

CREATE
ETHNIC STATES



KEN SARO-WIWA

RSD

AUG. 12-19, VOL. II No. 33

N10

Citizen

NIGERIA TO RECOGNISE ISRAEL



C.A.N. WINS?

IT WAS OVERDUE
OKOGIE

IT IS OK
TAHIR, CIROMA

IT IS NOT
SHEIKH TURETA

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PREFACE

Putting together this week's cover must have been a most exacting task for Mohammed Bomo, the week's anchor man. The announcement for renewing ties with Israel by Foreign Minister Major-General Ike Nwachukwu, came from far away Israel itself where he went visiting apparently secretly; the announcement of his trip abroad from his ministry did not mention Israel. With the minister himself away, as well as his junior minister (Alhaji Ibrahim Zakari was also away in Eastern Europe at the time of the announcement) there was hardly any ranking official at External Affairs Ministry, Abuja to talk to for an official elaboration on the decision. Bomo was therefore left with the task of reconstructing developments leading to the surprise announcement partly through secondary sources and partly through unofficial primary sources.

However getting the reactions to the announcement was a lot easier. Mahmud Jega, Ike Okonta, Ronke Ojuade, an intern from University of Jos, Bilikisu Yusuf, Mohammed Haruna, Yinka Tella and Bolaji Adebityi fanned out to talk to people as diverse as Archbishop Olubunmi Okogie and Sheikh Abubakar Tureta for balance. We decided to publish the interviews with Okogie, Ray Ekpu, Godwin Dabo both senior officials of the Nigeria/Israeli Association and Sheikh Tureta, a leading Muslim scholar in Kaduna, as companion pieces.

For a long time the paradox of the decision by a Muslim president to renew ties broken nearly two decades ago by a Christian head-of-state will exercise the minds of pundits and religionists alike.



LETTERS

El Zakzaky: What does he want?

Sir,

The desire for an Islamic Republic of Nigeria as expressed by Malam Ibrahim el-Zakzaky in the July edition of your magazine, only goes to prove either of two things:

(a) That his knowledge of what Nigeria is, and what Nigeria stands for, does not go beyond his local environments i.e. Zaria or perhaps the north. And thus he does not seem to understand, the complexities of Nigeria's historical, political, social, economical, religious and or cultural situation; or

(b) That he is aware of this complexities but has deliberately or otherwise blinded himself with his misguided zeal to Islamise Nigeria.

While Zaria, and perhaps some parts of the north can be declared "Islamic Republic" with little or no resistance at all, the same, cannot be resistance at all, the same, cannot be said of Nigeria. The above submission is based on my belief that whoever knows Nigeria in its true context, knows as well that Nigeria will cease to exist, the day it is declared an Islamic Republic.

Gabriel Gidi Nglabak.
Katsina

Sir,

I must say that I am most surprised at the comments of Mukhtar Abubakar about the Muslim Brothers movement and its members. He seems to suggest that human beings are fundamentally not different from animals and infact share the same needs with them—feeding, clothing, shelter and sex—which, once given solve all their problems. And the Muslim Brothers, being human beings, can be pacified into silence the moment the government understands their needs and provides "them with means of learning trade"

and makes "easy for them means of social mobility." He also believes "they want to get married and take care of their families".

These assumptions about human beings in general and Muslims in particular is most absurd, degrading, ridiculous and materialistic. It is wrong. By it, Mukhtar seems to be saying that if he is given food and sex, he will have no reason or need to grumble even if Allah's laws are trampled upon. For life ceases to have any meaning or significance when it cannot be lived according to the belief of its owner.

I advise Mukhtar and his likes to come and stay with the Muslim Brothers for sometime so he can study them and know and understand their philosophy of life before jumping to hasty conclusions.

Mukhtar has proved to be a misguided and unqualified social psychologist through his wrong diagnosis of the issues at stake and



equally wrong prescription as a result.

It is better to be quiet and be thought a fool than to talk and prove to be one.

Hamza Muhammed Lawal
Zaria

Sir,

The man, Sheikh Ibrahim el-Zakzaky was deliberately misunderstood by a few Nigerian elites,

the Muslim Ummah and their teen-aging Christians for no other reason than safe-guarding their personal gain and retention of their current portfolios.

El-Zakzaky and his followers will continue to suffer unfair detention, jailing and continued harassment by the country's security agents as long as they preach fearlessly for the cause of Allah!

The Exalted Prophet of Allah, (Muhammad — peace be upon him) had suffered such treatment from *Kufr* and their collaborators, but the light of Islam prevailed!

Muhammad Sulaiman Baba
Kano

Sir,

Your cover story on the Islamic Movement of Nigeria reminds me of the words of Maulana Maudud: that "If leadership is in the hands of those who have turned away from Allah, the lifestyle of that society drifts towards rebellion against Allah, towards man's exploitation by man and towards moral degeneration and cultural pollution." This in turn he says, "leads to a general corruption of ideas, affecting the arts and sciences, politics and social economy, culture, ethics, behaviour, law and justice."

The seed of Islamic revivalism has been sown by the Islamic Movement. It will grow and blossom towards the attainment of perfection, perhaps generations ahead.

Any derogatory term or degrading label of the global Zionism against Muslim brotherhood should be embraced to serve as propelling waves that give buoyancy and determination. Says the Holy Qur'an: "So lose no heart, nor fall into despair: for you must gain mastery, if you are true in faith" — 3:139

Dalhat Hamid Bello
Bauchi

Letters to *Citizen*, carrying names, signatures and addresses, should be brief and to the point. They should be typed double space and addressed to Letters Page, *Citizen*, G.11 Unguwan Kanawa, PMB 2334, Kaduna.

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A disaster without let

The Federal Government's surprise decision to restore full diplomatic ties with Israel is an unmitigated policy disaster. It's timing is bad; its implications are horrific, and the consequences may yet prove to be calamitous.

The timing is bad because the hawkish Likud leaders of Israel are still resisting a peace conference with its Arab enemies. Unlike the South African Boer leaders, who have conceded the futility of apartheid and have accepted the principle of majority rule, Israeli leaders are yet to agree to relinquish the occupied territories, or to accept the principle of Palestinian self-determination, or to agree to meet with the Palestinians' legitimate leaders, or even to agree to a UN presence at the conference. As such, Israeli leaders do not in any way deserve to be "encouraged" in the way the West wishes to encourage President de Klerk. The Israelis have not scrapped any legislation or freed any prisoners; they are still killing, maiming, jailing, deporting, restricting, cordoning, and uprooting Palestinian villages in order to build more Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

It is terrible that Nigeria's encouragement of Israel came two months after President Babangida became OAU chairman and only a week after the OAU decided in Abuja to continue to isolate South Africa.

In the light of this deed, all of the Federal Government's adventures abroad become suspect. The government may or may not be aware that many Nigerians have long suspected it to be uncomfortably pro-American and in collaboration with Mossad. Many Nigerians in fact suspect that the President wants to meet with de Klerk and normalise relations with South Africa.

Actions such as last week's, only heighten such fears. Nigeria has now joined Mobutu, Samuel Doe, Paul Biya, Arap Moi, Houphouët-Boigny and Andre Kolingba, all instinctively neo-colonial, to wreck an OAU resolution.

The consequences of this action may yet prove to be calamitous. For one, it poses grave dangers to domestic stability. We do not believe that this issue is a religious one, but probably a majority of Nigerians think it is one. The Christian Association of Nigeria has already welcomed the action, which means Islamic groups should be expected to bitterly resent it. Experience has shown that these groups do not respond lightly to provocation. Could it be that government deliberately provoked them, three weeks short of the gubernatorial primaries, two months shy of the census, and four months away from the elections, in order to find an excuse to sabotage its own transition programme?

The consequences for Nigeria and Africa may also be horrific. If the twenty-or-so Arab states begin a mass economic and diplomatic boycott of Nigeria, then Israeli "technology" will in no way compensate us. Nor will Nigeria be able to maintain its shaky position in the oil market. If other African countries follow Nigeria's lead, then black Africa will come into a collision with the Arabs, an event that will wreck OPEC, OAU and the Non-Aligned Movement and destabilise the United Nations.

It defies all reasoning why the Federal Government should court this disaster. If it is meant to compensate for its bungled entry into the OIC in 1987, then the two issues do not compare in disaster potential. In any case, Israel is not an international Christian organisation; it is a Jewish State, an aggressive, stubborn racist one at that. No one in Nigeria should feel compensated by this act.

Voters' register

The registration of voters exercise which ended last Monday in most of the country cannot be said to have been a resounding success, despite claims by NEC official. August 12, 1991

officials. From the start, there were noticeable problems. Turn-out was visibly low in most registration centres throughout the three weeks the exercise lasted. Perhaps the rather

long period allowed for the exercise encouraged laxity on the part of the people.

Even when people did go to the registration centres, however, there were problems of acute shortage of registration materials. The officers often had no registration cards to issue, a very baffling affair given the very low turnout of prospective voters. Was NEC unready for this exercise after all? Back in 1987, some eighty-five million persons were registered, and NEC should logically expect many more to register this time.

The shortage of registration materials led many officials to abandon their centres, often for days on end.

When it comes to the time to apportion blame, therefore, government should not blame the people. We are disturbed that some military governors are already threatening not to pay the salary of anyone who has not registered. This threat is unwise and unconstitutional, since salary for work done is a right, whereas registering to vote is a civic duty which one may choose not to do. Especially if failure to register was through no fault of yours.

Kurds and Turks

The new world order is supposed to be a wonderful thing. Tell that to the Kurds, if you dare. They would certainly wonder about what you mean. What they tell in return will be heart rending.

They would be quick to point out to you the untold hardship and unending misery it had brought on them. When the west took its new order to Iraq, the only aspect the Kurds saw was slaughter. Thousands of them were slaughtered by Iraq's defeated Saddam Hussein. And now as the west tries to consolidate the so-called new order, a fresh wave of slaughter was unleashed on them by the country in which they were assured to be safest — Turkey.

When Saddam unleashed his mayhem on them, more than one and a half million Kurds fled from Iraq. A million or so entered Iran and the rest went to Turkey. Many among those trapped in the middle were cut down before talks about safe haven were heard.

Later on, realism forced Saddam to go to the negotiating table with representatives of the Kurds. There are indications that a settlement — or at least a lull in fighting — which will hold may be reached. Though fractious — and even as the negotiations proceed voices of dissent and division may be heard — the Kurdish resistance has maintained semblance of unity over a single objective — to get a better deal from Saddam. According to Mas'oud Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party, more than 70% of Kurdish demands have

been met by the Iraqi leader.

But as usual for Kurds, as one thing gets better another gets much worse. As the winning begins in Iraq, the refuge in Turkey, to which many fled and from which they are expected to reemerge soon, turned into pure hell. And the irony was not just one.

As Turkish soldiers pursued Kurdish peshmergas across south-eastern Turkey and northern Iraq it was announced in Istanbul that an international conference sponsored by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, OIC and the UN High Commission for Refugees on the best way to deal with refugees in Islamic states will be held there.

This is not the first time Turkey will be killing Kurds. They have been at it since 1920. This is not to say that the Kurds are used to being killed, though they must be getting close to that.

Right now of course fighting, or more appropriately, killing, is going on by Turkish soldiers backed by tanks and jet bombers supposedly against units of the Kurdish Workers Party — the irredentist PKK. Many hundreds of civilians in refugee camps have reportedly been killed.

Now of course the Kurds, whose cause the new-world-order-mad West supposedly fought, know how unreliable the West is and how painful it is to be left alone, high and dry. Iraq got a deserved bashing. All that Turkey got was probably a nod.

The Kurds and all other peoples must realise that they can have no one to depend on but themselves. The sooner this wisdom is realised, the better it will be for everybody.

Citizen

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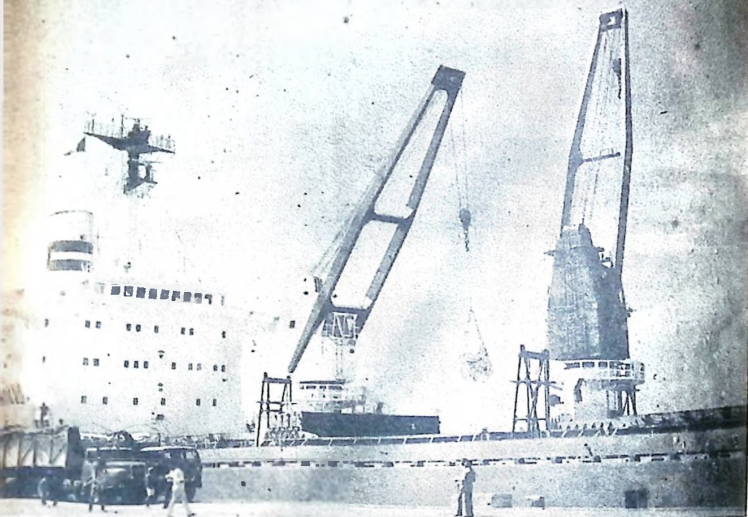
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try without clearance in 1984.

Second, the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, was on Israel's side and as someone once quipped, CAN is today perhaps the strongest political force in the country. The renewal of ties with Israel has for long been an article of faith with CAN. In pushing for the realisation

given its debt-ridden and dependent economy.

President Babangida is right when he says this matter should not be seen as religious. Partly religious, yes, but essentially it is a moral issue. The question is, is it right that a country should deal with another which seeks to brutalise other peoples? The answer clearly is no. That was the ostensible reason why the US clobbered Iraq with all its might. And yet! Israel is doing far worse to Palestinians in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip than Saddam Hussein ever did to the Kuwaitis or even to his hapless Iraqi subjects. Israel has broken every rule of law in international relations in respect of Palestinians. An article in the influential *Foreign Policy* magazine, (No.2 Spring 1991) published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington DC catalogued a long list of the brutalities the Zionist state has subjected the Palestinians to, a list which included murder, collective punishment, deportations, illegal incarceration, you name it.

The issue obviously is, objectively speaking, a moral one not a religious one for not all Palestinians are Muslims. Besides the PLO, which represents them, has been a staunch comrade-in-arms of the ANC in South Africa whose its black and coloured followers are overwhelmingly Christians. Therefore for the more charitable Nigerians, the choice before President Babangida was clearly between morality and our economy. For the more cynical ones the choice really was between morality and his own survival. Fortunately or unfortunately, it is not easy to draw the line between the economy and a government's self-survival.

President Babangida has made his choice. One can only hope that his faith in the might of the US and Israel is not misplaced.

of this article of faith, CAN has had on its side the fact that Israeli citizens and companies have done brisk business in the country, most of the time with more than a little help from Muslim leaders, who are loudest in condemning the Jewish state. Whatever any one may think of Archbishop Olubunmi Okogie, CAN's president, it must be admitted that he was quite right when he once said Nigeria's refusal to recognise Israel was one of the biggest lies and hypocrisies we were living.

President Babangida has said the renewal of ties should not be seen as religious and he is quite right. Unfortunately most Christians and Muslims see it basically as such. Christians may have no common religious purpose with Jews but Nigerian Christians want the renewal of ties with the Zionist state if only to spite Muslims. Muslims on the other hand see a common religious cause with the Palestinian Arabs, even though a substantial fraction of them are Christians.

The third reason why renewing ties with Israel was inevitable is that in the wake of the Gulf war the end of the cold war, the world is now unipolar, with the US as the only real super power. The relationship between the US and Israel has clearly been one of the tail wagging the dog and we all know what leverage the US has in our country

The triumph of might

It was almost inevitable. Even then by the time news broke last week that Major-General Ike Nwachukwu, our Foreign Minister was in Israel, prelude to the restoration of ties with that country, it came as a shock. In the last few years, President Babangida's government has maintained contacts with the Zionist state, but in his usual inimitable way, he seemed to be taking his time before making the final plunge so much so that many people, including this reporter, concluded that he was after all merely playing games with the Zionists. After last week's announcement by Nwachukwu that Nigeria will indeed renew the ties before the end of the year, it is obvious that we were wrong.

Perhaps the renewal of ties was inevitable even though it is clearly undesirable. It was perhaps inevitable for several reasons. First, once Babangida's government renewed contact with the country, diplomatic recognition became a matter of time. Israel has never been known to settle for starters when only the full main course would do. That probably explained why General Muhammadu Buhari, Babangida's predecessor, refused to give them any quarter, to the extent that he reprimanded Oba Sijuwade, the Ooni of Ife and Alhaji Ado Bayero, the Emir of Kano, for visiting the coun-

NIGERIA

Voter registration Exercise ends but

The complaint NEC will hear in the coming week will be that many eligible voters were not registered, not for their fault

The revision of the voter's register ended last week Monday August 5, a day longer to make up for the one-day delay in its starting, to mourn the death of over 240 Nigerian pilgrims in Jeddah last month, in Sokoto State, where most of the dead pilgrims hailed the exercise would continue for quite a while yet.

There was a surge of people to registration centres on the last day where officials were unable to cope with the number that turned up. The voters card was exhausted in the first few hours of business starting. Thousand of people went back home unregistered.

In Kaduna, such last minute surge was not prevented owing partly to the state governor, Colonel Tanko Ayuba's threat that no civil servant would collect his salary unless he present the voter's card.

At the registration unit on Galadima Road, Code No, LG/20/KD in Badarawa ward, people came out in their numbers on August 5 to beat

the deadline but were disappointed when registration officials told them they had run out of materials and fresh ones were not forth coming.

In Hayin Banki ward, the officer in charge of the Unguwar Kanawa registration unit, was put under tremendous stress by eligible voters who had been blaming her for their inability to be registered.

Solomon Ogbedaigo who was in charge of the registration unit on Saminaka Road, was bitter that he could not issue the card to any of the 50 people who had reported at his centre on the last Monday. All he did was to take down their names on paper. Elsewhere, registration units did not open at all that Monday. Those in doka stayed closed.

Citizen gathered that despite the last minute rush, most units could not have registered the required 500 eligible voters.

The exercise was disrupted in the evening of the last day by a heavy down pour. The rain caused most centres to close up. Many people have suggested that National Electoral Commission, NEC should consider holding such an exercise in future only during the dry season.

Asked to comment on the exercise last week NEC's information officer in the state, Malam Garba Lawal Mohammed said the overall turnout was very impressive. He said registration officers were instructed to register eligible voters who turned up even if they had exhausted their stock of registration forms and the card.

They were asked to write names of people for who there were no cards on a separate sheet of papers, so they would be issued with some at a later date. "He said the names could be taken to the NEC secretariat and entered in new cards, which the bearer could claim during the time the register would be put on display".

On whether most units were able to register the targeted 500 names, the information officer said those which could not were merged to reach the target.

On whether any malpractices were recorded, he said so far, there was none in Kaduna Local Government, but a man was arrested in Soba Local Government trying to register by proxy.

Contrary to what the information officer has said, Alhaji Yusuf Dantsoho a frontline politician told *Citizen* that the exercise was a total failure. In some centres, for all the three weeks, some registration officials worked for only three days. Thus according to him probably majority of people have not registered due to no fault of theirs, therefore, government should not blame people but NEC. The registration period should be extended, he said.

The display of the register was to have commenced the following day. But in Kaduna this did not happen until Thursday, August 8. The display scheduled for August 8-11 is to enable people to cross check their names with a view to raising any claims and objections and to have misspellings corrected.

Registration officers simply stayed away from their duty - posts. Some of them complained that the stipend promised them was not forthcoming. They however went back to work on Thursday after exacting a firm pledge from NEC to pay the allowances.

Professor Pius Sada, resident electoral commissioner for the state, could not be reached for his comments.

By Kolawole Fatai

Citizen, August 12, 1991



Dantsoho: a total failure



The race for Agodi house in Oyo State has all the trappings of politics of intrigue where consensus has no place. Attempts within the Social Democratic Party, (SDP), the dominant party in the fifteen year old state, to prune the number of governorship aspirants, ended in a major polarisation of the party. Three weeks to the August 24 primaries, the party is still battling to reconcile the two divergent groups.

It all started in the first week of April this year when Olagunju Adesakin, Oyo State SDP chairman summoned a meeting of his executive council to inform them of the suggestion by "party elders" that the army of contestants who are bidding for the party's nomination for the state governorship race be pruned to a manageable size. At that time, there were nineteen aspirants.



Adesakin

Oyo State The race for Agodi house

The race for the Oyo State Government House appear one sided in favour of SDP, but...

On April 29, all the forty-two local government chairmen of the party converged at its Ibadan State Secretariat. Their mission: to weed the chaff from the grains. And they did just that. At the end of their meeting which lasted about 8 hours, the chieftains came out with a short list of 6 candidates drawn from 3 senatorial districts of the state. According to Adesakin who presided over the meeting, the candidates were those who scored high in an opinion poll conducted by the party executives. Those who got the executive's nod were Chief Robert Koleoso, Professor Wande Abimbola (Oyo North), Mr. Dosu Ladipo, Olusola Dada (Oyo East); Chief Kolapo Ishola and Mr. Lere Adesina (Oyo Central). These are now known as the "Big six".

Those party executives asked to abandon their governorship ambitions include Prince A. Abiona, Lanre Fakolade, Isiaka Adeleke, Ambassador Kola Bidmus (Oyo East); Hammed Cbadamosi, Mrs. Tayo Adetola, Gideon Ogunroundbi (Oyo North); Alhaji

Lam Adesina, Dr. Ezekiel Adetuyi, Olu Sola Idowu, Dr. Toyese Mabaye and Dr. O. Oyemakinde (Oyo Central). Their reaction was swift condemnation of the executives' action as an illegality which has no constitutional basis. They then formed the "Group 14" intent on pooling their resources together to fight the party executives and their six "blessed candidates". Their position was boosted a few days later when the party's national chairman Ambassador Babagana Kingibe, on a visit to Ibadan, described the act of shortlisting as undemocratic and illegal. Since then, the two groups have worked at cross purposes, a development which political observers say may rock the boat of the party in the state. The "Group 14" have been holding joint rallies against the provisions of the laws guiding the transition programme which forbids joint participation.

Rallies have also been held in outright defiance of police directives that banned such gathering. The group insisted however that their action was necessitated by an earlier illegality and injustice. Said Lam Adesina, one of the aspirants: "We formed the group of 14, just to tell them (party executives) that if there should be any illegality at all, it should not be in Oyo State."

But how strong is this alliance in a state known for its political fluidity? Political analysts are skeptical about the survival of the alliance. They argue that given the nature of the coalition which has brought many strange bed fellows together, the chances of lasting unity are slim. Kolawole Bidmus, a 47 year-old former ambassador and



Adetola

a leading member of the "Group 14" coalition told *Citizen* in a recent interview that he was carrying his cross alone because he had enviable credentials which cannot be matched by any of the other candidates. Thus, individual ambition may yet prove the greatest undoing of the group. Of the 14, 5 each come from Oyo Central consisting of Ibadan and Ibarapa; and Oyo East comprising the state's minority groups as Ede, Iwo, Osogbo and Ikirun. The other 4 are from the North made up of Oyo, Iseyin and Ogbomoso.

The Ibadan, seething from their shortlived occupation of the Agodi Government House in the second republic, have made it clear that they do not intend to step down their ambition for that of any other community in the state. Their argument is that, even though they have provided the state's capital for more than fifteen years, one of them has only been in the saddle for three months. They feel the aborted rule of Dr. Omololu Olunloyo in 1983, now has to be redressed. Meanwhile, the East, believe they have a stronger case. The area is extremely backward and underdeveloped, a situation which they attribute to their exclusion from political power. They argue that they need their man in the saddle to redress their age long backwardness. The north, which is the food basket of the state is also bidding for the governorship on a similar ground of "backwardness". These interest groups which are not necessarily mutually exclusive have pulled the contestants more apart than together.

As at last week when *Citizen* visited Ibadan, at least 8 out of the 14 have collected nomination forms and paid the non-refundable fee of 10 thousand Naira to the party secretariat. That to all intent and purposes put paid to the possibility of presenting a common opposition to the "Big six".

So, their opponents,

maginalised by the party's machinery, arrogance and divergent communal group interests, the "Big six" have intensified their campaign. From the opinion poll allegedly conducted by the state executives, Wande Abimbola, a professor of linguistics and former vice chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and Lere Adesina, a lawyer and second republic senator from Ibadan, are ridding high as top contenders. However, they will have to contend with 6 candidates each from their constituencies. Abimbola will have to settle scores with Haruna Elewi a prominent businessman, banker and former chairman of Oyo local government area. Haruna is wealthy and has considerable political influence in Oyo,



Haruna

Abimbola's homestead.

Adesina may have his chances curtailed by the tenacity of another Adesina. Lam Adesina, is a veteran Awoist. He was a member of the House of Representative in the second republic. Lam contested and lost the 1987 Ibadan municipal council chairmanship election to Funso Alayande, son of Archdeacon Emmanuel Alayande, a close associate of Chief Awolowo. But here Adesina, may have reasons to be confident. In 1979, the votes that got him the senate seat was the highest scored by any senator in the

federation. The tussle within the National Republican Convention, is less intense perhaps because it is clearly the weaker party in the state. In the last local government elections, the party was only able to corner 3 local governments against the SDP's 39. Although 3 of these victories in Ibadan Municipal Government, Lagelu and Ibarapa, were reversed by the election tribunal, the July 13 bye-elections returned IMG and Ibarapa to the fold of the SDP.

There has also been realignment of political forces in Oyo State. NRC which is widely associated with the second republic's National Party of Nigeria (NPN), could not retain some of the NPN faithfuls who helped the party to snatch Oyo State from the UPN. Such name like Lamidi Adedibu, the strongman of Ibadan politics has pitched his tent with the SDP. Added to all these is the intra-party squabbles within the NRC. For more than four months, now, the 42 local government chairmen of the party have been up in arms against their state chairman, Alhaji Olajire Aikulola for what they call his anti-party activities, insisting on his removal. Because of the quarrel, the party's congress pacified the warring local government chairmen.

Intra-party squabbles coupled with the lustre response to the membership drive of the party has engendered a situation in which people with little political weight have taken up the bid for the NRC's governorship mandate. Names that are making the round include Mr. Abdul-Jehl Adebayo, Murana Ladeji, Chief A. Aderibigbe, Chief Abdul Akande, Alhaji Yekini Adeojo, Alhaji Tiamiyu Ojuairo, Bolaji Olitinwo, Amos Oladele and Folarin Popoola. Among these, "feather weight" politicians, a candidate to carry the "Eagles" contention for Agodi will emerge August 24 this year.

By Bolaji Adebiji with
Aluko Akinyele in Ibadan

West goes home

After nearly a year in the cooler, the former minister is off the hook

After being incarcerated for nearly a year for alleged corruption, a former minister of petroleum resources, Professor Tam David-West has been set free by a special military tribunal.

The former minister was jailed for 10 years by the Special Tribunal for the Recovery of Public Property on November 16, last year having been found guilty of abuse of office and corruptly enriching an American company, Stinnes Inter-oil Corporation from an off-shore contract by conceding to it 57,117,433 dollars, thus contributing to the economic adversity of the country.

Chairman of the tribunal, Mr. Justice Dahunsi Olugbemi Coker, in setting aside the 10-year jail term,

said that there was no evidence to show that the former minister had corruptly enriched Stinnes even though he actually abused his office but that the jail term was excessive.

Mr. Justice Coker said that the lower tribunal, in jailing Professor David-West had given undue consideration to minor and irrelevant matters that arose during the trial, such as the evidence of tea, dinner and a gift of a wristwatch. He said that such minor issues arose from the eagerness to conclude the Stinnes issue.

The tribunal blamed the former minister for taking the decision to negotiate and settle the deal with Stinnes without seeking the approval of either the council of min-

isters or the president and that he did not seek the approval of the president for the issue to be settled out of court. All he did, the tribunal said, was to inform the president after the conclusion of the deal and that he did not tell the president what action he took during the settlement and that even the letter he claimed to have written was personal, if not superfluous.

Mr. Justice Coker described the former minister's failure to inform the president in advance as a misuse, improper, and an arbitrary use of office and a departure from the proper use of power of the minister of petroleum resources. He further said that the ex-minister's advisers should have been made to share his predicament. The judge cautioned and discharged Professor David-West. The federal government has not clearly indicated whether or not it would appeal the judgment.

By Mohammed Bomo

Secret cults

From School to jail

Five students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, bag 30 months in prison for involvement in secret cult activities

Ken Ikechukwu Akubue, Annaoma Chike Adimora, Charles Ndubuisi Mba, Clifford Osita Mba and Obasi Eze are to share 30 cold months in prison for involvement in secret cult activities.

The five, all students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, UNN, bagged the dubious distinction of being the first set of students convicted for secret cult activities after being found guilty of belonging to, and participating in the activities of the Black Axe Fraternity, one of the 19 secret societies proscribed by UNN on March 7, last year. They were convicted in Enugu, July 11 following a two-

month-long trial by the Eastern Zone of the Miscellaneous Offences Tribunal.

At the time of their conviction, they had spent two-and-a-half months behind bars. Their journey to jail began on Sunday, April 28, when they were arrested by the police who, acting on a tip-off, swooped on the Umukanka Civic Centre along Umukanka Street, in the rusty university town of Nsukka, where a meeting of the Black Axe Fraternity took place.

Charged along the five were Nnaemeka Chiedu Ezeani and Jideofor Akpa. Mr. F.B.I. Egolom, the prosecutor, had charged that the students deserved the hammer for

contravening the Students Union Activities (Control and Regulation) Decree of 1989, which frowns at secret cult activities.

In their defence, the seven students claimed ignorance of the existence of the Black Axe Fraternity and vehemently denied either belonging to the cult or attending any meeting of the society at Umukanka Civic Centre Nsukka, on April 28 when the police trapped them.

In a 15-page judgment, the tribunal chairman Mr. Justice Obiesie, let Excani and Akpa off the hook for want of evidence. The prosecution, he maintained, had proved its case against the remaining five. The convicts, Mr. Justice Obiesie ruled, would each spend 6 months in prison, with an option of 5,000 Naira fine each. The tribunal chairman said that as leaders of tomorrow, it was necessary to use them as an example "so that those who may follow their footsteps" would know that a "similar tragedy" awaited them.

By Isaac Umuna in Enugu

Ken Saro-Wiwa

Create ethnic states

Next to Chief Obafemi Awolowo, he is perhaps the most consistent advocate of an ethnic state structure as well as of minority rights. An artist, writer and social critic, Ken Saro-Wiwa, speaks with a bluntness that most people would find surprising if not offensive. Samplers "The Third Republic has nothing to offer and the only thing the minorities can do is to fight against the federal government". He is even more blunt on the subject of Ojukwu. "I think the way he was granted pardon was spurious, it was purely political. I believe that the man should go and dig a hole 80 feet under the ground and hide there".

Never a person to equivocate he spoke with the same directness to every question we asked him in a recent interview with a team of our reporters. Excerpts:

Citizen: We noticed you are just becoming a champion of the minority in Nigeria. We want to know what essentially is your goal and mission?

Saro-Wiwa: My mission! It is to ensure social justice in the country and as a matter of fact, this is nothing new. I have been on it since 1968 and I have written extensively about it. All these have been lost on people, but I am now doing a collection of a lot of my newspaper writings since the seventies and reading it myself. The script is ready and will be out of the press any moment from now. It is called "Nigeria at the brink of disaster." It is amazing to me how consistent I have been making this argument since 1968. So it is not a new thing. It is a long standing battle which I hope to win before I die.

Citizen: You regularly write about minorities and social justice. Social justice in terms of what?

Saro-Wiwa: Everything you can think of, the right to employment, better life for the people, fair treatment, constitutional rights. All these are not there in Nigeria and Nigeria is a very harsh society, the more so because most of those who have run the country have been ignorant of the country itself.

Citizen: With the two party system, what role do you envisage

for the minorities in the politics of the Third Republic? In other words how can we use democracy to redress what you defined as social injustice?

Saro-Wiwa: We cannot because democracy is a game of numbers and so long as these minorities have no protection under the constitution they are finished. The Third Republic has nothing to offer and the only thing the minorities can do is to fight against the federal government because under the two party system the local government structure has made it impossible for anybody except the major ethnic groups to matter in the new dispensation because if you look at the congress of the parties, they are going to be based on the local governments, and these are local governments created by the federal governments which has no business at all creating local governments in a federal system. Now they have used federal constituency which is based on an estimated and cooked up population to create local governments which are going to constitute the congresses of the parties and these are the people who are going to vote. I mean it is not a fair and just system. It hasn't been done with an eye to solving Nigeria's problems.

Citizen: In what way do you

expect government to go about creating local governments?

Saro-Wiwa: Local governments are purely the business of the ethnic groups who are the constituent and component units of the Nigerian federation. It is not the business of the federal government to create local governments. They may have had the responsibility to create states, but those states were not to be created the way they created them. The question has always been raised: Are these states going to be based on linguistic groups or not? What has happened will go on to compound the local government system and deepen the dilemma of Nigeria.



Saro-Wiwa: no compromise

Citizen: *What is the way out?*

Saro-Wiwa: The way out is for all Nigerians to sit-down to talk. The federal government refused holding a national conference. We should have held a national conference for all Nigerians to sit

consistently in his method.

Citizen: *If for instance Awolowo has done so much for the minorities, we noticed that over the years he was never able to gain political control of the minorities.*

Saro-Wiwa: There are so many

They may have had the responsibility to create states, but those states were not to be created the way they created them.

down and discuss all the problems that afflict us. The ethnic question is only one as far as I am concerned, it is only one of the basic problems which needs proper discussion because the real problem of the country is that we have never sat down to talk and it is only through that we are going to arrive at fair and reasonable conclusions, and that is outside the policies, because this is purely an intellectual exercise.

Citizen: *Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo in his life time was seen as a supporter of minority rights and he was said to have thrown his weight behind the Dina Committee which destroyed derivation as a basis for federal allocation. Would it then be correct to say that Awolowo betrayed the minorities? Or would you agree with Ojukwu that Awolowo is the "best president Nigeria never had?"*

Saro Wiwa: That description is not Ojukwu's; don't ascribe it to him, he does not have the originality to say anything so beautiful. I am not so sure that Awo was behind the Dina Commission, I doubt it, because actually I was present at the commission's conference where the report was fully discussed. Awo, never did betray the minorities. He was never that type of man, once he has done a study, a proper study, he was not a man to go back on what he has studied empirically and if you read all his books, "Path to Nigerian Freedom", (1947) "Thoughts on Nigerian constitution". There is a basic

other things, first of all, many of the elections were not free and fair and in election time all sorts of things happened I am quite sure that Awo had the broadest base of support in the country of all the politicians. It is just that there were so many intervening factors that stood in the way and if you look at the country as a whole in terms of his ideas and followers, Awo surely was more popular though he was checked out of a post he ought to have got.

Citizen: *Would you say that the minorities of the oil producing areas still deserve a better deal than they are getting now?*

Saro-Wiwa: We don't have any deal for now. What is happening now is cheating because you see a lot of harm being done to the environs of the Delta areas by the search for oil. I think this has been a terrible mistake, because when they sit down to discuss this matter of revenue allocation greed is what supercedes because nobody has really done research on what harm has been caused by the search for oil in the Delta. When they just get up and say you have 1.5%, on what basis do you come to 1.5%. It is not scientific. So long as you do not use scientific criteria, people cheat or get cheated as the case may be and I am sure that if I were sitting there I will not give 1.5% to the oil-producing areas. When you look at all the revenue allocations commission all those from the oil producing areas have always argued for more or submitted minority reports which

of course are always thrown out. The system which they are using now is so wrong and I can't sleep well in my bed when I think about it because it is all leading to waste and what is even more, it is ruining communities like my own who have nothing else to fall back to, because after you have taken the land and after you have taken away all the money that come from oil, after you've failed to build any lasting monuments and the oil gets finished; what happens to these people? And then you have used all their money to develop the other areas except their own. Something very serious is happening which we should resent as Africans because this will not happen anywhere else in any other parts of the world. It just does not happen! There are other oil-bearing areas in the world, Venezuela, Kuwait, etc. let government go and see what they are doing in the oil-producing areas of Venezuela. The Delta of the Mekong is where Nigerians are getting a lot of rice from. Thailand Rice, is got from the Mekong. The Delta of the Niger is not only belching out a lot of money it also has very great potential. All these is not being exploited, we are trying to grow wheat in the North instead of swampy rice in the Delta from which the money comes. So all these paradoxes are not acceptable to me. It doesn't seem right to me.

Citizen: *Which is the best way in which these problems can be solved, especially how can the oil producing areas get justice?*

Saro-Wiwa: I have sort of analysed this quite a lot in the past. There are several ways to do it. First of all, is the question of revenue allocation, secondly ecological damage; when the Atlantic did some harm in Victoria Island, the federal government took out 350 million Naira from the Ecological Disaster Fund. They never spent that, not even 4 million Naira on the Delta. This is immoral. What are you doing in Victoria Island? Protecting a few houses belonging to a few rich

people on Victoria Island and that Island was even reclaimed with oil money. Meanwhile, the area where gas has been flamed for over 32 years right in the middle of the village, has anybody quantified the damage this has done? They have not even spent 2 million Naira in 32 years even to educate them. You therefore have to look at the ecological damage. If you come to my home, strictly speaking, this is not a part of the Delta, purely arable land, you look at the sort of houses the Ogoni people are living, you cannot believe that this is an area



Ojukwu: Should have been executed

that has provided 40 billion Dollars to Nigeria in the past 30 years. You have to spend money to abate the harm that has been done to human, plant and animal life and that is not a small sum of money, you have to ensure that they have good houses, this is all tied to the political rights which they enjoyed, you must tie it up with their political rights because in this country if you don't have political rights, you can never have economic rights. Most of the people living in the Delta, for example in Bendel State, the Urhobo and Isoko people and the Ijaws for instance who are in the oil-producing areas when it is time to enter into the Nigerian Defence Academy, Bendel State has five people as they are doing in Nigeria,

giving people to each state, because it is one state, immediately the Yoruba people who are in five states have twenty five people, Rivers five, yet you have so many communities in all these places. This is the reason why I said that ethnic autonomy is the thing we have to base all these things on. Then there is the question of employment in the oil companies; they are not employing enough people from the Delta areas because from the very beginning, they have been based in Lagos. Lagos is the place and they tried to pander to the interest of those who control the government and they do not care for the minority people on whose land the oil is found. It has always been the same with NNPC, people from the oil bearing states have not been properly represented in the NNPC and this is going on now under Jubril Aminu; he is very serious about it because we know what point of view he normally represents and the oil companies aid the federal government in this regard; they do exactly what the federal government asks them to do or what they think will please the federal government and so they are not giving jobs to people from the oil-producing areas. They are not even doing any social work. Gulf and Shell operates in my home. Recently when Gulf wanted to award scholarship, they stupidly awarded three scholarships per state. What does that mean? It is absolutely ridiculous. Gulf pays more money for a flat in Victoria Island, for a middle employee, more money that it has paid for all land in my home where it has operated for the past 10 years. One flat for one year, it has spent more money on that than it has spent in payment for the landlords in the area where oil is exploited.

The federal government takes all royalty. It is immoral. There is no where else where royalty is taken by somebody who doesn't own the land. Where are the peasants to form tomorrow when you have taken everything and you are giving

nothing back? Most of the oil contracts are given in Lagos, while they are just bleeding the oil-producing area, sucking the blood of the people and you only need to go there to see the amount of depression that there is. It is unfair.

Citizen: One also finds the problems North and South of the country. There is even more poverty up North than even in the riverine area. Is there not a collision between the leadership in the oil-producing areas and the non oil-producing areas? To short-change the people?

Saro-Wiwa: You can understand the poverty in other non-oil producing areas. They should be poor because the things that actually bring about money are not there but you cannot explain that for areas that actually has a lot of money.

Citizen: The point is, having made 40 billion Dollars for instance from that place, there is no evidence of what money have been spent somewhere beyond the urban areas.

Saro-Wiwa: That is the second part of the argument. In the first place give free education. If that oil money was used first and foremost in equipping schools and ensuring that all the kids go to school everybody in Nigeria would have benefited. Even those who are in the more populous area would have benefited more from oil money immediately. So, I agree that is mismanagement even in the oil-producing states, though they've taken away so much from them that whatever remains there is peanuts compared with the tremendous problems that exist in those areas, because they are too enormous for the small sum of money that have been coming out to make a difference. A peasant who has a farmland in the North may be living in a poor house but he still has something, but if the oil companies have taken away the land and that peasant hasn't the land and they paid him 50 kobo for sugar cane, 40

kobo for cassava, you cannot compare the two things. You look at even the rich. They are more in the non-oil producing areas, and this should not be the case.

Citizen: What should be the people's response to the exploitation by their own leaders bearing in mind the recent Umuechem incident?

Saro-Wiwa: The situation in Rivers State is a slave situation, the people have been so brain-washed that they begin to worry about peanuts. You go to Kuwait and see how the Shieks live, the people who actually take the oil money; you cannot compare that to the house the chief of Umuechem lives in. All that the Shell Company does is to come at a time and spend about 2,000 Naira on a Chief and all those people who have never seen real money, 2,000 Naira begins to look like big money whereas it is nothing. If they want to give things to the chiefs of the areas, they should build them palaces. Why is it that non of us who can contribute is a member of the board of directors of any of the companies?

Citizen: Most readers consider your book "On a Darkling Plain" an excellent account of the civil war except for your constant reference to Biafra with a "b". Exactly what do you have against Biafra?

Saro-Wiwa: It was not a logical development, I don't like doing things that are not logical because, the argument was, you've been fortunated out of Northern Nigeria, right, you get back to Eastern Nigeria and you turn round and torture the minorities. It is illogical. That alone is enough to make the entire enterprise fall because people don't accept it.

Citizen: Minus the torturing of the minorities by the Biafrans, would you say they had a just cause?

Saro-Wiwa: Oh yes, it was very central, you couldn't suffer all that tribulation in other parts of Nigeria and take it. There is no reason for that to happen. But the mistake that

leadership made was to get back to Eastern Nigeria and practice the same thing on others. It doesn't work. As far as I am concerned that was something that destroyed it. Secondly, again the leadership exploited the common people. The leadership of Biafra was very opportunistic, and I have a lot of contempt for everything that they did because they saw that they have a very energetic people, who will listen to whatever they wanted them to do. They put them through the worst possible torture and all for what? You know, my own people were in Biafra, and I was there from the very good beginning. I saw these things, and I couldn't take it.

Citizen: One of the problems

and the Ibos from Owerri who bought land there. And even before the war, there was just so much trouble in that area because most times, these things were not just registered with the government (ministry of works) and so you do not have proper documentation on that land. You then also have farm land which was not in Port Harcourt. It was in other parts of the state, where people just go like in African traditional style and say "give me land, let me just farm on it" and he says it is okay. The man has invested a lot of money but because he doesn't have proper documentation, the successive government in Rivers State couldn't just hand over such land, because

A peasant who has a farmland in the North may be living in a poor house but he still has something, but if the oil companies have taken away the land and that peasant hasn't the land and they paid him 50 kobo for sugar cane, 40 kobo for cassava, you cannot compare the two things.

that surfaced after the war was the abandoned property issue. You were a commissioner in the Rivers State government then. What did you do to ensure that justice was done?

Saro-Wiwa: I think that justice was done at the time I was in government. All that the abandoned property edict did was to try to ensure that there would not be trouble between those who are living in houses that did not belong to them and the original owners of the houses. But there were lots of problems which I am sorry, that all those who have written on the abandoned properties have never examined this issue because there are three areas of Port Harcourt, the first is what you call Government Reservation, then you have Diobu not owned by government, it was always between the Ikwere people

sometimes you have 2 or 3 different people coming to ask for the same piece of land. I say all these advisedly because I was not in government till the end. I left government at the end of 1972, and most of the issues had not really crystallised that time. But I recall very well that during the time I was in government, this was the sort of idea that was prevalent. I did not ever, and I know quite a number of commissioners who did not touch anything that could be regarded as abandoned. There were a lot of men of honour in that government who decided to handle things the way they should be done and fortunately I also know that, shortly after the 1975 coup, the federal government, got interested in it and there was a lot of trafficking in all these things. It is also true that at the end of the war,

there were a lot of Ibos, who wanted to sell their properties themselves. It is also true that at some points, politicians decided to use this to score points and they confused the issue even more because as I have said earlier, properties do not belong to ethnic groups, properties belong to individuals. You see, people use ethnicity when it suits them and they are not honest about it.

Citizen: Governor Diette-Spiff dropped you as commissioner. What was the problem that led to that?

Saro-wiwa: Under the law, the military governor can drop any man for any reason.

Citizen: But what do you think resulted into that? Did you have any disagreement with him?

Saro-wiwa: If you are an intellectual, you are bound to have disagreements with the military government. It is unavoidable. He might have objected to the ways I put my arguments.

Citizen: Do you accept the principle of creation of states as a means of allaying the fears of the minorities?

Saro-wiwa: Yes, but what I am saying is that the states should be created on the basis of ethnic groups.

Citizen: Do you mean the about 500 ethnic groups in the country should each have their own states?

Saro-wiwa: Well, this is one of the things we have to sit down to talk and iron out. You see, it is a question of what resources do each of these groups have. Some groups have a lot of resources, though they may be very small, other groups are large, they have no resources, so we must sit down to talk about them. I don't like anybody saying we are going to have 300 states because there are 300 ethnic groups. We don't even know how many ethnic groups there are, nobody has cared to sit down and do that work. The only work I know in that regard was done by a Russian lady, and these ethnic groups are so important because they are being used all the time by politicians to cause trouble, by academics to do their study but nobody wants to look at all that now. Again people are sponsoring confusion. If you sit down and do a logical study, a purely intellectual study, you are going to get the answer. Chief Awolowo did it to a very large extent in his book "Thoughts On Nigerian Constitution".

Citizen: You said Ojukwu should have been executed; why?

Saro-wiwa: I said "he should

have", that is what the law says. That is gone now, because he is here now and nobody can do anything about it, although I still think the way he was granted pardon was spurious, it was purely political. They should not have done it. I believe that the man should go and dig a hole 80 feet under the ground and hide there.

Citizen: Do you then think that Chief Azikwe's description of Ojukwu as a confirmed coward and tyrant in contemporary history as you wrote in your book "On A Darkling Plain" is a correct assessment of the man?

Saro-wiwa: Absolutely! You need to read that well-researched and well written pamphlet where Dr. Azikwe made that statement. He said many things. In fact one of the most telling phrases he used there was his description of this generation as a "chicken hearted" generation for its inability to stand up to Ojukwu's tyranny far fear of being killed or jailed.

Citizen: How would you assess the Babangida administration in the light of his schemings, SAP, transition programme, the question of corruption, especially the imprisonment of Professor Tan David West, the allegation of corruption against former governors Adeleye of Rivers and Olabode of Ondo State and others?

Saro-wiwa: What happened to Olabode George? Can you enlighten me?

Citizen: It was alleged that he was involved in shaddy award of contracts and the purchase of two dilapidated bouts at N6m for the riverine mass transit and awarded contracts to his friends in the government house at night.

Saro-wiwa: I am just sick of the corruption stories, and that is why when I see them, I just pass over them because I believe nothing is going to happen to them and that worries me a lot. So when I saw a one page advert by friends of Olabode George, I was having a good laugh. But it is very difficult right now to



Zik and Awolowo: No love lost with Ojukwu

assess the Babangida administration, because when you are living within a system you can draw a lot of wrong conclusions, but most time, you do not even know what to make of the things and magazines. But give it a bit of time, many of the things will begin to unfold. As a thinking man, you cannot draw very rational conclusions based on the types of accusations against Adeleke in Rivers State, Princeswill in Cross River State, because you get all these things, the next governor comes, he says he did well but the people who were under him did not carry out his instructions to the letter. You do not really know what to go by and generally I think the country has accepted that honesty is not accepted in public office in Nigeria, so people get into public offices, and start building fantastic houses for themselves without bank loans. All these things are available to the government and there is nothing they can do about it.

Citizen: Some people are saying that the imprisonment of Tam David West is supposed to be a kind of a big warning from Babangida that if this can happen to David West, it will surely happen to any public officer.

Saro-wiwa: I think that this was political action taken against David West. There was an error committed but if Babangida was going to do that to all the ministers, how many will escape hanging? as Shakespeare says. He must have trodden on a number of toes and they therefore decided to "show" him.

Citizen: But looking at the proceedings, would you say that the man was actually guilty?

Saro-wiwa: It is a regretful error, he made, but I would never have taken that type of decision without the first having a recourse to the executive council and secondly, even if my boss gave me oral instructions, I would then write back and say "you said so and so on and so date, and it has been done,

please approve", and I will have something on paper.

Citizen: We noticed that there was no serious protests from the "radicals" students and David West's home base. Why?

Saro-wiwa: What was his base?

Citizen: That is the point we are trying to raise. It appears that he has no social base.

Saro-wiwa: What did Tam David West stand for?

Citizen: A social critic and anti-corruption crusader.

Saro-wiwa: You cannot be just a social critic. What are you criticising. What do you want? You have to begin to define corruption and as they say those who live in glass houses do not throw stones. But now they have shown him. When you talk of management, how do you manage \$57m? Actually it is a very sad case because here is a competent man, a man who has stood against certain things within government and then things happen to show that he is susceptible to errors like the rest of us and if you want to apply the full rigour of the law as I say "who will 'escape hanging' including those who are now judging him?"

Citizen: The question now is: given the benefit of the hindsight, consistent failures and so on, should academics and social critics serve in governments that is not their own?

Saro-wiwa: Let me explain one thing. I do not believe we can have a government that will be their own. They will always be a part of the system. But the fact that you are a social critic does not mean you are going to be a good manager, in fact most times, they don't have any management skill whatsoever, and you often find that writers write books, but it is not reflected in their personal life. So it is the same with academics whom I have found to be one of the worst managers. Look at the way they managed the universities as vice chancellors. The things they complain against in the wider society are there blooming

like tribalism, inflated contracts, fraud and financial mismanagement. These are done by people who are supposed to have great ideas. That is why I have always stated that we really have to go and look for real managers or train those who will run the government. One of the mistakes is the notion that within four years, one can learn to do the work of a minister. It is not possible, because during that four years you are just learning but the general thing in Nigeria is that before that four years, you get sacked.

Citizen: As a writer, do you think we can use literature to redress some of these problems we have?

Saro-wiwa: No! If you want to do those things you must get into



Aminu: NNPC not fair to minorities

the political arena, so that you can take the decisions of reality and not decisions of fiction. Things valid in fiction are not valid in reality.

Citizen: How would you like to be remembered, Saro Wiwa the writer or Saro Wiwa the business man?

Saro-wiwa: Not business man. I am a writer.

By Ike Okonta, Bolaji Adebisi, Aluko Akinyele, Nkechi Attoh, Samson Ojo and Clifford Amadi

States creation

Hotline Publisher blows hot**Transition programme will fail unless more states are created**

Kontagora: "North must have more states"

He gesticulates to make his points, stands up from the chair with alacrity and paces around the office. When he speaks, his voice is harsh and insistent. He must be heard, to correct the "one way traffic of information and subsequent imposition of views that have become the established pattern in this country." The publisher of *Hotline Magazine*, Alhaji Hassan Sani, the *Magajin Rafin* Kontagora remains the most controversial publisher north of the Niger. He thrives on controversy. He is the only self confessed member of the Kaduna Mafia and has no apologies to offer for the so called northern hegemony. His obsession with promoting the development of the northern states is palpable in his stand on national issues. He has added the creation of states to the long list of causes he champions on behalf of "his people".

The fad in the past few months is the creation of states and Hassan will not let other agitators for this cause out do his "people." "I have learnt from experience not to dismiss rumours. I have heard rumours about the creation of nine additional states,

five in the north and four in the south. I say it is unfair. The northern states should have eight and the south four. The southerners always get what they want because they have the media in their pockets and can make noise. So their views become that of the whole country. Why?"

However those Nigerians who are not infected with the state creation virus consider the demand out of place now that the transition programme has taken off in full swing. Creation of states can only upset the electoral landscape since elections will have to be deferred in these states. Where are the resources for the initial take off going to come from? What benefit will be derived from creating unviable states?

The *Magajin Rafi* does not subscribe to this school of thought. He stamps his feet on the lush red carpet "What do you mean by viability? If you want to base creation of states on viability why was Katsina State created? For all I know it has only the Steel Rolling Mill and plenty of land for the encroaching desert at the time it was created out of Kaduna State. But today there is visible development in that area. If viability is of crucial consideration Rivers State with its creeks and impenetrable areas would not have been created but the state has recorded remarkable progress in its backward riverine fishing communities. So why shouldn't Zamfara State be created out of Sokoto State? It has industries, good road links, railway network, fertile land and the Bakalori dam. What base motives can anyone have to prevent the creation of Zamfara State when you can create Rivers and Katsina States? As for your anxiety about the transition, the programme will fail unless more states are created. Creation of states will ensure stability since more homogeneous states will emerge out of the exercise. I am convinced that creation of states will usher in a stable Third Republic by reducing ethnic and religious problems to the minimum. This is precisely what you need for the success of the Third Republic."

Not taken in by this argument I made it clear that there is still some unease about the timing of the creation of more states. Why not concentrate on the transition programme which includes a national population census that promises to be an authentic and credible one. Perhaps based on the outcome of the census more states could be created in future. Hassan was visibly itching to respond as his restless hands tinkered with odd items scattered

on the table. "You theoreticians place too much emphasis on the census without a detailed examination of its implication on the transition programme. I want you to understand that the census will bring chaos if states are not created. What do you think will happen when citizens of Kano State with twelve million people, sufficient land and numerous industries discover that a mini enclave of 4 million people has a state of its own; gets the same number of places allocated to it in federal institutions like the Nigerian Defence Academy? Why should populous states like Sokoto, Kano, and Borno get the same allocation with Rivers, Niger or Cross Rivers? I say it is unfair because it amounts to under representation which should be promptly corrected if we want stability. Kano deserves two or three additional states. Others should also be created from Gongola, Kwara, Sokoto, Borno and Bauchi.



Aikhomu: Chairman boundary commission

President Babangida is committed to ensuring that the Third Republic is built on solid foundations. He has, more than any other leader we have had demonstrated his understanding of the psychology of Nigerians. A realist and a fearless leader, he knows when it is impossible to sweep agitation for creation of states under the carpet. This is one such moment. And he should not succumb to the pressures from any quarters to delay this imperative need for additional states."

An indigene of Niger State, Hassan is not advocating creation of additional state from Niger and why? "The

...The southerners always get what they want because they have the media in their pockets and can make noise. So their views become that of the whole country. Why?"

demand does not exist but because I am a Nigerian to the core, I worry about the whole country. That is why I speak out for my people whose voices have been drowned by the incessant clamour of those who think only of themselves. If Kano State which has a small population of two million and scanty land, is demanding an additional state why not Borno with 6.8 million people and the largest land mass of any state in the federation?"

Hassan believes he is the voice of the voiceless and he singles out the case for the creation of Zamfara state as one that deserves special attention." Sokoto state as from which Zamfara state must be created has land area of 42,850 square kilometres. The proposed Zamfara state would have twelve local governments, new Sokoto

fourteen and Kebbi eleven. With these new states the pace of development will be hastened. So committed are the people of this proposed Zamfara state to the progress of the area that they could raise funds through communal efforts help develop their state."

The problem of additional overhead administrative cost for the new states is not in Hassan's view a cause for worry. According to him "sole administrators and Directors General could be appointed to run the states as an interim measure. Later these states conduct elections, so money is not the problem."

It was apparent during the course of this encounter with the *Magajin Rafi* that the man will never run out of steam. Born in Kontagora in 1948 Hassan attended Kontagora and Kaduna Local Education Authority primary schools before proceeding to Government College Bida in 1963. He graduated from Bayero University in 1976 to begin a career in the private sector. Asked why he did not join the civil service, Hassan laughed heartily and asked another question in answer to the previous one. "Do I look like someone who will work in a corrupt system? Look the civil service is a rotten system that stifles one's initiatives and I am not the type of person who will witness injustice and close my eyes. Never! I will rather talk and get sacked." Did Hassan try working in the private sector rather than work for himself? The prompt answer was no, "No. I decided to deal in other things such as controversy. It certainly is paying dividend because I can say what I like when I like without mincing words. Thank God for free speech."

For his candid albeit tactless posture and his philanthropy Hassan's office is a bee hive of activities, a meeting point for a diverse group. Soccer enthusiasts come and go. Journalists, politicians, bureaucrats converge in the office exchanging views or just relaxing.

By Bilkius Yusuf

Zambia

Kaunda walks a tight rope

The president does not have just the multiparty elections in October to worry about. Within his ruling party, UNIP, his leadership is being challenged

Weeks to the congress of the ruling United National Independence Party, UNIP, the first since President Kenneth Kaunda last September ended one-party rule in Zambia, radio and television stations have been broadcasting campaign songs, urging Zambians to "work for KK."

Before last September, Zambians needed no urging to support the president. One-party traditions were very strong then. But today President Kaunda is walking a very tight political rope. Last month his motorcade was petted with garbage when he arrived at an international match in the capital. His political rival, Mr. Frederic Chiluba, leader of the main opposition Movement for Multiparty Democracy, MMD, was given a routing cheer.

But that should not be his immediate worry. His leadership of UNIP is being challenged at its ongoing congress, which opened August 7 in the northern town of Kabwe. The challenger is Mr. Enoch Kavindele, a younger man and very flamboyant businessman. Himself a senior member of UNIP's central committee, Mr. Kavindele said last week that he was "extremely confident that come next week (this week) this time I'll be president of UNIP."

He said that Zambian youth were restless and President Kaunda's dominance of the party was pushing it into oblivion. He was studding against the president "to improve our chances of winning the general elections in October." According to the challenger, he represents "an idea whose time has

come."

President Kaunda is just as confident of retaining UNIP's leadership, but he said if he lost he would go back home to fight for the chairmanship of the local UNIP and from there fight his way back to the top!

Even within the ranks of UNIP there is a clear preference for a new team other than the one which has been around for the past 30 years. One of the over 6,000 delegates in Kabwe put it this way: "People are expecting a new team that will spearhead UNIP's challenge against the opposition, more younger people, not just in the sense of age but people with a different dimension, direction, emphasis and a new enthusiasm."

Last week it was clear that most of the delegates did not consider Mr. Kavindele a man to lead UNIP. One report said he was the subject of much derision, "a very lonely man." Not finding one, they decided to back the old horse. Even younger UNIP members were saying Mr. Kaunda was the only man to lead



Kaunda, opposition at last

the party to victory at the polls.

The conclusion many observers are drawing from all this is that the congress' theme of "adapt and survive" and President Kaunda's appeal to party members to accept reform are not meant to be believed. The party is reluctant to change, one observer said.

However, it is confirmed that some old guards would drop out of the scene after the congress. The 68-year old secretary-general has said he would not try to keep his post. So have a number of others said, who have been around for the last 30 years.

By Tawey Zakka
with agency reports

The Comoros

Coup in the ocean

A judicial coup may sound strange, but the Comoros' supreme court recently very nearly pulled off one

It must have been a confident President Said Mohammed Djohar who packed his holiday bag and left Moroni, the capital of this four-island archipelago on the weekend of August 3. Any serious threat to his government could only come from the army, but he has the full support of the Comoros' armed forces. Only recently the president appointed a French colonel to head the armed forces. Besides, he has the backing of the French government.

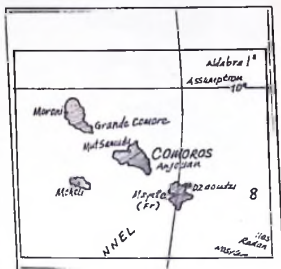
So President Djohar took off on a weekend vacation, satisfied he had his country in his pocket. But his country's supreme court had a different idea. In the morning of Saturday August 3, Abass Yousif, a businessman, received a phone call from the supreme court asking him to broadcast an "important declaration" about the president over his *Radio Tropicque*. He said he set up the private radio station to "help the cause of democracy," but it had been out of action for a while.

The supreme court declaration said President Djohar had been removed and the supreme court President Ibrahim Ahmed Halidi appointed acting Federal President. Halidi and his eight colleagues on the supreme court bench charged President Djohar with negligence and insanity. Specifically, they charged him with the "break-up of the country's territorial integrity and destruction of its unity."

Trumped-up charges? The president is 84, but people who saw him that weekend said they saw no evidence of illness and the president was in perfect control of his senses. Besides, they said that the constitution did not give the supreme court impeachment

powers. So Halidi and his colleagues had acted unconstitutionally.

President Djohar rushed back to the capital and promptly ran them in. Demonstrations followed but not all of them in support of the government. In fact, security forces shot at school children protesting against the government, injuring four of them. The president himself failed to show up at a rally of a major partner in his coalition government, a sign that he was



Island of Comoros

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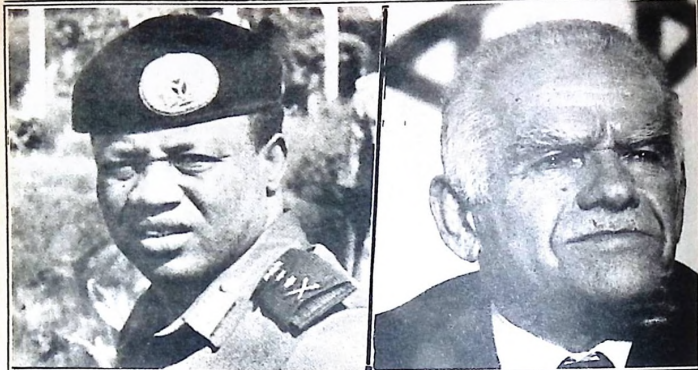
having some problems. Indeed, some coalition parties had even gone so far as to demand a change of the government or at least that some members be removed.

It is true that the territorial integrity of the Comoros is being undermined. From the very beginning, the island of Mayotte has refused to be part of independent Comoros, preferring to remain French. Recently, Moheli, the tiniest of the four islands that make up this Indian Ocean country of 292,000 people, declared itself an independent state. The islanders have rejected the authorities, deposed the governor and put up

their own flag.

At the moment, President Djohar would seem to have the situation well in hand. As one foreign news correspondent said: "It looks like things are going to settle down." They surely have and the president is back in the saddle. In the beginning, he no doubt was looking over his shoulders to see what the South African government, a major aid donor and investor in the Comoros' tourism industry, was doing. It has remained silent so far. So Djohar can sit back and relax his frayed nerves — for now, at least.

By Tawey Zakka
and agency report



Babangida and Shamir: *New ties*

Israel/Nigeria relations

Mending fences?

Government announces the restoration of ties with Israel and sends ripples through political and religious circles

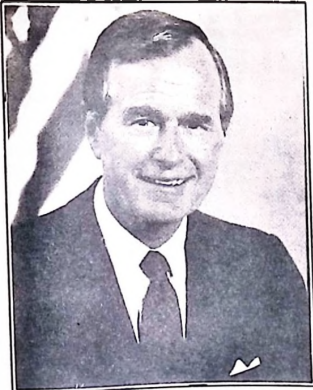
Probably among the first Nigerians, as it were, to learn of the Federal Government's decision to initiate the restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel are the journalists who accompanied the Minister of External Affairs, Ike Nwachukwu, on the visit that they had been told was to take the minister to Zaire and a few other

African countries. Thousands of feet in the air and one hour after take off from the Murtala Muhammad International Airport, Lagos, the second-time-around minister told the astonished journalists that "there is no secrecy in my mission. Africa cannot allow itself to be left out in the current efforts to bring peace to the Middle East and other parts of the world."

The policy turn-about described by Nwachukwu, a retired army

general, as a wedding between Nigeria and Israel, is based on what he said is Nigeria's desire not to be left out of getting Africa back into the "mainstream of world politics."

Other Nigerians first learnt of General Nwachukwu's furtive trip last Monday from the news bulletin of the British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC. The radio station said emphatically that the minister was in Israel, but that Nigerians did not know he was there. It went on to



Bush: getting more friends for Israel

say that the issue of Nigeria restoring diplomatic ties with Israel is so sensitive that the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, FRCN, a government-owned federal radio station, had failed to mention it. It identified religion as the "sensitive" factor that informed the decision to shield advanced information about the trip from Nigerians.

On Tuesday, Nigerians were again taken aback by the announcement, in Jerusalem, by Nwachukwu that, in effect, Nigeria had opened talks with the Israelis on re-opening ties that was broken 18 years ago, after holding talks with his counterpart, David Levy. The minister also extended an invitation to Levy to visit Nigeria. "When Levy comes" Nwachukwu said, "we will cross the T's and dot the I's."

Nigeria, along with the rest of Africa, broke off diplomatic ties with Israel in 1973 as agreed by the Organisation of African Unity, OAU, following Israeli annexation of and occupation of Arab lands. Since then, especially after the 1977 signing of a "peace" accord between Egypt and Israel arranged by then

President Jimmy Carter of the US, there have been clamour from the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, for the restoration of relations with Israel which was first established in 1963 when Nigeria attained republican status.

The controversy reached a climax in 1984 when the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero and the Ooni of Ife, Oba Sijuade Okunade were suspended from office for six months when it was discovered that they had visited Israel on their own.

Equally in 1988, the then minister of external affairs, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, was dropped in a cabinet re-shuffle after it came to light that he had held meetings with his Israeli counterpart.

President Ibrahim Babangida himself gave a strong indication of what would happen in 1989 on a visit to Accra, Ghana when he hinted that restoring ties with Israel was a matter of time. The same year, the president was widely reported to have held talks with Israeli President Chiam Herzog at the funeral of the late Japanese Emperor Hirohito. At the time, the official media gave the impression that it was a chance meeting and nothing more.

Nwachukwu's announcement clearly suggested that government has merely been bidding its time before taking the final step. While on an official visit to Oyo State last week, President Babangida, himself, told reporters in effect that Nigeria could not afford to continue ignoring Israel. "As the most important black nation on earth", he said, "Nigeria must

keep pace with development in international relations". He said the decision to renew ties has nothing to do with religion and that the two nations have had contacts at various levels.

The contacts referred to by the president indeed date back to pre-independence days. In 1958 late Chief Chief Akin Deko, then Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources led a delegation of officials of Western Nigeria to Israel. This visit led to the establishment of joint ventures between the Western Nigeria government and Israel in 1959, among them Nigeria Water Resources Development Company and Nigersol Construction Company. The Eastern Nigerian government led by Dr. Michael Okpara followed suit a few months later and following negotiations with the Israeli government, two joint ventures, Eastern Nigeria Construction and Furniture Company and Nigeria Water Planning and Construction Company were established in the region.

When the country attained independence in October 1960 this informal commercial relationship was given an official seal at the Federal level. The Tafawa Balewale NPC government gave the go-ahead for Israel to open its embassy in Lagos in October. Interestingly though, Nigeria did not make any move to establish a diplomatic mission in Tel Aviv. Efforts by Dr. Michael Okpara, premier of the Eastern region to correct this "anomaly" was politely rebuffed. Indeed, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto and leader of the Northern Peoples' Congress, NPC, was known to have remarked, when questioned on the reluctance of Nigeria to open an embassy in Tel Aviv, thus, "to my mind it (Israel) does not exist".

In spite of the Sardauna, however, business links with Israel prospered. Most Nigerians have heard of such companies as Afro-Continental, Dizengoff, RCC,

Solei Bonch and Nicon Noga Hilton, Abuja. Between them and several others, they represent a burgeoning Israeli presence in the country's economy.

Reactions to the renewal of ties have been mixed. Although President Babangida has tried to play down the religious factor, the reactions have tended to be a long religious lines with Christians expressing support and Muslims being opposed. Dr. Godfrey Otubu, an



Gumi: silent protest

executive member of Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, and Baba Aladura of the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim, told *Citizen* "We in CAN are particularly pleased because this is what we have been clamouring for. It is good news to every Christian, and indeed all well-meaning Nigerians".

Otubu's views were shared by Archbishop Olunmimi Okogie, the President of CAN. "If Christians want to go on holy pilgrimage", he told *Citizen*, "they cannot go to these

It is long overdue — Okogie

Archbishop Olunmimi Okogie, president of Christian Association of Nigeria; CAN, spoke to *Citizen* at Ijebu-Ode where he was attending a provincial episcopal conference.

Citizen: CAN has always held the view that Nigeria should normalise diplomatic relations with Israel. Now that there are strong indications that this is about to happen, how do you feel?

Okogie: It (normalisation of diplomatic relations with Israel) is long overdue and it's also not surprising we hear that the government, at long last, is now planning to normalise relationship between Nigeria and Israel. If the Israelis can stay and work in Nigeria without any immigration cover, I don't see how (why) Nigerians cannot be allowed to go to Israel or travel there and come back. So there must be some hanky-panky going on somewhere because the Israelis have companies here in the country that do

big jobs most of which are federal government jobs. Under whose cover are they (the Israelis) operating? Whereas Nigerians cannot travel there (because) we have no diplomatic relations with them. So, I don't really see how we, Nigerians can be fooling ourselves by saying "we have no diplomatic relations with this nation therefore we cannot..." when the people (Israelis) are here, they are doing big jobs. And this is the hue and cry of nearly everybody in the country. If Christians want to go on holy pilgrimage, they cannot go to these holy places because the country has no diplomatic relations with Israel. Now, what we normally do is, they (government) just give you a travelling certificate (where) you just list out your name and you go (to Israel) just for some time, may be for a duration of two weeks, ten days (or) at times eight days. This is not proper, you can't go there and trade but they can come here and trade. So who is cheating who? So you see, a

lot of things in this country are being done under religious cover because they don't want to offend those at the corridors of power, those who feel the country belong to them. Because they don't want to offend them, so they want to offend the silent minority. That is what is happening.

Citizen: During the Organisation of Islamic Countries, OIC, debate in 1986, when Nigeria was said to have joined the OIC, the issue of normalisation of diplomatic relation with Israel came up as a Christian demand and precondition for Nigeria's membership of OIC. Now that your demand is being met would you be opposed to Nigeria's full membership of OIC as a way of pacifying the Muslims?

Okogie: you see, that (normalisation of relations) has nothing whatsoever to do with OIC. Normalisation of diplomatic relations with Israel and (the issue of Nigeria's membership of) OIC are two different things, two parallel lines that can never meet. People

who are for OIC, do not know the charter of OIC, because if they do, they will know that Nigeria can never be a member of the OIC because if you look at the section (of the charter) that deals with membership, it says that the nation must be an Islamic state. Nigeria is never an Islamic state, neither is it a Christian state. We have three different religions. We have traditional religionists, Muslims and Christians. So I think the two issues are parallel lines that can never meet. The (supporters of OIC) are only looking for a way to force people to admit that Nigeria should be a full fledged member of OIC. It is only those who have no head, those who do not know what OIC stands for that will say yes... even some of my Muslim friends they themselves... you look around, sample opinion (and) they will tell you, even Muslims (will ask) "what is it? We have been living peacefully, we have been doing this, nobody cares whether you are Muslim or Christian, we

holy places because the country has no diplomatic relations with Israel"

Many people like Olobu and Okogie indeed see the renewal of ties as victory for CAN. Citizen learnt that at a recent MAMSER-brokered inter-faith meeting to achieve religious harmony, a retired army general and a leading supporter of CAN, threatened Muslims and said unprintable things against the person of President Babangida whom he accused of trying to

intermarry and live together, why do you now want to separate us?"

Citizen: The Secretary of Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Dr. Lateef Adegbite, has said that it would be premature to normalise diplomatic relations with Israel now, when outstanding issues such as the occupation of Arab lands by Israel and an independent homeland for the Palestinians remain unresolved. What is your reaction to this?

Okogie: As far as I'm concerned, Adegbite is not somebody the Islamic world should reckon with because he makes statements that are not even backed by those he thinks he is supporting. That is number one. Secondly, you will see that this man is only crying over a split milk. As I told you earlier on, the OIC has nothing to do with normalisation of relations with Israel because we had this (relation) before all of a sudden they cut it off. And they cut it off not because of the Palestinians, if you follow the history properly. Misplacement of priority (is) exactly what Adegbite is doing because this is something he was against, you go through all his statements right from the

Citizen. August 12, 1991

"If Christians want to go on holy pilgrimage they cannot go to these holy places because the country has no diplomatic relations with Israel".

Islamise Nigeria in order to secure Hausa/Fulani support. He reportedly said the country cannot know peace so long as government discriminated against Christians.

Such discrimination, other Christians at the meeting said, included governments refusal to renew ties with Israel and its refusal to return the denominational

OIC parley that we all engaged in. This was one of the things, he doesn't want because he felt that by not having diplomatic relations with Israel, they will be holding the Christians to ransom provided they (Muslims) can go to Jeddah. **Citizen:** So, Dr. Adegbite has always supported the normalisation of relations with Israel?

Okogie: That's it, right from the word go. I believe so. He has been doing it (supporting Israel) so this one he is saying now is just red-herring. He has no argument, no foundation and no basis (for his claim). **Citizen:** Of course sir, we

Egypt and other African countries, have long resumed relations with Israel preclude the sovereign right of Nigeria to insist on its own condition being met before it resumes relations with Israel?

Okogie: Look, Nigeria is only one out of how many nations? So whether Nigeria is still holding its reins or not, those who want to go back, the sensible nations and leaders among them, have done it (gone back) because it's not paying them economically, morally or otherwise. Their nation is the one losing. This is just like us. We are losing but we still have these

So who is losing? Why bring them (Israelis) in secretly then you begin to say "well we haven't got diplomatic relations with Israel, so no Israelite should come in."

know that Nigeria, like other African countries, was urged to sever diplomatic relations with Israel because Israel occupied some Egyptian territories in 1973 during the Yomkippur war. But since then other issues have come up the resolution of which have now been made a precondition for resumption of relations. Now, does the fact that

Israelis working and doing federal government projects that could have probably been better done by Nigerians. So who is losing? Why bring them (Israelis) in secretly then you begin to say "well we haven't got diplomatic relations with Israel, so no Israelite should come in." If you, as a private individual want to bring them in, they will not allow it. But the

government can. So who is cheating who? And who is the government if not the people? You see the problem with us in this country is that we don't know our rights. The moment Nigerians will wake up to demand their right that is the moment there will be more coups in this country I can assure you of that. There will be no more coup because before you step in, they (the people) will tell you, sorry my friend that is not your right, it's our own business. **Citizen:** Finally sir, since normalisation of relations with Israel, presupposes a deepening of Nigeria's involvement in resolution of the Middle East crisis, what will be your advice to government on how best to resolve the Middle East crisis particularly as regards the issues of occupied Arab lands and an independent homeland for Palestinians?

Okogie: I am not a politician. If I were one, then I would know what to tell you. I am not. If it has to do with religion, yes but.... **Citizen:** But it has a tinge of religion.

Okogie: To me, it's more of politics than anything (else).

schools taken over by government in General Gowon's days.

Almost immediately after this meeting, violence erupted in Langtang, home of General Domkat Bali, and a severe critic of the president. The Christian majority population in the town and the surrounding areas chased out its Muslim population, destroying their property. About 3,000 of them fled to Jos and Wase for safety.

An observer of the political scene who declined attribution, said this episode, plus recent criticism of the president by General Bali in a Lagos based magazine, may have persuaded him to take the final step in renewing ties with Israel.

For some Muslim leaders, the renewal could not have been more disastrous. A re-knowned Islamic

scholar in Kaduna, Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi, was emphatic in his opposition to the renewal of ties. "We certainly don't support the restoration of relations with Israel, but we don't know what the government means." Sheikh Gumi then resorted to Hausa. "Allah shi saukake," he said meaning May Allah have mercy.

But if Sheikh Gumi's position is that of mute protest, that of Sheikh Abubakar Tureta, an Islamic scholar of renown in Kaduna left no room for ambiguity. "As Muslims", he said, "the government has humiliated and violated our rights. It is better for us to be driven away from this country willingly than have Israel back. The government does not feed us and

we want to pursue our religion in peace without the presence of someone whom Allah has told us would perpetually seek to divide and destroy us."

He told *Citizen* that there is a looming danger for us "Israel is quite aware of the religious divide on this issue in Nigeria and will seek to exploit it, as it does in Lebanon." He however does not expect the Arabs to raise hell over this, since many of them fought on the same side as Israel during the American war in the Gulf.

The Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria, MSS, also sees the thawing in relations with Israel purely in religious terms. A statement by its national president, Malam Ahyu Abubakar Tanko, said Muslims "do not find any logical or sensible

It is good — Ray Ekpu

Mr. Ray Ekpu is deputy president general, Nigeria-Israeli Association.

Citizen: What is the position of the Nigerian Israeli Association on Major General Ike Nwachukwu's (rtd) visit to Israel.

Ekpu: The position of the Nigeria/Israeli Association has always been that the issues for which we severed diplomatic relations with Israel have been overtaken by events. In fact, I thought that soon after Egypt, the major protagonist in the Arab-Israeli conflict had made peace with Israel, the others should have made peace with Israel and the PLO even recognised Israel and expressed its desire to make peace. I think that we should have

followed suit. The question of Israeli business with South Africa wasn't to me even a strong point in the first instance. Much as we deplore business links with South Africa we should recognise that other countries such as Britain and America have been in the forefront. They have more massive investment in South Africa. They have been foremost in sustaining the racist regime. It is good that Nigeria has come round I think it would help the cause of peace in that region. In fact, it would help improve Nigeria's relationship with Israel and bring some benefits in the area of the economy. You know the Israeli people have a highly technological culture. They turned the desert to

fertile land. I think they would bring a lot of benefits to agricultural sector. The development is going to be mutually beneficial and it is a welcome decision.

Citizen: What do you think would be the implication of the foreign minister's visit for the wholesomeness of this nation if the religion complexion of Israel is taken into consideration?
Ekpu: I don't know why religion was made a big issue because Israel is not a strong Christian nation. Judaism is the predominant religion in the country, then you have Muslims as well as Christians. So, it is just out of fear and undue suspicion. Nigerians have even, despite the severance of relations. Nigerians visit Israel regularly, going there as

pilgrims. When they come back they add J.P to their titles — Jerusalem Pilgrim. So it would give Christians a sense of fulfilment that they can have more access to Jerusalem, now that we would have an embassy there. But I don't think we should make a fetish out of that.

Citizen: What happened to the resolution adopted at a seminar your association held last September at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism on 'Why Nigeria should restore Diplomatic Relations with Israel?'

Ekpu: But we issued a communique.

Citizen: I know there was a communique, but the president general (Dabo) said you were going to take the resolutions to Dodan Barracks. What happened thereafter?



Sijazade and Dayero: reprimanded for visiting Israel in 1984

reasons" for normalising ties with the Zionist state. It accused government of double standards.

"We still maintain strictures against South Africa asking it to repeal laws and release political prisoners but

go ahead to embrace the more guilty Zionist state.

The MSS said that it "is absurd" and called on the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki to take up the issue with the government and described the renewal of ties as the "biggest test for the Sultan."

The statement said that it would be a disservice to the nation for the government to allow itself to be stamped into restoring ties with Israel even though "we are aware that a country trapped in the net of foreign debt cannot have anything for free."

Alhaji Lateef Adegbite, secretary-general of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, said the decision of the government was premature. He

Ekpu: I don't know what happened, but there must be all kinds of inputs before this kind of decision was arrived at. I will not like to claim that it is the Nigerian-Israeli Association that was responsible. There were all sorts of inputs from business sector, the religious sector, the political angle, international community

and so on. And one thinks the result is an aggregate of the inputs from the various quarters.

Citizen: Could you be more specific about the inputs? From the N.I.A for example?

Ekpu: How do you mean? Citizen: I know you were trying to raise consciousness and all that stuff but what about the Dodan Barracks angle?

Ekpu: We weren't going there to lobby. We just made our views known like any other group in the country. I mean Christians have spoken on this same issue. Muslims have spoken, politicians have spoken, academics — they have also made their views

known just as journalist have also spoken.

Citizen: One is aware that the Nigerian — Israeli Association was at one time involved in getting one million Nigerians to sign a sort of representation to Dodan Barracks on why Nigeria should restore diplomatic channels with Israel. When was the representation made and what was the feedback like from the presidency?

Ekpu: When the president-general comes, you ask him.

Citizen: But you are his deputy.

Ekpu: I know but the president should be the one to speak on that issue.

Citizen: Where you not part of the delegation?

Ekpu: I won't tell you.

Citizen: Well, last question. Yesterday you were at Chief Dabo's house to celebrate...

Ekpu: What!

Citizen: Not so?

Ekpu: Me?

Citizen: Yes.

Ekpu: You are lying

Citizen: I am not lying

Ekpu: At Chief Dabo's house? Was there a celebration there?

Citizen: I know there was a celebration and a reliable source spotted you at the occasion.

Ekpu: The person doesn't recognise me.

Citizen: With Jola Ogunbusi?

Ekpu: Oh! Not me.... You see how stories spread. I did not go to Dabo's house. I mean, I didn't even know that there was a celebration. He was supposed to have travelled to Abuja yesterday for the Nigerian Guild of Editors conference and I assumed that he had travelled. I didn't go to his house at all. The person who claimed to have seen me doesn't recognise me.



Ekpu

By Yinka Tella



Okogie: Long overdue

said ties with Israel could only be considered when Israel frees Arab lands and allowed an independent home for the Palestinians.

However, not all observers see the development from a religious perspective. Said Abubakar Hassan Fulata, a lecturer

in Sociology, ABU, Zaria, "Some opportunistic leaders of certain Christian groups are already jubilating. This I cannot understand, since Israel is not a Christian nation. It is a Jewish nation and is hostile to Christianity as it is to Islam. Many Palestinian Arabs are actually Christians, but the

Israelis do not distinguish between the two."

He told *Citizen* that there is a looming danger for us. "Israel is quite aware of the religious divide on this issue in Nigeria and will seek to exploit it, as it does in Lebanon." He however does not expect the Arabs to raise hell over this, since many of them fought on the same side as Israel during the American war in the Gulf.

Dr. Mahmoud Yahaya, a retired diplomat and a commentator on international affairs, is of the view that since it was the OAU that broke off diplomatic ties with Israel, Nigeria should have asked the body to decide on the matter.

He also said that Nigeria should have waited for the outcome of the conference on the Middle East scheduled for October to determine the seriousness of Israel.

For Dr. Tanimu Abubakar of the Department of English, ABU, Zaria and chairman of ASUU, ABU branch, the issue is that of violation

May Babangida reign for ever — Dabo

So delighted was Chief Godwin Dabo Adzuana the President General of Nigeria — Israeli Association, NIA with news that diplomatic ties will soon be restored with Israel that he described it as "the greatest move in Nigeria's contemporary foreign policy." For the past four years the association has constituted itself into a powerful pro-Jewish lobby to bring isolated Israel back to Nigeria. Other executives of NIA are Chief John Edozie, the National Legal Adviser, Mr. Ray Ekpu and Professor J. A. Shindi of University of Jos as

deputy Presidents General.

Dabo told *Citizen* he has 41 reasons why Nigeria must restore diplomatic relations with Israel but when pressed he declined to state these reasons "I am reserving them for the press conference I am going to address on Tuesday August 20, at NUJ Lighthouse at 10 O'clock." When asked for his view on why president Babangida as the current OAU Chairman chose this moment to restore diplomatic ties with Israel, Dabo reeled with laughter. "Babangida is a realistic leader, his being OAU

Chairman should not deter him from doing the right thing. Egypt tabled

the case of Israeli occupation of its land to the OAU in 1973, which was why the Organisation broke diplomatic ties with Israel. Today, Israel and Egypt are the best of friends having restored their ties without consulting the OAU. Infact other African countries like Zaire, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroun and even Ethiopia where the OAU

secretariat is based has since restored ties. "What was the 'giant of Africa



Dabo: God bless Babangida

of Nigeria's principled opposition to racism and oppression. Israel is still a Zionist state, does not talk to the PLO and does not concede the Palestinians' right to self-determination. The action, he told *Citizen* is a

position in the Middle East.

He said that when the US lifted sanctions against South Africa, Nigeria described the action as "hasty," since South Africa has not yet dismantled apartheid.



Nwachukwu: Diplomacy by stealth

Liman Ciroma, sees the issue from the perspective of a changing world in which it is sometimes dangerous not to move with the times. He described the government move as

Dr. Ibrahim Tahir, the Talban Bauchi sees some dangers in the renewal of ties, and the leading sociologist and former university don told *Citizen* that Israel might be tempted to start manipulating the affairs of Nigeria when it re-enters.

disgrace to the OAU. Nigeria, he said, has not only become the first African frontline state to re-establish relations with Israel though only two weeks ago we reaffirmed our policy of isolating South Africa, but is now seen to encourage Israel's intransigent

Dr. Abubakar asked: "How then do we describe Nigeria's resumption of ties in the context of the present Middle East peace efforts? Clearly, he said, Nigeria's action was taken to please the US.

However, a former secretary to the federal government, Malam

waiting for?" Dabo wanted to know. He is convinced that Nigeria will benefit immensely from interaction with Israeli expertise in construction and agriculture.

But then Israeli companies have been operating in Nigeria even when diplomatic relations were severed? Dabo hastily interjected, "you will see the difference when ties are restored. Now the annual turnover of these companies is 5 billion Naira but as soon as ties are restored my association will establish an Israeli - Nigeria Chamber of Commerce and an Agricultural Development Bank with 150 million Naira share capital. This bank which

will have technical partners from Israel and the United States will grant loans for agricultural development."

On the Palestinian cause and the proposed Middle East Conference, Dabo was less articulate. He dismissed it with a wave of the hand and justified Israel's expansionist policies on the prophecies contained in the scriptures. He also made it clear that it was not his business if you did not believe in the scripture. "Look God promised the Israelites thousands of years back that they will return from exile to occupy their homeland and he has kept that covenant. So what is your problem?" he asked, adopting a defensive

tone. But doesn't he think the Palestinians deserve an independent state? Dabo veered off course and said the Tiv people originally came from the Middle East, they are Jews. Israel will wax stronger. It has come to stay."

The Chief then disclosed that he was appointed as the executive chairman of Benue State Agricultural Development and plans to turn his state into Nigeria's food basket with Israeli agricultural expertise. He then embarked on a praise singing stint for president Babangida, whom he described as the "Abraham Lincoln" of Nigeria. "He is the greatest leader this country ever produced.

The courageous and patriotic action he has taken in the national interest will ensure that his name is written in gold in the annals of Nigerian history." Dabo also added a spirited defence of the Structural Adjustment Programme by describing it as the greatest foundation for future economic development and long term survival of Nigeria. "In Tiv mythology the efficacious medicine is bitter but it cures - SAP is that medicine."

Then Dabo delivered the bomb shell "General Babangida should stay beyond 1992 because he has done for this country what no leader has ever done or will ever do!"

By Bilikisu Yusu

"right" in that our economy is at the mercy of the West, which is Israel's friend. "In the final analysis", he said, it is only a matter of facing up to reality of the a new world order that is dominated by America".

The first civilian governor of Kaduna State, Alhaji Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa, sees it from the opposite end. He said that the government of President Babangida not only risks alienating its biggest constituency, but that it has by so doing offended progressive forces.

Archbishop Peter Jatau of the Kaduna diocese shared Malam Liman Ciroma's views that renewing ties was the

logic of the times. He told *Citizen* in Kaduna that Israel is a very hard-working country and could help us in the field of agriculture. He said

"You say you recognise the Palestinians but at the same time you recognise an oppressive establishment that does not recognise the existence of Palestinians"

that people in the eastern and western parts of the country have benefitted from Israeli expertise.

Bashir Kurfi, a lecturer at ABU's Institute of Administration, told *Citizen* that the argument is purely in line with the present neo-colonial

agenda and blackmail going on all over the world.

To him the parlous state of Nigeria's economy might not be

unconnected with the decision to renew ties with the Zionists. He said, "considering the Nigerian economy today — there is the imposed SAP, poverty, and the government is going into this debt re-scheduling the west might have

It is a singular disaster — Sheikha Tureta

The Qur'an is very clear on this. Allah said that the Jews and Christians would never accommodate a Muslim until he completely subjugated and surrendered himself to their faith and doctrines. However, if a Muslim, after knowing this still chooses to succumb to their creed, he would not have Allah's protection and love. It is a remarkable irony that while a Christian, Yakubu Gowon, who had seen the Jews for what they are and severed relations with them, a Muslim would succumb to them.

Babangida is trying to put up a house in collaboration with rattlesnakes or cobras, a task which bodes ill-wind for anyone to undertake. Politically, the Jews have a long history. We can glean from the old and new testaments of the Bible that no set of people

persecuted and antagonised the prophets of Allah more than the Jews. When the Prophet Muhammad stayed in Medina, he made a pact with the Jews on unity, co-existence and a clear understanding that the Holy City belonged to Muslims and the Jews, therefore it was imperative that they equally defend it from attacks of pagan tribes in Mecca. In less than six years, the Jews broke the pact.

Consequently, they had to leave for Palestine where Caliph Umar had to send them away for treachery. They dispersed to Europe and America and everywhere leaving a trail of bad-blood. In consequences,

they devised a plan which would lead to their dividing and ruling the world. Hitler had to once again disperse them for activities designed to undermine and dispose of the indigenous Europeans.

Nigeria as a solid country, a super-power in Africa, respected and admired as a leader, should know better than to open up relations with a

country and a people that has created and spread cancer of subversion. Because the Jews have systematically destroyed and ravaged Europe, they are now trying subtly to expel them by sending to the Middle East to be rid of their treachery, destructiveness and subversion. Most peoples of the world know the Jews for what they are. In spite of this, Nigeria is now inviting Israel back. There has to be a re-think.

History has shown that there is nowhere the Jews have stayed without creating disharmony and fundamental divisions. Christians drove them away from Palestine and they sought refuge with the Arabs in Medina, where they systematically dispossessed the Arabs. Realising that such a situation would lead to an Arab revolt, the Jews sought to divide the Arabs by causing an



Tureta: disastrous

used as a condition for the negotiations."

He accused the government of double standards. "You say you recognise the Palestinians but at the same time you recognise an oppressive establishment that does not recognise the existence of Palestinians" and wondered why Nigeria rushed to embrace Israel and shun South Africa arguing that some of the worst oppressions happening in Israel do not happen in South Africa. He also pointed out that in Israel, Arabs need to have a special plate number for their vehicles.

Kurfi does not see national interest being served. "It is absolutely unwise and criminal

Publicise it and may be even open it for a debate."

Dr. Ibrahim Tahir, the Talban Bauchi sees some dangers in the renewal of ties, and the leading sociologist and former university don told *Citizen* that Israel might be tempted to start manipulating the affairs of Nigeria when it re-enters. "If they get into the affairs of the nation, they will get more than a belly-full of trouble," he said.

However he is not troubled by Israel's presence and even sees it as an advantage. Nigeria, he said, stood to gain in the areas of "international finance, technical know-how, agriculture and

industries. There are also other reasons why Nigeria must renew ties. One of these is the attitude of the countries of the Middle East, he argued. He said they have not given anybody much encouragement to continue to maintain an anti-Israel position. Syria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt with which Nigeria maintains good relations do not care about the Palestinian problem. Those nations are just happy-go-lucky," he said.

By Mohammad Bomo,
- Adamu Adamu, Bilkiisu Yusuf,
Mahmud Jega, Ronke Ojuade (in
Kaduna, Zaria and Abuja), Ike
Okonta, Yinka Tella (in Lagos),
and Bolaji Adebisi (in Ijebu-Ode)

unnecessary war in which some Jews were sacrificed to mask the real nature of their plan. It was Prophet Muhammad who put an end to that interine war. In Nigeria, the Biafran succession was part of the Jewish plan to dominate the world. I assure you that such type of rebellion would happen again once the Jews are allowed to return. One part or tribe will be instigated against the other. Nigeria, for whatever its fault, is working to the greater benefit of the communities that make the country. We have a situation where whatever community or political party you run, there are Igbos, Kanuri, Hausa, Fulani, Kaje, Yoruba, Gwari etc. There is no tribal or religious bigotry. To bring the Israelis back is to invite and puncture this harmony.

On the religious side, if Babangida believes in Islam and the Qur'an, then he should not have restores relations

with Israel because Allah has clearly shown to him that Jews are harbingers of disharmony unless he intends to put asunder what Allah has decreed, in which case, the muslim ummah has no business with such a person. In any case, in what way have the Israelis helped us? When Babangida came to power, news went round that he had hired Israeli bodyguards to protect him. He should remember that despite all the security apparatus the Mossad put in place, a coup attempt nearly toppled him. Babangida knows that it was Allah only, not his ingenuity, his brilliance, his competence or intelligence that saved him. From that time, he should have, if he had been misled before, known that his only way out is to return to what Allah had decreed for him. Allah protected him because the thrust of the coup plotters and those behind them was the overthrow of Allah's religion. Allah, in saving

Babangida, was protecting his religion, and thus he benefitted from Allah's mercy and benevolence. Those who were part of this plot are there still with him and he knows that, but they are less evil and treacherous than the Israelis he is now bringing back to Nigeria.

What government has done is merely to please CAN. Look at the situation. In Kafanchan, muslims were murdered and the man at the centre of it all is running about unfettered. But 2,600 muslims were arrested. 900 were kept in detention for nine months. They tried in area where the crime was not committed, surrounded by high security and by an avowed christian judge. The same thing happened at Numan, Gongola State, only in that case, not even a Kangaroo committee was necessary because those who were harmed were muslims only. In Katsina, the Prophet Muhammad was blasphemed and when

muslims naturally reacted to this deliberate provocation, 140 were rounded up and incarcerated. The Federal Government owns the *Daily Times* that published the offending material and we hold the government wholly responsible for this. It was a provocation because no muslim would allow the prophet to be soiled. In Bauchi, government soldiers massacred muslims. All these put together shows a clear pattern of bending to the will of the christians and favouritism to them. What happened to the OIC issue? Nothing. If it had been a christian demand, the government would have acceded to it. The issue of restoring ties with Israel is a CAN demand which the government has fulfilled. So the question of whether or not the government is favouring christians is not something that is hidden.

By Mohammad Bomo

Lebanon/ Hostages

Another hostage off the hook

Islamic Jihad which on August 8 released hostage John McCarthy says it's a test for the West

The signal went out from Beirut, Lebanon on Tuesday. A number of Western hostages held in this strife-torn country by *Islamic Jihad*, a pro-Iran fundamentalist movement would be released "in the next 48 hours". The English language Teheran *Times* was more specific. A story credited its Beirut correspondent said two Western hostages, one British and the other American, would soon be on their way to freedom.

The mood in Western capitals, particularly Washington and London, was one of expectancy. But when with only four hours to the deadline, and still nothing had happened hope began to fade. Then at about 12 noon (local time) the news broke: John McCarthy, a British television journalist kidnapped in Beirut in 1986 while on his first foreign assignment, had been freed by his captors.

McCarthy, 34, was released in the Beka'a valley of Beirut, driven to Damascus and handed over to the British ambassador in the Syrian capital by a Syrian government official. He was reported to be "haggard and bearded" otherwise he "looked well and spoke calmly". Before television cameras the former hostage read out a statement, saying he was happy to be free after more than 5 years in captivity.

He said he was given a letter by his captors for the United Nations secretary-general, Javier Perez de Cuellar, in which they were seeking his help in securing the release of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners in Israel in exchange for Western

hostages. *Islamic Jihad* had earlier said it was sending an "envoy" with a message for the West.

A top Syrian government official was to explain the message as "a test for the West to exert pressure on Israel to release its own Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners. Israel's reaction had been to deny any role in the release of the hostage but an Israeli government spokesman said "we are ready to do anything to end this human tragedy. We want a simple exchange, worked out in secret".

Even before he had arrived in Britain, relations and friends were already celebrating. Miss Jean Muriel, a former girlfriend of McCarthy said she was ecstatic. She said the former hostage could now pick up the pieces of his life and his uncle, John, said he looked forward to having a beer with him again. The British prime minister, John Major, said Britain was grateful to Syria for its assistance in the release of McCarthy and to Iran for its "humanitarian gesture".

The release of McCarthy had fuelled speculations that there had been a deal with his captors. But these have been denied in London, Tel Aviv, Damascus and Teheran. One observer said it was "unrequited", as there had been no prisoner exchange. But he thought it might very well be "the kicking-off point of a process".

Both Syria, with a big military presence in Lebanon and Iran, which exerts tremendous influence over Lebanon's mainly Shi'ite movements, are believed to have played a



De Cuellar, UN Secretary General

role in this latest hostage release. Syria is said to have come to terms with the reality of the United States being the sole superpower today and more so, it wants the Middle East peace plan to get under way quickly.

Iran under president Hashemi Rafsanjani is moving to open up to the West whom it expects to help restore its battered economy with loans. It is seen in Western capitals as a "public-master" in the hostage saga because of its influence over hostage-takers — even if it does not control them.

Shortly after McCarthy's release, secretary-general de Cuellar announced that a second hostage would soon be let off the hook and he believed the hostage would be an American. But even so, there will still be 11 more Western hostages in Lebanon. The best known of them are Terry Anderson, an American and Terry Waite, a Briton.

By Tawey Zakka
with agency report

NNIL

A gentle adult

Established 32 years ago, the quiet investors' midwife has weathered the storm

It was a gathering of who is who in the investment market, banking and finance. The occasion: Dinner to mark the end of the Northern Nigeria Investments Limited's 32nd annual general meeting. Venue: Durbar Hotel Kaduna, Monday August 5.

In his opening speech, the chairman of the occasion, Alhaji Aliko Mohammed, Dan Iyan Misau, declared that "Northern Nigerian Investments Limited is the best in the country and a breeding ground for top executive in both the public and private sectors of the economy especially in this part of the country today."

Alhaji Aliko, who was a top executive of the NNIL said his short stint with the company had taught him more than he assumed to know about investment and the money market.

Earlier in his speech, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Professor J.S Odama said "in a nutshell, as a pioneer development finance institution in this part of the country, NNIL has been closely involved and in fact has promoted, jointly with others, virtually all the pioneer industrial establishments in the northern states."

The economics professor at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and now on sabbatical leave with RIMS Merchant Bank added that "NNIL has since inception about 32 years ago, operated quietly behind the scenes with our activities known mainly to our corporate customers and, to some extent thousand of employees of associate companies jointly promoted and established by

the company (NNIL) and other investors." The NNIL has among others as its associate companies such giants like the Bank of the North Kano, Crittal Hope, Arewa Textiles and United Textiles Limited all in Kaduna.

Announcing NNIL's performance during the year ended March 31, Professor Odama revealed that a gross income of 13.79 million Naira made up of operational income of 8.28 million Naira and capital gains of 5.51 million Naira was recorded. Similarly, a profit before tax of 9.5 million Naira was recorded during the year as against a pretax profit of 1.98 million Naira the previous year. He attributed this giant leap forward to sound management which his colleagues on the Board and a team of dedicated staff past and present had put in place.

The chairman however noted that "the company's balance sheet is showing low asset value due to the accounting policy of showing value of the company's investments at cost or nominally. Today the realisable market in properties and associated companies is well over 100 million Naira" this he said makes it pertinent for all and sundry to appreciate our position and congratulate us on a job well done.

The dinner which was preceded by Board of Directors' meeting early in the day attracted such notables like Alhaji Adamu Bello, Managing Director, Habib Bank, Daniel Ugbabe, Group Managing Director of the NNDC, Alhaji Dahiru Mohammed, Managing Director of the New Africa Merchant Bank, Dr Ahmed Tijjani Abdullahi, Rector,



MD NNIL: Bichi

Kaduna Polytechnic. Also present were representatives of associated companies.

NNIL is a development finance institution established in 1959 by the then Northern Nigerian Government in collaboration with the Commonwealth Development Corporation of the United Kingdom.

The company was established with the sole objective of stimulating industrial growth, contributing to and influencing the economic development of Northern Nigeria in particular and Nigeria in general. NNIL became a subsidiary of NNDC in 1978 when NNDC acquired the shares held by Commonwealth Corporation NNIL has since its establishment, helped in the financing of a network of enterprises in Nigeria.

Presently, NNIL has equity and or loan investments in forty associated companies engaged in insurance, banking, pharmaceuticals, metals, textile, tannery and food processing activities. Indeed, NNIL contributed immensely to the economic development of Nigeria, especially of the eleven Northern States.

By Tijjani Isa and Abdullahi Usman

Dog eats dog

Desperate to remain in business, insurance companies undercut one another's rates

The proliferation of banks and non bank finance houses in the country has led to unwholesome practices in the finance industry, the insurance industry inclusive.

Of late there has been an increase in cases of rate cutting among insurance companies. Rate cutting to Hassan Alege, a Lagos-based insurance consultant, is a practise whereby an insurance company looks at another's rates and offer to underwrite the same risks for lesser price.

Citizen gathered that price cutting is neither new in insurance business, nor is it limited to the industry alone.

Industry watchers believe that price cutting is not done haphazardly. They argue that based on certain data and analysis, any insurance company can decide on what it believes to be a reasonable rate. Most practitioners therefore do not see anything wrong in rate cutting.

An underwriter with one of the big insurance companies in Marina, Lagos told *Citizen* that the rates in some classes of insurance are excessive. On the other hand, third party motor insurance for example is said to be so highly unprofitable that no sensible insurance company would undercut the rates. Hence, insurance practitioners point out that rate cutting is only restricted to certain classes of insurance, and is not as pervasive as critics would want the public to believe.

Citizen investigations reveal that there is no uniform enforceable rate for the insurance industry. Even in cases where there are regulations, such as workman compensation, motor and fire

insurance, it is the general consensus among practitioners that the regulations are not religiously adhered to.

Even more disturbing is the fact that the insurance decree of 1976 seems to be silent on the issue of rate cutting. Section 32 of the decree puts a restriction on general increase in premium rates while section 33 deals with a rating committee to review rates. An increase in premium rate against what is stipulated in the decree attracts suspension of operations in respect of new insurance business, for a period of not less than six months or more than three years; or cancellation of its certificate of registration.

In addition to the foregoing, the decree states that every such insurer shall refund the excess payment to every person making such excess payment or to other persons entitled thereto.

Insurance practitioners point out however that the decree does not have adequate legal teeth and it is this that is responsible for the spate of rate-cuttings in the industry.

Peter Daramola of ACEN Insurance Ltd believes that in the absence of legal backing, moral persuasion is the only alternative left for the Nigeria Insurers Association (NIA) to fight against rate cutting. Even then not all the insurance companies in the country are members of the NIA. This clearly makes it difficult for the body to enforce a uniform moral code on all the insurance companies in the country.

While rate cutting could be a means of survival for an insurance company, industry watchers caution that the practice could be dangerous if it is carried to the extreme.



Olkongwu: of Economic Planning

Expatriating on the dangers inherent in rate cutting, ACEN's Daramola points out that if the premium is not commensurate with the risk, the insurance company may not be able to pay claims when damages occur.

This, he argued may further affect, negatively, the confidence reposed in insurance business by the public.

Insurance practitioners believe however that steps can be taken to bring sanity to the industry. As a first step, Daramola wants the proposed new insurance decree to make it mandatory for all insurance companies in the country to register with the NIA. He believes that this would make it possible for NIA to have a moral code for all its members.

Dipo Olanrewaju, a senior manager with Equitable Loss Adjusters would also want insurance brokers, who are the perpetrators of price cutting to explain the underwriting factors to the insured before agreeing on rate cutting.

By Tola Sunday

Develop environmental safety — Aminu

The Minister of Petroleum Resources, Professor Jibril Aminu has appealed to oil operators in the country to develop environmental safety procedures to guarantee safe and clean environment, especially in oil producing areas.

Professor Aminu made the appeal in Lagos last week at the inauguration of the annual "Abuja Black Gold and Energy Lecture" organised by the National Association of Energy Correspondents (NAEC).

He said: "While oil is undoubtedly the most available and versatile energy resources that has transformed the economy of many nations, it is associated with potentially serious environmental problems.

He therefore urged Nigerians to pay due regard to health and safety in their contact and use of oil and its products.

Professor Aminu declared the support of his ministry to the annual lecture series and called on the oil companies and services in the industry to give maximum support to the initiative.

Towards this end, he announced a donation of 30,000 Naira by his ministry and NNPC for the subsequent annual hosting of the lecture and 20,000 Naira to defray part of the costs of the

Inauguration ceremony.

The lecture series was to enhance dissemination of information and knowledge on oil and energy.



Aminu

Gamji Bank makes progress

Gamji Bank of Nigeria achieved significant growth last year despite problems in the economy, according to its chairman, Alhaji Idris Koko. Speaking during the bank's 9th annual general meeting at Shukura Hotel, Sokoto last week, Alhaji Idris announced that deposits increased from 170 million Naira in 1989 to 199 million Naira last year. Shareholders' funds also rose from 10 million Naira in 1989 to 28 million Naira last year, due to the sale of shares and capitalisation of earnings embarked upon by the bank. Earning

assets rose by 26 percent to 225 million naira, while total assets grew by 25 percent to 306 million Naira. Though 5.02 million Naira was provided for bad debts, after tax profit was 2.4 million Naira in 1990. Alhaji Idris said these gains were made despite the opening of 25 new banks in the country in 1990, bringing the total number to 106. The chairman also revealed that under the bank's innovative pilgrims savings scheme, introduced in 1990, three persons performed this year's hajj.

UBA assets hit N12.68 billion

The total asset base of the United Bank for Africa PLC (UBA) has reached 12.68 billion Naira recording a growth of 11.7 percent from 11.35 Naira of the preceding (1990) year. This was announced by the Bank's chairman, Alhaji Adamu Fika to the shareholders at the just concluded 30th annual general meeting held in Abuja.

Bank's deposits increased from 9,694.0 million Naira in 1990 to 11,894.4 million Naira with a reassuring balance of 1.9 billion Naira in the savings deposits. The Bank's gross earnings also rose from 1,145.8 million Naira to 1,457.7 million

Naira during the same period.

He further announced that the Bank's total lending to the agricultural sector as at the end of February 1991 has reached 604,035,294 Naira out of which small scale agricultural and agro-allied enterprises received 110,514,113 Naira.

UBA was rated first among all commercial banks in lending to agriculture under the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS) at the 1990 Central Bank of Nigeria annual conference for agricultural credit officers; while four farmers granted UBA loans emerged best farmers for the year in their

various states.

UBA's network currently stands at 194 comprising 96 urban, 89 rural branches, 7 cash offices and 2 foreign branches.

By Tola Sunday



Fika: Chairman UBA



BILKISU YUSUF

Afro Continental, Dizengoff, Dizpharm and Motorola among others dabbled into other lucrative sectors. Add to this the clandestine intelligence cooperation between our security agents and the Jews. When the Organisation of African Unity, OAU led African countries to sever diplomatic ties with Israel in

that Nigeria is poorly placed to bulldoze other African countries into restoring ties with Israel. In fact this attempt to bamboozle them into doing so could be counter productive. As OAU chairman Babangida was quick to observe that the lifting of embargo against South Africa was premature. What has he to say about restoration of ties with Israel when the much touted Middle East conference is yet to take off? Of course Egypt signed the Camp David accord and restored ties with Israel but occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territories, and the creation of an independent state for the Palestinians are yet to be resolved. To crown its intransigence Israel made it clear that it was not ready to "trade land for peace." Over riding all this is the brutal suppression of the Palestinians engaged in the *Intifadah*. This unacceptable face of Zionism cannot be turned to a world that is becoming pacifist. Herein lies Babangida's terminal mistake.

On closer examination one can readily detect the subterranean external forces at play in this rather complex mosaic of arm twisting that has replaced international relations. Avarice for loans and the country's beggar posture have become an irritating constraint on the freedom of this government. The result is aid and loans that are given with strings attached. The United States rescheduled Nigeria's debt last week. Being Israel's mentor perhaps the US put some pressure on Nigeria to complete what it had left half undone. The winner in this chess game is CAN whose suffocating, anti-Islamic hysteria has borne fruits and Babangida's proudest success should be linked with his reluctance or inability to stem the excesses of the CAN lobby. What transient gains.

"What failures are they who top the list of the world's most successful men."

Israel: Voice of conscience

God, give us the courage to stand for something, lest we fall for everything — Peter Marshal

It started like a bad dream but time made the dream a reality. It began with a half disguised flirtation with the Zionists and translated into a testing of waters when President Babangida said last year that restoration of ties with Israel was only a matter of time.

Now the package is sealed with the visit to Israel of Major General Ike Nwachukwu, external affairs minister. He had to return to that ministry for the second time to do this tight rope walking of bringing Israel back to the country through the front door.

There is much about this government's information management that leaves a sour taste in the mouth. If the government was guided by national interest in restoring ties with Israel why did Nwachuku conceal his trip to Israel? If he had the power of conviction that ought to guide foreign policy why did he resort to cowardly ambushes from far away Israel? From their back door status the Jews have according to Mr. Godwin Dabo, President General of Nigeria-Israeli Association, executed 43 percent of all construction contracts awarded in the country. The Israeli construction companies litter our landscape, Solel Bunch, Reynolds Construction Company RCC, Road and Building Company RBC while

the wake of the Arab-Israeli war and subsequent occupation of Arab and Palestinian land by the Zionists, Nigeria was Israel's biggest trading partner in Africa. Those who benefited from the bilateral trade relations constitute a powerful lobby that was vehement in its opposition of the break in diplomatic relations. They were joined by the paranoid Christian lobby under the auspices of the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN. They have won the day through the barrel of Nwachukwu's diplomatic gun.

Yet the implications of this U-turn amidst the screeching of brakes can not be ignored. Of course diplomacy is another name for double speak and subterfuge but it is the peak of deception for this country to go ahead and restore ties with Israel when President Babangida is the OAU chairman. Since it was a collective decision of the OAU to sever diplomatic relations with Israel decency demands that normalisation of relations should also emanate from the same body. A worldly and calculating leader, perhaps Babangida just waited long enough to occupy the OAU chair, do the now familiar "maradonic" dribble and lead the wavering continent to Tel Aviv. No ovation will come. He should expect nothing less than thunderous denunciations for this perverse and deplorable misuse of political power.

The President should realise

Citizen

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All the news in perspective

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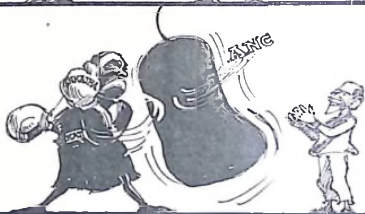
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Kada Babes example. Page 49

Citizenship

By Edmund Morris



Voter harassment

Political apathy is a disease. It deserves special treatment. The cure does not lie in intimidating all eligible voters. Yet we must cure this apathy before democracy can develop firm roots. The questions we should be asking is whether some citizens adopt an indifferent posture because they are tired of listening to a long list of campaign promises that are not made to be fulfilled.

Now what do you do about a politician in the second republic who promised to build schools, hospitals and roads in your village but absconded as soon as he was declared winner? His newbreed brothers are now promising jobs to unemployed including the unemployable. Others like Dr. Professor, Alhaji Hali Tazan of Sokoto are bent on making privileged citizens out of criminals by promising to install air conditioners in all prison cells.

All these vote catching gimmicks are not as effective as they used to be. Even the packet of Omo, cam-

paign T-shirts and headties are less useful as vote buying items. So what is the cure for apathy?

Democracy is every body's love and government we are told is doing everything possible to ensure that the marriage between the people and democracy will ensure that the lovers will live happily ever after. But there are people who are not willing to take the brand to democracy being proposed to them as their life long partners. Their love is not blind so they are reluctant to "take democracy as their love, in sickness and in health, for better for worse until death do them part".

Yes, you will be right to call them cynics, skeptics, spoilers infact any name will do. But if democracy is about freedom of choice and freedom not to choose, why should anybody be harassed to vote? How can that be? Well, 'am telling you by the power of my eye that there is a grand design to punish those who failed to register when voters registration was conducted recently. Last



week in Kaduna an NTA announcement said farmers who want to buy fertilizers will have to produce not only their development levy receipts but also their voters registration card. Holy grains! If you think that is carrying the concept of forced marriage to democracy too far, then come with me to Gongola State. In this fertile land of the Mambilla Plateau you may not need fertilizers to get a good yield, so how do you punish reluctant voters? Ofcourse you refuse them cholera vaccination until they present their registration cards. Some people say dem no wan marry democracy abi na by force?

The barons

Baron Nababa— is still touring different parts of the country to discuss with other politicians. He is still in Maiduguri trying to convince a sceptical Baron Jatau to join his peers in Kaduna

Baron Nababa—Thank you sir for this thesis. Have you too attended Kuru where a handful of hand picked civilians are admitted— to serve as future collaborators, if need be.

Baron Jatau—Not at all. I cannot co-exist with soldiers. God for bid. Me and soldiers are like cat and mouse! If the group in Kaduna intends to fight soldiers, even with their fists, I join them. Human, arms with the assistance of missiles, proj-

ects or other objects picked at random, can work wonders. They can pierce steel armour. It is not the gun or weapon that matters but what's behind it. If the human arm has strong will power and moral force behind it, it moves mountains. You remember Mahatma Gandhi with his *stygaha* or moral force that enabled him to cow the British and won independence for India in 1947 after almost 300 years of British rule.

Baron Nababa— But we lack moral force here in Nigeria. No ideology, no commitment to cause (s), no vision for a greater Nigeria. Without these attributes you cannot mobilise the masses to confront your adversary. What we can do is to play game of hide and seek with the military and try to win political power by the back door — on a

platter of gold without shedding blood. That has been the tradition in Nigeria since the beginning of party politics in 1940's.

Baron Jatau — You people are not serious. Please leave me alone.

Baron Nababa — I plead with you sir, to listen to the voice of reason and come along with the rest of brother Barons to rescue this country from the shackles it has found itself and also save it from rulership by greenhorns come 1992.

Baron Jatau — O.K. I give you the benefit of doubt. Expect me in Kaduna whenever the conclave of the Barons is convened. I also promise to contact other friends in Borno State and few Barons of the first and second republics. You may wish to pay courtesy calls on Borno Archbarons — you know them. Good night.

Historical insight

The lessons derived from history will depend on how it is written, from whose world view history takes its direction and the trust the reader vests in the writer. This week's verses review history through the legacy of a glorious past to the sorrow of natives turned refugees and the loneliness of the "uncivilised" world.

Legacy of a glorious past

I see the charred remnants
Of a once vibrant existence
Casualties line the routes
Of my once beloved nation
Sightless eyes stare sightlessly
From sightless eyeballs.
I see mother working their fingers
To the bone
In order to scrape a meagre existence
for their army of children
Little kids playing endlessly
To stall the hunger in their rumbling stomachs
I weep but no one consoles me
For tears have been shed
Until the glands are dry
I ask myself,
Where do we go from here?
The promises of a glorious future
Have gone down the drain of history
Fled are those sweet dreams
Of a blissful tomorrow
Fled are the promises
Of a united nation
Fled are the double faced philanthropists
playing on the low intelligence
Of a gullible nation
Duly the legacy of a glorious past
stare mockingly at me.

Ifeanyi Omeni

Long drums

When my oldies talk of bows and

arrows

It is as clear as spring-water
When they talk of clubs and spears
Used against their enemies
In wars ancient as the world itself
This is not impossible to grasp
But when the hawk and the bear
Deploy tubular objects of horror
Far longer than the long-drums
That throb on the arena of peace festivals

In our villages
Each says to the other: I like it not!
And both make the world afraid of itself
And I am surprised and I wonder
I wonder that long-drums bring others no peace.

Hycladzira A. B. Shaffa

Return of the natives

As they come home and told their tales,
a wave of sorrow swept across the land,
Mingled with despair and disillusion,
All born of the fury
Of the moment.
Mar, grew to a hurricane
The spirit, of old natives were dead,
Many were lost in their own country;
Only the format remained and a badly shattered one.

Clara C. Uwazie

The marooned

We set out on the wild waters
For the desert island of good
On yonder point, after miles at sea
In our inherited boat
Inherited first by our father from his father
But half-way through the expedition
With the hunt for the treasure yet to begin



My brothers, suddenly civilised(!)
Change their minds
Plunge into the seas
And beat a retreat
Leaving only one, the uncivilised (!)
Marooned on this lonely island
I struggle alone for survival.

Isaac Umuna

Reshaping

Floored by the ruthlessness of the minute
Of the minute, my tadpole innocence
And timeless reverence
Metamorphosed
Into a full-fledged croaking anger
And the anger swelled like the mountains
That poke at the bottom of the deuds
Then burst like the oceans
Breaking through puny slush
And cannot be deterred.
Now schooled
In the shape of what is mine
Rolled into love and submission
And hatred and defiance
I am rising tall in my agitation
In the manner of my today's self
In the live fashion of my innocence.
The anger subsides only with success
For the majority
and is replenished by the pulsed monstrosity of the minute
Thus irritation shaken in a source of love
Broil my fuel
Day by day.

Ibrahim Sheme

Sadiq Daba (*Bitrus*)

Not yet the promised land

1983 was his year of glory but for Bitrus the promised land is still far



Daba "I don't know how I manage it"

He breezed into the office clutching an immaculate briefcase. Caftan cap on head and starched Guinea brocade hanging out of his lithe frame with suede shoes to match, he could pass for any successful businessman.

"Citizen", he mutters, flipping through the magazine and nodding. "I will talk with you". He is just moving into the office, you note. The table and chairs are being brought in and set as you look on. No time for a chat? But he beckons on you. And you ask for a more "convenient" place.

"House?" he suggests.

"Fine," you reply.

"Let's go", he says, standing.

"I'm on my way".

Then you remember you have another engagement slated for that moment! He is already at the door, waiting. You run up to him and request for a "better" time. He obliges you.

The sitting room of his NTA Yaba quarters, is long and narrow making the arrangement of the aging furniture a little queasy with the centre table placed beside one of the sofas. Video tapes line a mini divider on which a colour TV stand, atop. Three plaques announcing the NTA award to him as "Star Actor of the Year, 1983" adorn the wall. Only a privileged few would raise an eyebrow when the name, Sadiq

Daba, is mentioned. But many Nigerians certainly would, on hearing of Bitrus. It was a character he breathed life to in "Cockcrow at Dawn", an NTA drama programme that ran for five years. Then in his late twenties, the part demanded that he portrayed a rascally teenage school drop out, growing up in the city.

"I don't know how I managed it", he says chuckling. "But people really believed I was that young".

Once, passing through a Lagos street, a tot resting on balcony had shouted at him, "Omo-ota" (ruffian) to his discomfiture. But the worst was yet to come.

"I was at Eko Hotel," he recalls, "drinking and smoking peacefully when all of a sudden I got a hard knock on my head. I turned only to find a very little kid grinning at me. I wanted to beat the hell out of him but his words froze me: "Why are you drinking and smoking?" he had demanded. Apparently he thought I was as young as he was. I threw away the unfinished drink and smashed the cigarette, assuring him that they were actually for my uncle....."

When "Behind the Clouds" came on stream, later, Sadiq Daba was to metamorphose as Dauda, a city lawyer. So, how was he able to adapt to the role of an adult? "It was really a challenge," he says. "I had to shed the image of Bitrus." He continues, "you see, an actor has to be able to play any role given to him. A good actor should adapt easily to any character. I do not see myself as a one role actor; a studio actor."

For Sadiq Daba, a native of Kanc

born in Kumasi, Ghana and raised in Freetown, Sierra-Leone, stardom was more than a dream come true. In the early days, it was the radio that enchanted him. And without a single TV station in Sierra-Leone then, what else but being on radio would he have thought of?

“I used to listen to William Roberts on Radio Sierra-Leone,” he recalls, smiling broadly. “He was my role model. Being on air for me, became an obsession.” That was in the early 1960’s, a time he used to go around with the popstar, Giraldo Pino, who practised just behind their house, to dance halls. But it wasn’t till he met Khalifa Baba Ahmed on his return to Nigeria around 1967, he was able to actualise his childhood dream. And it was by happenstance!

It was on a casual visit to his brother, Major Daba in Kaduna, who took him to Hamdala Hotel — where he found himself sharing the same table with Ahmed. Listening to him talk, the man asked him whether he had ever being on radio. His answer was a blunt, no. But Baba Ahmed may not have believed him. The voice was just too arresting. He was immediately invited for an interview at the Broadcasting Station of Northern Nigeria (BSNN), Kaduna. There, again the old question popped up. Has he ever worked on radio? His was an emphatic no. When he left, he put the whole episode behind him, heading straight for Kano. His letter of employment arrived at his brother’s the following day! And he had to be trailed for days before he could be reached. Still relishing the experience, he beams, now.

“I felt excited. Confused. Surprised. It was like a dream. All along, I have been listening to people on radio. Now people are going to listen to me

He knew he had a good voice but to be able to attain a reasonable height in broadcasting, he still needed some formal schooling in diction. He was lucky. Ibrahim Abba

Gana, started him off. There was Abubakar Abdul Salami and the man he calls “my Godfather”, Adamu Augie. “They were the best presenters then on RTK (Radio TV, Kaduna),” he recalls.

He began as a continuity announcer on Radio and also anchoring a Sunday magazine programme for TV. One day, a man came looking for him. He wanted to meet that man called Sadiq Daba whose voice, he enjoys very well on Radio. When they met, the man could not believe his eyes. He had expected to meet a “very big personality”, but shaking his hands and identifying himself was this thin, if not frail, looking boy. It was a joyous moment for the straggling presenter. So, he was now accepted by the people, he thought to himself, grinning. His journey to the top was only beginning.

For Sadiq Daba, a native of Kano, born in Kumasi, Ghana and raised in Freetown, Sierra-Leone, stardom was more than a dream come true. In the early days, it was the radio that enchanted him. And without a single TV station in Sierra-Leone then, what else but being on radio would he have thought of?

He went into Radio plays where his voice was even sharpened the more before his transfer to Sokoto where he met Peter Igho who was then in charge of drama at the NTV. “I don’t know what Peter saw in me”, he says, down playing, the impact his voice might have made on the producer, “but he invited me to join his programme”. He had never acted before. The part given to him was that of a Prankster. His debut outing was impressive.

But it was during the All Nige-

ria Television Festival in 1978, that he came to national limelight. He played the part of Doctor in NTV Sokoto’s entry, “Moment of Truth” which won the first prize. It became easy for him to play the role of Bitrus and Dauda, thereafter. Instantly, he became a local idol even assuming an international status with his participation in “Soweto”, a film put together by an international consortium, where he played alongside such South African stars as Sophie Ncinna, Frank Williams and Sidwell Yola.....

And he is not, done yet. “I’ve not achieved one-tenth of my potentials. I want to see myself grow as an all round artiste”, he says, clenching his fists in emphasis.

But for Sadiq Dada, such aspirations may have to wait as his employers (NTA) only last year

clamped a ban on those of them producing, from acting. Nigerians, too, may have to contend with missing the face of this amiable actor, who spends more than half his salary on transportation, (you don’t expect him to be hopping into molues, do you?) and who for almost a decade graced the screen to their joy.

Will NTA ever shift ground? “I’m a civil servant,” he says, nursing a glass of coca-cola in his hand.

By Oji Onoko

SPORTS

WAFU Cup

Lobi Bank move closer

Lobi Bank defeated Entente Deux of Togo 3 — 0 to brighten their chance of winning WAFU cup on first attempt



Unaka: Lobi Bank's left winger

In the strong tide of soccer rivalry among West African nations, Togo has always been haunted by the agonising trauma of how to handle Nigeria both at national and club levels. Since 1989, when the francophone country returned to international football arenas after two year voluntary withdrawal to reorganise and raise the standard of the game, her national team and club sides have always found it an impossible task handling Nigerian teams.

On Saturday August 3, Togolese top division one side, Entente Deux hit Makurdi township stadium with a fantastic dream — to hold Lobi Bank, Nigeria's flag bearers in the West Africa Football Union (WAFU) cup, to a scoreless draw. No, they even took their pre-match fancy a little further. They were hoping for an upset victory against Lobi Bank in the first leg of the WAFU cup semi final to be decided at the banker's home-base that evening. "We have come here to beat your team", Entente assistant coach Agbo Assiogbon, boasted during their training in the morning of the match.

Entente however got it wrong. The Togolese club who has in its squad such fine national team players like Lawson Placca and Agunyon Komi realised quite too late that such simplistic calculation has no place in football when Lobi Bank defeated them 3 — 0 by the time the explosive and exciting 90 minutes match ended.

The victory does not only confirm the supremacy of Nigeria's soccer over Togo's. It also puts

Nigeria in a very strong position for the WAFU Cup crown which was won last in 1989 by Ranchers Bees, the country's second representatives who crashed out in the first round. This first leg home victory even means much for Lobi Bank, and their home fans who have not been opportuned to see how good or badly their team could perform at their home-based in international engagement.

The Makurdi boys entered the race for the WAFU Cup in a devastating form and high spirit when they stormed Mauritania and defeated A.S. Nouadibou 3-0 at their home base in Nouakchott in April. Everybody who love the game stormed Makurdi stadium a fortnight later, hoping to witness how Lobi Bank would massacre the Mauritania club in the return leg. That was not to be. The fans filed out of the stadium in disappointment because A.S. Nouadibou refused to turn for the second leg.

It was therefore understandable why the Makurdi based team came to the stadium with smoking fury and fervent determination to keep alive their dream of wearing the crown by winning convincingly against a weather beaten team like Entente Deux. But the proceeding proved quite tough and tasking for both teams on that cool Saturday evening of August 3. The Togolese club, still bitter about how BCC Lions, another Nigeria club threw them out of the Africa Cup Winners Cup's first round in 1989, came to the match contesting the ball with equal ferocity as the Lobi boys. For

the first 13 minutes of the game, Entente held their ground and even had an edge in the mid field where petit Agunyon Komi caught the fans' fancy with crisp passes and brilliant skill. Lobi however began their fruitful move to eventual victory when Austine Wuyep, a natural right winger caught in powerfully from that side of the pitch and floated the ball for target man Ibrahim Mohammed to score with a fast drive.

Lobi Bank's fans who longed for more goals in that first half were however disappointed. Entente Deux reorganised their game with a view to getting an equaliser. The Togolese's hope could not materialise because their attackers floundered a few chances that came their way. But their somewhat robust and bruising defensive style helped to keep the Lobi boys at bay for the rest of that half.

If Entente were hoping to keep the score line at respectable 1-0 as they did against BCC Lions at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa stadium in Bauchi, two years back, their opponents were not bargaining for that. Lobi Bank stormed the pitch in the second half playing better and directing more shots at Entente goal post in order to earn more goals.

And it took them only three minutes into the second half to increase the score line to two. The goal was scored from the spot by Austine Wuyep when Entente's Haito Ese was penalised for handling the ball inside his team's penalty box. The third and final goal for the Nigerian club side came almost in the manner of the first goal three minutes to the end of the match. Scorer of the first goal Ibrahim Mohammed crowned his fine outing with a second goal when he out smarted Entente defenders to head home a pull-out from the left side of the pitch by Henry Hassan.

As far as the two teams are concerned however, the struggle to gain a berth at the WAFU Cup final has just begun, and only at the end of the second leg semi-final match in



Entente Skipper, Lawson

Lome this Sunday will the true picture be known.

Entente, still in their

characteristic way of talking big, would not admit Lobi's superiority. And if one should take the word of their coach, they are keeping their ace till the second leg. Said coach Bawa Bako of Entente: "Lobi boys are not better than BCC players and if they play the way they did today in Lome, we must nail them".

For Lobi Bank, it is just not yet party time. In spite of winning 3-0 in Makurdi, the team coach Bernard Ogbe said he would approach the second leg with thorough preparation and strong sense of mission. "Anything can happen in the second leg. We shall approach it with the same determination displayed during the first leg. We won't allow this victory to get into our head."

No drugs, please

The Nigerian Olympic Committee and the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports in conjunction with National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) have begun a massive campaign to educate all the athletes and officials who will represent Nigeria at the 5th All-Africa-Games slated for Cairo next month on the danger of hard drugs.

The enlightenment team from NDLEA have been touring all the centres where the country athletes for the Cairo Game are being camped. At Ahmadu Bello Stadium, Kaduna, an NDLEA team of two men and three women assembled the Cairo bound athletes in football, Taekwondo and gymnastics last Wednesday and tutored them on the grave dangers inherent in using banned drugs for performance enhancing in international sporting competitions.

Employing both aural and visual aids, the NDLEA team cited

permanent ruin to the athletes' career, serious damages to the national pride, serious and sometimes irreparable impairment to the athletes' mental and psychological structure, and other legal consequences like long term imprisonment, as some of the unwholesome effects of dealing in hard drugs.

The team also told the athletes



Kwajiffa: NDLEA boss

The team enjoined the athletes to shun the temptation of becoming drug users or couriers in the interest of the nation.

to consider themselves lucky to have been selected to represent their country, and should therefore not disgrace themselves and their country either as drug users

or couriers. The team also urged all the sports authorities in the country to include anti-drug campaign in their sports development programmes.

Female soccer

Kada Babes example

For many years, she has maintained a high profile as an ardent football supporter, rooting persistently for both small and big clubs in Kaduna, her base. But 1987 marked her out not only as an irrepresible lover and promoter of the game, but also as the first woman to own a football club. Her

female football club has a dream — to make female football as popular in Kaduna as it is in some other states in the southern part of the country. It is this singular ambition that propelled her in April 1987 to take the plunge. "I found the club out of jealousy. I saw some other states with female football clubs and I thought to myself that Kaduna state deserved to have one"

Princess Yusuf, a one time member of the state football association was to find out that there was a big gulf between identifying with a popular game and trying to promote the same game among green horns. Although she was able to get positive response from girls to form the team, getting them to master the tactics and rudiments of the game became another obstacle.

"After over coming the initial problem of how to get keen female players, I turned my attention to

the girls the basic trainings in football, while the Princess moulded the club by buying balls, and giving the girls transport fares to, and from their house to encourage them to turn up for training.

By the time the Nigeria Football Association decided to give female soccer official recognition this year in line with FIFA, the world football governing body, Kada Babes have become a very strong club. Not only that. The Princess' pioneering effort has also encouraged other female clubs to spring up in the state. "Other clubs have followed our footsteps, and it is my hope and prayers that more will come up".

Kada Babes have not only served as a spring board of inspiration for other female clubs to grow in Kaduna and other neighbouring states. They have also represented the state in some major competitions. They won gold medal for Kaduna at the zone six intra-zonal sports festival held in Kano. The club's players were also in the majority in the team that represented zone six at the National Sports Festival in Bauchi.

Princess Yusuf will however be facing her toughest challenges when her girls and other female players from other clubs in the state join other female teams from Bendel, Rivers, Anambra, and Oyo, in the Benue zone of the first ever female challenge cup to be staged in the country. But the Kada Babes proprietor is not losing her sleep over the challenges awaiting the Kaduna state representative in the zonal preliminary. "I am not going to let the state down. If the director of sports can continue with the support he has been giving us since we started representing the state, and with God on our side we will do very well in the challenge cup."

By Joe Olajuwon



Maude (top) and the Kada Babes

club was not the traditional all-male football club. She chose to promote the game among her own women folk by funding the first female football club in this part of the country.

Princess Aishat Yusuf, founder of Kaduna — based Kada Babes

how to get the girls to know how to master the game." Luck came when the current Calabar Rover coach Ben Duamlong, then a coach with the disbanded NNPC football club of Kaduna, decided to lend a helping hand. He was later assisted by another coach. Both of them gave

ADAMU ADAMU S

DEFINITIONS
IN HUMOUR

Wasrael

Once upon a time Mr. Baycar stole an antelope from some Arab tribesmen and named it Wasrael. Baycar fed it well and sharpened its antlers every morning. All the animals living in the area feared Wasrael's antlers. Then one day a hunter called Sadman began amassing bows and arrows; and Wasrael feared Sadman's arsenal might surpass its antlers in potency.

To test his prowess Sadman captured Youwait, a gazelle living in the same area. Phard, the leopard, developed complicated diarrhoea; and only the destruction of Sadman's bows and arrows would cure him.

Baycar came out of the bush and destroyed the bows and left the arrows. Phard became normal, Wasrael became defiant. Now Baycar insisted that all of them must participate in the Dance of Legitimacy in honour of his daughter antelope — Wasrael.

Phard balked. "No", he said.

"Very well then", said Baycar. "I leave you to your own devices with regard to Sadman. I give him back his bows and withdraw my arsenals".

"The daughter of legitimacy", Phard declared.

The last time, Phard was proposing marriage to Wasrael. But it was impossible because Wasrael is a past tense.

Oh!

Life is difficult business; its profit must be earned, while its loss must be endured. The other alternatives to life are various forms of death. And we all know that cowards die many times at death — the valiant never taste of it at all. What you saw so shall you rip open — the rule of the game is stealing, isn't it? You

didn't see, you didn't hear and nor did you talk. So who can accuse you of causing any harm? Your conscience. You should talk because you heard even if you didn't see.

You came, didn't you? You saw, didn't you? And you were conquered, weren't you? The grip of zion is firm, his purse full, his (her) stare alluring — and you are weak.

That is the end of the story.

WHY — Isn't it odd that if agricultural know-how and turning the desert green are really the factors informing resumption of ties with Israel shouldn't the northernmost part of the country, which is prone to drought and desert, lead in the clamour? But what do we see? The hot bed of opposition to Israel comes from there.

Questions of technology transfer appear out of the question. What did this nation transfer from the more developed countries with which it had had relations for so long?

If the relations will benefit Nigeria more why is it that Israel is more anxious than Nigeria to see them restored?

ZIONISM — Phenomenon adequately understood by only a small percentage of its

supporters and an even smaller percentage of its opponents.

—Stone

COMEDY —

Zionism & Three supporters
Zionism & Two supporters
Zionism & One supporter
Zionism & its sharp teeth.

NIGERIAN — Someone who wakes up after his head is cut off — Magaji Garba. Appropriately enough the name of the headless corpse is Jaji (remember *Fargar Jaji!*)

ANTI-SEMITISM — Palestineans are Semites; Jews hate them. And so Jews are the real anti-Semites — but it is you who gets accused.

ARABISM — Arabs were defeated by Israel in 1967. In 1973 they were defeated by the United States. In 1991 they were defeated by Arabism.

Zionist Logic

It is not true that the Arabs hate Jews for personal, religious, or racial reasons. They consider us — and justly, from their point of view — as westerners, foreigners, invaders who have seized an Arab country to turn it into a Jewish state.

Mashe Deyes

quoted in Peace in the Middle East? by Noam Chomsky

I was born in Haifa, and so was my father and my grandfather. Now I am a refugee. Golda Meir was born in Russia, educated in America and now she is Prime Minister of my country. I studied law with Abba Eban in Cambridge. He was born in South Africa and educated in England. Now he lives in my country and I can't.

Ahmed Khalil

quoted in The Guardian (London) 22 December, 1973



MEMBERS OF
BLACK GOLD GROUP
CONGRATULATES

MR. PRESIDENT AND
COMMANDER IN CHIEF
OF THE ARMED FORCES
OF NIGERIA, ON HIS 50TH BIRTHDAY



Chief Sunny Okogwu

BLACK GOLD GROUP

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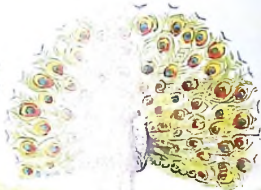
MR. PRESIDENT, YOUR DEFENCE IS OUR
CONCERN... MAY ALLAH PROTECT AND
BLESS YOU.

(We are the simulator people)

CHIEF SUNNY OKOGWU

PRESIDENT BLACK GOLD GROUP

Our New Direction



PREMIER COMMERCIAL BANK "the new strength..."

New Ownership Structure through Privatisation for greater efficiency and profitable growth

At the inauguration of a new Board of Directors for the Bank, the Military Governor of Borno State, Lt. Col. M.B. Marwa, said:

"The State Government purposely decided to enlarge the Board members by incorporating those who have made substantial deposits for the shares in Premier Commercial Bank so that they can oversee their investments directly".

"The new Board is under the Chairmanship of Alhaji Baba Duna, an outstanding Banker of considerable repute and excellence, with over 30 years experience before voluntarily retiring as the Managing Director & Chief Executive of Bank of the North".

"The State Government does not intend to own more than 25% of the shares of the Bank. So it does not have any special right over other shareholders, and control of the Bank from now onwards will,



Lt. Col. M.B. Marwa
Borno State Military Governor



Alhaji Baba Duna
Chairman, Premier Commercial Bank Ltd.

therefore, be in the hands of its Directors".

"In line with the present programme of structural adjustments Government has decided not to interfere in the operations of the bank. Thus the Bank's Board shall be allowed considerable latitude to determine the operations of the Bank in strict conformity with modern banking ethics. The Government is also agreeable to the Bank going public in due course as that would have, not only the advantage of widening the shareholders' base but also will enable the bank to raise more than the minimum requirement prescribed by the Central Bank".

The above amplifies 'A New Direction' in our overall mission — a direction that gives freedom to run the affairs of the bank along profitable growth path and ensure adequate returns on shareholders investments. PCB has now come closer to its customers, making banking work definitely better.



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