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October 10, 1988

Admission



SEOUL THE BIG CRASH

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WHEN Nigerians are not complaining about SAP, they are most boastful of a sports heritage that has grown from the days of the bare-foot RED DEVILS certainly more versatile and into a major passion.

The older ones reminisce, usually with glee, how systematically facilities have developed. From the improvised neighbourhood patchments through the 'standard' lawns and fields of exclusive clubs and schools of the later colonial period, the current trend is a splash of Olympic simulation. There are massive stadia everywhere proclaiming international standards.

From the more common place soccer and boxing and a few events in track and field, the repertoire now covers the entire book. Playing for the heck of it, belonged to the past. Professionalism is setting in. And the era of the Akioyes, Adeolas and Omiunus when good performance facilitated movement up the service ladder, is being replaced by one in which the good sportsman is a ruthless mercenary. He hawks his skills from season to season to the highest bidder, as the various sports them-

selves become big business.

Correspondingly, sports administration has grown increasingly complex. And perhaps laurels have become all the more difficult to ac-



quire! The fact that the just-experienced Olympian Big Crash was actually preceded by very optimistic assertions by the various team managers, technical advisers, coaches and the athletes themselves

tells how immensely uncertain the terrain can often be.

The apex of every nation's ambitions in sports continues to be the Olympics. The best must be reserved for the games, which also are best suited to reflect the finest and most absurd in preparation strategies. To date, Nigeria has had only a miserly romance with success at the Olympics. A single silver and three miserable bronze medals, ever since, don't make an exactly glorious testimony.

So what's the matter? Is it just a luckless streak or a well-deserved knock for programmed sloppiness? Assistant Editor, Chukwuemeka Gahia anchors this revealing treatment with reports from all over the country and from our man on the spot at Seoul, Chris Ogwu.

Chris Ogwu

Editor-in-Chief

International

Ethnic wranglings in Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia and Azerbaijan are causing some nightmares to the Soviet authorities. While Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev labels the leaders of the collisions as "corrupt elements", the country's news agency, TASS calls them agents of "anarchy and hatred."

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Business & Economy

Earnings from the black gold are declining. The spot market price is now \$12.50 per barrel as against OPEC's target price of \$18.92. The organisation is in dire straits and, no less Nigeria's economy which is its mainstay and whose current budget is planned on receipts of \$16 per barrel. Some cause for worry.

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The Military: Will they ever go?

Your cover story (September 12) was as edifying as it was a trip down memory lane. Military rule is not only an aberration and an epitome of underdevelopment, but also a reactionary institution of imperialism in Nigeria.

The military will continue to rule Nigeria till eternity except drastic revolutionary steps are taken. One of such steps is turning Nigeria into a military state where everybody carries a gun to defend not only himself but the society at large. Anything short of this is waste of time.

*Taoleq Yomi Gidado
Ado-Ekhi, Ondo State*

As long as the material and social status of military officers given political appointments at one time or the other is seen as better than those of their colleagues in the barracks, and even after retirement, we should not expect the military to go finally after 1992. The officers will always attempt coups, not necessarily to better the lot of the people and the nation but to improve their material and social positions in the society.

The only feasible means of stopping coups is for the society to go into the street and protest any time there is one.

The practice whereby Nigerians go into streets to protest only foiled coups, tends to suggest that we are incapable of preventing a coup. Surely, whatever instruments of coercion the 300,000 soldiers may have, it cannot be stronger than a society of more than 100 million people. All the society needs is will-power: it has happened elsewhere.

*A.N.Z. Sani,
Jos, Plateau State.*

There is only one solution to the inordinate ambition, and frequent military intervention in Nigerian politics by the army. The army has since 1966, neglected its traditional role of defending the nation, hence the devil always finds work for the idle minds at "pepper soup joints."

I suggest that the AFRC members, if they are really interested in preventing further disruptions of our politico-constitutional development, should reconsider their decision not to send our army to liberate our brothers in South Africa. Otherwise the coup decimal will



recall itself after 1992.

*Akuzamus M.G. Anakwa
Jos, Plateau State.*

Street kids

The fact that crime wave among kids is increasing is a function of our social system (September 19). Much as this is the rule rather than the exception, the entire social structure should be reorganised so that it becomes less stratified. Until this is done we may still live with more serious juvenile involvement in big-time crime.

*Olowu John,
Dopemu, Lagos*

MAMSER: Who wants it killed?

The position of your medium as the OASIS of hope in a political desert of despair (which MAMSER equally symbolises) was further accentuated in a creative dialogue held recently between our directorate and the distinguished members of your editorial board. (September 12)

We are impressed by your honest criticisms arising from your genuine support to see MAMSER through in its onerous task of sanity restoration to a society where cynics abound in terrifying proportion.

The role of MAMSER and that of your medium are co-terminous: restoration of sanity to a prismatic society. Critics would have a field day. Our collective resolve is to work very assiduously to succeed far more than the critics would acknowledge.

*Jerry Gana
Abuja*

Holy smoke

Reading "What's happening in God's House" (September 5,) reveals actually the atrocities that are going on in the so-called houses of God. But in retrospect, do we think that these are new developments in the church?

The fact is that right from the time the first church came into existence (Acts Chapter 4,) the act of cheating or the urge to cheat in the house of God has always been. Remember, it was in an attempt to outwit the holy spirit that sent Ananias and Saphira to hell (or is it paradise?).

Therefore, what is happening today is an advancement of what started with, and in, God's house. And I tell you, this will continue except Jesus comes.

Augustine Anyanwu N.
Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Chess or power game



In every event that involves more than one person, there is what I believe to be "The Politics of Life". Like in politics proper, the best candidate may not win an election, but a candidate with a sugar-coated tongue, strong support and, probably money and luck.

Then, if a game turns to war, it is good equipment, better logistics with the best of luck that dictate the eventual winning team.

So, sharpen your equipment and be on alert; the game had started from birth; you will not be around to know the result, because it would be announced after your death.

Lekan Azeze

Address Letters to the Editor, typewritten double-space, with writer's name, address and, if available telephone number, to: The African Guardian, Rutam House, P.M.B. 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria. Letters subject to editing.



Aerial mishap

THERE are strong indications that at least two of the paratroopers who practised for last Saturday's independence day celebration at Abuja were injured, perhaps fatally, in aerial mishap.

The first incident took place last Tuesday when a paratrooper fell into a clump of bushes near the parade ground after struggling to get the parachute open. The spot where he landed is about five metres away from the spectators stand. According to a witness, the paratrooper was immediately surrounded by the mounted military men, apparently, to shield him from members of the public who were around. The horses and their riders stayed in place until the injured man was removed.

The second incident occurred last Wednesday, barely 24 hours later. It was essentially a replay of what happened the day before. According to a resident of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), he saw an airborne paratrooper also trying desperately to get his parachute respond, before he fell out of sight, said the source, who thought the paratrooper "was still doing acrobatics."

The parachute rehearsal the next day was not marked by any accident of the same proportions. That is, except for a paratrooper, whose landing was not very smooth. The man, in a white helmet, was able to land quite close to the "correct area" designated by green artificial smoke. However, because of a strong wind, he was almost out of control when he hit the ground. His descent was too fast and when he landed, he was entangled in the folds of the parachute. The hearts of the spectators were in their mouths until the paratrooper stood up aided by soldiers who went to his rescue. Moments later, he was running with his colleagues over the parade ground, but his obvious limp was an indication that all was not round.

Col. Y.D. Rimdan, the paratroopers' leader, was at the parade ground with FCT Minister, Air Commodore Hamza Abdullahi, former Governor of Oyo State, Oladayo Popoola and Col. John Shagaya, Minister of Internal Affairs and others to watch the rehearsal last Thursday.

As at the press time last Thursday, there was no word from the FCT authority or the military on the incident.

Awards for IBB's aides

LAST week, at Dodan Barracks, six of President Ibrahim Babangida's personal aides received German national awards from the President of Germany, Richard Von Weizsacker who visited Nigeria last May 5.

The awards which are the recipient's personal physical fitness award were sent through mail to the recipients; the president's personal aide, Sadiq Wali; the Aide de Camp, Lt. Colonel Usman Bello; Personal Assistant Major D. Usman; the Chief Press Secretary, Duro Onabule; Personal Assistant, Ahmad Watanafa and the Chief of Protocol, Abubakar Udu.

Since the citation for the awards were written in German language, recipients had a hard time understanding what exactly they meant.

• Weizsacker



• Onabule



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Olatunji Osofisan

Africa: the victim as villain

FROM the beginning of the colonial era in Africa, the European intruder represented his mission as one of unalloyed altruism. He was in the continent to put an end to the savagery and backwardness of the natives, to bring them enlightenment, to wean them from their infernal deities and instruct them in the ways of the Christian God. It was a mission of love, a burden the white man had cheerfully and disinterestedly undertaken in the name of civilization and progress.

This was nonsense, of course. The white man's mission was primarily predatory. He was out to secure cheap raw materials for the factories of Europe as well as assured markets for their manufacturers. Measures that could guarantee these twin objectives were undertaken swiftly: railways were built to evacuate agricultural and natural resources from the hinterland and seaports were developed to handle the shipping of these precious cargo to the metropolis. On the other hand, road networks were undeveloped, as were other infrastructures that did not directly further the designs of the intruder.

The white man reaped obscene profits from his "burden" as resources flowed ceaselessly and abundantly from the colony to the metropolis. Walter Rodney, the great son of the Black Diaspora, has documented this process in his monumental work, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

Even where viable manufacturing industries existed, the colonial intruder had to destroy them to foist an enduring dependence on Europe. Thus, to cite an Asian example, India which produced and even exported textiles was, over time, reduced by every kind of artifice to importing them from Manchester.

More than 25 years after their independence, many African countries continue to pay hefty pensions in scarce foreign currency to officers sent down from the metropolis primarily to advance the cause of imperialism — pensions that enabled many of them to retire early to a life of leisure and comfort. No matter what, these pensions have to be paid. The "white man's

burden," then, was a term contrived to justify the colonial intrusion and to salve the imperial conscience over what was essentially a predatory exercise of the most unconscionable kind.

In many respects, the Black man has borne the burden of developing Europe and America, from the period of the "voyages of discovery" through the Atlantic slave trade and colonial exploitation to the present. The burden exists today in more insidious forms. Pernicious terms of trade continue to guarantee a net flow of resources from the developed to the developing countries. The price of raw materials is dictated from abroad, as is the price of imports. They are caught up in debts so staggering that, in order to pay just the interest, they have to

"Even when allowance is made for the corruption, ineptitude, lack of imagination and sheer laziness of mind of the leadership in the Black World, we would still find on balance that Africa is more a victim of Western greed and perfidy than it is a product of poor leadership"

plunge their citizens in privations so deep as to arrest and in some cases even reverse their growth.

The World Bank last year, urged a wicked swindle of the type perpetrated on Nigeria by the James Matthey Bank in England and by overseas confederates of crooked Nigerian businessmen who provide cover for the import of container after container of sand, old newspapers and rags to Nigeria instead of the true merchandise that had been paid for in foreign currency.

The International Monetary Fund has become, in a way, the debt collector's agent. Whatever may have been its original mandate, its mission these days is to prescribe and enforce policies to guarantee that the creditor gets

his money back even if the debtor perishes in the process of paying up.

African and Third World countries are being told to cut back on food and other subsidies so that they can repay their debts to Europe and America, when Europe and America are paying their farmers to produce less or not to produce at all. For they still have on their hands mountains of butter and grain and rivers of milk produced decades ago with massive subsidies to farmers.

Hunger whose eradication was once within sight in many Third World countries has returned with a vengeance. By UNICEF's understated account, 100,000 children are dying everyday in Africa alone, and at least one million have so far died since African countries were inveigled into using their resources to service doubtful debts instead of using them to serve their people. In the stunning imagery of one commentator, what is happening is the equivalent of three jumbo planes, all full of children, crashing everyday and killing all on board.

The World Bank last year, urged a meeting of vice-chancellors of African universities to devise ways of curtailing access to higher education in particular and all formal education in general, to service debts owed to Europe and America. The same institution recently told Zimbabwe to end its drive to redress the criminal neglect which African education suffered in the hands of the colonial settler, and to stop arming itself against a racist South Africa that is forever arming itself and threatening its neighbours.

Everywhere, the victim of pro-sterous trade and financial arrangements is cast in the role of a villain who must be injured before he can be redeemed, via "structural adjustment programme" or whatever other poisons the neo-colonial imagination can devise. Even when allowance is made for the corruption, ineptitude, lack of imagination and sheer laziness of mind of the leadership in the Black World, we would still find on balance that Africa is more a victim of Western greed and perfidy than it is a product of poor leadership.

UNITED STATES

A battle of wits

Presidential aspirants debate on TV.

THERE stood George Bush last Sunday night at the Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem North Carolina, fencing and skillfully dodging the torrent of verbal blows coming from Michael Dukakis at the opposite end of the rostrum. For most of 90 minutes that the battle of wits between the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates lasted, Vice-President Bush could have been mistaken for an embattled state witness under a gruelling cross-examination in a court-room. And the Massachusetts Governor, the defence attorney.

Only a few minutes into the presidential election debate, it was clear that it would have made all the difference if it was President Ronald Reagan who stood facing Dukakis on the podium. Indeed, the contest for the most part, turned into what seemed like a trial, an X-ray of the Reagan administration. But, in the stead of Reagan, stood his number-two man, Bush, fighting off, explaining and defending the administration's policies during these past eight years; policies ranging from the controversial Star Wars project to the relationship with Panamanian strongman, Manuel Antonio Noriega, accused of involvement in international drug trafficking.

In the end, however, whatever points Bush appeared to have lost from his political association with Reagan, he tried to recoup from his position as incumbent Vice President. "Give me the credit for all the good things that happened to world peace since Reagan and I took over," he told the estimated 100 million American voters watching the live telecast. Making indirect references to the historic Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty signed between Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, as well as the on-going negotiations on strategic long-range nuclear weapons. Bush quickly contrasted himself with Dukakis whom he had often described as naive and inexperienced in foreign policy and defence matters. The Vice President also spoke of the thaw in the East-West relations, and the resul-



• Bush and Dukakis (right): A verbal sparring



tant avalanche of peace moves in Nicaragua, Afghanistan, the Gulf, Angola and so on as some of the legacies of the Reagan-Bush administration.

On such domestic issues as drug control, death penalty, taxes, employment, housing, education and health care, the Vice President (and to some extent Dukakis too), launched into long explanations of details. Bush, who said he wanted to be president to lead America to an "era of peace and harmony," and "enhance freedom around the world," reiterated his support for the Star Wars project, military aid to the Nicaragua contras, constitutional ban on abortion, the death penalty and his promise not to raise taxes during the next four years. In an apparent bid to woo the so-called conservative Reagan Democrats, Vice President Bush, a millionaire businessman born into a millionaire family, tried to shunt his opponent to the left of the political spectrum. He gleefully recalled Dukakis' statement describing himself (Dukakis) as "a Massachusetts liberal, a card-carrying member of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Bush admitted he was more conservative on "family, social, economic and national-security issues" than Dukakis, a son of Greek immigrant parents whose civil rights credentials over the years have remained impeccable. The Massachusetts Governor, as would be

• Reagan: Count-down to vacation day



expected, is opposed to Bush on nearly all issues, except, perhaps, on the matter of international terrorism. Both politicians say they are against all forms of negotiations with hijackers, although Dukakis cast veiled doubts on Bush's sincerity in view of the Iran-contra scandal (in which top members of the Reagan-Bush government were found guilty of secret deals with Iranians and so on). Specifically, Dukakis said he does not foreclose the possibility of a tax raise "as a last resort," but he promises the electorate, among other things, more prudent management of the economy, more equitable distribution of the national wealth ("bringing Americans together to end the kind of polarization they've had too much of over the past eight years").

Although the Bush-Dukakis contest was dominated by arguments over domestic policies, it nevertheless extended to such important world issues as the crippling Third World debt and the Noriega saga. But most surprisingly, no mention — not even passing reference — was made by either of the candidates, or the panel of four journalists who fielded questions, about the apartheid regime in South Africa. Analysts, however, suspect that the issue now considered rather too hot by both political camps, is likely to come up when Bush and Dukakis meet in a second face-off later this month (October 13 or 14).

As it is, clouds of controversy continued to trail the evaluation of the Bush-Dukakis debate. Both politicians claim victory. Some political analysts say it was a draw. But the Associated Press Panel of six veteran debate judges and the ABC network pollsters gave the day to the 54-year-old Massachusetts Governor. A sure indication that he has now levelled up, if not over-taken Bush in the overall preference rating.

By Emenike Okorie

Caught in the web

Russia in dilemma over Armenian demand for separate republic

NEARLY everything — from persuasion to expulsion of some of the dissidents — has been done in these past three months by Soviet authorities to suppress the ethnic violence affecting Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia and to some extent, Azerbaijan. After the series of appeals early this year failed to calm the feud, Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev angrily labelled leaders of the unrest "corrupt elements," and enemies of *perestroika* (restructuring), his pet-project.

The Soviet official news agency, TASS, went even a shade further, describing the Nagorno-Karabakh nationalists, who demand to be transferred from Azerbaijan and merged with Armenia, as agents of "anarchy and hatred."

Last July, Moscow moved beyond rhetoric in the bid to stamp out the ethnic collisions which have led to loss of over 30 lives and closure of schools and industries especially in the Armenian capital, Yerevan, and several towns in the chiefly Armenian populated Nagorno-Karabakh. The nation's highest state organ, the Supreme Soviet, decreed that the people of Nagorno-Karabakh should continue to remain under Azerbaijan (rejecting their clamour to be integrated with Armenians with whom they share close cultural and religious affinity). In other words, the authorities were not swayed by the argument that the predominantly Christian Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh would be better off if they are transferred from the mainly Moslem Republic of Azerbaijan, and integrated with their kith and kin in the Republic of Armenia.

The Supreme Soviet's intervention has, however, not proved to be the expected panacea. Not even after Armenian front-line nationalist and writer, Paruir Airikayan, as a warning shot to

other dissidents, was (late July) stripped of his Soviet citizenship and expelled to Ethiopia. And just a fortnight ago, the streets in the Armenian capital were literally taken over by columns of Interior Ministry and regular army soldiers from Moscow. The roads were ringed with tanks, while a curfew and ban on public meetings and marches were imposed. But this clampdown, followed by mass arrests of suspected ring-leaders, has hardly scaled down the tem-



• Gorbachev: Facing a huge political dilemma

po of the demonstrations. The problem remains as thousands of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia reportedly still rally to press for an emergency meeting of the Supreme Soviet to reconsider their appeal.

In all, the crisis presents a huge political dilemma for Gorbachev. In fact, the Armenian nationalist question is a classic illustration of the problems facing the present Soviet administration's policy of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika*. Apart from the international embarrassment and bad publicity being generated by the disturbances, there's, analysts say, some irony in Moscow's continuing hardline stance against the Armenian nationalist demands. To a large extent, it was Gorbachev's sudden whiff of tolerance and openness that reawakened the largely suppressed nationalist sentiments. Even now, the Soviet leader has continued to exercise

some measure of restraint in dealing with the crisis unlike most of his predecessors who resorted to decisive and ruthless methods.

As it is, however, the hardening of views by the Armenian nationalist leaders, and Gorbachev's strong identification with the Supreme Soviet's position has left him very little room for manoeuvre. "If we don't find the key to the solution, it will have far-reaching consequences for *perestroika*," Gorbachev had told the Supreme Soviet session in July. Apparently, he realises that to fail to pacify the Armenian nationalists would seem like going against the very spirit of change which he urges. And such a position would, no doubt, disenchant the Armenians, and dampen their enthusiasm for his policies.

To grant the Armenian nationalist demands, Gorbachev perhaps realises too, could have even more far-reaching consequences. In the first place, it would be interpreted as the entrenchment of what the Supreme Soviet described as "narrow nationalist feelings" over the Soviet belief in "internationalism" and supremacy of the communist ideology. Besides, as the world's largest country, the Soviet is a complex web of cultures, traditions and religious beliefs (with reportedly the world's highest concentration of most ms), and is made up of well over 100 nationalities (dominated by the Russians).

Letting Nagorno-Karabakh region (predominantly Christian Armenians), leave Azerbaijan (Moslem Republic) the Armenia Republic (Christian) would, therefore, seem ill-advised. It would, therefore, seem ill-advised. It would only spur other demands for separate republics along ethnic and religious lines, thus relegating ideological integration to the background and bringing ethnicity and religious sentiments to the fore-front. This, Gorbachev, or indeed any other Soviet leader, cannot afford. The snag is that the Armenian nationalists have turned down all short-term administrative solutions.

By Emerika Okoro.

SAHEL

New alarms of starvation

Locust invasion deflates hopes for bumper harvest

SWARMS of ravenous insects have taken possession of Mauritania. The locusts which invaded the country a few weeks ago, migrated from North Africa and are now heading for Mali, amidst fears that great damage will be done to this year's harvest expected soon. Several hectares of farmland have already been devastated by the visiting swarms in Mauritania.

Locust invasion, now a common occurrence in the Sahel, has repeatedly conspired with perennial drought problems in the region to make the problem of food shortage unbearable. This has resulted in the mass movement of people from the Sahel down the coastal regions in search of food. Efforts of the poverty-stricken Sahelian countries have had little effect in terms of stemming the locust invasion. The huge capital required for effective pest control, experts maintain, cannot be mobilised by most of the affected West African countries. Mauritania, Mali and other Sahelian states that continue to fall prey to pest disasters are among the poorest in the world.

What is new in the latest invasion is that it has spread to coastal regions of West Africa, destroying crops in countries like Nigeria, Togo and Ghana. The last two years have seen Nigeria battling to retrieve as much as possible of its agricultural crops from the mandibles and beaks of crop-eating insects and birds. Recently, the 11 northern governors, after series of locust threats to food production in their respective states, met to consider a joint implementation of proposals on pest control.

The fear of locust influx is not limited to the northern part of Nigeria. In August, the Lagos State Government launched a satellite communication system to fight locusts invasion. The system according to expert reports, can be used to monitor the movement of locusts, thereby enabling control teams to launch attacks.

The continued presence of the swarms in the forest regions of West

Africa has led agricultural experts to worry about an unprecedented food crisis throughout the West African sub-continent. Pest control experts believe that the locust plague will continue and intensify in time. They say regions that were not previously affected could come under invasion.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) predicted early this year, a major outbreak of desert locusts all over Africa and some middle East countries. African



countries thought to be vulnerable include Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad and Mauritania.

Meanwhile, sources in Khartoum say the sky over Sudan was over-cast several hours last week with swarms of migrating locust heading towards Ethiopia. They report that Sudan has been put under a locust siege since last week as control teams with only 20 planes and trucks found it difficult to do much to the billions of locusts that fell upon farmlands. Sudanese agriculture minister, Abdel Fateh Al Tigani, who has publicly denounced the inadequacy of international aid, last week sought the help of Egypt in tackling the problem.

For some 43 years, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has been trying to fight pest control and boost food production in Africa. Even then, observers believe that the FAO's dream of a world free of starvation appears almost as far as it was

when the organisation was founded 43 years ago. Millions of people die each year of starvation and hunger all over the world.

This notwithstanding, the FAO at its 15th regional conference in Port Louis, Mauritius capital, this year, called for support from the world community to enable it combat effectively persistent locust incursions in Africa. Reports quoted FAO sources as saying that, at least, 240 million US dollars would be required to combat the current locust invasion in Africa, described by analysts as the largest in the last 30 years.

Already, the United States government through USAID has set up a task force to coordinate government efforts in the continent. The task force, sources add, is closely monitoring new sightings of locust swarms in Sudan and Ethiopia, and issuing warnings about possible invasions. In another development, the British government announced that it is using a computer-based satellite observation system for the monitoring of locust movement in Africa. The system, according to computer experts, will precisely locate locust breeding areas and allow control teams to strike early and forestall serious damage of crops.

As the plague rages on, sympathisers believe that more than sporadic assistance from international organisations is

needed to avert the problem. Already, the presence of the destructive insects has deflated high hopes of bumper harvests this year, based on the fact of the heavier-than-usual rainfall in most African countries.

By Abraham Ogbodo

• Maize farm: Under threat



Last gasps of a monarch

Emperor Hirohito awaits death's cold grip

ONCE, he was thought a divine being, worshipped as a living *Shinto* god. Today, Japan's Emperor Hirohito, world's longest reigning monarch lies on his Chrysanthemum (Marigold) throne, awaiting the in-escapable end of all mortals — death.

In a sense, the 87-year-old emperor's plight brings to a head his process of the de-mystification begun 42 years ago by US occupation forces after Japanese defeat in the Second World War (he was forced by General Douglas Mac Arthur, to renounce his divinity as well as the concept that the Japanese were a superior race who should rightly dominate the world). But, the whittling down of his political powers in the May 3, 1947 post-war constitution (he was reduced to a mere figurehead) did not completely erase his pride of place in the Japanese society. Even now that he lies critically ill, awaiting the final toll, many Japanese still revel in the emperor's divine past.

Reports late last week were that many who now throng the imperial palace dai-

ly to pray for the ailing monarch have announced their preparedness to die in his stead if they could. The fact, however, is that Hirohito's chances of survival are slim. Die, it seems, he would. Even the palace doctors say they have resigned themselves to the hope of merely ensuring that the emperor, who bleeds in the stomach and pancreas, passes on painlessly (he underwent a major intestinal operation late last year).

But, perhaps, the prompt handover by the imperial family of all the emperor's official duties to Hirohito's son, Crown Prince Tsugu no Miya Akihito, is the most authoritative confirmation that Emperor Hirohito's era, which spans over six decades (since 1926) is as good as being all over. The 54-year-old Prince Akihito is the first to ascend the Japanese throne as an ordinary man (others, including his father did as demigods). Watchers of the Japanese political scene, therefore, expect the suave English-speaking and tennis-playing marine biologist to be more modern



• Hirohito: Waiting for the last

than his father. But, indications are that less avant-garde than the Some of his close advisers that Hiro Akihito, next in line, is London, a student of his father's victim of his pitiless deeply conservative

Hunger on the prowl

World Bank reports foresee gloomy future for Africa

THE usual quiet and debonair atmosphere that surrounds World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) deliberations was conspicuously absent at this year's conference in Berlin last week. Instead, the delegates found themselves walled right from the air-port by a horde of angry visitors. Hundreds of Berlin citizens armed with stink bombs had marched in protest through security barricades onto the tarmac of Berlin's Tegel Airport to wave their placards at the delegates arriving for a three-day talk on steps to be taken to tackle debt crisis and poverty in Third World countries.

The Berlin protest confirmed the fact of the increasing concern in the international community about World Bank and IMF financial dealings with Third World countries. Those countries that have sought either 'expert' counsel or cash assistance from the agency have invariably been plunged into a sea of

economic woes ranging from swelling foreign debts to domestic hardships.

In a report presented at last week's meeting, the World Bank put the estimate of starving and undernourished Africans at a frightening figure of 103



• World bank chief Barber Conable for Africa

million people who cannot believe in the normalcy of life. The report also states that the number of people who are starving and undernourished in Africa is 103 million.

The power, the fury

Pharmacists, doctors disagree on medical bill

It started with a whimper, then a bang. When the first signs of conflict between doctors and pharmacists started about a month ago, the general view was that it was likely to be resolved amicably. But events last week revealed that both have thrown decorum to the winds and bared all to anyone who cares to watch and listen. In what appears to be the climax of the cold war, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) has issued a memorandum to the Constituent Assembly to legislate that only a doctor can head the health ministry at both the state and national levels. The pharmacists are however, crying foul and are accusing the Health Minister, Professor Olikoye Ransome Kuti, of taking sides. Said one of them: "We have been too mild with the minister. He has now become a union leader."

According to the National Secretary General of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Dr. Ifeanyi Atueyi, doctors are simply out to monopolize power within the health sector.

The evidence? He readily points to the 15 teaching hospitals in Nigeria, out of which only two have pharmacists in the management board. There are also only two commissioners of health who are pharmacists in Nigeria.

But doctors do not see what the hullabaloo is all about. Explaining their position, the Lagos State chairman of the General Medical Practitioners Association, Dr. Doyin Okupe asserted that "the Nigerian doctor must of necessity be the leader of the team within the health sector. We appreciate the discomfiture this places some other professionals within this group and appreciate their contributions, but none of these contributions is enough to make them medical practitioners." However, the pharmacists counter by saying that being a doctor is not a criterion for leadership. The physician, they argue, has begun to believe in the myth he has

woven around himself.

Indications of the sour relationship became apparent when, at a dinner organised by the Kwara State chapter of the NMA, the health commissioner, Dr. Abdul Karim, a pharmacist, stalked out following what he regarded as an insult on his person. The Kwara NMA chairman, Dr. Oladele Olayemi had remarked jokingly: "Without begging the issue, ladies and gentlemen, it should



• Atueyi and (right) Matu. Up against doctors' monopoly of health sector

not be difficult to appreciate that a carpenter should not supervise the mechanic workshop."

Though the NMA national secretary general, Dr. Mike Ekpo said Dr. Olayemi was not expressing the view of the NMA, he, however, made little effort to hide the fact that the issue of professionalism has been one sore point the NMA has been indicating to the government.

Apparently, it is not only the pharmacists who have an axe to grind with the doctors. Nurses have also accused medical practitioners of power-greed, thus, fueling speculations that the tussle might be something beyond the issue of mere leadership in the interest of the patient. Deputy secretary general of the Nigeria Nurses and Midwives Association (NNAM), Moses Matu describes the on-going controversy as an "economic war." He says that the doctors have

proven that their interest is "lining their pockets" because the proposed nursing decree of 1989, which seeks to promote professionalism, has received knocks from doctors. This, he stresses, is as a result of the fact that many private clinics have auxiliary (untrained) nurses within their employ. "They believe that whatever havoc they (the auxiliary) commit, they can cover them, and these are the things we are fighting against," he said.

An infuriated Dr. Okupe says that nurses and pharmacists are simply fighting for selfish gains and that the agitation for the so-called professionalism is an attempt to usurp some of the powers of doctors. "How can you ask a nurse or pharmacist to handle common ailments?" he asked. "What is a common ailment and where do you begin to draw the line?" For emphasis, he drew an allusion to the United States of America where the surgeon-general is a medical doctor and chief executive of the health ministry.

But information from the United States Information Service (USIS) in Lagos reveal that in the US, the surgeon-general is not as it were, the national head of the health sector since each state is autonomous in health matters.

Legal experts are divided on the implications of making this position the exclusive preserve of doctors in Nigeria. While a minority like Ambrose Nwankwe believe that doctors are in a better position to understand the health needs of the society, majority view the doctors' request as ridiculous. "Heading ministries is only a political issue, not a medical affair", stated another. In his opinion, it is as ridiculous as insisting that only a pilot should head the aviation industry.

While the mudslinging goes on, the health minister is maintaining a dignified silence. Officials at the ministry are also keeping mum. But there are indications that a once stable castle is on the brink of collapse and if left unmanaged might have devastating consequences for the nation's health system.

By Josephine Akarue

Wise talk too late

Ayida speaks on national self-sufficiency from vintage

ALLISON Ayida, one time "Super Permanent Secretary" in the federal civil service was the first to admit that his national day lecture last Wednesday was delivered with the benefit of hindsight. Such retrospection, of course, afforded him the opportunity of making brilliant suggestions as to how Nigeria could attain self-sufficiency. As an observer was quick to point out, Mr. Ayida, who was part of the period when it was said that money was not Nigeria's problem, but how to spend it, was being "wise after the fact."

The former Secretary to Government, whose national day lecture was chaired by his former boss, General Yakubu Gowon, told the gathering of Armed Forces Ruling Council members, Governors and a sprinkling of members of the diplomatic corps that "Nigeria seems to have lost the art and the know-how (of self-reliance) with the attainment of national independence, especially with the emergence of the petro-Naira era after the civil war in 1970."

If one thought Ayida's bolt was also aimed at General Gowon, whose rulership seemed to have been included, the former head of state obviously had a different opinion when he got up to describe Ayida as a man who spoke his mind without "fear or favour." Mr. Ayida took a swipe at the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree. To him, "The Federal Government is atomizing the Nigerian shareholdings and limiting the individual's indigenous shareholding to 5 per cent or ₦50,000 maximum has determined that no Nigerian group of investors can control or provide core management in the partially indigenised multi-national". This he sees as detrimental to technological self-sufficiency.

On more recent government policies, Ayida feels that the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) with its high interest rates, credit squeeze and undervalued naira has virtually run the small scale and medium sized industries out of business.

Ayida's position regarding the wealth of the country is rather uncommon. He says, "There is enough money in the (present) economy to sustain a self-sufficient economy even in the foreign exchange sector..." This position which

he says he has always maintained since the early 70s is hinged on the notion that "A country where the individual can donate over 1 per cent when the external parity of the naira was \$1.50 should not be on the list of Less Developed Countries (LDCs) with irredeemable debt. A country is potentially rich if it observes and offers two conditions: proper management of resources and radical redistribution of income."

Ayida does not feel that Nigeria lacks leaders of vision: "We have always been faced with a lack of vision," he says. To buttress this point he cites the example of the ₦75 billion road project which depended on toll gates on expressways which ₦1 and 50kobo are collected. "About 150 million people are to be sold to amortise the cost originally estimated at ₦2 billion." The laudable objective (of raising funds for highway maintenance) is unlikely to be achieved at the rate pegged to satisfy consumer demand and public opinion."



• Ayida: Nigeria has enough

Third tier gets fresh tonic

Transition programme steers along with cheers

PRESIDENT Ibrahim Babangida's national day address on Saturday held the promise of drastic changes in government. With his announcement that "change of gear is soon to begin with the Presidency itself", as part of a package of establishing a more coherent policy-making team, it became clear that the much speculated reshuffle in the federal cabinet might take place anytime from now. The change is expected to sensitize the Nigerian public, which has become "increasingly wary of big and complex government" to the administration's policies and lay down the foundation for the emergence of the two political parties that will come on stream in the second quarter of next year.

To this end, the President has directed the abolition of the state ministries of local government to allow local government chairmen more autonomy. It was gathered that the first ever joint meeting of military governors and members of the Armed Forces Ruling Council in Dodan Barracks last week was specifically to intimate the governors with the new dispensation.

This was not the only surprise the President had in store. To alleviate the problems of drugs and medical essentials in the health sector, government approved N100,000 each for the 204 local governments for their immediate purchase. For the state government, one million naira was made available for the same purpose while the Federal Ministry of Health was given N2.6 million to enhance its curative health programme. The teaching hospitals on the other hand are to share a total of six million naira.

To stem the decline in the quality of education and to enhance the nutritional status of children, at the primary education level, government has

ordered the immediate release of N40 million naira under the fiscal control of the cabinet office. At the end of the joint meeting of the National Council of States and the AFRC on Wednesday, the decision had already been taken to promulgate decree 31 which would make government partly responsible for the funding of primary education. The decree will become effective from next year.

But the bigger surprises were outside the Presidential address. At press time,



• Gen. Ibrahim Babangida: Tempers justice with mercy

The African Guardian, learnt from highly reliable sources, that at about the same time that his speech was being broadcast, letters of amnesty for some jailed, past politicians of the Second Republic would be delivered. Notable among them is the former civilian governor of Anambra State, Chief Jim Nwobodo and his one time Commissioner of Finance, Sam Ifeka. Unlike the amnesty granted to other former politicians before now, government is likely to waive the condition that such politicians granted reprieve are to pay what they owe the nation before they are released. It was gathered that the jailed politicians would be made to refund the money pilfered from govern-

ment treasury after their release.

Chief Jim Nwobodo who turned 48 years recently was found guilty of paying N670,000 to the coffers of the defunct Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP) by the Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Awote's Anambra State tribunal on the recovery of public property.

The panel also found Nwobodo guilty of over paying a company, "Green Field Nigeria Limited" a total amount of N5.8 million. With this amnesty, Nwobodo who was sentenced to a total of 43 years is to refund N1.7 million to the federal government. The former Finance Commissioner of Anambra State, Sam Ifeka who was penalised for releasing the amount paid to "Green fields" is also to refund N266,488 to government after his release from jail.

It was however gathered that the amnesty would only be extended to politicians jailed for corrupt practices during the second republic. Sources close to government say that for jailed public officers like the one time director of the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC), Peter Obasa and Folorunsho Kila, former Assistant Director of the NYSC, an amnesty is not likely to be granted.

The President, who gave no indication of the amnesty in his Saturday speech only said that government believed that "All Nigerians have a right to basic freedom".

The President did not also touch on the release of the former Head of State, Major General Muhammadu Buhari or of the former Chief of Staff Major-General Tunde Idiagbon. On Thursday the Security Council consisting of President Ibrahim Babangida, the Chief of General Staff, Vice-Admiral Augustus Aikhomu and all service chiefs met all day long in Dodan Barracks. Specifications are that the discussions had to do with the security implications of releasing both men. There are strong indications though that both former helmsmen are likely to be released from restriction.

By Wale Akin-Aina



• Colonel Buraimoh



• Chief Justice Bello



• CA Chairman Aniagolu

Aturu goes to court

BAMIDELE Aturu, the National Youth Service Corps member who rejected an award last August to protest alleged muzzling of labour and students by the Federal Government went to court last week to press for the release of his discharge certificate. Colonel Animeshaun Buraimoh, director of the NYSC has tied the release of the certificate to a public apology to be made by Aturu to the people of Nigeria. But Aturu in his application to a Lagos High Court said he does not owe Nigerians any apology and that the seizure of his certificate, was a violation of Decree 24 of 1973 as amended by Decree 17 of 1979.

Mayor for Abuja?

The future administration of Abuja — Nigeria's fledgling federal capital — may fall on the shoulders of a mayor, with other parts of the federal capital territory constituted into local government coun-

cils. This recommendation by the Constituent Assembly Committee on the Federal Capital Territory, may have resolved the contentious issue of the status of Abuja. The recommendation is subject to the approval of the Assembly.

Still on hold

Lagos State Director of Public Prosecution (DPP), Mr Abiodun Kessington, was still prowling through his legal books last week to find suitable charges in his bid to nail Chief Gani Fawehinmi, *The African Guardian* editor Nduka Irabor and four other journalists of the magazine. And the search which began last March when he made it known that he would press criminal charges against Fawehinmi and the journalists for alleged defamation, will continue till October 25.

The state is irked by *The African Guardian* report of March 7 1988 of comments by Fawehinmi that the ruling by an Ikeja High Court clearing Col. Halilu Akilu, Director of Military Intelligence and Col. Tunde Togun, Deputy Director of the State Security Services (SSS) of the murder of *Newswatch* founding

Editor-in-Chief Dele Giwa, "was a pre-arranged collusion between the trial judge, the Lagos State Attorney-General and the Director of Public Prosecutions."

Kessington had earlier indicated his willingness to call Irabor and the other journalists — Sunny Biaghere an assistant editor, Dili Ojukwu, Chima Eweama and Paul Nwabuike all reporters, he changed his mind and went ahead to file charges. Last week Kessington told Mr Justice Olu Obadina that he would like to substitute the charge for another one.

But Fawehinmi who stood in the dock with four of the accused journalists, objected on the ground that Kessington, would have to withdraw the charge first and that he could not file a new charge, on information without withdrawing the pending charge. "Once a charge is withdrawn, it cannot be substituted. It is struck out. A new charge can however be filed but no substitution."

Fawehinmi argued, describing Kessington's move as "fishing in the pond of confusion." *The African Guardian* counsel Boye Leyimu agreed that the charge had to be withdrawn first.

Kessington who insisted he was right under Section 77 of the Criminal Procedure Law later asked for an adjournment because the fifth reporter was not in court. Justice Obadina granted the application and fixed further hearing for October 25.

Reprieve from Ita-Oke

A teacher, Titus Adesegun Adebajo detained in Ita-Oke, a secret detention Island, off Epe in Lagos State would breathe the air of freedom albeit momentarily on October 7 when he is expected to be brought before a Lagos High Court. The court ordered at the instance of the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), last week that the police should produce Adebajo in court. Mr. Olisa Agbakoba, CLO President, and Secretary, Mr. Clement Nwankwo, told the court that the incarceration of Adebajo at Ita-Oke was a violation of the constitution and that the teacher had been tortured by the police to extract a confession.

The penal centre has, however, been disbanded last week, with all the inmates transferred to Alagbon Close in Lagos.



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A vital but missing link

NOTHING can be as indicting of Nigeria's nationhood as the incredibly stunted growth of the country's technological development, 28 years after independence. That Nigeria currently lacks a scientific and technological base is not so much the issue as the fact that after these several years, the country is yet to chart a discernible path to the attainment of industrial self-respect.

The reality since 1960 is one of a potpourri of ill-conceived plans and projects that are neither comprehensive nor well implemented. Care appears not to be taken to ensure that these various plans and projects fit into a technological whole that is sure to guarantee a measure of industrial self-reliance. What we find in Nigeria is a landscape dotted by numerous technological wonders, whose construction, operation and maintenance have not bequeathed any technological knowledge to the indigenes. Oftentimes, foreign contractors are preferred to the detriment of local ones. No one apparently listens to members of the Nigerian Society of Engineers that they be given a chance to learn by doing. Even as commonplace as making Nigerians properly undertake study these foreign firms at the construction stage is taken lightly.

Going by the present trend, were Nigeria to construct, say a hundred refineries in the next 50 years, it would always require a foreign firm to do the trick on each occasion. In contradistinction, however, are the shining examples of former under-developed countries like India, Brazil, South Korea, Algeria and Taiwan, who, armed with clear-headed industrial policies, have managed to wrest technological spin-offs from their encounters with the industrialised East and West.

Here in Nigeria, we have made a fetish of ourselves as a nation of shopkeepers, imbued with the spirit of a malignant commercialism that is bound to eat away our self-esteem as a people worthy of the 21st century. Yet, few nations are endowed with so much resources in men and materials as Nigeria.

Despite the copious pronouncements by officialdom on the technological imperative for Nigeria in every development plan, the suspicion cannot be helped that the frightening hiatus between intentions and achievements is a direct consequence of collusion between our officials and what we would term as our foreign detractors, all on account of personal gains. More often than not, public office, meant for the service of the public good, is seen as a liberation from labour, a sure-fire means to instant wealth. The record of public officials in this regard is too self-evident to need restating.

Perhaps, nothing helps this self-immolation more than the vagueness of our national planning. Grandiose projects, some of them out of tune with the felt needs of the people and national realities, are hastily embarked upon. Little thought

is given to just how they would solve perceived problems and how they fit into the national goals. Thus air-buses, whose sophistication is beyond our maintenance culture, whose purchase; car assembly plants sprout without specific steps as to how and when we would acquire the car building technology; thermal stations are constructed without the pipelines that would supply gas; steel plants are built without adequate provision for raw materials and supporting inputs; ill-tested aerostat balloons are fancied without regard for our technological competence; and lead-free refineries are constructed to ultimately have recourse to the use of lead.

In all these, scant regard is given to project-cost explanations. Contracts, often with foreign firms, are sometimes written with inbuilt pecuniary disadvantage to Nigeria, and with no thought to how the country will benefit in terms of knowledge. The charade, unfortunately with the unwitting connivance of the media, is for state officials to announce projects costing millions of naira. Questions as to the reasonableness of cost; what problems they could solve; whether they are feasible; and whether on a cost-benefit; what another project would not have been preferred are ignored.

To compound the sorry state of poor conceptualisation and execution of technological plans is our inability to manage the polity.

Technological development is an arduous task that requires political stability over time, the commitment of the people and their leaders, as well as continuity of government. All of these have been absent in Nigeria's 28 years of independence.

As the country enters its 29th year, it must re-examine out of the technological inertia it has, hitherto, kept Babangida to set up a Science and Technology Council. It must take an immediate inventory of all the technological projects so far; to re-appraise their usefulness; and to re-examine as components of a balanced and beneficial technological wheel. This Council, which will chart a new framework of action, should be directly responsible and independent to have the freedom to act and the power to change situations, devoid of bureaucratic and ministerial bickering.

For Nigeria to continue in the present state of technological underdevelopment, it must conceive of the situation that one day it will berthed at the harbour, laden with goods and wealth. Needless to say such wishful thinking will be a self-defeating situation; a situation quite incongruous with the image of herself as the giant of Africa.

The expert's dilemma



"Where facilities are sub-standard and supportive institutions non-existent or highly inadequate, an expert has as much chance of effectiveness as an out-of-water fish breathing with its gills".

BY ISI OMOIFO

THE world is leaning towards a greater dependence on experts. Behind the modern-day economic miracles — the Soviet Union, Japan, South Korea etc — is the conscious mobilization of experts, in the scientific, technical and managerial fields, preceded, of course, by a deliberate nurturing of the expertise.

The technocracy is here; at least, it is highly influential in policy formulation and execution. More and more, the business of government is mediated by economic and technical experts as well as specialists in other fields. Some of the greatest dreams of humanity are hinged on that substratum of society. Want to place a man on Mars? — Call the experts.

The new wave of experts have their older and still visible relations. The arch-priest of the sanctuary mediated between man and his notion of the absolute. Affairs of state have awaited the leisure of prophets and prophetesses scanning the firmament for the secret thread of life.

The modern expert is knowledgeable of his terrain, usually after long training and specialisation. He delights his audience with a high command of the standard terms that distinguish the field. He can on the spot reel off facts and statistics and recent developments in his area. He conveys an aura of indispensability when important matters touching on his specialty are on the agenda of ministerial councils or have reached corporate boardrooms.

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, IBRD, the World Bank, make an extensive use of experts from a selection across the world. From the trajectory in Washington, the World Bank's community of experts strive to break the backbone of underdevelopment. That is still a mission unaccomplished. The International Rice Research Institute, using multi-disciplinary teams, had better successes in Mexico and the Philippines.

The Nigerian environment may be a minefield for the expert, local or foreign, what with the lack of data and supportive institutions. The American, Professor Stolper, was invited in the 60s to help prepare the national development plan. Probably the most enduring thing from that experience is the book, "Planning Without Facts," which he wrote in exasperation at the situation in which the expert

had to operate in this country.

It costs a fortune to secure an expert. Increasingly, in the latter part of this century, a number of countries from the more advanced parts of the world have found how their external balances can be improved through the export of human capital. The United States is a master of the game. Its external deficits may have been more unbearable but for the movement of its petroleum and high-tech expertise abroad. The trans-continental drift of Mr Fix-it may be in industry, business, bureaucracy or sports.

A high-cost product is expected to justify its price. The expert is under pressure to provide a formula that works. With the high tide of expectation, he is pushed to adopt a quick-fix method. If he falls to the temptation, he becomes two times a victim. He is firstly a victim of his own over-estimation of his abilities, and secondly of the fascination of the public who demand from him an extraordinary act.

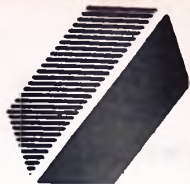
The expert moves into the centre of the stage. He has already a programmed ideal in his head. In some cases, he has little time at his disposal to plan towards the ideal. But the deadline is close and he must rely on his sophisticated sense to produce results in double-quick time. He embarks on an uprooting and demolition job of obstacles on the way. Even *irokas* cannot withstand the storm of his critical choice. In the end, he could be left holding a wraith animated only by the passion of his ideal or cherished system.

That stage could be a football pitch. The field of play is a creative space. The pattern of play may be infinite. An expert may rightly be enthusiastic about the mass-defence; mass attack system favoured by some top clubs today. But it seems certain that the winning teams tomorrow will be the ones who can successfully match the ball to the field in any imaginative pattern.

Here lay the dilemma of Manfred Hoener, technical adviser to the Green Eagles, renamed Super Eagles in one of its glorious moments. He faced the choice, with the disadvantage of time, to build on the strengths of the team that almost won the Nation's Cup in Morocco, for the Olympic event and slowly but progressively mould it towards a new pattern of play in the long term. Or with the magic wand of the 1-2-5-2- system hope to achieve an instantaneous football feat. Hoener chose the latter option. But he was no magician.

It seems then that change, like the daylight, will not be rushed. The expert is obliged to abandon his absolutist plane and step below to take stock and establish a working basis, followed by a preparatory phase aimed at consciousness-development to a level at which expert and respondents begin to speak an identical language. Only then can a programme of action be put into effect with a probable degree of success. But time is necessary for all these.

The possibility of success by an expert in a given task is further linked to the presence of a facilitative environment. Where facilities are sub-standard and supportive institutions non-existent or highly inadequate, an expert has as much chance of effectiveness as an out-of-water fish breathing with its gills.



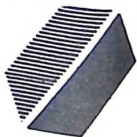
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Not yet glory

Nigeria wants success in sports but would not pay or plan for it. Hence the fire-brigade approach which has always fetched the most readily available laurel: failure... as it happened in Seoul

COMPETITIVE sports are undoubtedly festivities Nigerians have grown fond of. The young and old kept vigil as the Seoul Olympics stunner between Nigeria and Brazil was pressed to its unsavoury end. They know all about Joe Lasisi and Charles "Young Dick Tiger" Nwokolo and where they now stand in the latest World Boxing Council (WBC) ratings. Even women are learning these days to put obligatory pretence aside and whoop it up for the boys during epic soccer tournaments. They are getting to know a lot about the Brazilians and the Eagles. Women referees are on the way. Female soccer clubs are growing.

It is just that all of this enthusiasm — this rising frenzy — over sports in general, and soccer in particular, is frequently deflated. Official handling of sports is a perennial source of frustrations and complaints. Some enthusiasts have been constrained to live with them. Waidi Oyekale, civil servant and football fanatic, has learnt to expect that "the day you think the Green Eagles are going to win, they lose in such a way that you won't know what to do with them".

That may not be totally true. The national team wins at times. But the scenario Oyekale is trying to construct is familiar enough. A tournament — an international tournament — is coming. One year from now, Nigerians are hopeful that our representatives will "go for gold" and bring us something to crow about in the world. There are skeptics, of course. But for now, the name of the game is high expectation all around. Officials marshal their plans and tick off the gains.

They quote the money that will do the trick, then sit back and raise more hopes. Weeks pass. Months pass. Athletes are still not in camp. Sports enthusiasts are worried. Questions are asked. They are not answered. Suddenly, the tournament is just a few weeks ahead. Officials are jittery. They stampede themselves into action. It is the 11th-hour syndrome — rushed arrangements, and hurried departure. In the end, the result is no good — close shaves but no laurels. Another Nigerian sporting disaster.

When government began final plans for last month's Seoul Olympics, there were clear warnings that things could go wrong. The only time serious efforts were made to screen and select athletes, especially for field and track events, was during the last National Sports Festival — "Rivers 88" — held at Port Harcourt. Arrangements with United States-based athletes took time to fix.

Thus, a good number of them either arrived late for the final screening at the All-Nigeria Open Championship which

took place in May at Bauchi or failed to report at all. Chidi Imo, the nation's hope for a medal in the 100 metres event, and Innocent Egbunike (400-metre-race) were not there. Both flew independently into Seoul a few days before the tournament kicked off. Egbunike even took his personal coach along with him. As for tennis star, Nduka Odizor, few knew if he would attend. Still, in the end, he too turned up in Seoul and joined the Nigerian contingent. Thus most of the foreign-based athletes were hardly ever monitored. Local athletes

were assembled. But then, their training was not extensive.

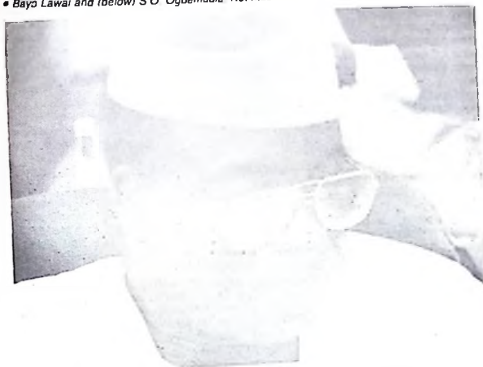
The group that had something of a serious pre-Olympic preparation was the weightlifting team which undertook a 35-day training tour of Bulgaria. People shook their heads. Officials said they were confident. Addressing the entire contingent on the eve of its departure (September 13) Air Commodore Bayo Lawal, Minister of Social Development, Youth and Sports, ordered that "the gold must not elude Nigeria". He said they ought to "win by all means".



• Seoul bound Nigerian contingent heading for the fateful adventure



• Bayo Lawal and (below) S O Ogbemudia: Not much success



"I don't care how you do it. You have got to show the world that we are Africa's best athletic nation".

Overall performance of the athletes showed, however, that he was wide off mark on that one. Africa's two gold medals won by the second week of the tournament went, not to Nigeria, but to Kenya and Morocco. Senegal even picked up a silver medal. There was a long chance that Nigeria's three relay teams which got into the final might turn the huge Olympic embarrassment into a last laugh. Otherwise, nothing had been

won by that second week — at a tournament in which even individual athletes from the US, Soviet Union and East Germany, for example, were carting home two or more golds.

Imoh who took his time to get to Seoul was the first to flop. He pulled a muscle on the left thigh just 10 metres to the finishing line and could not continue. Yet assuming he did not suffer that accident, he would still have failed to win, for, as experts have since learnt, he started the race rather late. Egbunike got to semi final and crashed out.

Sunday Uti, another 400 metres hope had earlier gone out. Maria Usifor, national and African 400 metres hurdles champion failed to win even in the first round. Long jumper Yusuf Alli could not get into the final 10 finishers. Tony Mmoh won his opening match and that was it. Odizor also crashed in the second round. From then on, no Nigerian athlete came close to winning in any event.

The defeat was total. Officials promptly began to look for scape goats. Abraham Ordia, presidential adviser on sports, blamed it all on the athletes for failing to justify the huge money government (N11 million) spent on them. Dr Samuel Ogbemudia, chairman of the National Sports Commission (NSC), implied that they were not selfless enough. In the frantic bid to knock the athletes none of the officials could even contemplate that the short cut approach that has become the hallmark of Nigeria's preparation might have been responsible for the dismal performance. Chief Emiola Adesina, first Director of Sports, Oyo State, explains: "The nation knows that glory goes with achievement. But we do not seem to know how to go about achieving it."

It was exactly the particular illusion that bedevilled the preparation of the Green Eagles for the Olympic soccer tournament. There was hardly any serious scouting for talents. Key players like Belgian-based Stephen Keshi and goalkeeper Peter Rufai (also based in Belgium) failed to make the final list. Keshi reportedly asked for too much money. Rufai's case was explained away as that of a fading star barely able to make his club's second division team. The arguments sounded incredulous to shocked soccer enthusiasts. Just last February they had seen these two players put up an impressive performance at the African Cup of Nations tournament in Morocco (Maroc 88). When finally the Eagles began their training in Germany it was clear that they were racing against time. Technical Adviser Manfred Hoener who, after getting his contract in April, stayed away from Nigeria until some two months to the competition, threw out the winning strategy used at Maroc 88. That strategy had been based on mass attack and defence, plus the wings. The German's Seoul strategy effectively clipped the wings and concentrated on a 3-5-2 midfield blockade system.

Still, there was no way of knowing which strategy was better. Nigerians looked forward anxiously to the open-



• Justice Izupeazu'rid / Nigeria's soccer deserves better planning and organisation

ing encounter: the Nigeria — Brazil match (September 18). Paul Umoh, a tailor, borrowed N40 to repair his television set in readiness for the match. Pius Agumagu, a Rivers State College of Education English teacher, made sure he and his family of five did not miss it.

The first half ended. Nigeria had not conceded a goal, had not scored. "I could not believe it," Umoh says. "I was almost sure it (Hoener's strategy) was going to work." It did not. Four quick goals and the Eagles were in deep trouble in their group. By the time they also lost to Yugoslavia (3—1) and Australia (1—0), they conceded eight goals to one, and were out in the first round. Zambia topped Group D thrashing Italy (4—0). Tunisia was the other African



• Hoener: Unsuccessful strategist

country. Nigerians at home and in Seoul never quite recovered from the shock.

Immediately the old fears and questions about Nigerian sports and its blues came streaming back. The problem of why the nation had turned itself into a never-do-well in virtually all sports was the issue at hand. Far more daunting was the question of where to lay the blame — on sports administrators, on our sports men and women, or on our fate?

Nigeria has had little to cheer about when it comes to international tournaments. It has been the case of a country that always manages to throw good money at sports festivals, works itself into frenzy over expectations of big returns in terms of medals hauled, and winds up at the venue of the tournament in such a bad shape as will completely



• Brodricks-Imasuen: Exemplary ability

guarantee that nothing but the whirlwind is reaped. In seven Olympic appearances, it has won only four medals, none of them gold. At the 1980 Olympics in Moscow, a sex scandal broke in the Nigerian contingent. No medal was won.

The Flying Eagles squad that lost 4-0 to Brazil in Chile, in 1987, had very little exposure, although plans for an overseas training tour had been on the drawing board. The Golden Eagles team that became the first to win the first-ever Kodak Under-17 World Cup, left for the China tournament with a myriad of problems. At one point special boots had to be borrowed from the Saudi team. Kwara '85, the National Sports Festival of that year, was stymied by allegations of corruption and actual cases of indiscipline. The problems have gone on and on.

Also for as long as Nigerians can remember, shoddily organised competitions that invariably ensure that the large pool of talents available cannot be utilised have remained the basic feature of national sports. We have had such world renowned stars as boxer Dick "Tiger" Ihetu, Hogan "Kid" Bassej, Obisia Nwankpa, Eddie Ndukwu and Joe Lasisi. Modupe Oshikoya, Chalton Ehizuelen, Egbunike and Imoh have been outstanding athletes. Soccer stars of the calibre of Teslim "Thunder" Balogun, "Chairman" Christian Chukwu, Segun "Mathematical" Odegbami, "Chief Judge" Adokie Amasiemeka, Henry Nwosu, Stephen Keshi, Emmanuel "The Tallest" Okala, Peter Rufai, Samuel Okwaraji, "Ten-Ten" Bright Omokaro and several foreign based professional players in Europe have also worn the national colours.

Yet the nation has never seemed able to pull these great talents together at any one time, and bewildered nation has often wondered why Nigeria, for instance, has never won an Olympic gold medal whereas supposedly less gifted African nations like Algeria, Ethiopia, and Morocco have several to boast of.

Experts have been trying to find answers to these questions. Sunny Ojeagbese, publisher of *Complete Football*, told *The African Guardian* that the problem does not lie in the players and officials as such but on what he calls "the whole system which has no definition, which is not based on any policy". He worries about many frequent changes in sports policy. "We change good teams and substitute them with mediocrities and when the mediocrities

come in they damage what the good teams have done or planned.

Ojeagbise is opposed by Chief Jerry Eneyazu, former director of sports at the NSC, who argues that the problem is one of the absence of dedication on the part of coaches and athletes. The pursuit of personal gains is a serious drawback, he says, adding, however, that appointments into sports councils have become politicised.

Eneyazu's position is essentially the official line, echoed by another bureaucrat, Dr Ndiil L. Nwamara, Imo State Sports Council secretary. Dr Nwamara assured *The African Guardian* that whereas government, according to him, is spending heavily on sports, coaches, in particular, have not been alive to their responsibilities. "Their attitude is defeatist." However, "there should be rededication by our sports administrators, coaches and athletes — because the question of dedication is psychological and should be evolved by individuals and not the government," he adds.

The danger in this line of thought is that it can be too self-serving. It is clear that a narrow dimension of a rather complex matter is being made to look like the determinate factor. The fact is ignored that dedication cuts both ways. In a situation where athletes are trained with bad equipment and yet are expected to perform wonders, there will be nothing but what Nwamara himself calls "general rattling". Coaches and athletes are not to blame for this year's badly managed, badly scheduled league season, for instance.

Former tennis star and now Oyo State Chief lawn tennis coach, Thompson Onibokun, thinks it is a problem of administration. "Committed administrators are the factors that make things work in sports", he tells us. Next to that is continuity. "In lawn tennis, we produce good players in the junior category but since there is no continuity, this trend does not always reflect in the senior category," Onibokun says.

Festus Adegboye Onigbinde, the first indigenous coach to take Nigeria to a cup of Nations finals, also has a dim view of Nigerian sports administration. In an interview with *The African Guardian*, he was emphatic enough: "It (sports administration) was the problem in the past and it is the problem now". Onigbinde, also former Oyo State chief coach and erstwhile handler of IICC Football Club is not in the least totally happy in recalling these things. He got little appreciation for his stunning Cup

of Nations feat. In fact, he was thrown out in the following year.

He believes that the only difference between past and present administrators is that while past administrators may not have been as knowledgeable as present administrators, they were more dedicated. "The present-day administrators are only interested in what they can get out of sports, not necessarily in terms of money. It could be connections, name or popularity or comfort," he says. His argument is that problems created by technical people are, on the

nations have not started to pay attention to such competitions. "We are going to be in serious trouble when the junior competitions are taken seriously."

However, the immediate problem will continue to be that of whether administrators can plan long enough and whether, most importantly, they will come to acquire correct orientations towards recreations that are now followed with considerable passion around the country. Thus, when Eze Edwin, Anambra State Sports Council public relations officer says that govern-



• National Stadium, Lagos under reconstruction. Inadequate facilities hinder performance

whole, not as much as those resulting from maladministration.

Onigbinde laments the fact that while many football and athletic coaches trained abroad, administrators, in his own words, "assume they have known enough about sports." "Thus they do not bother to update their knowledge." He wants a situation in which the technical cadre will have better control over sports. Jide Orimogunje, Oyo State Sports Council public relations officer is worried about the issue of planning. Speaking to *The African Guardian*, he said the problem is that national sports is not well planned. He thinks that for this reason Nigeria cannot be said to be really serious about sports.

Planning is also the theme that recurs in the assessment of Chris Okojie, *Vanguard* deputy editor. Okojie contends that what happened in Seoul is a reflection of the extent of the nation's preparedness. "We have always used the fireman approach. Proper planning is the key." Okojie says that shortcomings in Nigeria have been adequately explained by analysts and are known to administrators: "Nobody cares". He believes that the reason why the country appears to be doing well in junior competitions is because the leading soccer

ment's policy is to reserve automatic employment to only those that win gold or silver medals at national competitions, the question is bound to be raised as to how athletes are to be encouraged and groomed until they can perform such a feat.

At any rate, such a policy does not say much for the widely preferred long view approach to sports development. And when, by the same token, Lawal (Minister of Sports) pronounces himself satisfied with the performance of our athletes in Seoul, it is not clear whether he has even thought of the need for someone to take responsibility for the humiliating experience. Secondly, a situation in which the football governing body, the Nigerian Football Association (NFA) will have three chairmen in under four years (Tony Ikhezoboh, John Obakpolor, and now Justice Ikpeazu) has little to commend it.

Nigerian coaches and other members of the technical cadre are themselves not exactly the darlings of our sports enthusiasts. In a fairly long time, the quality of coaching has not improved in any meaningful way. There is no doubt that continuity, as Ben Ofor, Imo Grasshoppers principal coach informs is the

key to success. However, a coach must have sufficient knowledge before he can impart skills. Yet several times, it has been said that Nigerian coaches rarely up-date the know how. New Nigeria Bank (NNB) coach Alabi Aisen has come out clearly to say that indigenous coaches are technically deficient and not current. It was under Onigbinde that the IICC was relegated to division two.

The African Continental Bank (ACB) football club had no choice but to summarily dismiss Patrick Ekeji (its coach) for reason of declining performance. Coach Joe Enco — all the *jongo bonito*

(tip tap soccer) his Berger boys are reputed for, notwithstanding — could not save the team from relegation to division two. Willie Bazuaye, Flash Flamingos coach, has not been particularly outstanding in terms of the performance of the teams he has coached since the time of his meritorious campaigns with NNB in West Africa. In short, Nigerian coaches are yet to do much to elevate the technical standard of the game.

Nor have Nigerian players fared any better. While it is true that they lack most of the up-to-date facilities they need to realise their full potentials, this



• Odzor: Dashed hopes

A Lie for a win

Officials find a short cut to success

WHEN the 1988 Olympics is handed over to them, historians are likely to be more engaged by the name Ben Johnson than the tons of medals collected or the arithmetic of money. For Johnson, the Canadian sprinter whose speed is compared to that of the bullet from a smoking gun, is a creator of extraordinary precedents. Johnson has set records and broken records. In 1988, he broke his own record as the fastest man on earth and set a new one as the first Olympics laureate whose medal was withdrawn on account of using drugs. His record-breaking 100 metres dash was aided by dope. And Johnson becomes the symbol of fraud in sports.

Yet Johnson's case appears only the extreme or the most popular in the many activities that contradict the spirit of sportsmanship. Individual athletes and indeed countries are known to have been far from being honest in their bid to win in sports.

In Nigeria, for example, virtue has been found in the theory put forward by Hartford, one of the famous wrestling Love brothers. If you cannot win honestly, holds Hartford Love, cheat!

And in local as well as in international competitions, Nigerian athletes have heeded that call quite often, especially by participating in categories they have certainly outgrown.

Philip "Zanza" Osondu was the wonder boy in the Golden Eagles team that won Silver for Nigeria in the 1987 FIFA/JVC Under-17 World Cup Competition.

Osondu, who also won the Most Valuable Player Award in that competi-

tion was registered as a 15 year-old. But records have shown that he was about 21. At the East Street Primary School in Aba, Imo State, where Osondu enrolled in 1974, his serial number on the admission register is 278 and "approximate date of birth" is 1966.

Oladimeji Lawal was another dazzling pearl in the silver winning under-17 team who could have won the most valuable player award. Dimeji, now a member of the Flying Eagles is easily one of the best wingers in Nigeria today. But he has been shining in a category to which he should not belong. Dimeji completed his secondary school education at Prospect High School, Aba-NIa, Ibadan in 1982. He went to Ibadan Grammar School for the Higher School Certificate course which he completed in 1985. At Ibadan Grammar

School, Dimeji was made captain of the Oyo State Academicals team to the National Sports Festival at Ilorin in December 1985. He and Nosa Osadolor, stocky defender in the Flying Eagles team that represented Nigeria in the 1987 junior World Cup competition in Chile, it has been reported, were disqualified in the semi-finals for being above the 18 years limit. Yet in 1987, he played in the U-17 category for Nigeria. Equally puzzling is the fact that July 24, 1971 is recorded as Dimeji's birthday on his passport which means that he completed secondary education at the age of 11 and was 16 when he played for the Golden Eagles.

"In international competition," says a sports official, "whatever appears on the passport is respected. And of course, our officials know how to fix things." "When Dimeji Lawal was disqualified, there were many participants much older than him in the competition", adds another official.

Indeed, Dimeji's case is aptly illustra-



• Emiola Adesina: "We do not seem to know how to achieve glory."



• Sunny Ojeagbase: Worned by the "whole system"

speed and accuracy. The centre has an improvised punching bag — a large army bag stuffed with saw dust in place of the normal punching bag. The ring itself is a far cry from what a standard ring should be. Instead of the normal three or four ropes used to encircle the ring, only one is provided. A trainee boxer told *The African Guardian* that the boxers contributed money to buy the only available rope in the centre. The roof of the ring is leaking, and each time it rains heavily, the ring is flooded, and this makes it difficult for boxers to train.

Nigerian athletes generally lack proper care. And this, in no small measure, contributes to poor performance. Apart from a few who are on the payroll of their various sports councils, a large number of the athletes are unemployed. With their survival totally based on their skills, performance can only degenerate from bad to worse when, as is always the case, sports officials do everything to recruit the athletes only to abandon them once the tournament is over.

Administrators on their own have been trying to look into some of the problems. After Nigeria's dismal outing in the 1987 version of the under-20 World Cup football tournament, the



• Imoh: Selfless service

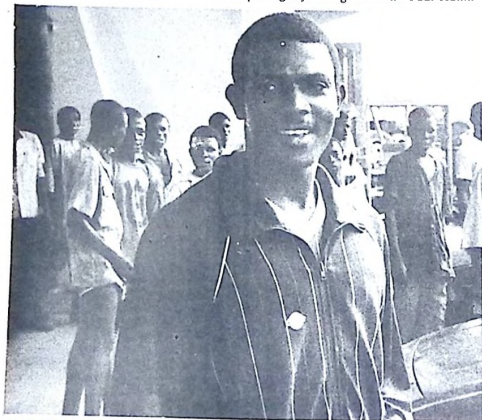
NFA set up a committee which included Sulaiman Ibrahim Kashimawo Laloko, First Bank coach, Emmanuel Omiunu, Adegboye Onigbinde and Paul Hamil-

ton among others to investigate the outing. It was however decided that what Nigeria needed was more than the review of a single tournament.

The coaches went ahead to deliberate on the general problems of Nigeria's football and identify key crises in administration. They recommended an administrative and technical model for Nigerian football as well as uniform pattern of play in the country. Other recommendations were a programme of training for coaches, youth development, release of players and selection of the national team.

The report of the committee, *The African Guardian* learnt, was presented to the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Social Development since November. Yet, not even the most innocuous recommendation that the NFA should have a library (documentation) section, among many other units of an elaborate technical department, has been implemented. Thus, today, while information on how or when Pele scored a particular goal can easily be obtained in the football archives of Brazil, NFA could not come up with the tabulation of points needed to determine whether NEPA Football Club or the Plateau Highlanders was to be promoted to division one.

• By Chukwumeka Gohla with reports from Mike Ubani, Debo Adesina, Joseph Okujeni, Abdul Oroh and Ola Sheylin



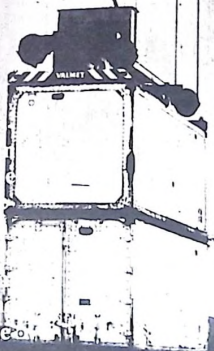
• Keshi: An allegation of asking for too much money



The Board And The Management Of
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late President Ibrahim B. Babangida
And His Administration On The Occasion
Of The 20th Anniversary Of
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Dwindling oil fortunes

Lukman expresses concern over falling price

WITH the current spot market price of oil at \$12.50 per barrel against OPEC's \$18.92 target price, Nigeria's 1988 budget planned against oil receipts of \$16 per barrel, the shortfalls in budget implementation is likely to worsen. More so as oil production is limited to the current quota given by OPEC at 1.3 million barrels per day (mbd). The Petroleum Minister, Alhaji Rilwanu Lukman, at a seminar on "Oil in the Nigerian Economy: Current Issues and Future Perspectives," held in Lagos last week said that the situation should be of great concern to all Nigerians because oil is "intimately linked with the fortune of the country."

The nation's production quota under OPEC, he said, is substantially lower than the technical production capability of the country. But it appears the nation cannot act otherwise given its position in the organisation, as the OPEC President is unlikely to embark on quota busting.

OPEC is fraught with conflict of views on production quotas. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have temporarily thrown over-board the illusion of a "bigger OPEC," and are now embarking on activities they consider profitable to their nations, said Mr. Michael Olorunfemi, Group Deputy Managing Director, (Corporate Services), Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). In a study conducted recently by Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) it was re-

vealed that OPEC produced 19 mbd as against the self-imposed ceiling of between 17.5 mbd, and 17.7 mbd. And in spite of repeated calls by OPEC officials for adherence to production levels, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates did exceed their quotas in August. Even more disturbing is the fear expressed by analysts that with the cessation of conflict between Iran and Iraq and the reconstruction of their economies which will soon begin, the oil industry may soon experience a further oil glut with its adverse effects on prices.

Against this backdrop, Mr. J.S. Jennings, Group Managing Director, Royal Dutch-Shell has predicted that "oil prices may well stay in the \$10 to \$20 range well into the 1990s." Even then, these prices will only subsist if OPEC "keeps its acts together." From a peak of \$43.65 per barrel in 1981 price of oil plummeted to a disappointing \$12.50 last month. And unless something is done to stem this downward trend, it is believed that prices might fall even beyond 1973 price of \$7.06 per barrel.

This situation appears to be threatening OPEC's effectiveness, even its existence. Professor Gabriel Oluasanya, Director General, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, (NIIA), Lagos asked: What must have prompted this state of affairs after OPEC's glorious nide in the '70s? Mr Olorunfemi, while affirming that OPEC is still effective says its problems are as a result of conflict of interests between oil producers and consumers. While over 70 per cent of world oil reserves are located in the Third World including OPEC countries, less than 20 per cent of it is consumed in the region. On the other hand, the industrialised countries which produce less than 20 per cent of total world oil consume about 80 per cent of it. Again, while the Third World countries depend almost entirely on oil for their foreign exchange earnings and as such would not want it controlled by market forces, the industrialised countries de-



• Lukman: Believes in the future of Nigeria's oil industry

pend on it for their well being and would want to exert all political pressure if necessary to achieve their desired objectives.

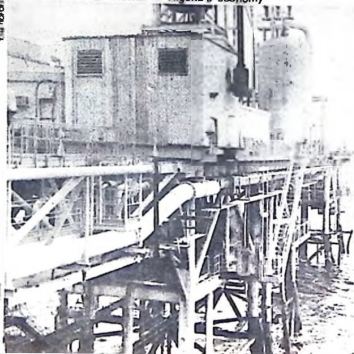
Towards the realisation of this objective, Dr. Chibuzo Nwoke, a research fellow with NIIA believes the IEA, an agency of the 24-member nation Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was set up in 1974 with the sole objective of countering OPEC, especially after the energy crisis of the 1970s. And through massive political pressure on individual OPEC members, the OECD countries have effectively countered the economic power of the oil cartel. The result of such pressure, says Dr. Nwoke has been the winning over of Saudi Arabia, a foundation and leading member of OPEC, that is today an important ally of the OECD countries, through whom a lot of destabilising effects have been wreaked on OPEC by the OECD countries.

Against this backdrop, energy analysts have predicted that unless some political pressure is exerted to put OPEC together and ensure some market stability, not only could it spell doom for OPEC, but the Nigerian economy,

woven around oil fortunes, might equally be heading towards a catastrophe.

But it seems that the government is doing something about this. As the Petroleum Minister puts it, steps have been taken to cushion the economy from the impact of our reduced oil production and unstable oil prices well into the future. Some of the measures include the commercialisation and the setting up of 11 subsidiaries within the NNPC which, he said, will better equip the corporation to meet with the challenges of the present situation

• Offshore oil rig: Lifewire of Nigeria's economy



and react to changes in the market promptly. A more pragmatic marketing policy for the crude oil which will now involve only joint venture partners, companies prospecting for oil in Nigeria and which have completed a specified programme of work and overseas refining companies in which the NNPC has equity interests have also been put in place.

Towards this end, negotiations are now at advanced stages with identified refineries in Europe and America for the acquisition of equity interest in downstream activities.

The establishment of the new Port Harcourt refinery which will be ready by early next year with a capacity to refine 445,000 mbd and the development of petrochemical and gas projects

are measures aimed at expanding the domestic refining capacity of the country. Also efforts are being intensified to complete by the mid 1990s the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project. With all these in place, the minister believes there is a future for the Nigerian oil industry.

Now a reprieve

Creditors agree to reschedule Nigeria's debts

NIGERIA, after a year of ceaseless negotiations with the steering committee of her 400 foreign creditor banks led jointly by Barclays Bank, B.N.P. and City Bank of London, succeeded last week in having her \$5.2 billion debts which is about ₦24.44 billion at the FEM rate of ₦4.70 to one US dollar rescheduled over a period of 20 years. The rescheduling which came as a welcome relief to the overburdened economy will now allow the country to repay the principal at a rate of three per cent yearly over the first 12 years while the balance will be repaid in equal amounts for the remainder of the term.

Another welcome relief is a three-year grace allowed before repayment could commence for letters of credit as well as other forms of debts. With this package, \$500 million (₦2.350 billion) debts, which include interests due on outstanding letters of credit, will now be repaid without additional interests. The debts which are restructured in line with Latin American creditors' pattern will enable Nigeria to be able to suspend repayment of principal due on medium-term obligations of \$2.7 billion (₦12.69 million) and on \$2.5 billion (₦11.75 bil-



• Finance Minister Okongwu: Some respite

lion) in letters of credit.

The rescheduling which the creditor banks themselves considered to be a fair deal to Nigeria, and reported by the *Financial Times* of London as having been restructured to avoid heavy commitments, was satisfactory to the Nigerian financial team to the negotiation. An official of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) says the economy which had been under pressure as a result of foreign exchange crunch and high debt servicing ratio is sure to be relieved.

The nation's export earnings which

peaked \$24 billion (₦112.8 billion) in 1980, last year tumbled by 70.8 per cent to a mere \$7 billion (₦32.9 billion). This, analysts say, is not even enough to meet the nation's imports, let alone settle debts. Some of the burden of debt servicing which is put at \$26 billion (₦122.2 billion) will now be spread over 20 years.

Economists believe that with this outcome, the nation is likely to have an easier negotiation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Nigeria's agreement with the IMF for its support of the economy expired early this year. Since then, not less than three negotiations have been attempted. While the Nigerian financial team has persistently maintained that it will seek agreement with IMF on its economic programme, the nation is apparently weary in accepting the IMF conditionalities of a freer economy and further withdrawal of petroleum subsidies because of political and trade union crises they might trigger off.

However, as the country prepares to host the IMF team for another round of talks in Lagos this month, it is believed the team might be persuaded by the recent commercialisation and privatisation of most government parastatals and companies, as well as the positive outcome of negotiations with the creditor banks, to chart a softer path with Nigeria.

By Lucky Flakpa

BRIEFS

Low year for Golden Guinea

THE turnover of Golden Guinea Breweries Limited fell by 6.6 per cent from ₦41.1 million in 1986 to ₦38.4 million for the year ended December 31, 1987. The company also recorded a one per cent drop in net profit from the previous year's result of ₦6.6 million to ₦6.5

million. The chairman of the company, Chief Innocent Uchendu attributed the fall in company's activities to the various economic policies which he said, gave rise to unforeseen problems leading to low capacity utilization and difficult market situation.

Enter Jobitex Easy Foods

Intersardine (Nigeria) Li-

mitted at the Sheraton Hotel, Ikeja, on September 26, launched three new products — Jobitex Jollof Rice, Jobitex Beans and Jobitex Egusi Soup. And more is to come from the canning-line of the company which blazed the trail of canning sardines for the first time in Nigeria. They are Jobitex — moimoi, edikang-ikong and miyan taoshe

The Chairman (Managing Director), of the company, Otunba Mohammed Anu Jobi, disclosed in his speech at the opening that Jobitex Easy Foods are 96 per cent locally sourced and have the approval of the Food and Drug Administration of the Federal Ministry of Health. Also, the chief executive placed the shelf-life of the foods at two years.

Fresh knock for reforms

Accountant queries civil service restructuring

LAST March, Alhaji Adamu Fika wrote a minority report in which he disagreed with the presidential task force on the implementation of civil service reforms. Fika charged that the task force had adopted policies 'aimed at the destruction of the cohesion of the civil service itself by a policy of fragmentation.'

Fika's reservations somewhat chilled enthusiasm for the reforms, and earned him some trouble too. He lost his position as Head of Service amidst speculations that the Federal Military Government was embarrassed by the wide publicity given to his pariah report. As Fika was leaving the service, the government was pressing on with the reports. He appeared to be alone, one-man fight against an idea whose time had come.

But two weeks ago, Mr. J. K. Randle provided fresh evidence that the argument was far from closed. In a paper to a gathering of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), in Abuja, he sought to examine the impact of the reforms on the economy. Entitled 'Accountability in the new Civil Service Structure — problems and prospects,' the paper touched on the question of whether the reforms are not due to the longstanding contest for power between civil servants, politicians and soldiers. Many believe this factor to be at the heart of the reforms.

Interestingly, only the senior civil servants appear to be on the firing line in this power tussle. Being at the decision centres, the opinions of the public servants often run counter to the wishes of their military or political overlords. For instance, top-level civil servants have expressed reservation about the debt for equity conversion and the privatisation programme which the Babangida administration appears determined to pursue. The policy, they argue, amounts to handing over the reins of the country's economy to foreigners and a few rich Nigerians. Such arguments fuel the suspicion that the reform is designed to put civil servants in their proper and subdued place. Says Randle: "the suspicion is that what the military are actually telling the civil servants is: 'if we fail, you fail too; when we go, you civil servants go too; either we go up together or we come down together.'"

On their own part, civil servants tend to see their destiny as distinct and sepa-

rate from the soldiers'. Even so, the civil service has its own share of the blame for the country's lingering woes, some of which the Structural Adjustment Programme and the reform may be out to address. One of the measures is the abolition of import licences.

Many contend that the reforms have chipped off some of the powers of the civil servant, the government insists that enough protection has been put in place to check abuses. It did that by establishing a powerful Audit Alarm Committee through which civil servants can alert the government of financial irregularity by the Minister or Chief Accounting Officer of any ministry.



• Randle: Reforms necessitated by contest for power

Even this, Randle suspects, is either one-sided or fails to address fundamental problems that have rendered the civil service ineffective in the handling of the economy. While a civil servant can raise an audit alarm if a minister insists on what looks like a financial irregularity, there is no provision on what he may do when a minister acts in a

way that compromises national interest. Also, it is not clear how the job-security of the public servant raising the query is assured against the fury of an exposed minister.

Besides, the 30-day time limit to reply to audit queries appears too generous, since the issues could normally be attended to in three days. The generous time-limit seems to say, "If you can't join in the looting exercise, then stay away and keep quiet."

The voting of special funds for the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI), Mass Transit Programme, and Mass Mobilisation for Social Justice and Economic Self-Reliance (MAMSER) may well become new avenues for ripping off the state treasury if left to the control of politicians. The risk is bound to be higher if it is not defined whether the funds are subject to civil service procedure.

Another sore point of the reform is its accent on what should not be done rather than what ought to be done. A case in point is the reconciliation of debts by comparing unreliable papers instead of the more vital problem of matching monies owed with actual receipts of goods.

The government's embrace of "market economics" is a conundrum for civil servants who are now caught between the contradictions of laissez faire capitalism and socially responsible business. On the economic and political fronts, this confusion is wreaking substantial havoc.

On the economic front, the controversial exchange rate at the auctions and at the autonomous market should ginger civil servants through the Central Bank to eliminate the suspected leakages. Also, autonomous funds should be pulled out of the stock of available foreign exchange in order to stabilise the naira. Government also has to come to terms with the debt problem.

Randle recommends that between now and 1992, Nigeria must balance its budget, carry out a reliable census, and hold free and fair elections. But these are not feasible until there is a more comprehensive reform of the organs of government. He suggests that perhaps the civil service reform is a first step towards this goal. However, in arriving at the solutions to these problems, the civil service should not be tele-guided; rather it should be seen as the anvil on which the fulfilment of the expectations of Nigerians from their government, military or civil, is forged.

By Herbert Ojeh

Slight upsurge in trade

Increased volume of shares brightens hope for companies

TRADING at the stock exchange was on the upward movement last week but indications are that the end of the third quarter will be a little better than the previous three months.

The market opened at the beginning of last month with a fresh hope for an active exchange, trading 419,694 shares in 496 deals, the largest volume of shares that changed hands in any week during the last four months. But any hopes of the market making a clean breast of it was dampened toward mid-month with a disappointing 333,058 shares in 443 bargains.

By the end of the month, however, activities had picked up some steam. For the week ended on September 23, 421,709 equities were swapped. The month had opened with the NSE common stock index hovering around 218 points. Last Thursday the index jumped nearly six points to 224.7.

It was good news and bad news in the Second-tier Securities Market. The bad news is that Cutix Limited the Nnewi based electrical cables economy has lost 11 points since its listing last April, trading at an all-time low of 52 kobo per share as a result of its poor showing this financial year. Against a profit of N24,000 last year, Cutix closed this trading year worse of by a N415,882 loss.

Now the good news: Grommac Industries Ltd is riding the popularity crest, having paid a whopping 30k per share in

dividends. This has caught investors off-guard as it appears that little attention had been paid to the sector. The company's stock closed last Thursday at 91k per share, up 53 kobo from a low of 38 kobo in the beginning of the year.

Bewac Nigeria Ltd., in the Automobile and Tyre sector went up 10k from 42k last Wednesday. R. T. Briscoe's shares surged from 1,1160 shares requested on Wednesday to 10,730 a day after. Brokers think that R. T. Briscoe's new lease of life is a result of a new confidence placed in the company by brokers following its diversification effort, having purchased a 60 per cent equity interest in Coconut Industries Limited two months ago.

The Foods, Beverages and Tobacco sector, has 7-Up Bottling Company, Flour Mills and Nigerian Bottling Company going ex-dividend, high lighting the demand pull prevalent in the usually active sector.

FCMB Syndicate

First City Merchant Bank (FCMB) has led two banks — Merchant Banking Corporation and Progress Bank — to complete the first leveraged lease facility of N6 million loan for South Atlantic Seafoods Company Nigeria Ltd., (SASCO). FCMB is also lead-managing an N18 million credit facility with United Bank for Africa (UBA) and Allied Bank, for Overseas Merchantile and Manufacturing Company Ltd.

Forex

Naira swings up

The naira appreciated against major currencies except the CFA Franc against which it lost 4.70 per cent at the 63rd auction session last week. For the next fortnight the US dollar will sell for about N4.70, down 0.74 per cent from the central rate of N4.72. The Swiss Franc depreciated by 1.35 per cent against the naira.

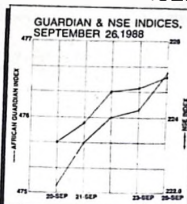
At the autonomous market, the naira appears to be closing the wide exchange gap recorded last week. In some major banks the US dollar is

exchanging for between N5.75 and N6.00 at the interbank market.

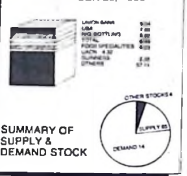
Cross Rates via vs other Currencies

Name of Currency	Buy- ing	Can- tral	Sell- ing	Pre- vious	Depre- ciation
				Can- tral	per cent
US Dollar	4 6580	4 6823	4 7057	4 7172	0.7454
Found Sterling	7 8712	7 9108	7 8503	7 82225	0.1478
Deutsche mark	2 4810	2 4933	2 5060	2 5154	0.8422
Swiss Franc	3 2863	2 9430	2 9577	2 9827	1.2480
French Franc	0 7285	0 7322	0 7358	0 7388	0.9014
Dutch Guilder	2 1997	2 2107	2 2218	2 2272	0.7464
Japanese Yen	0 0347	0 0348	0 0351	0 0351	0.9371
CFA Francs	0 0148	0 0148	0 0142	0 0142	4.6900

THE AFRICAN GUARDIAN ECONOMIC INDICES



LEADING CONTRIBUTORS TO AGM INDICES SEPTEMBER 26, 1988



Five Day Price Leaders

Stock	Price Gain (%)	Price (k)	Shares Traded	Earnings Per Share (k)
Glasso	+7	155+	10301	24.2
Nig Breweries Ltd	+5	212+	5473	24.4
University Press	+5	35+	0	4.9
Grommac Ind. Ltd	+5	91+acc	0	14.3
Foxed Specialiser	+3	212+	970	76.2
UTC	+3	174+	5502	37.9
UNTEL	+3	105+	950	37.2
Van Leer	+2	88+	0	23.6
P.Z. Industries	+2	250+	1954	91.0
Guinness (Nig) Ltd	+2	140+	15738	16.7
AP	+2	162+	10128	33.4
NCR (Nig)	+2	180+	0	64.4
Vitalform	+2	83+	7933	7.8
Nig. Bottling	+2	232+	122620	39.6
Golden Guinea	+1	52+	1800	8.4
Julius Berger	+1	60+	1230	16.4
Dunelm	+1	56+	400	13.4
K. T. Roscoe	+1	66+	19807	0.0
U.A.C.N	+1	121+	24500	20.9
Poli Products	+1	56+	0	15.1
CFAO	+1	114+	3344	18.0
UBA	+1	304+	2420	77.1
Pfizer	+1	118+	10135	14.3
Inter. Paris	+1	103+	200	32.0
Metal Box	+1	72+	300	11.4
Cadbury	+1	142+	3394	19.9
WAPCO	+1	103+acc	0	28.4

* The above is a listing of price gains on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. Indicated are price gains as at Monday, September 26, 1988, compared against the previous Monday. Shares traded are for September 23-26.

Touch of the trigger

Father's gun explodes on son's playmate

ESA-ODO does not stand out from any of the hundreds of sleepy villages that dot the Nigerian landscape. Except it may be worth mentioning that some relatively better-off members of the community which lies further off Ilesha in Oyo State have television sets which receive signals from broadcasting houses located in Ibadan, the state capital. Also there is an out-station of the State Water Corporation.

Matthew Atetedaiye, a driver with the Corporation, supplements his pay by hunting for game in the surrounding forests. He shares the staff-quarters adjoining the office with fellow workers. One morning on August 4, the peace of the small community of workers and of the entire Esa-Odo was shattered by an incident which brought Atetedaiye's family into the centre-stage of events of tragic proportions.

Atetedaiye recalls in Yoruba: "It was about nine O'clock and I was engaged in a discussion with my boss in his office. Then a loud shot rang out, followed by a cry of anguish." Dashing home, he found Olayemi, a neighbour's son, twitching on the ground, blood on his chest. His eight and a-half-year old son Timothy looked on dazed from a distance, the dane gun which had apparently been used for the deed thrown carelessly aside.

Atetedaiye's wife, a fish-onger who had been out on her business, hurried back home to behold the spectacle. She instantly fled into the bush, wailing uncontrollably. The victim

was rushed to the Wesley Guild Hospital in Ilesha, an hour's drive away, where he was certified dead.

Asked why it was so easy for Timothy to lay hold of the gun, Atetedaiye replied: "I have always kept my guns in one corner of my parlour because there just wasn't anywhere else to keep them."

Father and son were arrested and later released on court bail on September

the second time this year. It is usually screened between 7.30 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. It has also been shown on NTA Channel 7, Lagos.

The series depict clashes between two communities in Yorubaland, Dopemu and Lokunu. Lead character Fadeyi Oloro is cast in a gory role, a terror to adversaries and even to women and children and sometimes seizing pregnant women and babies for sinister purposes.

Guns are used freely during clashes or fired into the air as signs of impending war. It was voted at one

find.

Television sources say that children were not the target of the series, though it became their favourites.

If Timothy was involved in acting out the drama, it could happen with any other drama, whether local or foreign, the sources say. "Man from Atlantis" an American Television series, is cited as an example. The lead character displays various superhuman tactics under water. But it comes with a note of warning that children should not imitate such tactics.

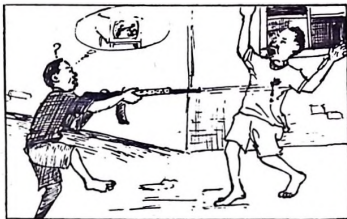
"Communication experts have divided opinions on the influence of television on people," says Dr. Delu Ogunade of the Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos. "One school of thought believes that the media do certain things to people, while another contends that people do something to the media, in that people only tune to programmes that interest them and remain indifferent to those that do not.

"We learn from the media; so it follows that the young ones in particular who are very impressionable, learn by imitating, whether violent or not."

Mrs. Ibronke Oyeyemi, mother of the dead boy, bears the loss with courage. "What can I do?" she says. "My son is dead. He was a very helpful boy who assisted me in my trade."

Also in the fish-selling business, her husband had been transferred to another station of the Water Corporation. She is quite forgiving to the Atetedaiye family: "Both families are friends and this will not bring enmity between us. I'm still young and can have more children."

By Omatayo Atolabi



1. Timothy now resides with his paternal grandfather near Ile where he would be brought for the next court appearance on October 19. Police sources say Timothy faces a charge of culpable homicide while his father has been booked for negligence.

The exact circumstances under which the shot was fired remain foggy. A police report indicates that the two kids, who had been class-three pupils of the United Primary School, Esa-Odo, had been rehearsing a scene from the popular Yoruba television drama, *Arelu*. The series, first shown in the last quarter of 1987 by the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS) has run for

time the "Best Drama Series" in the Concord Press — sponsored Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) arts awards, and reported to be a kiddies' favourite due to its near-life and exciting action.

But says Mrs Mobola Ajire, an Ibadan housewife of the series: "I never allow my children to watch it. Apart from the extensive use of charms, there are lots of curses and incantations which children can easily pick up. Such foul language is bad for the development of a child."

Muraina Ajao, a clerk in an insurance company in Ibadan captures tersely the impact of the drama. "Once the programme was on, even taxis were hard to



• Randle: Solutions with grace and humour

Saints and sinners

TO some, Nigeria may be a problem country, but one of those who know best how to unravel its multi-facets with grace and humour is J.K. Randle, author of *The Godfather Never Sleeps* and *God Does Not Live in Los Angeles Alone*.

At a conference of the Institute of Chartered Accountants late last month, J.K. Randle treated delegates at the prestigious Nicon-Noga Hilton Hotel, Abuja, to a buffet of his wit, but always with a knack for the profound.

Hovering on the central theme of the conference, the new civil service structure, Randle said: "The message is that it is not only the civil servant that needs a new machine. Rather it is the entire machinery of governance that requires urgent overhaul. What we are yet to resolve is whether we are a country of saints to be ruled by sinners, or a country of sinners to be ruled by saints".

Of the toxic waste scandal he says that the Italians had made it known that the waste dumped at Koko was not toxic when it left Italy. "Their plea is that it only became toxic on arrival in Nigeria where everything gets contaminated."

Winning a spotlight

FOR his production of *Descendants*, aired on Channel 32, Washington, US, Nigerian student Olaniji Areke received a local Emmy Award in the category of individual achievements. This is the first time in the eight-year history of the station that a student has been so honoured," says the station's General Manager, Arnold Wallace.

Areke is a graduate student in the School of Communications, Howard University, Washington D.C. *Descendants*, which dwells on the relationships between Africans and Afri-



• Areke: "I feel great"

cans in the diaspora was Areke's contribution to a television programme, *Spotlight*, produced entirely by student interns.

About the award, Areke says, "I feel great. I'm very glad 'Spotlight' can be recognized as an important show in Washington."

May's new dream

Mary Ellen Ezekiel, energetic editor of the society magazine, *Quality*, is fast becoming a newsmaker herself. When she is not organizing charity balls, she is busy conquering new heights as a novelist. With the publication of her maiden work, *DREAMMAKER*, 31-year-old May has started on the course which she hopes would bring her the millions.

Written in the popular literature genre, much of the experiences and models for the personalities in the *DREAMMAKER* derive from her background.

Actual work on the novel began in 1985 when May was a student at Wisconsin University, US. It was

inspired by the hit tune, Mr "DREAMMAKER" by American gospel-pop musician, Cliff Richard. Explaining her own dream, May says: "Marriage did not work out, so my dream is to go on and become a successful professional."

DREAMMAKER, — published by Mary Ellen Ezekiel (MEE) Publications will be launched on October 1 at the Nigerian Institute of



• Ezekiel: "Marriage did not work out"

International Affairs, Victoria Island, Lagos. After the book launch, May hopes to leave for Chicago and New York to push for the novel's publication in the US.

By John Nwaobi

Overheard and Landmark

► This nation is what the leaders have made it. I don't care whether they are military or civilian, they are Nigerians — Rt. Rev. (Dr) James Ukaegbu, moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria delivering the sermon at the service to mark Nigeria's 28th anniversary.

► "He is not guilty, no wink in my eye, no doubt in my spirit. He is not guilty" — Clair Rodney, Ben Johnson's sister on his disqualification over use of drugs.

► "Jesus Christ alone knew answers to all questions and knew how to feed

20,000 Jews with five loaves of bread. We don't possess that skill, we have no ready prescription to solve all our problems quickly." — Mikhail Gorbachev in an interview with the Washington Post on Perestroika.

► I have no political ambition — General Yakubu

• Gowon



Gowon (rtd), Nigeria's one-time head of state.

Transition: Oloye Thomas Odunsi Ayan, 88, father of Pius Ayan, managing director of Express Printing and Packaging Company Limited, September, 25.

► Prizes: Festus Iyayi, former lecturer at the University of Benin, a regional co-winner of this year's Commonwealth Writers Prize, for his latest novel, *Heroes*. Iyayi shares the prize with Charles Manguoshi whose collection of short stories are entitled, *The setting sun and The rolling world*.

Art for cash

Nigerian works go commercial at Sinsemillia fair

THE art world recorded a major event on Sunday, September 25, as Sinsemillia Gallery opened a seven-day fair tagged "Within us, Without us" at the Sheraton Hotel, Ikeja. In attendance was a swarm of art lovers, associates and well-wishers of both the gallery and the exhibiting artists who made the rounds. A feeling of elation that the struggling artist was getting both aesthetic and commercial attention hung in the air.

As if in a search of a fresh approach, the art expo projected the works of such young artists as Sam Ovrati, Hassan Aliyu, Sola Oguntuwa, Val Mbachu, Fela Odaranile, P. Ejukulem, E.L. Briman and Jude Eseurbobo. Even though they have had a number of exhibitions, the artists are yet to reach that quality which makes a work priceless and eternal.

The Chief Executive of Sinsemillia Gallery, Dr. Oladele Olusanya, says the aim of the expo was to create an avenue where the art lover, Nigerian or foreigner, can have an ac-

cess to the rich Nigerian art culture at reasonable costs. And since the works of mature Nigerian artists appear to be the preserve of a particular set of people, it becomes both desirable and timely to promote the younger artists, he says.

Some of the amateurist, aspects of the works on display were evident in such works as "Family" by Briman and "Wrestler" by Ejukulem. The "Family" in the medium of cement and painted black is a gnarled and distorted work in the likeness of a frozen worm with modules at some points, difficult to link with any aspect of family hood. Also in "Wrestler," a wood sculpture finished in black, is a despondent, tired-looking man, which contrasts with the formal image of a wrestler.

The best of the fair may lie in such works as "African Repute" and "Palmwine Tapper" by Jude Eseurbobo, "Rhapsody" and "Dignity of Labour" by Val Mbachu, Sam Ovrati's "Empty Pails," Hassan Aliyu's "The Maidens," "Opelenge," "The Rat



• "The family"



• A MASK

Race, and Fela Odaranile's etchings.

"African Repute" executed in polyester is so appealing that its strong presence diminishes other works. Extolling the theme of music and dance, the three men, one beating a drum, another blowing a flute and the third stomping away are shown overflowing with excitement. Beside the three figures is an ancestral mask indicating that music and dance are derived from spiritual or ritual beginnings. In the

same category as "African Repute" is "The Maidens." Done in acrylic and oil on board, it portrays three maiden heads with pots on their heads. The elongated and graceful trunks appear to be emerging from a pool of water. Finished in very strong traditional colours of red, yellow, black, green etc. the work imbues a mystic feeling.

Organised in the strict commercial nature of fairs, the Sinsemillia expo is a cash and carry affair. As soon as a deal is struck on a work, it is immediately taken down and another quickly takes its place. On every sale, it is a seventy by thirty per cent ratio between the artist and the gallery. The works attract between two hundred and two thousand naira.

From the high response to the Sinsemillia expo, the arts market in Nigeria might be making an auspicious beginning that could become the multi-million naira affair it is in some other countries.

By Humphrey Bekran

• "African Repute"



Radiance in the home

Interior decor gets a boost in Nigeria

DEBAYO Olufunmi, the youthful and hard-working chief executive of Mana Interiors, Yaba, Lagos, does not hide his anger at what he calls "the all-comers-job" of interior decoration. "All drop-outs, including painters who could not make it in their chosen fields, now flock to interior decoration," he complains.

In identical vein, Marc Osah, marketing manager of Royal Interiors, Apapa, Lagos, criticises the proliferation of interior decoration firms. Osah attributes the sharp rise of new entrants into the industry to a growing awareness by Nigerians that places of work or the home environment could be made conducive or comfortable.

Interior decoration is one of the youngest but fast-spreading business around. It is believed that over 200 interior decoration firms operate in Lagos alone. The vogue is to convert beauty salons or furniture and office equipment concerns into interior decoration outfits. About 25 firms linked with interior decoration attended the Exhibition of Modern Home and Office Equipment organised by Times Leisure Services, last August.

The highest tastes in interior decor may only be entertained with some level of financial confidence. That explains, perhaps, why most of the clientele range from governments to banks, and parastatals and big firms.

computer. Some of the items that have been computerised include window-railings and aquaria which are imported. A remote control rail costs ₦60 per metre while the engine costs ₦500.

Even a lot of the input in



• Comfortable but costly

At the Summit Furniture stand at the exhibition, a square metre of brick-design wall-panellings cost ₦272. This works out to ₦2,448 for a room of nine square metres. Apart from cost, another indication that interior decor may be the preserve of the well-to-do is the high-tech development. Interior decoration, like most other things in society, is going

the average interior decor business are imported. Mr Bisi Fabusoye, executive director (Finance), Daily Times of Nigeria, observes that most of the products on display at the exhibition "were assembled in Nigeria with little or no local input."

Ayoola Olasupo Surulere Lagos, says African Spinet Furnishings that a need to give an edge to the preference for natural chrome and other things." Mrs. Mary Ochi, a horticulturist, has introduced a shift from artificial aquaria, ones in interior decor, etc. That necessarily high price

contested. Osah of Royal Interiors, maintains that any person can afford the services of interior decorators. "All the person needs is to let the professional decorator know that the budget for the job is." Agrees Yemi Elemosho, General Manager, Tonad Interior Decor, Ikeja, Lagos: "Interior decoration has degreed and what is needed is to search for that which best suits the client."

In many cases, families take up the challenge beautifying their homes. The Okkis, when they bought a new house on the outskirts of Lagos, opted to decorate it themselves. Their little knowledge of aesthetics, Mrs. Ochi chose the colours for the walls on the building as well as the result furniture. The result atmosphere of elegance and plants have become a thing in homes. Mr Store who owns a flower shop in Lagos, says, "I have sanctioned the use of natural plants in interior decoration. Another thing to bring into the phase is the use of plants in the WAJ ca stressed in v most of the plant, at But some of the plants to be planted are figs, banana, guava, etc. They are fully grown and low-maintenance."

• Plants bring nature into the home



no, a Canadian appellation synonymous with the wider known *Ben Bullet*, was on a non-stop flight to New York.

The 26-year-old Canadian, whose rise to stardom in the last three years has been astounding, beat the imagination of the athletics world how he could achieve the new 9.79 world record, less than a month after recording uninspiring defeats in Europe, traceable to an early season injury that had dogged him.

Two Bulgarian Weightlifters, Mitko Grablev and Angel Guenchev, also tested positive for drugs and the Bulgarian weightlifting team withdrew from the games on the same day that Johnson made the spectacular but now disqualified run.

Western athletes generally believe that their Eastern bloc counterparts use sophisticated drugs and are never detected because they are on government funded sports programmes. After the world championships in Rome last year, it was revealed that the East Germans artificially inseminated or encouraged their women to get pregnant three months before major meets as it has been discovered by the "German labs (laboratories)" that a woman is at her strongest in her third month of pregnancy. This, though not illegal, typifies the extent athletes go for victory.

Also well criticised was the simultaneous use of two adjoining rings for the boxing event. The confusion came to a crescendo when a South Korean, acting on the bell from the adjoining ring dropped his guard and walked away. His American opponent who knew the fight wasn't over in



• Carl Lewis: Wants ban lifted.



• Ben Johnson: Caught out by dope test

High flying dopey Seoul

Use of drugs taint XXIV Olympiad

BEN Johnson will definitely go down on record as the man who has left the greatest impression on this year's summer Olympic games. In the opening week of the athletics events, the Canadian starred in a sensational 100 metre-run and returned a superhuman 9.79 seconds which sent the telegraphic wires buzzing across the globe with the despatches of the press corps.

Suitably impressed, the track world announced a new world record. Canada, his adopted country, announced him as an ideal role model. Manufacturers and advertisers jostled at his feet for his endorsements while the Koreans were just pleased he gave them the honour to host the electrifying run. Three days later, Johnson was trapped within the heat of his fame, after the results of a mandatory drug test following the world record run revealed he had used anabolic steroid stanozolol to enhance his performance.

The press corps got busy again, with dispatches (this time of a sullen nature) with Ben Johnson-speed throughout the world.



• Florence Griffith Joyner



• Said Aouita

Almost immediately, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), through its spokes-person Michelle Weider nullified the Canadian's September 24 victory, cancelled his world record and withdrew his gold medal.

Also withdrawn by advertisers and manufacturers were lucrative endorsement contracts modestly put at three million pounds. Not to be outdone, the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF), slammed a preliminary two year ban which is the automatic minimum punishment for a drug offender. Press re-

ports had suggested that the Canadian government placed a lifeban on Johnson from participating in sports competitions following the revelation but that has been refuted. (See Box).

In a typical Ben Johnson style, the disgraced speedster who still possesses the world 100 metres record (9.83) — from another remarkable victory at the world championships in Rome last year — immediately packed bag and baggage, headed for Seoul's Kimpo airport and before the world could fully comprehend the drama, *El Volca-*





Thompson: Fallen legend

their own ring, summarily dropped him with a left hook to the stomach.

Not the exclusive preserve of the Canadian, however, were those explosive and similarly superhuman performances that sometimes marked the games. The world witnessed American hurdlers Andre Phillips and Roger Kingdom set larger-than-life records in the 400 metres and 110 metres hurdles events respectively.

American heptathlete Jackie Joyner-Kersey continued her overall domination of female track and field, establishing her fifth world record. Sister-in-law Florence Griffith-Joyner was even more phenomenal over the 100 metres. "The way she runs at present, only a man can beat her," says ex-world record holder Evelyn Ashford, another American, whom Griffith-Joyner beat to the second place in the finals.

From the weightlifting gym was the incredible Turk Naim Suloyanaglou who lifted three times his own 59kg body weight. The world has seen a couple of exceptional athletes over the years but never this sports galaxy. Even men believed to have passed their peak made astounding returns.

At 30, Desai Williams, a protege of Charlie Francis, Ben Johnson's coach, also believed to use performance enhancing drugs is just running his lifetime best. Jamaica's Bert Cameron and Australia's Daren Clark, both quarter milers made "remarkable" returns to smash long-forgotten personal bests after five years of inactivity.

The reason for the new wave may not be far to

seek. With the enormous monetary benefits attached to sports success, especially the outstanding performers, sports is no longer purely for the Olympic ideal of the competition. Today's sportsmen are a glitzy cult of young millionaires who drive the latest off the production line of hopping Benz instead of training team buses. A Test (Ben Johnson has a personal collection of five Ferraris) was purchased by Rosa, was purchased in Rome last year for a quarter of a million US dollars of a glamourous theater of a millionaire. They gloss over the screens several prodigious which naturally bring financial comfort to luxury.

It is thus not strange that athletes go to any lengths

using banned substances for two years, as offender. Second of get a life ban. John however claiming mistake has been If he's found guilty investigations carried out, it is thing we can't be good of what been trying to Canadian go the IOC has been on. Permanent offence Sport in N

'Not yet banned'

High Commissioner Jurschewsky says proper investigation awaits Johnson

THE CANADIAN Acting High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mr. Sven Harald Jurschewsky spoke to The African Guardian's Omatayo Afolabi on his government's reaction to the Ben Johnson affair. Excerpts:

Whether Canada has banned Johnson for life from taking part in sports competitions:

The Canadian government has not banned him for life. In line with our policy on drugs, the government has cut off his funds. But he can appeal against this decision after a proper investigation has been made into the whole matter.

On whether Johnson has been banned from the national athletics team:

He's not been banned from the national team. That may happen but it hasn't happened yet. As soon as the team returns from Seoul, an investigation will be carried out. And it's going to be wider than just Ben Johnson. We take the issue of drugs very seriously because its usage is cheating.

On the speculation that Johnson may be stripped of his Canadian citizenship:

It's utterly absurd to say that his citizenship would be withdrawn. The worst possible action would be that he's banned from national competition for life.

The punishment that may be meted out to Johnson if an investigation confirms the drug test.



Jurschewsky

The possible penalties from the International Amateur Athletics Association and its affiliate, the Canadian Track and Field Association, would usually be to suspend the athletes

Name	Olympic Country	Drug offence
Audor Szanyi	Hungary	
Mitko Grabler	Bulgaria	
Fernando Matarica	Bulgaria	
Kalman Csengeri	Bulgaria	
Angel Guanche	Cuba	
Ben Johnson	Canada	
Alex Watson	Canada	
Linwood Christie	Canada	
Kermit Brown	USA	

SPORTS



• Joyner-Kersey



• Reynolds: Shock defeat



• Ed Moses: The legend was beaten

improve their sporting abilities which in turn enhance their financial status.

Though drug tests are mostly administered on athletes on a random basis, it is only world record breakers who face a compulsory test. Even then, the tests have been circumvented and it is often said that only "fools" are ever caught for using drugs. This makes Johnson's case more interesting, since he was reputed to have the best cover up artiste (this coach Francis) in the world in track circles. On his return to Canada, Johnson vowed in a statement to appeal against the IOC decision to strip him of the gold medal.

At the airport to receive him was his mother who was however pushed down in the press of journalists and photographers. His father, interviewed in

Jamaica, said that he was ready to go to court to defend the innocence of his son. The South Koreans are taking the credit for the highly sophisticated anti-dope technology used for the test. Staff from the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology devised the urine test first used at the 1986 Asian Games. Johnson's appeal may be assisted by the revelation that he took three and a half bottles of beer before the test.

The 100-metre gold returns to Carl Lewis, who was runner-up to Johnson in a new American record of 9.92. Asked to comment after Johnson's exposure by the drug test, Lewis said: "It only confirms what people knew about him (Johnson)."

In terms of the Olympic games that have left most gasps as favourites succumbed to the who, what's his name upstarts, ...

the Seoul games were definitely beyond comparison. Many giants went to Seoul just seeking the extra confirmation an Olympic gold medal gives to their number one status. Unfortunately, they not only met the regular opposition, but also, a set of up-and-rising athletes on a fairy tale challenge.

Among the latter was the Surinamese swimmer Anthony Nesty, who won the 100 metre freestyle gold. The American Matt Biondi was favoured by the odds for the title. The Surinamese whose country's four-man team only got to Seoul courtesy of the International Olympic Committee, beat the American wonder kid with the finger tip and sent officials searching furiously for a Surinamese flag for the medals presentation ceremony.

Also at his best was Kenya's 800 metre runner Paul Ereng who only started running the distance seriously this year. He was pitted against the seemingly invincible Aouita, multiple world record holder and he won.

There was the inspiring early performance of the Zambian soccer team — originally the least regarded of Africa's three qualifiers. The Zambians opened with a draw against Iraq that was more of their fault but made up for it with a 4-0 drubbing of both Italy and Guatemala. The bubble finally burst when they found themselves at the wrong end of a 4-0 victory, conceded to West Germany.

Nineteen-year-old Steve Lewis is, under normal circumstances, probably too young to win the Olympic gold in the 400 metres — the one they call the killer race. His prospect was not even considered when world record holder and one of the world's recent

track phenomena — Harry 'Butch' Reynolds was in the line-up. The youngster beat Reynolds, his team mate from the US. Another, Lewis, Carl of course, competed in a supposedly routine 200 metres. King Carl could not find the speed to ward off his under-study Joe Deloach, so away to pay back a mentor!

From the tennis courts came the dethronement of Wimbledon champion Stefan Edberg of Sweden to whom it was believed the gold was to be given. The big Czech Miloslav Mecir, most probably thought differently all the while as he was dispatched him in the semi-finals.

The Australians were also a tremendous surprise at the games. The men from down under did quite a bit of upsetting. Swimmer Duncan Armstrong startled the world with a new world record win in the 200 metre freestyle ahead of established stars Matt Biondi and Michael Cross. The male hockey team defeated world champion Pakistan 4-0, Kenya 7-1, etc. etc. 400 metre hurdler Bebbie Flintoff set a new global women's mark for the event, winning the gold medal in 53.17 seconds.

Edwin Moses lost his legend and anticipated gold medal to compatriot Andre Phillips, with a surprised Senegalese, El Hadj Amadou Dia Ba blowing past Moses in the final phase of the race. Monly Ibrahim Boutayeb, the 21-year-old protégé of Said Aouita, for whom victory at September's African championships over the 10,000 metres was considered an upset, repeated the upset at the world's greatest sporting platform.

By Oia Sheyn

Oriental wonder drug

Officials react cautiously to Chinese discovery

KELLY Evuen, 32, is ordinarily a just-filled and vivacious guy. He is a six-footer with finely proportioned limbs and living in the industrial town of Warri in Bendel State.

Kelly has a problem, which also faces the over 100 million Nigerians or hundreds of million Africans who inhabit the tropical belt. Virtually every month, he is reduced to a pitiable state by the female anopheles mosquito bearing the malaria parasite in its bite. Food becomes an aversion. High temperature, headache, body pains etc act in concert to whittle down his bulk by more than half. In the advanced state of the disease, he sees shadows of death flitting across the doorway.

Usually, when a dose of chloroquine or any of the quinine derivatives is administered, he soon recovers and resumes his vibrant self. But that may be after 72 hours.

That period may now be slashed by more than half with a Chinese discovery, the drug, Artemetheri. Experts confirm that the drug has a shorter parasite and fever clearance time than chloroquine and its cousins.

This followed clinical tests, under an arrangement between Chinese medical officials, the Federal Ministry of Health and UNICEF at the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital (UCTH) and University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH).

A Chinese medical team visited the Health Ministry in January to promote the drug and a follow-up visit by a Chinese trade delega-

tion is due soon to talk to interested Nigerian businessmen.

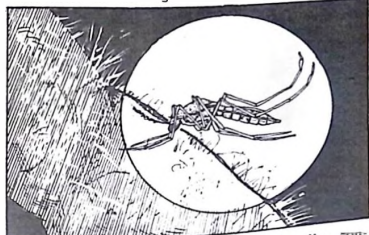
Comparative clinical trials at UNTH between February and June on patients aged seven to 43 showed that for 26 patients on chloroquine, the number of failures was three; average parasite clearance time, 2.5 days; fever clearance in 24 hours 83.3 per cent; fever clearance in 48 hours 100 per cent and side-effects (pruritus/rashes) 65.4 per cent. For 34 patients treated with Artemetheri, failure rate was nil; average parasite clearance time, 1.4 days; fever clearance in 24 hours, 91.3 per cent; fever

clearance in 24 hours was a remarkable 81 per cent. The gladdening news comes at a time of growing resistance of the average patient to chloroquine and related drugs. Dr. Okokou Jackson Ekanem, Chief Consultant Malariaologist, Federal Ministry of Health, welcomes the possibilities of the drug Ekanem who served on the panel that investigated the drug however told *The African Guardian* that chloroquine was still the drug of choice of the health ministry.

Artemetheri is reserved for extreme cases of malaria and its use is restricted to university teaching hospitals until more clinical tests are performed, he said. A sensitive area is the possible use of the drug on pregnant women, sicklers and other patients requiring intensive care. began more than 2,000 years ago in China. An attaché at the Chinese embassy, Zhu Mzaha,

Ekanem advises that the drug be not applied to pregnant women, though in China, it is given to all categories of patients. He says more tests need to be conducted to determine its effect on mother and foetus.

The story of Artemetheri



• Health Minister Ransome-Kuti. Chloroquine still the choice

clearance in 48 hours, 100 per cent and side-effects (pruritus/rashes) 8.8 per cent.

The efficacy of Artemetheri compared with chloroquine in UNTH was even more striking. Of the patients in the age bracket of 11 and 32, for 11 patients on chloroquine, failure rate was nil; average parasite clearance time was three days; fever clearance in 24 hours, 37.5 per cent and side-effects 50 per cent. For those on Artemetheri, 30 of them had a clean slate in

bracket one and 10, fever clearance in 24 hours was a remarkable 81 per cent. Artemetheri is one of the active ingredients contained in the Chinese herb Qinghao, very much like the *dogonyato* tree, widely used in crude form for malaria treatment in Nigeria from the 1950s he said, research into the herb was intensified until it was perfected into three drug forms — Qinghaosu (Artemisinin), Artemetheri and Sodium arisanate.

Analysts say Nigeria is a part of call by the Chinese as a matter of careful choice, based on commercial considerations. With an overwhelming population of malaria patients, Nigeria has always been on the lookout for drugs with greater efficacy.

From the United States of America, also came the news last week that an anti-malaria vaccine, made from synthetic materials, has been developed by researchers in Columbia.

By Humphrey Bekaren

Strides in journalism

Duyile provides a history of the Nigerian press

Title: *Makers of Nigerian Press*
 Author: Dayo Duyile
 Publisher: Gong Communications
 Reviewer: Isi Osojfo

A BOOK about the evolution of the Nigerian press providing a roll-call of its "timbers and caterpillars" is bound to make interesting reading. Chief Dayo Duyile, author of *Makers of Nigerian Press*, brings to the task modest gifts, painstaking effort and a high sense of purpose.

The book covers nearly the same ground treated by Increase Coker in his 1960 publication, *Landmarks of the Nigerian Press*. The work under consideration gives fleshy detail where the other had been mainly sketchy; and further picks up the story of media development since the 60s.

Lateef Jakande, ex-governor of Lagos State, himself a prominent media-man, contributed the foreword. He begins with the apt observation that the history of the Nigerian press is in many respects the history of Nigeria. Mounted opposite the title page are pictures of the great pioneers — Reverend Henry Townsend, Robert Campbell, Herbert Macaulay, Thomas H. Jackson, Ernest Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, J.V. Clinton, Obafemi Awolowo, Abubakar Imam, etc.

Considering the scope of the Nigerian press today (the author gives a survey of 30 daily newspapers, 29 weeklies, 20 television stations and 25 radio stations by 1986), it may seem surprising to learn that it was relatively a late-starter in the West African sub-region.

The first Nigerian newspaper *Iwe Irohin*, published by CMS Missionary, Henry Townsend, in Abeokuta in 1859, was preceded by publications in Sierra Leone, Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Liberia.

Lagos did not boast a newspaper till 1863, when Robert Campbell, a West Indian, set up his press by the Holy Cross Cathedral in a street which still bears his name.

From Townsend's small hand-press which he brought from England to the computerised press — from typesetting to printing — initiated a year ago by the Kaduna-based Nationhouse Press, the industry remains dependent on foreign technology, registering no indigenous growth to complement the strides of journalism traced in the book.

It details successively the exciting phases in the annals of Nigerian journalism. Two of the first firebrand nationalist writers, John Payne Jackson and Thomas Horatio Jackson, his son, starred on the pages of the *Lagos Weekly Record* (1891-1930s). "The *Weekly Record* of John Payne Jackson and Thomas Horatio Jackson was so powerful that at one time, on account of its uncompromising attitude in the national interest, all foreign advertisements were withdrawn (by the colonial authorities)," the author states.

Herbert Macaulay, doyen of Nigerian nationalism, began as a freelance writer with the *Nigerian Chronicle*, run by Christopher Kumuloh Johnson, and later estab-

lished the *Lagos Daily News*.

The arrival of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe from Ghana to start the *West African Pilot* in Lagos in 1937, and similar publications in the east and the north post-dated by more than a decade the establishment of the *Daily Times* (the oldest surviving newspaper) with foreign interest in 1925.

Chief Anthony Eronsele Enahoro, at 21 the youngest newspaper editor in Nigerian history, edited the Warri-based *Southern Nigerian Defender*, another of the Zik's group of newspapers.

The book lists "the old editorial brigade" of Lateef Jakande, Timothy Olu Adebajo, Adamu Ciroma, Bisi Onabanjo and others preceded by the older ones of Ernest Ikoli, H.O. Davies, etc.

Famous newspaper columnists of the 60s and seventies are given as Ebenezer Williams, John West, Aiyekoto, Allah De, Peter Pan, Sad Sam, Mickey Mouse, Dap Dorman, Candido, Unu-Habib, etc.

Among media prisoners of conscience are Herbert Macaulay, Davies, Ikoli, Deniga, W.C. Labour, L.B. Benjamin, Jackson, Enahoro, Amakiri, Jakande, Ojewunmi, Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor.

Attention is drawn to the editorial independence of *The Guardian* newspaper, predicated on the liberal posture of publisher Alex Ibru. Stanley Macebuh's style and innovativeness, both at the *Daily Times* and *The Guardian*, where he is currently managing director, are highlighted. Also mentioned is the impact of Dele Giwa (killed with a parcel bomb in October, 1986) on the *Daily Times*, and *Concord* and *Newswatch* magazine which he co-founded.



• Duyile: Eulogising past media men

The book suffers from a too apparent effort at comprehensiveness. With tighter editing, the 726-page book could have been cut drastically through avoidance of repetitions and more precision in treatment of material.

The inclusion of *Holline* magazine in the radical press makes a joke of that category. The author's enthusiastic endorsing of "the quality of the contents of the newspapers and their brand of responsible journalism" may meet with some reservations.

Published in 1987, a few of its conclusions are already invalid. The book was evidently in the press before the new communication policy was put out by the Federal Government, so its reference to a disjointed official approach has been overtaken.

With a N45 price tag, the book may be out of reach to students to whom it is primarily targeted, including the author's students at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, where he is acting director.

Cry, whipping boy

SEVERAL years ago, Tunji Oseni, the then embattled editor of the *Sunday Times*, wrote a piece in his paper about the journalistic dilemma. The pressman, he observed, is everybody's whipping boy: head or tail, he must lose. If he exposes, he's in trouble, if he doesn't, he's equally in trouble. Which is about the same thing as saying that whatever he commits or omits, he's bound to hold the rough end of the stick.

That may very well be Nigeria's contribution to journalism. The principle appeared to have been well played out last week. A nosy newspaper, probably in a fit of self-righteous indignation, went to town with the news that the government was about to spend five million naira of hard-earned taxpayers' money on this year's celebration of Nigeria's 28 years of independence.

TONY COLEMAN



Well, the paper must have congratulated itself for doing a brilliant expose. But the government was not amused. Not long afterwards, accredited newsmen reported at the Murtala Muhammed Airport, Ikeja on Tuesday, September 27. Their mission: to partake of the yearly ritual of being ferried to Abuja, venue of the celebrations, days ahead of the event aboard an Air Force plane, of course, at government's expense.

They had already ensconced themselves in the womb of the luxurious plane when a gruffy voice announced to the consternation of the journalists that they should disembark. This time around, government was not apparently prepared to play the Father Christmas, even if the newsmen were out to cover a national event.

At the end of it all, only selected mediamen, on the state house beat, mainly from the television, radio and few papers were hand-picked (don't ask us why) to make the trip at government expense. And not until Thursday, September 29.



Government's reasoning, we understand, was that the bloating of the cost of celebrations which journalists are so happy to bring to public glare was not unconnected (standard journalistic language) with what government spends on them to cover the event. So, find your way there if you want the news. Sound reasoning you might say. The snag though is that it would appear that someone has cut his nose to spite his face. The

whipping boy?

Stardom is not enough

WHEN it comes to the struggle against apartheid, it seems there are no grey areas. If what we hear about members of the African National Congress (ANC) in Nigeria is true, then, the maxim is: if you are not for me, you must be against me.

No doubt, Chaka Chaka, the South African queen of pop fusion has been thrilling millions of Nigerians with her music, bringing smiles to faces and jives to fun lovers. We hear that a popular night club in Lagos, sensing the commercial viability of the venture, decided to invite Chaka Chaka over at a cost of £6,000. Somewhat regrettably, the chaps at the club decided to enlist the help of the ANC in Lagos to speed her travel formalities. We hear that was when the musical waters started getting murky.

The ANC, we are informed, would have none of it. Why? Well, Chaka Chaka, instead of using her God-given talents to sing (if not take up arms) against apartheid, decided to praise DJS, to glorify innocuous pastimes as love and to admire nature. In short, her lyrics aren't just right in the ears of the ANC leaders. We understand that the ANC is not only working hard to ensure she doesn't step into Nigeria, but is also bent on convincing the government to ban her records in the country.

We must admit the paradox here. Anti-apartheid struggle is a fight for freedom. Is Chaka not also exercising her freedom to sing what she likes?

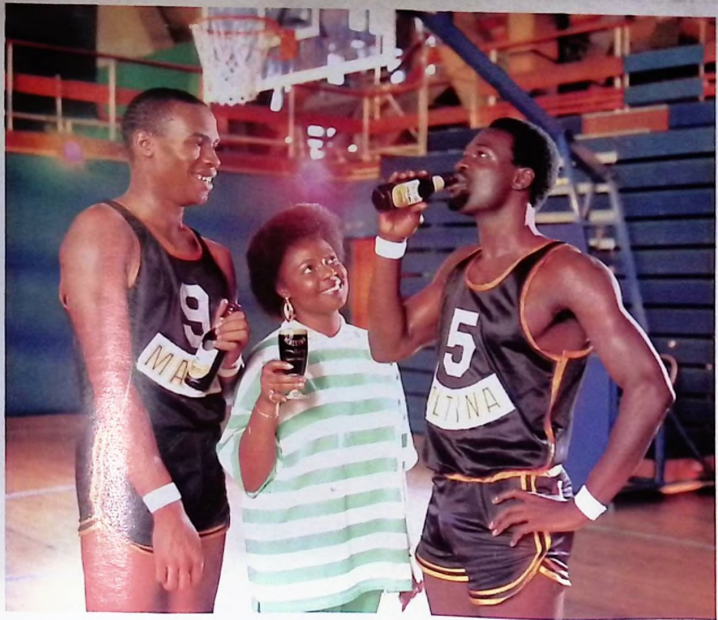
Some reporter, some ...

THE way some journalists carry on, you would mistake them for some fawning bureaucrats. Take this journalist, who the other day, decided to ask a question after the National Day lectures at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Here he goes: "Your Excellency, General Yakubu Gowon, Honourable Minister, Colonel John Shagaya, Distinguished...."

Gowon reacts sharply: "Cut that out and ask your question."

Anyhow, our grovelling reporter managed to mumble out what must have sounded even to his own ears as exactly not a question. Whereupon he apologises: "I hope my question was well taken". This time, Gowon equally mumbles under his breath: "whatever he means by that". Some reporter, some question.



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