guarantee genuine participation of our people in the political process". The African leaders' stand was apparently informed by the state of civil wars and inter-state conflicts (see box) in the continent which have resulted in untold human tragedy and set back development process. This situation therefore calls for the

ropean economies thus making them industrially and technologically strong and viable. This was in part made possible by the labour of millions of Africans shipped away to work under inhuman conditions in European plantations. It was obviously all these that motivated Chief M.K.O. Abiola, publisher of Concord group of newspapers, to start the campaign for reparations. The call for reparations by the OAU is in order but should not the tackling of development issues be done through hardwork and commitment?

This time around Africa has cause to be optimistic now that the chairmanship of the OAU has fallen on Nigeria. The dynamism and energetic drive with

Stability Still Elusive

The majority of African states, with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia, were legacies of colonialism. The newly independent states were colonies of a number of European nations who, at a conference in Berlin between December 1884 and January 1885, partitioned territories among themselves. The colonial powers were, however, forced to grant independence to these African territories because, with time, anti-colonial tempo became unbearable. Through out Africans have resisted colonialism in one way or the other. The degree of anti-colonial activity varied according to the level of ideological awareness. Thus in Nigeria, Libya and all the predominantly Muslim nations of north and west Africa natives put up by far the fiercest resistance. Significantly, Sudan with 95% Muslim population became the first African country to gain independence in 1956. But viewed on the whole, it is like the late Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana had said, "Africans were merely granted flag-independence while external control over their economies remained intact".

The colonial powers balkanised the continent into small geo-political enti-

ties with artificial boundaries most of which were arbitrary. The arbitrariness with which these boundaries were drawn constitutes one of the sources of conflict in Africa. The neo-colonialist nature of Africa suggests that while there are pockets of radical leaders around the continent, many other conservatives exist who were handed over power in a grand design aimed at perpetuating the interest of the colonial overlords of the newly-independent states.

Thus, the OAU at birth (May 26, 1963) was merely a fragile alliance of leaders having irreconcilable national differences but willing to pretend that there were no antagonisms between them. This was not to be. The situation subsequently became another thorn in the flesh of the Organisation and conflicts ensued. One of such are border disputes which are mostly products of the expansionist tendencies of certain African leaders who, faced with a crisis of credibility among their citizens or driven by rabid nationalism lay claim to territories which were within the sovereign control of their neighbours. Another cause of the deaths and conflicts were liberation struggles for independence of the

territories still under colonial rule after the OAU was formed.

Apartheid policy coupled with the invasion of frontline states by racist South Africa is yet another cause of conflict. There is also instability expressed in civil wars, coups and counter-coups as well as uprisings against dictators and tyrants. Underdevelopment of African economies which, in addition to the failure of Africa can leaders to tackle fundamental economic problems, also played its part. And finally, there is the question now dead(?) of the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union as well as other forms of foreign intervention either military or otherwise.

The failure of the OAU to resolve conflicts is however attributable to the neo-colonial nature of the states that make up the Organisation and the irresolute, inept hands of the leaders. The situation is worsened by ideological antagonisms fuelled by the intervention into the internal affairs of Africa by external powers especially the US and its Western allies whose main objective appears to be to perpetrate continuous conflict in the continent.

By Adamu Abdullahi

which we have tackled other regional and continental issues should now be employed. In fact there is need to revitalise such diplomatic tactics and dexterity because as it is now we would not only be acting on behalf of ourselves, but for the entire continent.

General Babangida's leadership must take bold steps to address the very important issues of regional and continental security, African refugee problem, low literacy rate, low school enrolment, low per capita income, unemployment, political crises and the agonies of war. These and others call for more powers for the OAU chairman. The leadership, which also must be strong and purposeful, should be able to blend both state and pan-African na-

tionalism into one without creating conflict between the two. We must call off the bluff of the international financial institutions pioneered by the IMF



Dr Salim A. Salim: OAU Sec. Gen.

and the World bank because these institutions constitute the bulk of Africa's problems. Above all we must be able to relocate our position within the orbit of

global economy and fashion out our own unique models of development that would be typically African.

Here is to hoping that the decisions and agreements reached during the Abuja Summit would revert the threat of marginalisation of Africa. The challenges are formidable but with the support of African leaders they could be surmounted.

By Adamu Abdullahi with
Freddie F.A. Airohi

Is Democracy the Magic Wand?



*President Mobutu Sese Seko
of Zaire.*



*President Paul Biya
of Cameroun.*



*President Arap Moi
of Kenya.*

doubt, the pro-democracy agitation is gradually spreading to Africa but people must not rush into doing things. The situation in China, Eastern Europe, Soviet Union and

The wind of change blowing across the world has reached the doorsteps of Africa. It was not too long ago when such wind blew across impregnable China. The result was one of the largest pro-democracy demonstrations in recent times. Even though the students pro-democracy activists in China were mercilessly massacred, the impact has no doubt, spread to other parts of the world and, particularly Africa.

Undoubtedly the pro-democracy agitations all over the world centred on political, economic and social issues with much emphasis on the need for political reforms and changes. Likewise in Africa, the situation appears to be the same as most agitators are concerned with radical political changes. Even though both in Africa and in the other parts of the world, the pro-democracy movement is political in nature, there is the need to understand the different situations. Obviously there is the need for political changes in Africa especially with the political crises here and there. Democracy seems to be the only alternative and people are yearning for it but it should be noted that democracy is only a means to an end.

The fundamental question here is: can democracy solve African problems or is it a prelude to solving its problems? Besides political crises, Africa is also faced with equally tormenting problem of economic underdevelopment. Obvious return to democracy doesn't mean automatic solution to Africa's problems taking into cognizance its economic

underdevelopment. This is because without sound economic development especially in this age of scientific and technological development, Africa cannot move anywhere particularly, economically, but no doubt, absence of political crises can alleviate especially some of its problems.

Evidently one can support the claim that even if there is political stability and no economic progress the continent will continue to live in poverty, hunger and underdevelopment which is most felt by the majority of the people. Some few African countries have at least enjoyed relative peace but to what extent are their economies or countries developed.

Some may want to believe democracy is the solution to our problems. When democracy is fully entrenched in Africa it will be democracy for whom? Obviously with the trend of events in Africa even if democracy is given a chance, it is still going to be an extension of the status quo. This is so because most of the pro-democracy agitations in Africa are sponsored by the ruling elites, whether they are doing it for their personal interest or for the general interest is another issue. What happens for example as earlier stated when democracy is given a chance and fully developed, a leadership not committed to the development of the economy of the continent.

Moreover any democracy in Africa can only be supported and approved by the West if their content is within narrow Western capitalistic notions. Thus popular Islamic rule or even communist democracy will not be recognised. No

elsewhere cannot be the same with ours in Africa. It should be known that these countries have already developed economies and it appears people are mainly demanding for political reforms and so any demonstration may not affect the economies and the existence of such nations, unlike in our own situation when unnecessary demonstrations will definitely cause more harm than good to us.

Obviously when change comes no one can really stop it. This was confirmed by the O.A.U chairman, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida at the O.A.U summit in Abuja. As far as our situation is concerned we need to be a little careful and this needs the co-operation of particularly the leaders and the generality of the people. The leaders should be aware that time has come to really effect political changes and democracy must be allowed to prevail. This surely needs adequate arrangement which must not be rushed into and equally not delayed.

Nevertheless people should know that democracy is not the solution to Africa's problems but it can create an instrument for tackling other fundamental issues: economy and underdevelopment. Democracy may promote political stability and consequently economic development, so democracy is only a means to an end in Africa and not an end in itself and that is why there is the need for adequate and well planned arrangement towards democratic rule in Africa.

By Mohammed Ibrahim Ismaila.

The New Cold War

A Western intellectual institution thinks that Islam is waiting in the wings — to become the anti-thesis of the West.

For almost 300 years, the Orient has helped the modern Occident, originally Europe and later the West, to define itself. During the Enlightenment, many European critics of absolutism discovered an Orient that seemed to be a model of enlightened life and thinking. There, in Persia and Egypt, many of these people believed, was the source of their philosophy, their cultural ideas.

They never meant the real East. What they meant was a kind of Oriental version of Arcadia, whose culture was thoroughly Western. Later explorers and travellers who went off to discover this land were plunged into terrible disappointment by what they saw — a disappointment that, even today, almost every Western tourist experiences upon arrival in Cairo. They discovered that "their" Orient was, in fact no different from the land from which they had come.

They found no trace of the magic East, of a spiritual, tolerant culture. But this sweet Orient was not to be lost. An entire scholarly discipline, Orientalism, arose. Its task was to rescue the "real Orient" for Europe. Its researchers soon believed that they had discovered the reason behind Europeans' disappointment: Islam, a disease that had made the cultures of the East sick and decadent. Having made the diagnosis, the Westerners could then present themselves as the doctors ready to effect a cure.

This made it almost axiomatic that the real Orient would not share in any of the key events of the modern Western world — no enlightenment, no secularisation of the society, no new forms of social and political emancipation. But above all, it meant that certain negative aspects of European culture, which could not be brought into line with the idea of an enlightened West, would be recognised strictly as elements of the Oriental identity. Despots became Oriental despots; political passivity of wide segments of society, which was part and parcel of 19th-century Europe, became Oriental fatalism; irrationality,

fanaticism, and violence became a mark not of Western but of Oriental culture.

The East-West conflict — communism versus capitalism — restructured the world, and for a few short decades no one thought about the Orient. But as the East-West conflict wound down — from about 1975 onward — political groups began to crop up in East European societies, demanding democracy and human rights. Such protests also began, virtually simultaneously, in Islamic lands.

In these countries' civil opposition movements — whether democratic or not — Western commentators could see nothing but Islam. When opposition movements became active in Eastern Europe — in Poland, for example — they were seen in a completely opposite way: They were immediately given political and economic support. The fact that there, too, civil protest was anchored in religion — that Lech Walesa made pilgrimages to a Roman Catholic shrine — was not a problem for the West.

A link between civil protests and traditional culture within Islamic society can scarcely be accepted by the West. Islam itself is seen as "incapable" of establishing a civil order. That this stance inevitably works to reinforce the rightwing and, especially, the fascist groups in Islamic countries, who recruit their fol-



Late Imam Ayatollah Khomeini

lowers with anti-Western slogan, should hardly surprise us. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

An older Egyptian socialist recently said, sadly, that many members of the civil opposition in Near Eastern societies feel that they have been left in the lurch by the Western public. He asked why leftist groups' mere membership in Islamic culture seemed to hinder any debate about the content of their movements. The scornful reaction was not long in coming: under the banner of "If the West will not let us take part in the construction of a truly civil world society, then we will not expect anything else out of the West", more and more leftist groups are moving away from the West and intensifying their Islamic identity. For them, too, Islam will be the antithesis of the West.

After refusing, for decades, to grant Near Eastern societies an equal place in the world, we now interpret protests against that injustice as a protest against us and our values. Thus, the Orient has become a political powder keg to be kept peaceful at any cost. The natural riches of the region have been given to these states only under custodial status, and only those regional powers that are worthy of the custodial role have been strengthened. What is actually happening inside these lands is of no interest. For example, the West provided massive arms to Iraq in 1987 and 1988, when it seemed in danger of failing to stop the "Islamic threat" from Iran. Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein's state was brutally suppressing its civil opposition and liquidating those portions of the population that opposed it.

A prisoner of its ideas about stability and security, the West, as a result of the Persian Gulf war, now welcomes Syria as an ally and gives it military support. Turkey will also be protected, even though it is precisely Syria and Turkey that have demonstrated how they intend to deal with their civil-opposition movements. So the war will strengthen these regimes' power, which will radicalise the political opposition and so aid the fascists and rightist radical.

A new cold war seems to be in the works. The Orient will once again play its old role as the area against which the West defines itself.

By Reinhard Schulze
in Die Zeit, Hamburg Germany

Macrae mans Mission

In many fronts Nigeria's most important relative, Britain sends in new blood to man the mission.

It was a cool summer evening Tuesday June 16 when Mr A. Christopher Macrae the three month old British High Commissioner to Nigeria attended a reception for about 100 guests at the Deputy High Commissioner's Lodge in Kaduna. In the variety and selection of guests the aim of the get-together organised for Mr Macrae by the Deputy High Commissioner and Mrs Colin Woodfield, appeared achieved. Prominent guests included retired Major General Muhammadu Buhari, Alhaji Isa Kaita Wazirin Katsina, Alhaji Dr Lema Jibrilu, a Presidential aspirant under the National Republican Convention, NRC, Alhaji Liman Ciroma, OFR and Kaduna state MAMSER Director, Alhaji Ahmadu Zakari. All relevant segments of society were also represented. Prominent figures in business, industry, education, health, diplomacy and the media were all present.

In a brief speech, Mr Macrae expressed the purpose of the gathering as a forum for getting to understand the terrain. "Down in Lagos they give a completely different picture. I have decided to come and see things for myself. I do not believe that you can know everything from Lagos", said Mr Macrae. He also expressed his anxiety, despite 27 years in Africa, to know the peoples of Nigeria. He traced the history of Anglo-Nigerian relations and the seeming mutual interests and firm relations.

The High Commissioner who is on his first extended tour of any station outside Lagos also said the priority of the British High Commission is to move its headquarters to Abuja, the new Federal Capital within the year in line with directives from the Ministry of External Affairs. Referring to the controversy over the viability of Abuja, Mr Macrae said "They want to play me in Lagos

saying that Abuja is not a possible reality. I know better. If Lord Lugard founded Kaduna and in 78 years it is able to grow so large then within 20-30 years Abuja should be a twin-city."

From this occasion it can be clearly seen that Anglo-Nigerian relations in the post Gulf war era can be sustained only by enhanced diplomacy such as Mr Macrae seemed capable of practising. But the crux of all such diplomatic work



*Mr John Major:
British Prime Minister*

must be based on the principles of non-interference and of broad economic assistance. Though as one American diplomat at the reception put it to *Hotline* the western world itself is vulnerable to financial crises and does not have limitless funds to invest in Africa, the task of Mr Macrae and his colleagues representing the western countries is to convince the populace that there is conscious effort to bridge economic imbalances between the North and South. This legitimate crusade is not even rewarded by the granting of

political self-determination.

For instance, it was observed during the height of the Gulf Crisis that the acceptability of the United Kingdom and other prominent members of the alliance against Iraq dwindled especially in the largely Muslim northern parts of the country. In fact, one official of the British High Commission who pleaded not to be named confirmed to *Hotline* that UK and US diplomatic missions are presently preoccupied with getting relations back to their "normal" levels. To this end, Britain and most of the industrialised creditors responded to debt-strapped developing countries by increased aid and favourable rescheduling of debts. Earlier in the

year, the British government increased overseas development and aid packages by as much as 21 per cent or up to £1.9 billion. Locally, the British government recently signed significant debt rescheduling agreement to the tune of N8.95 billion covering 15 years. It is significant that such response is coming at a time that these industrialised countries are facing a crisis of credibility locally and on the international scene. Another significant event in this issue is the proposed Commonwealth Summit of Ten Heads of Government to examine the continued

relevance of the organisation.

Mr Macrae's recent posting itself may not be unconnected with a desire of the British government to do something about the image of the country in Nigeria. Whether the new High Commissioner achieves such a great feat is a question which can only be decided in the course of his tenure. But standing tall and trimmer looking than his predecessor Mr Barber, blond and gentle Mr Macrae appears capable of understanding and some creativity.

By Muhammad Hassan-Tom

My Opponents Are Only Cutting Corners

- Sha'aba Lafiagi



He was born into the Haliru ruling house of Lafiagi, Kwara state fifty-one years ago. A prince he is but, unlike most princes who from birth lead comfortable life-style, growing up was tough for Mohammed Sha'aba Lafiagi.

After his primary education, he could not proceed to secondary school despite the influential position of Etsu Lafiagi (District Head and Treasurer of Lafiagi) held by his father. Alphonse Karr once said, "roses have thorns and thorns have roses", young Sha'aba knew that, for a man to achieve greatness in life, he has to walk through thorny paths. That he exactly did and today, he could beam luxurious smiles of triumph.

With sheer determination and hardwork, young Sha'aba engaged in private studies in 1964 and by 1966, he sat for and passed the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) in flying colours. Two years later, 1968, he passed the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) also through private studies and he proceeded immediately to Nigeria's premier university, the University of Ibadan from where he obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics in 1971.

Between 1972 and 1974, Sha'aba was at the University of Wisconsin, USA and through hardwork, he obtained two master degrees: one in Public Policy and Administration and

the other in Agricultural Economics.

Before proceeding to Wisconsin, he worked as an Economic Planning Officer and Secretary to the then North-Western state Manpower Board, and as an instructor at the Institute of Administration Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

He served as company secretary to the North-Western state Rural Electrification Board and set up the board's administrative machinery. He occupied the same office at the Kwara State Rural Electrification Board between 1975 and 1977. From 1977 to 1980, he was the corporation secretary of the Kwara State Agricultural Development Corporation from where he was appointed the deputy general manager of the Nigeria Sugar Company, Bacita in 1981.

In 1983, Sha'aba became the substantive general manager of the Sugar Company and rose to the position of managing director of the company in 1987. His remarkable achievement at Bacita led to his appointment as the National Sugar Development Coordinator for Nigeria (1984-85) and coordinated the development of Sunti and Lafiagi Sugar projects as well as promoting with foreign partners, the federal government proposals for the establishment of new sugar mills in the country. The report he submitted was made into a booklet titled: *Towards Self-Sufficiency in Sugar in Nigeria* in 1985. He also co-authored a publication, *Feasibility Studies On Poultry, Feedmill and Piggery Production Prospects in Kwara State*, which led to the establishment of Kwara Feed Mill as a limited liability company.

An associate member of the Nigerian Institute of Personnel Management, Sha'aba Lafiagi has served as a director of various parastatals such as the Nigerian Yeast and Alcohol Manufacturing Company, Bacita; Nigerian Insurance Corporation Limited (NICON); and Trade Bank Nigeria PLC.

Married to two wives and eight children, Sha'aba was appointed as the leader of International Students of the Centre for Development, University of Wisconsin in 1972 as a result of his leadership quality. At the University of Ibadan, he was the national president of the Association of International Students of Economics and Commerce (1969/70) and attended summer school in Oslo, Norway as an exchange student within the same period.

Sha'aba Lafiagi is today a governorship aspirant in the Social Democratic Party, SDP in Kwara state. What must have motivated him to go into partisan politics particularly in the politically volatile state of Kwara? He bared his mind to our Contributing Editor, *Mohammed Momoh Olu* in his (Sha'aba) Lagos office on June 17, 1991.

Hotline: What must have motivated you to go into partisan politics? And more so, why are you shooting at the gubernatorial seat of Kwara State?

Sha'aba: I would say that, my state (Kwara) has been very benevolent to provide me with good education because the state government bore the substantial part of the cost of my education. As a result of my educational background, I was and I am still lucky to have achieved reasonable amount of success in life. In the light of this therefore, my going into partisan politics and my wanting to be the governor of Kwara State is just a way of giving back to the state what I have taken from it. More so, since its creation in 1967, Kwara state has been unfortunate in terms of quality of life of its citizens. It is so glaring that Kwarans wallow in abject poverty, infected with diseases as a result of non-availability of essential social amenities that could make life comfortable for individuals - a situation which must be reversed. For such reversal to come into effect, there is the need to enthroned a purposeful, dynamic, visionary and serious minded leadership which the state has been lacking in its twenty-four (24) years of existence. Since I believe that the reversal of role could be effected with God's guidance, I also believe that it was time for me not to be on the sideline or sit on the fence but be an active participant in socio-political engineering in the state.

Hotline: And you think the only way you can participate actively is to be the governor of the state?

Sha'aba: There are several roles involved in reordering the socio-political structures of a society. One of these roles is credible and exemplary leadership. What we have been having in Kwara state all along was rulership and not leadership. Since I believe fervently in leadership and not rulership, I cannot be on the sideline, I cannot sit on the fence, I want Kwarans to understand the difference between rulership and leadership. That is why I am interested in the gubernatorial seat.

Hotline: What would you say then is or are responsible for Kwara's backwardness in terms of social and economic development considering the fact that Kwarans have held and are still holding prominent positions in government?

Sha'aba: I must concede that Kwara state has had a fair share of the good things of this coun-

try. The problem however is that, such opportunities have not been utilised for the benefit of the state and Kwarans. Yes, Kwarans have held important positions of secretary to the federal military government, ministers of important government departments, members of the highest ruling bodies in the country, the fact however remains that, the operations of governments in this country at times make it impossible to convert golden opportunities to the benefit of one's state or community. Mark you, the military sub-group has been in power for more than two-thirds of the country's thirty-one years of political independence, and military tradition of governance is different from that of the civilians. The quality of debate before policies are formulated and decision are taken as to how to steer the ship of state-craft also differs. Therefore, we cannot hold such Kwarans that have served at the centre entirely responsible for Kwara's under-development. What about those who served at the state level? Were or are they not Kwarans?

Hotline: Don't you think you are begging the issue of the under-development of the state you want to govern? At least, these people should have done something - one or two things to point to as the benefit of their stewardship.

Sha'aba: No! I am not begging any issue. I may sound rhetorical to you but I know within me and honestly too that, I am being realistic. Let's come down home. There are two main factors militating against Kwara state development. These are poor leadership and the problem of unity. Kwara state was created in 1967 (that was twenty-four years ago) and out of these 24 years, the military ruled for twenty years while the civilians ruled for only four years. As I have earlier stated, the military act in dispatch in terms of state administration without consideration for diverse opinions in the society while the civilians act with caution and weigh the implications of decisions to be taken. In civilian administration, there are checks and balances among the three organs of government - the executive, the legislature and the judiciary - which is absent in the military regime. Therefore, you cannot talk of good administration by the military. Any good decision taken by a military government is by accident and not by design. Under the civilians, decisions are taken by design.

On the problem of unity among Kwarans, I have come to believe that all over the world,

I cannot sit on the fence. I want Kwarans to understand the difference between rulership and leadership.





The problems militating against Kwara state development are poor leadership and disunity.

no community can achieve meaningful development without peaceful co-existence amongst its people. Our major problem in Kwara is disunity, lack of social cohesion and divisive attitudes of various social groups. A good example was the civilian regime of 1979-1983 which was characterised by divisive wranglings. In fact, the period (1979-1983) could best be described as "The 'years of skirmishes and retrogression".

Hotline: *Could you proffer solutions to these problems?*

Sha'aba: One, a visionary leader must recognise the strength of each social group in the state. Two, the interest of each culture sub-group must be recognised and respected. Three, differences in tradition must be noted and should inform policy formulation. Four, we must preach politics of issues rather than politics of hatred and emphasis must be placed on discussing positive rather than negative things. Five, the leadership must demonstrate at all times a committed resolve to harness resources - both human and material - of the state for the benefit of all. Six, the people must be kept busy in terms of developmental efforts at all times.

Hotline: *Are you justifying the popular saying: "An idle mind is the devil's workshop"?*

Sha'aba: Certainly! All these frivolities would have been absent if the people are not idle most of the times.

Hotline: *How do you intend to keep Kwara busy if you become Kwara state governor?*

Sha'aba: Through people-oriented, community-oriented policies and programmes and the vigorous pursuit of such policies and programmes.

Hotline: *Policies and programmes like?*

Sha'aba: I have set up a campaign directorate which you are very much aware of and the staff have specific assignments on how to make Kwara state grow positively. Also, I have commissioned experts in various fields to spell out details of Kwara state potentials in various fields of human endeavours. These experts have track records in the academic, civil service, private sector and so on. The experts were constituted into committees on various sectors and I am happy about the outcome of their findings so far out of which a blue print for Kwara state's positive growth and development will be produced. I am working seriously with the staff of the campaign directorate on the committees' submissions in order to meet the July 1991 deadline for the take off of my campaign proper.

Hotline: *That will take you to all the local gov-*

ernment areas of the state?

Sha'aba: Yes, we are going to reach out to all the nooks and crannies of the state-the grassroots and you are invited.

Hotline: *Your last public appointment was the managing director of Nigerian Sugar Company, Bacia. Today, you are the chairman and chief executive of Ezim Commodities Limited, a private business concern. Both appointments were either by appointment or personal design. Can you tell me the relationship and the differences between boardroom politics and partisan politics in which you have to seek the peoples' mandate to serve?*

Sha'aba: Both are complementary. One is a stepping stone to the other. If you are good in boardroom policies, you can easily fit into political party politics. All are about management of man, resources and society. It is only that, one has a wider dimension as a result of population, land mass and resources than the other. That is, dealing with human beings at micro and macro levels. My stint as the managing director of Nigeria sugar Company, the largest and oldest in Nigeria has been a rewarding experience. Before I took over as the company's chief executive officer, it was operating at a loss but within one year, I converted this misfortune to a fortune as we posted profit. I managed about 6,000 workers then. I can equally lead Kwara to prosperity.

Hotline: *How would you react to the recent shadow election purportedly conducted by the 14 local government chairmen of your party in which you were rated second in the race?*

Sha'aba: As far as I am concerned, the constitution of our party -the SDP does not recognise shadow election, therefore, the election and its results were illegally conducted. In fact, the chairman of SDP in Kwara state, Alhaji Ajanah denounced the shadow election as illegal, null and void. It was a sponsored campaign of calumny by those who want to get to power through back yard because, none of the participants got the mandate of his local government chapter of the party. The August 24 primaries is the only recognised and authorised forum by the government and the party for nominating the party's flagbearer in the gubernatorial race. Those who sponsored such campaign of calumny have no confidence in themselves. Really, I cannot fathom the reason why anybody is in a hurry or scared to breast the tape in a race in which the umpire is yet to blast his whistle. They are scared of me; they are jittery (laughter). Do you know that, my team and I were out of town when the

purported election was conducted and yet, we scored six (6) out of 14 local government areas?

Hotline: *What reason would you adduce for your opponents jitters?*

Sha'aba: It is simple and clear. Going by the law of statistics, it is not representative enough for 14 people out of 4 million Kwara to nominate a governorship candidate for a political party with large followership as the SDP. It's a mockery. A good reason for the jitters is the fact that, my team and I have worked hard since 1989 to mobilise the grassroot populace and now, they can not penetrate the grassroots. Therefore, they are doing everything they think is possible to short-circuit our good work by deliberately circumventing the rules of the game.

Hotline: *I am sure you are not oblivious of the speculation making the rounds that the NRC would be very happy if SDP gives you the guber ticket because there are documents about your tenure at Bacita sugar company to be used against you. People are also saying that the money you are spending is part of Bacita sugar money you converted to personal use.*

Sha'aba: (prolong laughter). I heard it and I never allowed it to bother my mind. It is a blackmail of me by those aspirants who are not sure of themselves. It is a diversionary tactics and an attempt to short circuit the electoral process. In a situation whereby a third rated manager is struggling with a first class manager for leadership position, what do you expect. Definitely, because the third rated manager knows he is not capable of beating the first class manager, he will resort to blackmail. What do you also expect of people who have worked for donkey years without meaningful contribution to the development of their communities and state? Since they know that they will be rejected at the poll but are hell-bent to rule, they have to blackmail the acceptable candidate to the people. I categorise the aspirants spreading such false alarm into three groups. One, there are, the third rated managers who have no confidence in themselves. Two, there are those who have worked for donkey years but have contributed little or nothing to the development of Kwara state. Three, there are those who have not worked at all but want to climb leadership tree from the top rather than from below. All the aspirants have me alone to beat, so naturally, I should expect such blackmail. Let me tell you that, I am myself eager to see the documents. Why should they wait so long? If they are sure of themselves, let them produce the

documents now. The people are wiser today. They don't take the blackmailers serious again after peddling the rumours for five months without substantiating them.

On the sources of funds for my campaign as a function of my stint at Bacita, it is another diversionary tactics. Tell me, who amongst the gubernatorial aspirants (not only in Kwara state but throughout the federation) who does not spend money to run his campaign offices? All we are doing in terms of funding are legitimate. I wouldn't like to dissipate energy unnecessarily on this issue. All I would say however is that, I do not regret any decision I took at Nigeria Sugar Company, Bacita.

Hotline: *You sound confident.*

Sha'aba: I have to because, I am the peoples' choice. Go to any part of Kwara state even to the remotest village, the name you will hear is Sha'aba, Sha'aba. Others are finding it difficult to penetrate the barriers. That is their grouse and that is why they have resorted to cheap blackmail. Come August 24 primaries, I shall carry the day.

Hotline: *If you carry the day on August 24, who will be your running mate?*

Sha'aba: That decision is left for the party to make. I believe in party discipline.

Hotline: *I learnt you are eyeing an Oyi man for the number two position.*

Sha'aba: I can not take decision on such a sensitive matter without the party's knowledge. The party will take decision on it when the time is ripe enough.

Hotline: *If you have not taken decision on who your running mate will be, how come the name of Chief Toba from Oyi is on the lips of your supporters?*

Sha'aba: As I have said, I believe in party discipline and therefore, I cannot choose a running mate without the party's knowledge.

Hotline: *You are from the same Eda local government area as Sarah Jibril, the only female presidential aspirant in your party. I learnt the two of you are not on good terms and therefore, her refusal to get involve in your gubernatorial ambition.*

Sha'aba: (Laughter). You see, my detractors are doing everything possible to smear my name. How can anybody say I am not on good terms with somebody whom I have a cordial relationship. Mrs. Sarah Jibril is my sister. I respect her guts. She is very intelligent, articulate and politically alert. She has a sense of direction. Moreso, she believes in the cause of women.

Any good decision taken by a military government is by accident and not by design.





How can I quarrel with her when I respect her and we discuss a lot anytime we meet. Sarah Jibril is as good as any other aspirant to the presidency. I would be very happy to have my sister as the president of this country - the first female president in Black Africa. I must be fair to Sarah. You see, she cannot be visibly involved in my campaign because she has been travelling all over the federation for her own presidential campaign. She sends me her messages of goodwill often.

Hotline: *What is your position on the establishment of a Kwara state University?*

Sha'aba: It is no longer a matter for debate that Kwara state should have its own university. The idea that Kwara state is educationally advanced is a misconception. Maybe, one or two local government areas can be pointed out as educationally advanced but in areas like Borgu, Kaiama, Edu, Kogi, Asa, Moro, Okehi, Okene and even Ilorin, I put a question mark. Even in the so called educationally advanced local government areas like Oyi, Oyun, Irepodun and Ifelodun, one can also put a question mark because most schools there are voluntary agency schools that are poorly equipped. The results of common entrance and WAEC examinations are a good parameter for measuring the level of educational advancement of any state. In recent times, Kwara state students have been recording poor results because of lack of laboratory facilities, workshop facilities and so forth. Students of Kwara origin always suffer before they get admission into universities because of quota system and the mistake of grouping the state among the educationally advanced states in the country. To redress this problem, the desirability of Kwara state university is not negotiable.

Hotline: *What would be the major priorities of your government?*

Sha'aba: Top on the agenda is the provision of potable drinking water for all communities in the state. It is a sad commentary that less than 75 percent of communities in Kwara state have access to good, clean, and potable water. Can you imagine that Lokoja, Lafiyagi, Pategi, Okene as popular as they are, have no access to good drinking water for most part of the year? We shall also pursue an integrated rural development programme that will involve road construction, rural electrification and industrialisation in order to enhance agricultural productivity. Our focus shall be the rural areas.

Hotline: *What about the Ajaokuta steel project. There seems to be some sort of foot dragging on*

its completion even some people are calling for the project to be abandoned.

Sha'aba: It is ill-informed to call for the abandoning of Ajaokuta steel project rather, the federal government should be prevailed upon to complete the project in earnest. I am happy that the federal government has set 1992 as the target date for the completion of the project. I am equally happy that Atlas Nigeria Limited has taken the lead in establishing downstream companies to produce knots and bolts at Ajaokuta. I implore other companies and individuals to establish downstream industries to produce nails or companies that will make use of the flat sheet to be produced at Ajaokuta. The completion of Ajaokuta steel project is one of the cardinal programmes of the Social Democratic Party. Article 6.2 of the party's constitution states that: "The completion and continuous operations of the steel complexes, other subsidiary rolling mills and the Itakpe Ore Mining projects shall be top priority. So, SDP government at the centre shall ensure the completion of Ajaokuta steel project."

Hotline: *On a last note, the state publishing and printing company, the publishers of The Herald seems to have gone down the drain. When The Herald hit the newsstand eighteen years ago, it was a credible newspaper but, it has since lost its credibility. Its circulation volume has depleted. What do you think should be done to restore The Herald's past glory? I am asking this question because the job security of my colleagues out there is at stake.*

Sha'aba: I am happy you ask this question because it goes a long way to show how concerned you are about your professional constituency. To your question, the problem with *The Herald* is lack of necessary equipment to make it function properly. The organisation still rely on obsolete equipment at a time when the media world is growing more and more sophisticated. This problem is further compounded by inadequate funding. There are good men and women of tested professional competence working in the organisation who, with necessary work tools and funds, can bring back *The Herald* to life. Efforts are being made in this direction considering the fact that, the present government in the state has embarked on the construction of *Herald's* permanent offices. By the time I come to office as the governor of Kwara State, I shall sustain these efforts and *The Herald* will once again be the envy of other media houses in this country.

Go to any part of Kwara state even to the remotest village, the name you will hear is Sha'aba, Sha'aba!

PEOPLE

Alhaji Muhammed Ida Umar of the Ministry of Industries, Garki, Abuja, will be turbaned the *Tafida* of Lokoja on Saturday, 6th of this month at the Maigari's Palace, Lokoja, Kwara State.

The conferment of the chieftaincy title was done by His Royal Highness, Alhaji Yahaya Muhammadu Maikarfi II (Maigari of Lokoja). In a letter of commendation to the new

Tafida, Alhaji Maikarfi said the honour was in recognition of his sterling qualities and in appreciation of his acts of patriotism as demonstrated in his love for the hometown.

Born on the 16th of March, 1949 at Lokoja, Kogi LGA of Kwara state, Alhaji Umaru attended Holy Trinity School, Lokoja (1956-1961); Commonwealth College, Jos (1962-1966); Staff Development Centre, Bida (1967-1968); Kaduna Polytechnic (1975-1976) and Pitmans College, London (1978-1979).

He started work as a clerk on 18th July, 1967 with Public Service Commission, Kaduna. He was redeployed to Kwara State on creation of new states in 1968.

The new *Tafida* has worked in various ministries within the state including the Governor's Office where he served as the Personal Secretary to the Secretary to the State Government from 1969 - 1980. In 1981, he transferred to the Federal Civil Service and was deployed to the Presidency where he served as Senior Personal Secretary to the Secretary to the Government of the Federation from 1981 - 1983. He has between



1984 and now served in various Ministries including the Ministries of Communications, Internal Affairs and presently Chief Secretarial Assistant to the Director-General, Federal Ministry of Industries, Abuja.

Back home, Alhaji Umaru is a caucus member of Lokoja Indigenes People's Union (LIPU) and has contributed immensely to the development of the town. As an active sports-

man, he has donated trophies for the development of sports in the area. Notably, these include "Captain Usman Cup" to Kogi Amateur Handball Association in April, 1987, "Baba-Katanba's Cup" to Muslim Community Secondary School, Lokoja in November, 1987 and another "Captain Usman Cup" to Government Technical College, Lokoja in January 1988.

In the field of education, Alhaji Umaru has contributed tremendously to the development programme of various schools in the area. These include

"Captain Ya-Gana Cup" for annual competition to the best Islamic Religious Knowledge student of Muslim Community Secondary School, Lokoja in 1987.

The traditional title of *Tafida* is as old as the town of Lokoja itself. The last *Tafida* of Lokoja was late Prof. Danladi K. Osori, then Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Sokoto.

Alhaji Umaru's hobbies include football, reading, swimming and hunting.

By Gabriel T. Gwajime

Hajia Lata Labayi, renowned educationist and proprietress of Labayi International Schools, Kaduna has come a long way recently to become the present President of the Soroptimist International. Soroptimist originates from two Latin words — 'sorro' meaning sisters and 'optimum' meaning best. Soroptimist can thus be explained as meaning 'women at their best, helping others to achieve their best. Soroptimist International is a service organisation of professional and business women whose primary air is to initiate actors that will improve the quality of life, and to advance international understanding and peace by recognising the needs of the people throughout the world, and by giving voluntary service which uses the diverse skills of its member, individual, group and cooperative endeavours. It is the largest women's service organisation, and a non-government organisation.

Hajia Lata Labayi has used her position and station in life, to offer and give considerable time and energy to the service of her fellow women folks and to the helping of the less



privileged in the society. As the proprietress of an international schools, she has projected herself into the immensity of problems prevalent in the society in relation to education by using her knowledge and power of mind to solving complex issues. This she has advanced from one stage of advancement to another. As she rightly pointed out, her life's purpose has been "rightly motivated, oriented and successful." She has the true and full prerogative of a woman who has hired her life to the full. But she is not resting on her oar. The struggle she says continues.

Finally to quote from an editorial of *Weekend Concord*, it says "we commend Malama Labayi's act of supreme love. In a country plagued by selfishness tribalism, and "ethnicism", Malama Labayi is a very of hope that all is not cost, that good people can still be found in our midst. Nigeria can produce the likes of Mother Theresa the saintly woman of Calcutta who administers to the poor and the helpless. We enjoy more Nigerians to emulate her."

By H.M. Balogun



In 1990,
4,380 of the deaths on the highways resulted from

**OVERSPEEDING,
OVERTAKING AND
OVERLOADING !**

What a shame ?

What future for our children ?

What future for our country ?

OBEY SPEED LIMIT REGULATIONS NOW Before it is TOO LATE !



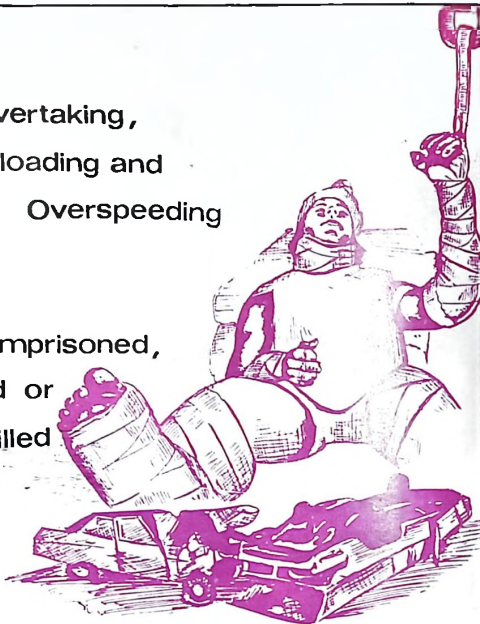
PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT DEPARTMENT,
FEDERAL ROAD SAFETY COMMISSION

Avoid

- Dangerous Overtaking,
Overloading and
Overspeeding

OR

- You may be Imprisoned,
Injured or
Killed



Drive to stay alive!



PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT DEPARTMENT,
FEDERAL ROAD SAFETY COMMISSION

