

Hotline

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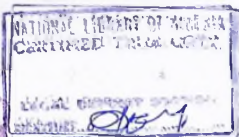
'THE GREATEST WEAPON IS TRUTH' - SARDAUNA 1966

Hotline

NIGERIA'S INTERNATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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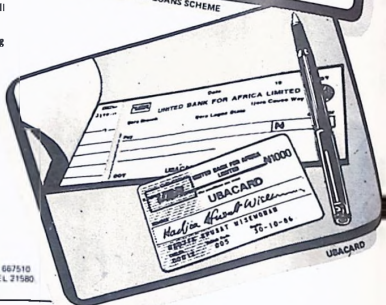
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FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

Enter The Untouchable Blunderer

The information has been placed on cliff-top suspense when the Ooni of Ife, Oba Sijuwade Olubuse II a valuable and highly placed friend of this administration, delivered a note of what most people termed faithlessness in the Nigerian nation and in particular, the democratic transition being executed. Though the call cause ripples in political circles across the nation, the usually hawkish watchers of the programmes (MAMSER, NEC, General Headquarters and security agencies) did not so much as rise a whimper. Should it be taken as a pardonable precedence for public figures in whatever position to push their weight on even issues clearly inimical to government programme? Our cover choice surveys the background, impact and effect of the Ooni's unique, not so unique, gambit.

* * *

On a completely different wavelength, we open up the National Youth Service Corps Scheme for you.

The NYSC has the good and the bad sides- All depends on which side one is looking at it. For the past 17 years it has been unfailingly organised and extolled to the highest grade of noble activity. The NYSC is one stubborn proof that an experiment of cross-cultural interaction can actually be sustained for periods with success. Singlehanded, the NYSC has done more to help the cause of national unity than the combined mouthings of political leaders.

On the other side, the gloomy tales: of corruption and abuse of the scheme ethics; and of untold hardships increasingly faced by corps members as a result of inadequate finding. Now, everybody is thinking that the scheme should be completed re-thought and undone. It is after all, an ill-proven idea, with roots in the dubious Jewish *kibbutz*.

In the nebulous middle course, between those who dismiss it and those who praise it, we at *Hotline* fall. For this service year, no less than four corps members have managed to leech themselves to us. This is the only verb to describe the manner these two male and two female youths refused to take our No for an answer. Now that they are here, we don't feel so bad, and wish that the four others we forced away, had persisted. These youth inspired our story on the NYSC, because they came with the entire package the good, the beautiful, and the sad.

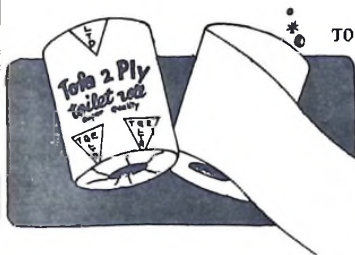


Muhammad Hassan-Tom
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Top Agenda



Cover:

Seemingly made of controversy, the Yoruba forefront monarch, Ooni Sijuade of Ife, sends into the air yet another thunderbolt. The million naira question now is: What is he up to? **Page 10**

Nigeria:

Still bedevilled by intractable bottlenecks, the noble concept of N.Y.S.C. lives up only to the expectations simulated by the bastardised version of its acronym - *Now Your Suffering Continues*. Details on **Page 15**



Discourse:

"This is the intention of the foreigners: open sex, immorality, decadence and indiscipline, so that we are at par with them in free sex; in the car, in motor parks. Our institutions of higher learning have become sex spots." - *Usman Farouk*



Page 33



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EXHIBIT

at the

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A Bridge Across Death

Your write up, *A Bridge Across Death*, November 1990 edition, clearly exemplifies government's apathy to the plight of peasant Nigerians. Be rest assured that if a specific brand of plane crashes today and is confirmed a little bit unfit for air travelling, such planes in the country's fleet will immediately be replaced with a completely different model by the government. Unfortunately, this same government with the above mentioned proclivity is folding it's arms while peasant Nigerian perennially die in canoe mishaps while crossing the River Kaduna. There must be a change in how our administrators reason.

Samuel Okoye,
Mando, Kaduna

If the government cannot construct a bridge across the crossing spot of River Kaduna, then the indigenous peasant population must be moved. But to where? And would this other solution not engender other problems? A quick solution is definitely needed for this issue.

Mario Idris,
Ungwar Rimi Low-Cost, Kaduna.

Dilemma of Private Schools

Your coverage of private schools in edition 69 refers. From all indications it seems that the country will end up producing people with little knowledge (which is a very dangerous thing to do) or those with none at all, from it's various educational institutions. The government has to really take a stand, either they come out more strongly to salvage the public institutions through adequate funding etc, or they provide the necessary assistance for the private schools. As *Hotline* rightly revealed, private schools are absolutely useful and relevant to national development. But with their exorbitant charges which ordinary Nigerians cannot afford to pay, the emphasis should be placed by the on public schools.

Kayode Olomada,
Ganji Bank, Lagos.

Bring Foreign Doctors

If I am not mistaken there was a time the federal government was about embarking on the recruitment of foreign doctors especially the Cubans. But that proposal met stiff opposition from both the Nigerian Medical Association and some members of the public. This made the government abandon its good intention and the plan was put in the cooler.

However, this time around I am calling upon the various state governments in particular and the federal government in general, to recruit doctors from overseas, so that government health



institutions, especially those in the rural areas staffed by them. This is due to the fact that Nigerians doctors do not want to serve in the rural areas.

My opinion was motivated by the situation now prevailing in the Niger State Government in where medical officers refuse posting to rural areas.

Sani Mohammed Sidi,
P.O. Box 5, Bida, Niger State.

SOS: Gov. Ayuba/KASUPDA

Any person who has been to Angwar-Rimi market, Kaduna in the last few months will bear me witness to the alarming mountain of waste piled in the centre of the market. People bring this waste from as far as inside Kaduna town in pick-up vans, not to talk of the dead animals thrown there too, which contribute to the suffocating smell that emits from it.

The worst of all is that around this heap of waste are food kiosks (bukaterias)

where people come to have their daily meals. It is surprising that after several 'Sanitation Days', the Kaduna State Urban Development Authority, who is supposed to be responsible for evacuation of this waste has not done anything about it.

Suleiman Zubair Okeji,
Shagari Road, Angwar Rimi,
Kaduna.

Youths and 1992, What Role?

When a ship is to be constructed, both the young and old are employed, but when the ship is ready for sailing, the old hand with an added advantage of experience on its side is highly favoured to take charge over the ship. many things have been said and more yet to come as regards the building of a solid foundation for Nigeria, in the coming Third Republic and to achieve the dream of having a healthier Nigeria, all hands should surely be on deck. Hence, why has the government failed to define the role of youths in respect to nation building? Is this a deliberate action, or an oversight? When will the youths, the suppose leaders of the future have their say in the lot of Nigerian?

Moreover, those appointed to lead can not be trusted because they soon take to demolishing the dream of having an ideal nation, they take to false enrichment by embezzling public funds, taking self-centred decisions and generally being stupid on purpose. They also embark on acquiring huge debts which the up coming generation is expected to settle, they suffocate the youths, the future leaders with debts.

Mohammed Seyi Gambo,
P.O. Box 53449, Ikoyi, Lagos.

Correction

Last month edition, we inadvertently misused Malaysia's name where the caption meant the African state of Malawi. We apologise unreservedly to the country so embarrassed.

Editor.

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

The Trial of Tam

Grave remarks by Justice Abdullahi Bello Gusau, Chairman of the Military Tribunal for the Recovery of Public Property, delivered in the judgment passed on the trial of Professor Tam David West last month, had the effect of a sledge-hammer. Although the anti-any-thing-Muslim Southern press have characteristically descended on the unimpeachable judge for being so fierce and honest, I believe this is a simplification of the matter. I do not want to believe that Justice Gusau is such a simpleton and naive person as not to know the prevalence of "correspondents who can be so corruptly influenced to divert them from the truth". The judge was quoted by the *Punch* correspondent as having "descended on the press for what he (Gusau) termed as its support for corrupt practices. . . He said the press shirked its responsibility of exposing corruption in the society and concealed the truth of the case from the generality of Nigerians. He urged the union of the press' if any', to look into this serious matter".

It is only unfortunate, but not surprising, that a parochial section of the Southern press chose, as pointed out by the Tribunal judge, to interpret the trial of former Petroleum Minister, Tam David-West as the trial of the southern integrity. It is in a sense. But justice and truth should never by all canons, be sacrificed at the altar of parochialism. One would expect the reaction of the press to be one of intensive co-operation to help bring the truth to light, as indeed it has aided, as in the "expose Umaru Dikko" crusade. Impartiality, that backbone upon which press credibility and acceptability lie in society, cannot be seen to be openly trampled for sectional goals; for battles to save one of the flock.

Can national progress be forged in this set-up where justice itself may be viewed through the taint of tribes and origin? Because I have been moving about and not confined to the silent halls of courts, this question has been with me even before I started publishing the *Hotline* six years ago. Which is why my own brand of press does not know how to see blatant truth and refuse to state it as it is; why, my outfit can never see evidence of inducement to corruption and open economic sabotage whether committed by Tamuno David-West, former Minister or Tanimu Umar current Director of Administration in the *Hotline*, and then refuse to state it. This is as it should be, but then who ever said Nigeria as a nation is getting a fair cut. Scandals within the press, such as this recent one, are symptoms of serious problems in the system. At this rate, the press fraternity is bound to lose all shreds of integrity and with their complete demise, there would be no watch-dog whatsoever and the authorities, barely restrained, may do their worst. This is the calamity we are headed for and unless it is rectified, no scale of transition programme to another republic will last more than the customary period.

The pessimism can be adequately founded on the premise that some journalists, behaving as if they were induced, can clearly see an open-and-close case of concession of national

wealth to a fraudulent outfit with the suspicious name of Sünnes Oii; and yet seek to lionise the culprit and add to his defence counselling. It was a similar press in the incidence involving Katsina state Governor Col. John Madaki and an erring contractor. I remember the uproar raised by these Journalists, on why Governor Madaki should apply the cane on a contractor. As in similar instances, they took one look at his state of origin and decided that the public flogging was the greatest barbarism of the century. Some papers even branded him "MAD-aki" and called for his ouster and trial. Now, if a state governor pursuing the execution of a public project cannot determine the measures to take, what sense would there be in his leadership. To say that a contractor who was granted all his requests on condition that he finish the work on a specified date but who fails to put up even a start, should not be flogged by the governor, is to suggest that he (the governor) has reason to defer to a clearly erring contractor! And only recently, another *Vanguard* journalist reported the same governor as saying that he sends copies of official documents to his village chief for safe keeping. Whereas as all the other reporters around recorded, the governor referred to copies of personal documents. The paper has since gone ahead to ridicule the governor.

Again and again, earthy principles of open truth and open justice, get stifled under the corrupt influences of bribery, parochialism and sheer witch-hunting. Surely, the press as an institution has nearly over-reached itself. Now that we have the verdict from high judicial quarters perhaps it is at last time to undertake thorough soul searching. Time to declare whether to say verified facts as they are, with any consequences or to declare for partisan prostitution and politicking. Now is the time to convene the Media Council.

Lest I Forget

Waves of moral indignation against all social crimes recently swamped Government House, Kano, and governor Idris Garba has been resolutely and commendably on the charge. But the recent loquaciousness of Kano state Police Commissioner especially in flushing out so-called prostitutes leaves one out of breath and depth. The Commissioner was said to have rejected a whopping N500,000 bribe presumably from the head pimps and prostitutes in the City. The state government has already written to commend the Commissioner but the question to ask is: since bribe giving is a crime, why were the bribe givers not arrested and prosecuted?



Alhaji Hassan Sani Kontagora
Magajin Rafi

Time To Overthrow The West?

Of certainty, the West is spiritually derailed, and with it all the pitiful appendages in the Third World. As the world's biggest civilisation ever, the nonexistent spiritual basis of the white Western world will continue to generate crisis upon crisis, and senseless bloodshed. Man will kill man, and when there is a lull or one cold war dissolves, then we must stand on the brink of another horrendous encounter. The Gulf Crisis not only promises to break into an extremely gory war, it also has all the aspects of a calamitous event through out the world.

This scenario - the speed, the razzle and dazzle and the dress-show with all their tension and unsettling, we have solely courtesy of Western greed, conceit, and stupidity. Who knows, perhaps the time has come, the brief moment when the invincible tyrant overreaches himself, triggering the final fatal revolt. There is a proverb in the Hausa language which says that to do and do and last, is a privilege only truth can claim.

The United States of America and the entire West have never come near to truthfulness and justice. May be among their different nations, at different truly moving moments they did aspire to very high spiritual planes. The Godliness of the authors of the American Declaration of Independence and of some few other leaders for instance has remained glaring through history. But this is unfortunately, the exception not the rule.

Yet it is wrong and simplistic to declare the West a Godless civilisation. They still clutch the bible and go to Church at St Peters in Rome which took one hundred years to construct, and is a moving emblem of a god-loving nature. The problem is that from the 17th century, there was a permanent coup against all forms of justice and mercy among humanity. This is summarised by George Herbert, a contemporary poet:

*Ah my dear angry Lord,
Since Thou dost love, yet strike;
Cast down, yet help afford;
Sure I will do the like.*

Then he might have added: "And in all Loving Awe dear God, I will sent down arms to cut down those who my beautiful will disobey." Another Western poet of the 19th century, Rudyard Kipling unearthed the spiritual secret of his people, "Look you have cast out Love" he sang.

*"What gods are these you bid me please?
To my own God I go, better than
your cold Christ and tangled Trinity."*

Today, 400,000 bloodthirsty American soldiers stand massed, effectively occupying a region which has not seen such show of force through out its ageless history. Each one

of these robotic mercenaries, what is his reward? The mad, lunatic glimmer of "rich American life", made possible before and now with the resources and labour of other people.

Involving the pride of the Western world, the 26 nation military build-up in Saudi Arabia is the culmination of the supreme insults the rest of the world has had to put up with from the West. Talk of the multinational forces being invited should of course even cease. The America worshipping Saudi ruling family, inept and laughable custodians of Islam's holy shrines, cannot any longer retain the slightest shred of respectability internally among their people nor in the eyes of the conscionable world. So with the conservative Arab leaders, in particular pro-Western Husni Mubarrak of Egypt and Syria's vacillating Hafiz Asad.

The provocative agent of this all-time clash between the forces of brute economic exploitation and those of indignant resistance, President Saddam Hussein, does not himself deserve the ultimate title of champion of this war of true liberation, when it sets on and when it fizzles. The true heroes of these moments must be the religiously motivated Muslim and Arab peoples of the region. They have stood up to aggression before, they can do it now.

Already, the munitive Gulf monarchs are rattled. They have stepped up repression in their countries, including official murder and bribes. The exposed Western lackeys, fat, silly Sheikhs, have been nervously proposing various political reforms to make the slightest concessions to their peoples ever. Sultan Qaboos of Oman just recently announced a new system involving councillors and consultation. Elsewhere, the exiled Kuwaiti government has pledged reforms to allow "greater participation" in government. The former system of government in Kuwait was not the Islamic mode, as widely thought but a mixture of parliamentary and executive democracy, with a constitution which reforms the Shariah. The average citizen in the Middle East today wants his complete liberty, including freedom from economic exploitation. It is for this compelling reason that truly enlightened people all over the world should stand up and tell the West: It is real time you give humility and justice a chance, or else face the combined indignation, wrath and force of all peoples, in all climes. Pleading weakness and dependence on the West for so much as many countries including Nigeria are doing is not being on the side of Truth. Neither is the succumbing to the lure of debt relief and renewed massive aid. In Nigeria, the matter needs more than the plaintive, placative mission headed by Ambassador Ibrahim Zakari. What to do now is to take a categorical decisive stand against a system which we ourselves are suffering under. Isn't our own invasion complete? Without even the glory of stationed nukes and tanks? Is it not time to overthrow the West?

Mr. President Sir, Hang Them

Every corner, every hole, every ghetto in every metropolis, waiting, staring, emaciated and apologetically canvassing for hand-outs to keep body and soul in undeserved unity. As if they need them. These kids. Whatever made them harbour the idea that *they* are part of us! Citizens? My foot!

The times are not theirs. You know what I mean - they are either too late or else have impatiently come too soon. Consequently, not having a place in outer space they have let themselves loose on the rest of us. We are now groaning, sweating and convulsing under their socio-economic pressure. Man is left in the dark on the *raison d'être* of all these; nature saddles us with the unenviable task of finding a place for them in our tight and conscripted socio-economic arrangement. Care for them. Provide them a bite of living? Even if the most infinitesimal? Ha. Ha.

We simply don't want them around or do we? We wish we are rid of them. Clean streets. That is our target, no compromise. By their act, mockery is made of our environmental sanitation policy. They constitute social no, not problem, that will be too inadequate a lexeme. May be *nuisance*, but that also is too mild. Oh Mr. President, save us from them. Kill them. Order them strangled. Let them go the way of Maroko. Demolish them - all illegal human structures littering our roads, our exclusive earth!

These homeless children. These destitutes. These beggars. These almajiris. In Lagos. In Kano. In Port Harcourt. In Kaduna. Everywhere. Did I hear anybody say social welfare scheme? Did anybody talk of rehabilitation? Of reintegration?; as practised in... where U.S.A., USSR, Britain, other parts of Europe and even in some African countries? No way. What a waste of public funds, that could

otherwise be used to improve the wellbeing of those of us God-select ones, further enrich the hyper rich, put more flashy cars on the road (for honestly, we've had enough of these sight-assaulting, rickety things in the name of cars).

Man, you need to see them, plate in hand, in raggy clothes, patched, torn and patched again. Such is their effrontery that they claim ownership of this earth with us, even if they don't say it! It is there on their faces for anybody to decipher. Rights? Do they have any at all? I think not. These kids. End-products of a blissful *momentary* love rendezvous with the opposite sex. Must we then put them into the scheme of things? Is it not just natural that we mate and do the 'the main, the main? Now the result. These kids. These haggard looking hopeless, helpless things. Insult on our collective sensibility!

Education. Health. For who? Those nauseating things on a pair of broom sticks they ignorantly call legs. No! the country can't afford to waste funds educating them. They are not worth it, not even a drop of providentially given rain on their ever-thirsty harmattan-dry lips. What a crime, indeed, for anybody to make a case for their education, their shelter. But why should people ask for such illegal concessions, knowing fully well that our leaders still have room for more wealth, more collectively owned riches to sustain their numerous women scattered like dry sand in harmattan all over the world; purchase more flowing *agbadas*, more *babbanrigas* and feathered caps. See? They must appear enviable at home and abroad. After all they are representing all of us - symbols of our bright economy and, you know, this must manifest in their flamboyant world view. We really need this. It's good for us. It portrays us well beyond the national frontiers. What a way of putting this filth at home under a



By Sola Jumat Lawal

blinding facade. This dung in the streets.

Sorry - permit the digression. Back to these children. Whoever could have thought they should be given anything. Just anything essential for human survival. (not just mere existence). What makes them need anything anyway? Because they are leaders of tomorrow? Which tomorrow? Who are they to lead? Despicable thought. How can they lead when we are still very much around here, leading anybody and anything lead-able. There is no tomorrow. Everything is simply going to end with our exit.

More than ever before, I now know that behind every argument is somebody's ignorance. Hence I can't help laughing whenever an ignoramus publicly displays buffoonery by appealing to our sentiment to consider these children, budding leaders who, with time, will grow up and grab the mantle of leadership. Isn't it time we tell such *fantasiers* that, in the words of the versatile Ghanaian novelist, the beautiful ones are not yet born? That even if leaders are going to emerge out of the young, surely not among these pigs on the streets. The beautiful ones, on whom leadership is trust by right and by birth, will spring out of the household of the elites. Fingers to remain crossed.

So, Mr. President Sir, order your boys, clad in starched khaki, clad in their boots. Order the guns. The Hangman's noose. The bulldozers. Get your henchmen. Kill these children; hang them; snuff the life out of them. Show no mercy. The society has no place for them.

Echoes from Royal Sophistry

Regardless of the context or tone, speech making and public speaking are the most complex, subtle and characteristically human means of communication. This gain currency by the countless number of words involved, simplicity of application and the incontestable fact that such methods of interaction are exclusive preserves of the human race. While some speeches are, from conception, through inception to culmination, unifying, others tread the path of disintegrating a hitherto bound citizenry. The former consciously or unconsciously champions and extols the virtues of kinship, nationality and races. It leads to tranquillity thereby throwing the gates of prosperity and abundance wide open. While the speeches that disunite rock the very foundation of the entire gamut of human peace. Raise tempers and unleash negative sociological consequences on a peoples life. Thereby opening new chapters of disenchantments, frustrations and chaos within a community.

Opinions are understandably realistic human entitlements. But when highly placed public figures speak, the sheer weight of their commanding presence makes their publics to listen with rapture, and pedestrian attention, nay with a critically unanalytic mind. The opinions of such occupants of societal strata become focal points of varying degrees of public concern, interpretation and analysis. Irrespective of what the public speaker implies, his listeners must differ in the conclusions they would draw therefrom.

Die-hard proponents of doom would always give the negative interpretation while the habitually optimistic minds take the positive course. Some passive onlookers react in a neutral tone. Whatever view a public speaker expresses or interpretation his audience would make, they are all natural after effects of the dynamic human

automobile.

At this juncture, the media, being a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism, stand compelled to draw objective analysis of the underlying implications of divisive and integrating speeches of our leaders. At least to content-analyse and report the crux of the reasons for their submissions from the onset. This would forestall the subtle antics of destabilising forces emanating from public speaking.

Great sophist in history who steered their communities to the pinnacles of success in life won the hearts of their audiences by dint of rhetorical might. Politicians from across the globe deploy rhetorical genius to sell their manifestos and garner mandates from their electorate. The clergy won converts by the sheer verbal prowess they were able to display on the minbar or pulpit. And in ivory towers, revered citadels of learning and research, academics and intellectuals have grown to become popular authorities in their respective disciplines by the power of the spoken word which finds expression in their convincing mechanisms.

However, some good public speakers are poor writers while prolific writers fumble on the rostrum. Whatever the case, of all communication media, speech is the most instant and effective.

Within the continuum of its instant and effective nature lies the reason why speeches of opinion leaders spread to all nooks and crannies of the society in no time. Thus the rule the waves as the most topical issues for a considerable period.

Despite persistent struggles



President Ibrahim Babangida: Are traditional rulers untouchable?

and ceaseless sacrifices by government, individuals and groups to put the structures of the next republic in place, some public speakers and indeed public figures have tended to use their positions to dent the tempo of progress in that arduous but necessary sphere of national crave. Recent weeks have witnessed a flurry of divisive speeches coming from various public figures mostly bordering on the nature and shape of the Third Republic. Of late Obi



Alhaji Maitama Sule, former UN representative: Icon of speech power

PROLOGUE

Okunade Sujade Olubuse II the towering Ooni of Ife opened what many observers believed is a can of worms that tended to uproot the basis of the unfolding political dispensation. The timing and tone of his call for a Yoruba presidential flagbearer for the SDP makes the third republic vulnerable to destruction even before it is put in place. Not minding the negative stand of government on zoning of political offices, ethnic politics and the involvement of traditional rulers in party politics, the Ooni dared to swim in troubled political waters.

Even among individuals of eminence there are distinguished personalities of prominence. Within the eminent traditional rulers in the country the Ooni stands out among the most prominent. This informs why his words must make some waves of national significance.

Considering the spate of criticisms and condemnations of the Ooni for voicing what he considered his opinion, the dangers of royal sophistry is therefore not far fetched. Especially when we notice that those leading the vanguard of condemnations are the Ooni's kinsmen, from his own flock. But the Ooni's statement was only a natural outgrowth of usual happenings within the broader Nigerian political culture. He was only fairly re-litigating the fatal socio-political flames that have bedevilled our political system for years.

Towards the end of Shagari's first term in power, Umaru Dikko had the guts to tell Chief M.K.O. Abiola that the presidency was not for sale. Chief Abiola who was a powerful member and financier of the ruling party NPN was a contending presidential material. He was banking on the zoning arrangement reached by the party caucus earlier that the presidency will be zoned to the South after the first four Years.

Seemingly astonished by Umaru Dikko's careless remarks, Chief Abiola's dream to democratically lead his country was thus shattered. He had no option than to bid farewell to party politics. This development had dented



Athaji Umaru Dikko

the image of not only Umaru Dikko in the eyes of Abiola and his kinsmen, but indeed the image of Dikko's party men in general. An era of negative thinking by a particular section of the country against the other was opened in our political paradigms.

In 1988, the undisputed Biafran warlord Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu called for a Yoruba-Igbo alliance to contain what he called "Northern Hegemony." Such a call just like the Ooni's, generated a barrage of reactions and ill-feelings from several quarters. Especially from those who felt they were directly the targets of Ojukwu's attack.

Even within Ojukwu's constituency people like Dr. Ukpabi Asika spoke against his statement.



Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola: Abandons the tribal platform

Realising his towering personality, his statement also added another dimension in ethno-regional politicking. Similarly, Chiefs Arthur Nzeribe and Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu have on separate occasions called for a Southern president in the third republic. Iwuanyanwu's diminishing political changes after the national executive elections of the SDP and NRC led him to openly castigate Northern politicians in the NRC. Some of the concerned politicians reacted in fierce terms which was another indication of our shaky political artwork.

Conscious of their growing influence in Nigeria's political system, the people of the Middle Belt and the Southern minorities are separately calling for a presidential candidate of either of the parties from their own fold. Even among the Ooni's kinsmen, NRC party Chiefs were bent on fielding a Yoruba flagbearer.

In all honesty and fairness to Nigeria as a nation and Nigerians as a people, we all stand to loose dishonourably if we stand by the confusing political signals we receive daily from our opinion leaders, and public speakers. Unless if we stand firm to discern between the darkness of night and the light of day, all the seemingly constructive efforts to put the right political framework in place would crash-land even before the transitional plane sets off. One fact remains basic: Nigeria needs only one president at a time. And regardless of the President's party, tribe, or region, he must come from within the geographical expression called Nigeria. Unless we bury our unrealistic narrow wants and allow concrete national needs to tower even higher than hope, I fear greatly that we shall step not through our stable dream gate of the third republic, into the broad prospect of prosperity that would lie before us, but back into the dreadful cankerworm of divisive politics and into violence. Thus we eventually fall back and start lamenting soberly, on our sorrows, agonies and despair all of which we are the architects.

By Abubakar Abba Tahir

The Ooni Lights 'Fatal' Political Flames

The political fire which has started burning from the discordant halls of ethno-regional politicking rages on, as the Ooni of Ife, arguably the temporal head of the Yoruba stock suggests a presidential flagbearer for the SDP from his flock.



Ooni of Ife, Okunade Sijuwade Olubuse II

As Nigeria desperately but cautiously fashions a stable, viable and reliable political culture-cum-structure, to bail her teeming millions out of the long-winding mess of socioeconomic and political imbroglia, it becomes increasingly pertinent to continuously check and forestall even the slightest negation to democratic ideals from all quarters. Since the quest for the dream nation under the banner of the next republic began, constructive attempts were made by government, individuals and groups to put a most lasting

structure in place. A lot of money, energy and resources have been sunk into the costly but democratically realistic venture out of which not much is realised yet. In spite of the lofty ideals being planted in preparation for the Third Republic, many Nigerians appear fed up with the entire transitional arrangement. Most of them complain of the daily excruciating economic pains of SAP. Another segment of Nigerians are busy reaping the fruits of politicking while many more are neutral to the entire transition process. Opinion leaders, public figures, political

stalwarts, and of course traditional rulers have been openly and secretly directing and redirecting the political loyalties of their subjects. Of all their political strategies and preparations, the open or secret influence of traditional rulers on the political direction of the subjects becomes the most questionable and worrisome. This informs why the recent call by the Ooni of Ife to Ambassador Bahagana Kingibe to consider a Yoruba presidential flagbearer for the SDP has generated a considerable degree of controversy and reactions from across the nation. But any analysis of the implications of the Ooni's speech on the shape and nature of the Third Republic must correctly begin within a contextual overview of the evolution of tribal politics in Nigeria.

The end of the Second World War in 1945 which signalled the emergence of anti-colonial struggles all over the world saw the emerging Nigerian educated elites - students, teachers, professionals, etc getting more organised demanding for self-government, more jobs, schools, hospitals and better living conditions. It was in realisation of these that some of the educated elites started setting up societies and associations mostly within the stated objectives of promoting cultural activities, community development and self improvement. As later events were to prove all the hitherto communal schemes metamorphosed into political parties.

Among the emergent ruling classes - students, teachers, journalists, professionals and business people formed these societies and associations. In 1943, Bauchi General Improvement Union was founded by Sa'adu Zungur. Zikist Movement came up in 1946 in Lagos under the tutelage of M.C.K. Ajuluchukwu, Abiodun Aloba, Kolawole Balogun and Nduka Eze. The first organisation which openly appealed to the ethnic instinct was the "Egbe Omo Oduduwa", (Society of the Descendants of Oduduwa) which was founded in London in 1945 by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Bode Thomas, I.O. Ransome Kuti, Adeyemo Alakija, et al.



Obafemi Awolowo: 'The Sage'

In the Northern half of the country people like AbdurRahman Hawaidi and Abubakar Zokogi set up the Northern Elements Progressive Association while the Northern Nigerian Congress which later became the Northern Peoples Congress was pioneered by Dr. R.A.B. Dikko and D.A. Rafiu Tijajeh in 1948.

From the underlying objectives for setting up such clubs and associations, it was understood that they all had tribal undertones. All of them were indeed apparent expressions of the politics of tribal and regional alliances. These unfortunate thought patterns were to manifest themselves in the formation of political parties in the 1960s. Although this bears ample testimony to the tribal

politics among the Yoruba, it was by no means limited to them alone. The unfortunate development has manifested itself among all the ethnic groupings of Nigeria. However, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a colossus among the Yoruba and popularly known as 'The Sage', had had a stultifying grip that has greatly stifled the emergence of alternative leadership material among the tribe. Even traditional rulers like the Ooni of Ife who is regarded as the ancestral/spiritual leader of the Yoruba did not have that aura of myth around him with which 'The Sage' was shrouded. Perhaps this was why Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola another Yoruba power broker parted ways with Awolowo.

Public opinion have credited 'The Sage' with introducing tribalism and sentimentalism into national politics. Obviously however, it is beyond anyone without the support of his kinsmen to be able to garner such credit. While Awolowo engages the tribe in its own exclusivity, and lays bare his indispensability; the tribe marries him and divorces whatever merit any non-Yoruba figure has and even any Yoruba figure not content to tie himself to Awo's political apron strings.

Today, there isn't any gainsaying that the old Western region and indeed the

Yoruba stock is filled with deep sense of loss and misery with the vacuum left by the death of 'The Sage' who was the undisputed head of the Yorubas. Three years after his exit from the political scene the vacuum has not found an appropriate person to fill it. Perhaps this must be the reason why the Ooni of Ife, who have had to undergo series of Yoruba leadership tussles with some other Yoruba Obas, has been, one way or the other trying to consolidate his hold on the Yoruba as not only their spiritual leader but the political rallying point. His recent statement in

some national dailies bordering on the necessity of the Social Democratic Party having a Yoruba presidential candidate, lends credence to his unguarded crave for the unofficial vacant political stool of the late Sage.

Whatever might have transpired before the Ooni's statement, it is worth noting that such a submission is an expression of all that is wrong with Nigerian politics. Since the formation of the SDP and NRC parties and the membership registration into them, the contentious issue of zoning of political posts have reared its ugly head and consequently, every tribe, each ethnic group and indeed every region and political stronghold have been trying to ensure that its own son(s) or daughter(s) is nominated. In fact, the presidential zoning system has reawakened the hitherto slightly dormant ethnic and tribal expressions in the Nigerian milieu. Not even the strong feelings of government against zoning has tended to border Nigerian politicians.

Money bags who are banned from active politics have been openly supporting candidates of their choice with nobody showing any concern. The government is seeing how these money bags throw their weights behind candidates, without taking any realistically tangible step to arrest it. Events in the last few months and particularly since political campaigns started have not shown any remarkable deviation from the politics of the old and have not given much hope for the envisioned political order. The politics played and woven around past political figures is still seen in play. This further enhances politics of ethnicity, of tribalism and regionalism. For instance, at the inaugural rally of the SDP last October in Lagos, shouts of "Up Awo", "Up Awo", rented the air when Dr. Tokunbo Awolowo Dosunmu, daughter of the late Sage climbed the rostrum.

Traditional rulers as bonafide members of the country and soiled with all that is bad in our political system are not left out of creating a more decadent situation out of an already



Babagana Kingibe: SDP Chairman

pathetic one. It therefore becomes equally important to trace the involvement of traditional rulers in the politics of Nigeria. As the British colonial rule allowed, the district authorities often took sides with the chiefs in any disputes against their subjects particularly with the emerging educated elites. The British found this very convenient method of governance particularly in its preference of the indirect rule through traditional chiefs. This further enhanced the exploitation of the rich, vast and diverse ethnic conglomeration of the entity that is Nigeria.

The powers enjoyed by traditional rulers under the British held sway particularly in the old Western region. This was guaranteed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo who introduced the Chief and Council in place of the Chief in Council practised by the British.

As time went on and as the 21st century draws nearer, the enormous power vested in traditional rulers in their native authorities has fizzled. Probably it is the nostalgia of these enormous power of old that is making some traditional rulers contrive in their various constituencies to foist presidential candidates on the parties. Though, the 1989 Constitution provides that traditional rulers are within their rights to show interest in matters which affect their subjects and their domain, is it not surprising and unconstitutional to expect and to see the royal fathers showing interests in matters political? Politics, being partisan, should not be seen to be played by traditional rulers. The duo—partisan politics and royalty relate just like the relationship of cotton and fire. Traditional rulers are therefore supposed to be the fathers of all residents in their domain. They should be seen at all times to be impartial and nonaligned with any particular political party. The idea of publicly endorsing the candidacy of some aspiring politicians from a particular ethnic group by a traditional ruler from that same extraction clearly violates this worthy expectation. And not only does it render the traditional rulers more vulnerable to accusation of



Chief Tom Ikimi: NRC Chairman



Oba Lamidi Adeyemi: Alafin of Oyo



Sultan Ibrahim Dasuki: Any role in partisan politics?

partisanship, or tribalism or ethnicity, it could also exacerbate the polarisation of the country into hostile ethnic and political camps.

The voice of reasonable dissent raised by the Awujale of Ijebu-land, Oba Sikiru Adetona condemned tribal consideration in selecting presidential candidates by the two political parties. This Oba is from the Ooni's flock. The Awujale told Chief Tom Ikimi, National Chairman of the NRC in his palace that "Selection on tribal basis may turn the president in wanting to see himself as a regional or tribal president who owes his region or tribe a special obligation" at the expense of the broader national aspiration.

The Ooni who uttered the following words to Ambassador Babagana Kingibe "I appeal to you not to forget the Yoruba when you are choosing your presidential candidate", received yet what appeared to be an indirect condemnation from his archrival for the Oyo Oba's leadership — the Alafin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi who spoke to Ambassador Kingibe in parables was apparently reacting to the Ooni's attempt to parade himself as the head of the Yorubas by his call for a Yoruba presidential candidate for the SDP. The Alafin told the SDP Chairman that if anyone thinks he can deliver the Yoruba votes in block, he is joking. The foregoing points to the singular fact that even the Yoruba house itself is not in order as traditional rulers, supposed fathers of the people, are seen openly countering one another.

Traditional rulers generally who should be detached from politics must not be seen to be choosers of who should rule the country.

By so doing, they would be dragging their royal selves through controversies on the pages of newspapers as the Ooni has just done. If they stay apart from partisan politics, they will save us the agony which we have undergone before and which we have no need to undergo once more.

*By Abubakar Abba Tahir
with Bawa Danjuma
and Mohammed B. Salau*

Ooni of Ife Makes a Move

The People React

Oba Sijuade Olubuse II, the Ooni of Ife seems made of controversy. The Yoruba traditional ruler was the one, who along with Ado Bayero, the Emir of Kano, had his movement restricted within his domain for six months for visiting Israel without official clearance, thereby defying government's official stand of no relations with the Zionist state. This happened during the later days of the Buhari/Idiagbon regime.

Sunday, the 11th, of November, 1990, the Ooni flew another ominous kite. Taking advantage of the presence of the National Chairman of the Social Democratic Party, SDP, Ambassador Baba Gana Kingibe, who was in his palace to pay him homage, the Ooni told the Chairman to consider a Yoruba person as the party's presidential candidate.

"I appeal to you not to forget the Yorubas when you are choosing your presidential candidate", the Oba said. "The Yorubas who I'm their leader are good people and I can assure you that they would not disappoint your party" he further said.

The Oba's remarks since then have generated swift and mixed reactions to what some critics say is too indecent.

On the other hand other critics say the reactions are uncalled for. That the Oba has the right to air his opinions on whatever issue.

According to Mr. J.A. Adamudu, a librarian, "There is nothing to it. He was only expressing a wish. It is left for the party to decide if a Yoruba is good material for the presidency". Mr. Adamudu said that the Ooni could only be taken to task if he had contravened any laid down rules.

In a counter reaction, Ado Ali, a lawyer with H.S. Usman and Company, said the Oba has not only showed how tribalistic he was, he has breached the transition to civil rule programme. "His, was not an opinion expressed. He

showed his intense interest in politics". Ado Ali wondered why the government has not moved to prosecute the Oba since "all traditional ruler are barred from politics. More over by asking for a



Prof. Jerry Gana, MAMSER Boss:
Keeps a silence

Yoruba presidential candidate, he was preparing the Yoruba peoples' mind. If any Yoruba presidential candidate loses the election, the Yorubas could grumble that the presidency has been snatched from them."

"If the past is anything to recall, the Yorubas would take to violence to avenge what should be theirs. That does not augur well for this country" Ali said.



Dr. Yusuf Bala Usman: Critic of
traditional institutions

Yusuf Johnson of the National Directorate of Employment sees the Ooni's statements thus: The Ooni was being selfish. If he had expressed a desire for a southern president, no one would bat an eye lid. It is very unusual to hear such from a natural leader. But it is time we realised that the leadership of this country has been too one sided. Unless of course we want another civil war.

Opinion of the party to which the Ooni's advice was directed was sought. Their own reaction was as swift. The Publicity Secretary at the Kaduna Local Government secretariat, Alhaji Jimoh Olorun Nimbe said the Ooni's statement came at a very wrong time. "The party is not interested in the presidential elections right now. What is upper most in our minds is the Local Government elections. Even so, SDP does not recognise any tribe. The Ooni was only pushing his peoples' interest. SDP stands for democracy of which fundamental human rights is a pillar. The Oba was only exercising his freedom of speech".

But Dr. S.K. Faleye of Dalili Medical Centre sees the issue differently. He thinks the Ooni of Ife was tactless in expressing his views. Dr. Faleye said it was uncalled for and that the Ooni should have resorted to extolling the ability and capability of the Yorubas rather than being so categorical.

At the National Electoral Commission's Office, the resident electoral officer said NEC Kaduna was not in a position to make a statement. While referring *Hotline* to Lagos, he said every body was entitled to his or her opinion.

MAMSER is in charge of efforts at detribalising politics of the Third Republic. At the Kaduna office, a highly placed and reliable source noted that it was most unfortunate for the traditional ruler to make such 'pregnant' statement. The source said Oba Sijuade Olubuse II was simply asking his subjects to go for SDP, with all the attendant results of ethnicity marring the political process.

By Tony Inwulale

Abuja: Mayoralty and the Natives Factor

Martins Oloja, Lagos Editor of *Abuja Newsday*, had cause to raise critical questions on the Abuja mayoralty factor in the opinion page of *The Guardian* on Sunday 4th November 1990. In the piece, Mr. Oloja attempted an X-ray of genuine issues bordering on the political cloud surrounding the novel stool which if left in the uneasy pit of insolvency, would throw the nascent capital into an unqualified political rubbish heap. Very worthy of note among others of course, is the uncertain future of the yet to be evacuated, relocated and compensated original natives of the Federal Capital City. As the last lap of the journey to the new capital draws nearer, one wonders what the future of the natives still living within the FCT area would look like. This is because majority of them were not compensated and have no defined destinations to shift to other than the land of their birth. Even if they have, at least a temporary imaginary abode to shift to, the financial wherewithal to transform such plans into realistic shelter tents have not been forthcoming from government. Their only hope, the compensation which they have been dreaming about for years now has remained an illusion. Just as Mr. Oloja stated in his piece, the few who have been compensated and relocated initially have, in the absence of reasonably befitting abode similar to their original homes, returned to the Federal Capital Territory. This number of returnees when added to the number of those who haven't moved an inch because they were neither relocated nor compensated, takes us to square one, that none of the natives has moved out of the FCT.

The fear expressed by Mr. Oloja that the continued presence of the natives in the territory would dominate the politics of the FCT is out of place. Though full of underlying factual mechanisms, the view is not devoid of technical porosity. Much as this pen does not attempt to claim legal authority on the status of the FCT, it is not a

misnomer to submit that realistically, the Federal Capital City was not built on a virgin plain. Rather than being a no man's land, it was a disvirgined entity since time immemorial just like Lagos was. As a matter of logic, if it becomes an accident of history that the original natives of Abuja still linger around it to clamour for political control of their homeland out of sheer democratic zeal, pending proper relocation and compensation by government, they should be allowed a breathing space to exercise their civic rights, nay their human responsibilities at least for now. Moreso, even if the presidential palace finally moves to the new FCT, and the natives expediently settled in the neighbourhood by government, which



*Maj. Gen. Gado Nasko (rd):
FCT Minister*

sons of the soil would legitimately be entitled to contest for the mayorship stool? Who apart from the original inhabitants comprising of the Gwaris, the Koros, the Gwandaras and the Hausa/Fulanis?

To the black race in general mayoralty is a novel attempt to fuse modernity into traditional African values. By Nigerian and indeed African standards, the mayor equals an Emir, Chief, Oba or Obi in terms of functions and roles. This fusion presupposes a traditional outgrowth of people's cultural heritage. Although the ascension to the throne is not without intra-palace politicking. The case of Nigeria's federal city must not be an exception lest we define it as a city out of black demography.

By conventional wisdom, therefore and by every reasonable yardstick, no "immigrant" should be qualified to vie for the mayorship chair of Abuja so long as the native stock lives.

Like any Nigerian Prince to his bonafide royal stool, the Abuja natives wheresoever, they may be reserve the singular entitlement to contest among themselves for the FCT stool and subsequently occupy it. This is if justice is to be applied. Partly because whosoever becomes the mayor eventually will be the custodian of the original people's culture I fear greatly what the picture might be if an immigrant contests and ascends to the mayorship chair. Certainly considering the difference in cultural heritage, the immigrant would only enact socio-cultural blunders while on the throne. And thus the culture of the Abuja natives suffers a deadly blow which may go on to mean that in a short while the cultural artifacts and values of the FCT natives would gradually be phased out of our archives.

In the unfolding political scenario of the FCT, regardless of the Federal Capital City status of Abuja, its traditional chief (the mayor) shall be subservient to at least the Emir of Suleja for filial royal seniority out of whose domain Abuja was carved out.

This, by implication, suggests that the impending mayor shall be the temporal representative of Abuja natives at any forum. And since the country's president, the FCT minister and four democratically elected local council chairmen would be in-charge of the political and administrative concerns of Abuja at different levels, the mayor would rightly fit in as the custodian of the culture of Abuja natives.

Lest we forget that Nigeria's capital is being moved to Abuja because of the congested life in Lagos among other reasons, the chaotic coastal fringe, never conceded the native status of its citizens-the Isale Ekos as a precondition of becoming Nigeria's bubbling administrative and political

17 Years of NYSC

Hotline team of writers riffle through the sour-sweet history of the National Youth Service Corps, Nigeria's version of the kibbutz

Besides the primary objective of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) of inculcating "in Nigerian Youths the spirit of selfless service to the community, and emphasizing the spirit of oneness and brotherhood of all Nigerians irrespective of cultural or social background," it also set out to tackle attendant problems of the country as a developing nation vis "acute shortage of high skilled manpower (coupled with a most uneven distribution of the skilled people that are available); establishing a great and dynamic economy. . . ." The National Youth Service Scheme was therefore set up in 1973 as a means of solving most of the structural problems that bedeviled the young nation at independence. Most of these seemingly intractable problems were such that compounded the burden of the newly independent nation especially that of reconstruction immediately after the bloody civil war that left the country with a ravaged economy. It became a necessity for the Gowon government after the civil war to set fresh goals and objectives that were aimed at making Nigeria a united and self-reliant nation.

One of the most important objectives of the scheme was "for employers, partly through their experience with Corps members, to employ more readily qualified

Nigerians irrespective of their states of origin and to enable our youth to acquire the spirit of self-reliance."

This was to enable these experienced Nigerians to put in their best and all the knowledge they acquired in their various institutions of higher learning to contribute to the productive realities of

the economy of the country. It is not as if Nigeria as a nation does not have the capable and ingenious economic contributors to the betterment of a battered economy, but the problem is that of articulation and that is exactly what the National Youth Service Scheme aims to do: to gather and articulate the specialised manpower or needs of this country under one umbrella in order to enhance adequate productivity.

It would be worth while to note also that embedded in the National Youth Service Scheme is the Community Development Service (CDS) which is "a scientific method of promoting self reliance through deliberate and useful exploitation of all forms of available human and material resources." This is an effort to draft the corp members into the development of manpower needs of the country. It is worthy of note that especially now, that the country is going through terrible moment of economic reconstruction that the in-put and contributions of the Youth Service Scheme cannot be over emphasised. Through the NYSC scheme, the productive capacities and scientific and technical potentials of our educated citizens are

headquarters.

In the light of the foregoing, from the onset, the government has no moral justification to declare Abuja a virgin plain. Certainly inconceivable even because the aforementioned natives of the new capital lived there and are still living on a sprinkle of the land which is a manifest testimony of birthright and origin. The government and people of Nigeria must therefore be told in clear terms that realistically, the Federal Capital entity is not a no man's land, rather it is the land of the Gwaris, the Koros, the Gwandaras, and the Hausa/Fulani collective leased out to government-out of sheer patriotism not force.

There can only be one of the two: either a virgin land with no traces of original natives; or natives of a disvirgined land with bonafide claim of birth right and origin. History cannot merely be erased with a rag duster.

While this pen salutes the government and people of Nigeria for having the model Abuja as the nation's new federal capital, it is worthy to note however, that during the early quest for the new capital, not much emphasis was laid on situating it on a virgin plain. If there was any, Abuja, the original home of about 400,000 Original natives couldn't have been chosen as a virgin land.

Unless we are told that in the process of finding a virgin plain, Abuja, an already disvirgined land appeared to be the centre of Nigeria and hence its consideration and subsequent burial of the virgin land crave.

In the final analysis, care must be taken not to consider the relocation, factor as a federally orchestrated ploy to annihilate all traits of the Abuja natives from the FCT. The natives more than anyone else at least for now, reserve the right to feature, contest and of course dominate the politics of the new capital city. Rather than saying the natives hijack the national monument, they are in reality struggling to judiciously reap at least a fraction of the fruits of their rare patriotisms to concede the land of their birth in the nation's interest.

By Abubakar Abba Tahir



Col. Animasun Braimoh, NYSC Director

NIGERIA

properly harnessed.

Since it is generally believed that Nigeria has the immense human and material resources to sustain its economy, it therefore becomes necessary to inculcate in the youths of this country the attitude of less dependency on the government in meeting their economic needs. After all, it was said by one of America's greatest leaders, President John Fitzgerald Kennedy that "Think of what you can do for your country and not what your country can do for you". Especially now that there is not much the country can do for its youths and indeed most of its citizens but it looks forward to what the citizens can do by way of contribution to the sustenance of its economy.

It is to this end and in the effort to curtail or even to fight against the culture of waste, exploitation, incapability of utilising the available resources that the National Youth Service Corps introduced the Community Development Service (CDS). And in order to enhance adequate productive out-put on the part of the corps members, it has embedded in its governing law "the urge to create a new social and economic awareness. Its science deals with conscious, purposeful and deliberate direction of all energies, skills and capabilities towards meaningful personal and social progress. It directs and regulates personal and social progress by eliminating all forms of obstacles which impede progress, change and conscious resistance against poverty, unemployment or hunger..." the Community Development Service (CDS) therefore was envisaged as a positive cure for under-utilisation of manpower and economic resources, economic stagnation and dependency.

As a very vital aspect of the National Youth Service Scheme, the Community Development Service Scheme (CDS) had a dream of creating the ability in each corps member posted to his or her place of primary assignment, to sustain material and technical bases which in essence might herald the genesis of an industrial and perhaps social revolution in this country. This, no doubt,



Corps members march at a parade

harnesses the intellectual development and creativity of all corps members who are still bubbling with their intellectual acquisition and are enthusiastically ready to put them into play.

Besides a commitment to creativity, invent, explore and a conscious striving towards a material and technical bases, the NYSC enhance a most scientific foundation for securing appropriate economic and technological advancement which the nation desperately needs. This invariably becomes a blessing for the nation if its youths can qualitatively bring changes and life into its major industries as they utilise their wide range and allied knowledge to develop and enlarge new and alternative raw materials to step up our economic output.

Further more, it is an avenue for corps members to bring more of physical work out of their mental knowledge, and to discard the culture of the ugly contrariety between mental and physical labour where it is believed among the highly educated Nigerian that it is their inalienable rights to monopolise management positions in the economy, while the bulk of the manual labour is left to the less educated. The scheme believes that "the levels of this nation's ever increasing unemployment situation invariably means that the line of demarcation between mental and physical work must be eliminated. In fact the present state of Nigeria's economy demands that both skilled and unskilled, mental or physical work must be intentionally

mixed and equally recognised to enable each corps member make useful contribution towards the achievement of the required level of production forces for material and technical development."

Laudable as these ideals are towards economic progress, there is no doubt there has been an unfortunate deviation from these. After orientation, corps members are faced with their primary assignments which incidentally is a complete tale of uncertainty and hysterical frustration. He now has to battle with unnecessary and sometimes callous postings. It is time to know that the english graduate is better qualified to serve in the nation's biggest Petrochemical Plant than the chemical engineering graduate. Or that the accounting graduate is better suited for teaching in some locality where his services are practically irrelevant while the literature graduate is expected to audit the ledgers of the biggest banks and forms in the city. This is, a defeated sense of professional dissemination of skills. The corps member who is more often than not provincial as regards his state of primary assignment, has to go through the gruesome ordeal of being rejected either due to over-qualification or complete irrelevance to his place of primary posting.

These in essence destroy the basis of professionalism for effective and coordinated output. There are a whole lot of these corps members who, after they must have been posted to their places of primary assignment and

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rejected, still come back and hang around the NYSC Secretariat for days on end waiting, praying and hoping that they are redeployed to another area. Those of them who finally find themselves in one place or another are already frustrated and exhausted to settle down and put in their very best towards the advancement of the place and hence that of the country. And even in some cases they are further exposed to the shameless exploitation of the employer of labour who uses him as if he is a full time worker without adequately remunerating him. Whether then is the case for youth participation in national development which is said to be indisputable as they are valuable assets which contribute immensely to national production?

If the manpower potential of the nation is to be fully tapped and evenly distributed, then the whole exercise should be more adequately funded by the federal government. This way, the fresh crop of professionals can be drafted annexed into the main stream of the productive network of the country in such a way that they are not discouraged by harsh conditions caused by the careless supervision and programming and ineptitude of government officials to reduce the noble objective of government into absurdity. Taking into consideration that the government pumps millions of Naira annually as subvention into the project only to be poorly supervised with a pathetic resultant effect on the country's financial resources which is already dwindling. It should be remembered by the administrators of this scheme that the country cannot, in this heady times, afford to allow its objective of revamping the economy be jeopardised by administrative miscreants who are inarticulate in their efforts at harnessing the product unity of youth corps members in their various areas of primary assignment.

What is more, these officials are inept in their duty of carrying out proper supervisions and monitoring of the activities of corps members and how they fare under their various employer

Besides, funds necessary for corps members to carry out any meaningful developmental activities are often not forthcoming. And where there are one or two corps members, exceedingly productive, the funds for such projects often comes out of their meagre allowance of N250, which is even late in coming. Most unfortunately however, these corps member are only recognised for their efforts with certificates and or National Awards with promise of a place in government parastatal without ensuring a continuum, thus heralding the death of such welcome projects.

In order to harness the various scientific development of corps members the federal government needs to set up corps members scientific and research centres throughout the federation, to particularly encourage scientific researches for the advancement of the Nigerian economy. If government could set up institutes such as that of International Affairs to boost better understanding of foreign policy matters, the same urgency is needed to set up a similar institute for the promotion and meaningful coordination of scientific studies by corps members.

The N.Y.S.C. scheme has drastically deteriorated in its objective particularly in the area of providing cheap, meaningful and productive manpower for the advancement of the economy. It has now become an avenue for employers of labour to exploit innocent young Nigerians to maximise tax-free profit without adequately remunerating the corps members.

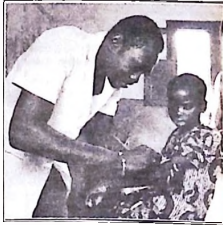
The relevance of the NYSC scheme has never been in doubt, especially in the area of education.

Looking at the background, goals, set-backs, and achievement of the scheme, since it took off 17 years ago. One cannot help, but agree that the NYSC programme is the most meaningful of government programme.

However, according to Mrs. Nwankwere, a senior staff with the Federal Government College Kaduna, the establishment of the programme has helped very much in the development of

out country, especially in education. She said "corpers are posted to schools, especially in the rural areas to ease the problem of acute shortage of teachers". According to her they are posted to teach subjects for which teachers are lacking. Though this, she said, has sometimes resulted in the corpsers themselves being assigned to teach subjects in which they are not specialised.

On the contributions of the corpsers to education she pointed out that: "They do help although some take the one year programme as a kind of transition period for them, thereby messing up the teaching profession." She however, agreed that the scheme has helped to a



NYSC doctor examines a patient

great extent.

Mr. Vitus Ezechukwu, Director of the NYSC Secretariat in Kaduna, pointed out that the main objective of posting corps members to teach in schools, more specially in the rural areas is to fill in the gap created by lack of adequate personnel, and also for them to impart their knowledge to the students.

If the federal government is hoping to continue exploiting the skills of the most potent echelon of its labour force with such poor supervision and mismanagement, there should be a rethink. Moreso, when the scheme has failed to meet a third of its target due to under-funding. This is necessary because the officials responsible for proper recruitment and posting of corpsers in accordance with their area of specialisation have often failed in their duty. Where then is the direction of

advancement? Besides, most corps members eventually end up in the capitals of the states of primary posting due to poor attention on the part of the authorities, hence defeating the ideal of adaptations and national integration.

To give another great impetus to the scheme, federal government should include the youth corps members in its

1991 minimum wage plans if it must ease their sufferings. By so doing, the corps members enhanced standard of living will influence their production output generally. This could, properly harnessed, reduce the brain-drain syndrome as well as rural to urban migration trend which does not augur well for the country's hope of

technological advancement. If the government make sure that the corps members serving the grassroots are better remunerated, then the ideal of rural integration would be much easier than what is presently going on.

By Bawa Danjuma
with Mohammed B. Salau,
Tony Inwulate and Betty Ikpeama

The Agency of Youth and Service

Egbunike Augustine had just concluded his bachelors' degree in Statistics at the University of Ibadan in December 1989. And on realisation of his posting to Kaduna State for his N.Y.S.C. national service, "I was briefly crestfallen and disappointed. I had hoped to serve in one of the southern states, preferably Lagos or my home state, Bendel State. I had never travelled beyond Ilorin into the true north in all my life, and I had the scary feeling of the problem of communication as I barely could speak any passable Hausa by any comparative standard.

After the orientation and all its inadequacies, I was posted to the National Population Commission in Kaduna, the state capital which was almost all corps wish for. When I arrived at the Commission, the Secretary was in fact unhesitant to show his dismay at my posting, since the National Headquarters had given directives that no corps were to be accepted for the year. I was baffled at why another federal organisation (NYSC) which knew of this order decided to post people there in the first place. This was actually the beginning of my worries. I could not quickly find an alternative so, I had to squat with some other corpsers as I could not find accommodation in a town I hardly knew anybody.

However, after being rejected in three other places, I was eventually bailed out by a member of the Crocodile Club, Dr. Kalada Dick Iruenabere, who offered me a job at his hospital, Kalif Hospital and Maternity in Kaduna. And by this very rare gesture, I have come to love the town in a bitter-sweet way.

If you can just imagine how a first timer in Kaduna is expected to survive

on N250 for six weeks (corpers allowances are often delayed), then you will possibly understand how much NYSC and the federal government really care for the labour-force which is supposed to be the future's hope.

The whole scheme could be better managed if the officials in-charge cared to alleviate the corpsers' problems by finding time to conduct surveys of all firms in need of corpsers' services all year round, and how many of these firms could afford to augment the paltry N250 paid monthly to corpsers. Otherwise, the federal government should reschedule all arrangements for the programme to guarantee a service year without tears.

Eventually, I will ever be grateful to the NYSC programme for making me see a place I never believed I would, plus its experiences of hardship which would stand me the test of a lifetime."

Sola Jumat Lawal, is a 27 years old indigene of Oyo State with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English Language from the Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife. After his final examinations, Sola Lawal was posted to Kaduna state for his national service, a State he has never visited.

After his orientation, Sola was posted to Hotline Publishing Company in Kaduna, and like many corps members, he faced the problem of accommodation. The search, according to him "took me to nearly all nooks and crannies of the city, but it was all an effort in futility". His search for accommodation took him, to Zaria, 78 kilometres from Kaduna. According to him "it is where I put up with a friend. And everyday, I have to shuttle between Zaria and Kaduna".

Sola was thus exposed to the hazards of having to journey everyday from Zaria to Kaduna. And it was during one of such trips, on a fateful Thursday, the 15th of November, 1990 that death stared him in the face. The motor in which he was travelling to Kaduna from Zaria, had an accident in which he sustained very serious injuries on parts of his face and limbs. At the hospital (ABUTH) in Kaduna it was all a tale of



Sola

woe as there was no adequate medical attention. "And when I requested that the NYSC secretariat be contacted on phone, the message could not get through."

"This is just a chip of the iceberg, just a relatively insignificant fraction of an almost unquantifiable ordeal corpsers' throughout the nation go through. The laudable intentions of the originators of the noble programme is being callously underplayed." He made the charge that "nothing stops the government from providing low cost houses and transportation system in each local government in the country specifically to cater for the need of corpsers..."

Whatever is worth doing at all, fairness stipulates that it should be done well. The youths are suffering immensely.

By Danjuma Bawa

NYSC in Arts, Culture & Sports

The Corps scheme has been achieving wonders in exposing Nigerian youths to the diverse cultures of their country and to the possibilities in them for arts, culture and sports

It's been seventeen years since the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established. In 1973, the Gowon administration, having at the back of its mind the need for integrating and exposing the youths to the heterogeneous culture of the peoples of Nigeria, introduced the NYSC scheme. Since then there has been no turning back. The service programme was to act as the melting pot in which religious and tribal differences will be diffused and the spirit of national unity imbued for the overall survival and development of the country.

Prior to the introduction of this programme, there existed an enormous level of ignorance on the part of many Nigerians (including those who have passed through the university system) about other parts of the country they have never visited. But with the introduction of the scheme, each year, new graduates from universities and polytechnics are statutorily required to serve (mostly in states other than those of their origin) for twelve calendar months, when, after orientation, they are posted out for primary assignments in various organisations. Thousands of Nigerians that have passed through the programme have concluded that the scheme is particularly culturally revealing.

Kayode Agbi, a businessman based at Akure, was among the first batch of the 1988/89 youth corpsers posted to Sokoto state. Having spent all his life before then in the western part of the country, Kayode initially found the art works, mode of dressing, food and the idea of not giving free access into his friends' houses because they bore the inscription *Ba'a Suga* (No entry), among other peculiar cultural practices of the indigenes of Sokoto quite strange. However, today, he has this to say about his twelve months service experience in Sokoto State: "Initially, I experienced a

severe cultural shock, but during the course of my national service I learnt more and appreciated the ways of the indigenes of Sokoto state. In fact I now explain many of their peculiar practices to other people mostly members of my family and friends who have never been to the North so that they will understand and cooperate with them and other Northerners more".

Ramatu Umar, a housewife in Kaduna, was particularly carried away by the art and craft works of the people of Benin, Bendel State, where she was posted from one of the Northern states in the 1987/88 service year. According to her, she learnt how to carve some wooden items in Benin during her service year. Today, she is improving, producing more complex figures and imparting her know-how to some of her close friends.

Imparting artistic and cultural knowledge to hitherto insufficiently exposed Nigerians about the places they have been posted for their compulsory national service which obviously lessens differences and enhances national unity is certainly not the only positive contribution of the NYSC scheme with regards to arts and culture. Mr. V. N. Ezechukwu, Kaduna State

NYSC Director, without giving clear cut examples throws more light on this. He reiterated that corpsers have contributed a lot to the Nigerian arts and culture. In his own view "Corpers who are qualified artistes, playwright and dramatists have always extolled native cultures in their artistic works and plays." This, according to him has always been an important development which helps to strengthen the country's culture. Mr. Ezechukwu further asserted that the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) has particularly taught corpsers, like majority of Nigerians, a big lesson. "They now look inwards more than ever before for most of their requirements and this is a really positive development when one talks in terms of arts and culture."

Other people, while agreeing that the NYSC scheme helps in reducing, to a considerable extent differences that encumbers the growth and development of the country, are also of the view that the programme has only helped in stultifying the Nigerian indigenous art and culture. These people predicate their opinions on the fact that, most if not all, Nigerians that have passed through the Western educational system and thus partake in the NYSC scheme, have a high level of predilection for foreign arts and cultures. Aliyu Abdullahi, a Lagos based legal practitioner encapsulates the opinions of those who hold this view. He succinctly stated that "despite



Youth Corpsers: Positively advertising whose culture?

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1989/90 Niger States Directors Cup Football Squad

SAP, you see that both male and female corpsers that punctuate the various parts of Nigeria are wearing outrageous hairstyles, they prefer foreign music and disco parties. They also shun indigenous food. These are the same people posted to schools to teach the little ones. Definitely, the young school children are being imbued with Western culture. Youth corpsers are really helping to kill our indigenous culture."

Be that as it may, there is no gainsaying the fact that the national service programme has generally contributed significantly to arts and culture in Nigeria. However, one question will for sometime remain to generate controversy any day. And that is, whose arts and culture is the NYSC scheme positively advertising, ours or the Western culture?

With regards to sporting activities, the NYSC programme has since its inception contributed significantly. Acknowledging the fact that sport generally is an essential prerequisite for fostering the spirit of brotherhood and oneness which, taken in broader perspective enhances national unity, the originators of the NYSC scheme included sporting activities in the

service programme. Therefore, during the short period of orientation in various camps, youth corpsers are expected to participate in sporting activities like soccer, basketball, volleyball, among others. It has been averred by many who have undergone the national service programme, that the period of sporting activities in the orientation camps have been one of rejuvenation in terms of sports for them. This is so since many who have relegated sports to the background in their priority schedule during their undergraduate days now have time for sports.

Soccer has attained a prominent level when compared with other games played by youth corpsers members. It is so far, the only game that has generated a lot of competition. Hence, a trophy, the Director's Cup, is yearly at stake. Each year, corpsers posted to various states who are proficient in soccer wear jerseys of their state in a bid to clinch the trophy. So far, the current defending champion is the Sokoto State youth corpsers who emerged the champions in the 1990/91 edition of the competition. However, this does not mean that some, if any of these footballing youth corpsers end up joining bigger clubsides for the national

professional or amateur leagues after their service year. Mr. V. N. Ezechukwu agrees that he cannot pinpoint any corps member who served in Kaduna state that currently plays for Ranchers Boss or any other equally big clubside. He however pointed out that as part of the contribution of the NYSC scheme to sports, one cannot underestimate the role played by graduate sports personnel posted to serve in various organisations. These sports personnel help in training a large number of local boys and girls in different games. By this gesture, they help in elevating the country in the field of sports.

Critics are however of the opinion that though the sporting programme contained in the NYSC programme has considerably helped in boosting Nigeria's unity, it has not contributed up to the expected level. They claim that for this level to be attained, other sporting activities have to be elevated to the same level with soccer. So, that, instead of having only the Directors Cup soccer competition, a kind of sports festival that includes, most if not all, sporting activities should be orchestrated.

Observers, while accepting the relevance of the NYSC scheme to national unity are also of the view that youth corpsers can contribute more in arts, culture and sports. This, they concluded can be achieved if youth corpsers are more exposed to the arts and culture of the areas that they are posted for their primary assignments. They advise that inter-marriages involving youth corpsers with indigenes of the states of their primary assignments, which is already in practise, should be more vehemently encouraged. These close observers finally claimed that if youth corpsers are really made comfortable in terms of accommodation and are able to easily acquire their basic needs then their contributions to sports, arts and culture will be more enhanced. Whatever new dimensions are introduced to the NYSC programme, there is no doubting the fact that Nigeria has acquired more unity through the scheme.

By Mohammed Bashir Salau

They now look inwards more than ever before for most of their requirements and this is a really positive development when one talks in terms of arts and culture.

Is the NYSC Working?

The geographical expression called Nigeria, essentially a heterogeneous entity, has had a chequered history of growth ranging from economic buoyancy to total recession. In 1967, Nigeria, for the first time, experienced a bloody civil war which nearly caused the disintegration of the entire nation. Although the war ended on a no-victor no-vanquished note, enormous disaffection had been created among the diverse ethnic groups. In 1973, the then Head of State Gen. Yakubu Gowon (rtd), in an attempt to restore unity and cooperation among the citizenry introduced the National Youth Service Corps scheme, a programme under which graduates from various part of the country are posted out of their states of origin, for a one year national service.

The NYSC was essentially introduced to serve as a means of integrating and exposing the youths to the heterogeneous culture of the peoples of Nigeria. It was to act as the melting point where religious and tribal differences would be diffused and the spirit of national unity encouraged for the continued survival of the nation.

The NYSC act was formally promulgated in 1973 by Decree no. 24 of 22nd May 1973 with the following objectives:

- (i) To inculcate discipline in our youths by instilling in them a tradition of industry at work and, of patriotic and loyal service to the nation in any situation they might find themselves.
- (ii) To develop common ties among our youths and promote national unity.
- (iii) To encourage corp members to seek at the end of their service, career employment all over the country thus promoting the free movement of labour.
- (iv) To induce employers partly through their experiences with corp members, to employ more readily qualified Nigerians irrespective of state of origin.
- (v) To enable Nigerian youths to acquire the spirit of self reliance.
- (vi) To develop in our youths, attitudes

of mind acquired through shared experience and suitable training which would make them more amenable to mobilisation in the national interest.

(vii) To raise the moral tone of our youths by giving them the opportunity to learn about higher ideals of national achievement and social and cultural improvement.

A typical NYSC year programme is divided into four phases:- The orientation programme, primary assignment, community development service (CDS) and the winding up programme/passing-out parade.

The four weeks of the general orientation programme is usually compulsory for all corp members. During this period, members undergo an orientation course comprising drills, physical exercises, lectures and leadership training activities.

During the period, corp members live a fairly regimented life in camps usually located outside state capitals. The corp members' nightmare actually starts at the orientation camp; the rigorous and hectic exercise; the unusual early morning jogging that compels them to be at the parade grounds at very early hours. The climax of it all is when they are being sent to their various areas of primary assignment: the "unlucky" ones are sent to rural areas where electricity and pipe-borne water are usually absent. The numerous problems that usually beset corp members, have made some satirists refer to the NYSC as "Now Your Suffering Continues". Apart from the endemic problems of funds and settling down in an unfamiliar environment, the NYSC had continuously been held out and accordingly regarded as a source of cheap labour. The dehumanising treatments which corp members are made to experience in their places of primary assignment, should bother anybody with the milk of human kindness. It is not uncommon to see corp members roaming the streets, from one office to the other 'begging' to be

accepted in places where they had been posted to. Most non-government establishments and even some gov. agencies refuse to accept corp members posted to them due to financial or administrative, as well as other ulterior reasons.

The attitude of employer of labour with regards to the welfare of corp members especially in the areas of accommodation, transportation and full employment after the service year reveals the lack of commitment to the entire programme. Thereby turning what was originally designed to be a most enriching gesture into a most frustrating period for corp members.

During the service year, corp members are also required to do a compulsory community development service (CDS) during which time they do such works as construction of culverts, bridges, and drainages, cleaning the streets, etc. The medical graduates among them offer free medical services to the public. Corp members also work at the various NYSC farms. The produce from these farms are partly used in feeding the corp members during orientation and the left over are sold out at reduced prices.

The questions that we should address our minds to should therefore be: Can Nigeria continue to fund the NYSC scheme? if no, why don't we scrap it and save graduates the embarrassment of living like refugees without accommodation or adequate fund. The endemic transportation problem has also resulted in the death of a number of corp members. With the present economic situation, is it possible for corp members to survive on the N250 monthly allowance? Considering the fact that the scheme was introduced and adequately funded during Nigeria's oil boom era, the present dwindling economy calls for a reconsideration of the continuous existence of the NYSC. There should be an overhaul of the socio-economic order of the scheme to make it more profit-oriented to both the federal government, and the corp members too. What is worth doing at all, is worth doing well.

By Joyce Echieze

Transition Rears Vandalism

It is barely a month now since political campaigns by both the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) began nationwide and already violence and thuggery as well as intra-party and inter-party squabbles have started to rear their ugly heads. Considering what we have suffered in the past as a nation, it is most unfortunate that Nigerian politics should in any way be associated with violence. Even the content and styles of the two political parties we are experimenting with to see us through the entrenchment of enviable democracy so far have shown that their leaders are yet to effectively grapple with the art and strategies of meaningful electioneering campaign.

Stories emanating from all over the federation, especially during the primaries for the December 8 Local Government elections, are most disturbing thus making many Nigerians begin to wonder if the new breed politicians can discharge the responsibilities bestowed on them. Provisions of Decree No. 27 of 1989 covering all aspects of Local Government elections in efforts to forestal violence and thuggery explicitly banned drumming and booming of dane guns, but not only have these been violated by followers of the two parties, violence have been erupting resulting in destruction of properties, serious injuries and even deaths. Even the campaign rallies have been haphazardly organised that fundamental issues are not articulated before the electorates. In spite of the fact that the two political parties were founded and funded, at least officially, by the Federal government, the parties have been plunged into divisive factionalism reminiscent of the politics of the Second Republic.

The NRC is now in the midst of intra-party warfare centring on protests by some members about the running of the party by its National Chairman, Chief

Tom Ikimi, which has resulted in the continuous widening of the gulf between the pro-Ikimi and anti-Ikimi factions. There are even reports that some members of the party have embarked on acts designed to sabotage some of the party's campaign strategy aimed at the forthcoming Local Government elections. The crises of the NRC in Lagos involving the state chairperson and a faction of the party has reached such an alarming proportion resulting in an apparent downslide in the party's popularity there. It is sad that the NRC has allowed things to degenerate to a point where a National Monitory Force had to be set up to look into the affairs of the party.

interference by state chairmen in the affairs of Local Government party branches and the imposition of unauthorised fees on political aspirants.

The SDP is faring no better. The party's most recent crisis is happening in Kano where followers of the late Mallam Aminu Kano have strongly opposed the reinstatement of Alhaji Sul Lamido as the state's chairman of the party. The supporters believe that since the party's ideals are off-shoots of democratic socialism of the late Mallam, the reinstatement of Alhaji Sule earlier considered banned by NEC may affect the winning chances of the party in the December polls.

On November 1, the Kaduna Local



Chief Tom Ikimi, Ambassador Babagana Kingibe: Chairmen, NRC and SDP respectively

In Bendel State, the intra-party strife within the NRC has resulted in undercurrent of discontent in view of what is apparently the personal interest which the National Chairman has shown in one of the party's gubernatorial aspirants. Party chiefstains in the state are annoyed that Chief Ikimi sidelined Benin City where he should have started his Bendel state campaign and opted for Warri, the hometown of the favoured gubernatorial aspirant. Elsewhere, problems of the party mostly arose out of the nomination exercise for the forthcoming Local Government polls as well as complaints of undue

Government Executive Committee of the party announced the removal of its chairman, Mallam Dauda Tsoho, following his alleged refusal "to listen to appeals on issues concerning the smooth-running of the party". A few days later the state chapter of the party declared the removal as unconstitutional describing it as an act by "some misguided officials in the Local branch".

The intra-party crisis within the SDP in Cross River State is another pointer to the presence of political spoilers within the parties instead of the political class that is truly committed to politics as a national instrument for progress and



A political rally: How effective?

stability. The Calabar crisis had its genesis in the disagreement over the conduct of the primaries for the Local Government elections and, although the National Chairman of the SDP, Ambassador Babagana Kingibe resolved the dispute, it was not without a sacrifice. It affected the turnout and conduct of the rally, organised with large sums of money, and which was the take off of the party's campaign in the state. In Owerri, Imo State, the police had to stop a scheduled political rally by the party because "none of the two political parties have met the requirements for granting licence to hold rallies in the state". These are just a few instances of intra-party wranglings afflicting the two political parties.

As if these are not enough, both the SDP and the NRC have been neck-deep in inter-party feuds which got to such an alarming stage that President Ibrahim Babangida had to hold a meeting with the two parties' national executives to express his displeasure on what he termed petty party squabbles, unnecessary campaign promises and divisive politics. A week before the meeting, the police had to ban political rallies in Okene and Okchi Local Government areas of Kwara State following the death of an NRC official in a clash between supporters of the NRC and the SDP. This political violence, which also resulted in injuries and destruction of property, came barely a week after the two parties

launched their campaign for the December elections. About the same time in another wave of violence and thuggery in spite of government's repeated calls for a peaceful conduct of campaigns, four Marshalls of the Federal Road Safety Corps were seriously injured and their patrol car damaged by supporters of the NRC in Bauchi.

These indications are clear pointers to a number of things. The situation whereby the two political parties are rent by factionalism portends grave danger for democracy and, as long as those in politics fail to realise the importance of compromise in their pursuit of power, the anticipated growth of honest and dedicated leadership that would use power only for sustaining nation building would remain elusive. The situation also emphasises the need



MAMSER Boss, Jerry Gana:
Baby-sitter

for party leaders to concentrate on taming "undue personal and growing ambition, sectarianism, rabble-raising and mere demagoguery in the politics of the Third Republic."

It is now more than ever that the party leaders should realise that the grasp of their responsibility would be reflected in how the two parties "come alive in their organisation, utterances, operation and performance" and that the politics of the Third Republic must centre on critical issues key among which is how to solve the nations' myriad political problems. The political leaders need to be wary of those within the parties' ranks who take delight in promoting violence, bribery and thuggery in politics because, unless they are eliminated, the objective of the new political order to enthrone grassroots democracy free from money, thuggery, ethnic and religious influences would not be realised. They should warn their followers against indulging in any of these past political vices since it is the way in which the leaders complies in this regard that would tell the public what type of leadership they are trying to provide.

This is also the time for the two parties to shun the spurious, empty and larger than life promises reminiscent of the First and Second Republics and stop offering programmes and ideals not stipulated in the constitution as these would be counter-productive. The present electioneering campaign falls short of expectation because the two parties are already being rent by factionalism and unless the leaders confront the emerging trend and resolve it now, the graver would be the consequences for the party system and for Nigerian democracy.

Above all else, there is need for every Nigerian no matter his or her calling in life to take up the challenge of ensuring that an enviable and lasting democracy becomes operative beginning with the Third Republic. The government should beef up security arrangements to stop the vandals in our midst from ruining our hope for democracy.

By Adamu Isa Muhammad

When Cometh Economic Transition?

The detail and execution of the Political Transition Programme may have convinced everyone of the sincerity of the federal government to disband itself but the Nigerian economic system still totters, with deep implications for civil rule in 1992.

Nigeria is now seething with preparation for the transition to yet another civilian administration. Right now in cities, towns and villages all over the country, political activities have been going on in full swing and that began even before the two political parties - SDP and NRC - started their political campaigns nationwide not only for the forthcoming Local Government elections but also in readiness for 1992. The beehive of



Alhaji Abubakar Alhaji:
A genius at work?

activities that range from political rallies and even house to house campaign is clearly a manifestation of the deep-rooted desire by Nigerians for a democratic system of government in which they may participate in running their lives. It is also a glaring indication of the yearning by Nigerians to have a united, progressive and genuinely independent country.

However, in spite of these democratic aspirations, by Nigerians and, also, in the light of the present military administration's apparent determination to hand over to a democratic-elected government, the

fundamental factor which has been preventing the emergence of a viable democratic political system in this country is still very much with us and that is our economy. The organisation of our economy is still based on the sole purpose of exploitation by foreign concerns and a few Nigerians. As long as this dependent capitalist economy prevails, majority of Nigerians would not be able to exercise any real control over their lives and their natural resources. Therefore to make this experiment on which we are spending billions of Naira succeed, a new economic system has to be evolved. Such an economic order has to be one which our working people control and which is geared toward the survival of all Nigerians.

At present there is still massive unemployment, inflation and hunger and vices like smuggling and profiteering are booming. These are phenomena which make the people insecure and create room for bribery and manipulation of all sorts. Moreover, the imposition of a two-party system, which would most likely further entrench feudalism because of the parties stance on traditional institutions, would seriously militate against the installation of democracy or even make it impossible. Already, reactionary regional, religious and tribal political forces have begun to loom their heads (see cover story). So unless these dangers are removed, the Third Republic would be fraught with crises and instability. The stage would be set for a sharp division in the society between a small group of the rich and the powerful on the one hand, and on the other, the vast majority of the population who are poor and through

whose sweat most of the country's wealth is created.

With such a set up, real political and economic would be in the hands of this small group of the rich who would use it not for the benefit of the society as a whole, but rather to acquire for themselves and their relatives vast wealth, they would loot from the treasures of the nation. In addition, it would perpetuate the bitter struggle between various factions of the rich and powerful for dominant position in government either directly or through their proteges. The hunger for the control of government in Nigeria is for one purpose - it is the main means for the accumulation of private fortunes and unless something is done about this, the Third Republic would end up with instability, chaos and its possible overthrow.

The scourge of unemployment mentioned earlier is not peculiar to Nigeria. It is a feature of all capitalist societies and that is because the backbone of their economy is that private profit and accumulation is by those who do not engage in production. That is why even advanced capitalist countries like the U.S., Britain and Japan have high unemployment rate. In Nigeria, however, the problem is worse because our economy is dominated and controlled by foreign companies with the solid support of some wealthy Nigerians. Here, most of the resources are transferred abroad rather than reinvesting them and these go to create employment opportunities in these foreign lands while the opposite effect is reproduced in Nigeria. With such a situation, it would be foolhardy to hope for political stability in the Third Republic. There can be no stability when a large section of the nation's labour force is unemployed and if care is not taken, these unemployed will be mobilised by politicians in their bitter struggle for political power as thugs. Not that this has not happened even recently. Not that it may not happen again. When cometh the fundamental transition?

By Adamu Abdullahi

Big Business, Bad Deal

The debate on whether Multinational Corporations (MNCs) bring 'development' to Africa is still at the level of political controversy. Opponents and supporters of MNCs have locked horns, and no compromise between the two sides is yet in sight. Our Special Correspondent tries to shed some light on the role of MNCs as they affect the majority of people in Africa.

An MNC is defined as a multi-product firm whose activities extend across international boundaries. It consists of a parent or holding company located in one of the industrialised countries—mostly the USA, and a network of branches or subsidiaries operating in many host countries. There are roughly 11,000 MNCs having 85,000 foreign subsidiaries, accounting for 40% of all world trade and 40% of all industrial output. MNCs market 80-90% of the main commodities exported by ex-colonial host countries.

MNCs are the essential instruments whereby capitalism is maintained on a world scale. They are the backbone of imperialism and are extremely large. In fact, their geographical spread and the money they command makes them much larger than individual countries of even groups of countries. Total value of all goods and services produced by most countries combined is less than the value of each of the largest MNCs sales.

The origin of this system dates back to the time of European slave-trading which enabled huge money surpluses to be accumulated in Europe so that imperialist banks such as Barclays and Standard could be established. Nigeria itself is a creation of MNCs, e.g. Unilever and Royal Niger Company, British-owned firms operating in various parts of the defunct British empire. MNCs thus had global power to establish, merge or destroy states, after the nominal dismantling of Europe's empire in Africa.

Well over three quarters of finance for MNC overseas operations is generated inside the host countries, and less than a quarter comes from the parent company. Capital flows out to

the latter not only as officially declared profits but in various other legal and illegal ways. The parent company exacts a monopoly and charges subsidiaries inordinately high licensing fees and royalties for use of technology over which the parent has monopoly control. An MNC may decide to show high profits in one country and low ones in another if tax on profits in one country is at a higher rate than in another. Taxes imposed by a host country are evaded by intra-MNC trade, as subsidiaries are forced to buy supplies from and make sales to the parent at artificially manipulated prices. Profits are repatriated by means of transfer pricing or double accounting, which is under- or over-valuing of exports and imports according to local tax fares. In these ways, and also by debt-servicing, MNCs take out much more capital than they bring in to ex-colonial countries.

Much of what MNCs produce and sell in host countries is overpriced, unneeded, even harmful goods, marketed by means of deceptive, dishonest and soporific advertising. Government-owned television allows MNCs to blatantly lie about the 'miraculous quantities of "food drinks of future Olympic champions"'. Advertising spuriously appeals to status and prestige needs of the consumer, while nutritional value of what is consumed is in fact, negative.

Ex-colonial countries acquire MNCs technology by renting or buying what they want for their industrialisation which is dependent and divorced from their development needs. Scattered MNCs assembly plants disintegrate and disintegrate the manufacturing process across the globe and prevent individual countries from locally

initiating, planning and controlling industrialisation to meet their own needs. A subsidiary is organically linked to the parent corporation and to other subsidiaries of the trans-national network, and it is virtually a foreign enclave isolated from the rest of the host country's economy. This negates the concept of self-reliant development which presupposes local and regional integration. The multiplier effect of the subsidiary is aimed at the world market and is extremely limited in its capacity to create new jobs in other sectors.

Like the other ex-colonial countries, Nigeria is attractive and profitable to MNCs because of her abundant virtually free labour that enables super-profits to be made. Lack of sufficient on-the-job protection and social security, restrictive labour legislation, repression of trade unions and wage demands have turned Nigeria into a paradise for MNCs.

Corruption is the main means by which MNCs gain and maintain access to politicians, business people and senior civil servants of the host countries. According to figures officially published by the U.S. Senate, ninety-five of the largest American MNCs gave bribes amounting to a billion dollars over a period of three years in order to buy the support and loyalty of local elites in poor countries.

Nigerian governments have for long been aware that MNCs do not in any way develop the economy but merely exploit the status quo for their own profit by utilising knowledge they already possess at minimum cost to themselves. In response to the known dangers and disadvantages of partnerships with MNCs, Nigerian governments believe they can avoid excessive subservience by a policy of diversification, of south-south trade, e.g. with other semi-colonial countries such as Brazil and India. Unfortunately, this has not solved the problem because MNCs control the industrialisation process in those countries too and use them as an indirect bridge to reach and exploit Africa.

A Custom of Porous Borders

By Umaru Muhammad Gummi

To an average Nigerian the mere mention of the Customs and Excise Department creates images of a goldmine of easy riches. A haven of wealth and financial buoyancy, where staffers make money with no sweat attached. Many Nigerians today believe that the only obstacle to wealth via the Customs ticket is to lack the uniform. Although, this is not much to be desired, many Customs Officers and men have shot astronomically into the money bags club within only a short period. But the rapidity and swiftness in getting rich quick under the Customs umbrella depends on the type of posting an officer gets. It is generally assumed that border posts, sea ports and airports are the most lucrative stations. Other postings are not as "good" as these three. Perhaps that is why after the six months rigorous training, the Customs officers and men lobby for postings to such spots.

Despite the prospects of quick, dubious riches in the Customs and Excise sector, a number of impediments stand in the way of efficiency in the discharge of duties by officers. Some of the problems were rooted in the transfer at one time of the department from the Federal Ministry of Finance to Internal Affairs. Instead of helping matters, the transfer caused more harm than good as staff morale continued to dwindle. There is the case of staff stagnation for years without promotion in addition to inadequate equipment to carry out necessary duties. The department workers are still afflicted with frustration, low employee morale and poor staff welfare all of which militate against efficiency and encourage corruption and smuggling. In a situation where the welfare of staff is not guaranteed and incentives are not forthcoming, it becomes difficult for staff to live up to the demands of their job.

Irrespective of rank, for instance, customs men and officers have to queue up at the corridors of the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs, Abuja for interviews before they can be promoted. A trend which is at great variance with what is found in the federal civil service commission, the armed forces or the police. What this goes to imply is that customs men who are not privileged to be serving at the "get rich quick" centres are constrained by artificial forces to stay stagnant on one rank for years, just because they cannot bear the burden of fruitless promotion trips to and from Abuja time and again. The resultant effect of which leads them to do the ugly and the forbidden. They become so loose to the extent of conniving with smugglers to make ends meet at the expense of the nation's already battered economy.

Instead of solving these problems, the then Minister for Internal Affairs, Colonel John Shagaya went ahead to exacerbate them. He reorganised the department and enlarged board membership by appointing full-time civilians with neither prison, immigration or customs experience with a confused chain of duties to perform. Another battalion of transfer of staff from other irreconcilable sectors aggravated the already grave problems.

Such new senior staff who had no experience passed through only a few weeks training only to come and block the promotional chances of experienced staff. Among the inexperienced and inadequately trained officers transferred to the Customs Department are area court judges, secretaries in state and federal ministries, and administrative officers from across the civil service fold, all of whom were appointed to run some customs units. Worst of all, these new faces have already put in nearly thirty years in

government service in different sectors.

However, many people would argue that despite the problems faced by the Customs and Excise Department, it is able to net billions of naira revenue each year. This is really not an improvement on the already poor performance card of the department because, the increase in revenue is a natural after-effect of SAP which make it possible for a few million dollars to read billions of naira. Another reason for rise in custom revenue is the hike in import duties. Today, compared to what we had in the 1970's, custom duties have risen to 100% and in some cases up to 200%.

Whatever might have transpired to lead the Customs and Excise Department into its present mess, Major General Abdullahi Bagudu Mamman, the new Minister of Internal Affairs owes the department a duty to study the problems therein. Identifying the problems carefully would help greatly in proffering solutions.

Among others, the Minister should focus attention on the training of all non-trained and inexperienced employees, provision of all necessary equipment like patrol vans, guns, uniforms, investigation devices, helicopters, communication equipment, etc. Staff welfare, station allowances, office and residential accommodation and the building of staff schools for the children of custom personnel should also be considered. In addition, the concerned authority should ensure the prompt payment of staff salary and payment of pension and gratuity to retiring officers. Unless the aforementioned problems are solved, our Customs and Excise Department would remain a toothless bulldog, all too willing to assist the drain on national wealth.

Gummi is the Chief Executive of Waru Investment Ltd., Sokoto.



Destitutes: How's life on the street?

Destitution

Recently, the Minister of Culture and Social Welfare, Major General Yohanna Kure (rd) said that the Federal Government has concluded arrangements to clear all beggars and destitutes from the Nigerian streets. The government, he further emphasised, intends to expand the rehabilitation centres in Federal, States and Local government areas so that by 1992, the number of destitutes on the streets would have been reduced to the barest minimum.

But laudable as this move is, we might not see a distinct departure from what was witnessed during the Festival of Arts and Culture (Festac) in 1977 when destitutes and beggars were cleared from our streets but returned almost immediately after the festival to resume with vigour, the trade which they seem to know how to do best. The cosmetic and foot-dragging attitudes of governments past and present to this pathetic issue has not been encouraging. Besides, there are a lot of factors militating against the realisation of the rehabilitation objective. These factors often involve the political, social, economic and cultural milieus of the country and the local definitions and priorities.

It is disheartening to note today in Nigeria, the degree which the art of begging has attained. All one needs to do is to take a walk down any of our

major streets and see the different pathetic faces of destitutes which incidentally are misconceived among many Nigerians to mean only the visibly disabled. Destitution, as far as the term goes, does not stop at the doorstep of the physically handicapped, but encompasses those who are "lacking possessions and resources, lacking the necessities of life, and suffering extreme want". Destitution in essence, is a state of being deprived.

We might then ask at this juncture, who is a destitute? Is it the cripple who is totally handicapped to do anything or even fend for himself; is it the deaf, the dumb or the deaf and dumb; is it the leper who cannot make use of his limbs; is it the child whose parents have shirked their responsibilities to him and is left to walk the streets of life unguided; is it the social out-cast who have no where to go but roam the streets; is it the wreck (drug addict) tossed around by the tidal wave of deprivation; is it the lunatic; or is it the man who is economically handicapped with no means of realising a meaningful economic existence? The answers to these posers are not far fetched, because going by the meaning of the term destitution, which is a state of deprivation, it would be realised

that any individual, whether physically disabled or otherwise, lacking in any or all of the necessities of life, is handicapped in so many ways, is a destitute. Because he lacks the ingredients for advancement in life, he is therefore reduced to a beggarly status, dependent completely or almost completely on outside help for survival. It is this man's sense of want and the inability to realise this hunger for necessities i.e shelter, food, clothing, education, health, advancement, etc. that distinguishes him from other men.

The alarming rate which destitution and begging have attained in this



*Maj. Gen. Y.Y. Kure (rd):
Social Welfare Minister*

SOCIETY

country is as a result of series of engendering factors most critical of which are the economic and cultural. The economic recession which the country has been going through since the commencement of the 1980's has resultantly affected the living conditions of Nigerians which could aptly be said to be "... below any definition of human decency". It is a factor that has created the situation whereby the young and the old, the physically and economically disabled, in order to survive in the jungle of deprivation so created by the economic predicaments of the nation, resort to alms-begging.

Economically, the times are so hard for most Nigerians that they find it rather difficult to make ends meet. Parents who were hitherto bread winners for their families suddenly find themselves out of job and still they must keep body and soul together. And how do they do this? They engage in doing menial jobs, and where they cannot find even this to do, they become social as well as economic burdens both to themselves as well as to the society. Most of these poor and extremely deprived parents, in order to survive, resort to begging. And more often than not, to garner more resources, they draft their children into their new found enterprise which hitherto was thought to be the reserve of aliens.

Most school leavers who graduate into a labour market that doesn't have need for them and who do not have the financial backing to go into gainful self employment, resort, as an alternative, to alms-begging or what could aptly be described as "scientific beggary". You see these young men and women, some of them moderately attired accosting people on the streets with pathetic stories to tell in order to get something with which to feed. Though, it has been realised that some of them are crooks, and some others are just plain-lazy, but which ever way they are looked at, they remain sordid expressions of the problem to which government must address itself.

What is more, some customs in the

country encourage the act of begging particularly where we find parents who have given birth to a set of twins. The custom demands that the mother must go on a round of alms begging in order to enhance the survival of the twins. The most unfortunate thing however is that this only happens to set of twins born into very poor families.

In some parts of the country, especially in the North, there is the tradition of sending children from the one part of the North to another in order for them to acquire vast wealth in

organisations and government to alleviate their economic and mental state of being.

Besides keeping these destitutes in rehabilitation centres, what else is government going to do? Is the government just going to keep them in these centres as a sort of good riddance in order to be seen to be doing something? And assuming government succeeds in rehabilitating a good number of the destitutes, what guarantee is there that the type of orientation they receive is going to be



Destitutes in training at Rehabilitation Centre

Koranic education in the domains of learned Islamic scholars. These children called *almajirai*, are expected to fend for themselves while they are with these Mallams. And in most cases they even have to cater for their master by giving him part of the proceeds from their alms-begging. This is a drawback from the past ideal where pupils and scholar live a domesticated life.

Having identified the various facet of destitution and some of the factors that are responsible for them, government must know the category of destitutes it is expanding the rehabilitation centres for. If it is for those who are physically handicapped, what happens to the economically and mentally handicapped? Are these group of people expected to be left to continue roaming our streets because they are nobody's problems? They are bonafide members of the society and as such they also demand as much attention from both concerned humanitarian

beneficial to them so that when they finally graduate from these centres, they remain adequately equipped to be able to cater for themselves? Is there going to be a reversal of their conditions and perception of life or is everything going to remain the same for them? These and many more are the areas government must address itself if it must be seen to be doing something tangible. Furthermore, in tackling these social malady, government must identify and tackle the very root(s) of destitution and if need be, re-educate our people on the evil of alms-begging especially where it is part of their custom. It must also be able to expand and adequately equip our mental institutions or asylums for the mentally deranged and our leprosariums for the lepers as well as special institutions for the blind, deaf and the dumb. These institutions must be equipped with professionally trained teachers and instructors to inculcate a new orientation in the handicapped.

In an interview with the Secretary, Kaduna State Rehabilitation Board, Mr. Henry S. Gyams, Hotline was able to learn some of the problems and impediments towards the Board's realisation of its set objective of catering for the number of destitutes it is able to pick off our streets. Here is an excerpt from the interview:-

Hotline: How did the Rehabilitation Board come into being and when?

Gyams: It came about as a result of the aftermath of the 1977 FESTAC. A lot of disabled persons were picked from the streets and kept somewhere. The government was very concerned and therefore decided to look at the problem very seriously. As a result of that, a unit was created in the Ministry of health and Social Welfare as far back as 1977. Thereafter, the first civilian Governor of Kaduna State said that in order to tackle the problem of despitution and disability in Kaduna State, a board, to be known as Kaduna State Rehabilitation Board needed to be created. So in 1980, the board was created from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to cater for the training and welfare of disabled persons in Kaduna State.

Hotline: What are the main functions of the Board?

Gyams: Basically, it is charged with the responsibility of training disabled people who can be trained in various vocational skills so that they can be adequately equipped with such skills for them to be independent of the society. To an extent, the board is also charged with the responsibility of assisting communities afflicted by natural disaster like flood, fire etc. The Board comes in to distribute relief materials to them.

Hotline: How effective has the Board been ever since?

H.S. Gyams: It's been trying its best to rehabilitate the numerous disabled persons in Kaduna State. Not only rehabilitating them vocationally but also assisting those who want to further their education. And as a result of this, about 131 disabled persons have undergone training here between 1983 and now. About 30 people, through our adult education programme and mass literacy campaign, have been placed in various post primary institutions nearest to their Local Government areas.

Hotline: How many handicapped people do you have right now?

Gyams: Right now, we have 2 centres. One was opened in Katsina shortly after the state was created. Towards the end of last year, Kaduna State Government opened another at Kafanchan. Hitherto, there was only one here in Kaduna. Although, the capacity of these two centres in Kaduna State (Kaduna and Kafanchan) is 500 for Kaduna and 250 for Kafanchan. Right now, Kaduna has 55 people and



Kafanchan 33 people. That makes 88 people in all.

Hotline: Why? There are many disabled persons all over the streets.

Gyams: Rehabilitation is a very complex process. It is not something that you can do depending on quantity. Professionally speaking, effective rehabilitation cannot be carried out if one depends on quantity but rather what you can do to the few in order for the other disabled persons to emulate. If you say they should all be packed there, the aim of rehabilitation will not be achieved. Because, at the end of their training, one may not be able to place them effectively. But above all, the main reason for these lapses is quality. We can only achieve this if we have committed, professionally trained people in the field of vocational rehabilitation for disabled people. And rehabilitation is a very new concept in this part of the country and people have not given themselves for training.

Hotline: But people pass through this centre and still go out on the streets to beg.

Gyams: It is mainly the social stigma attached to disability by society. They believe that disabled people are people who are not capable of doing anything on their own despite the fact that they have knowledge and skill. If a disabled person carries his certificate today to look for a job, he is hardly given the chance to demonstrate his skill. People assume that an organisation with a disable employee will be low in productivity. Even if they start business of their own, people may not patronise them. So if they are frustrated, they are not recognised, they are not integrated or re-integrated into the society or accepted by the society, then they opt for the society's sympathy.

Hotline: What message then do you have for the society?

Gyams: I think the society should heed that part of the Presidents Budget speech of 1986 which says that employers of labour should reserve at least 12% of their labour force for the disabled persons. We should know that disability is not a thing of choice. It can happen to anyone at any time. We should give them the chance to prove themselves.

By Danjuma Bawa

Gwagwalada Local Area Council: A Great Leap Forward

Revolutions come in different dimensions. Some come wearing a gradual garb. Some come in a minuscule impress. While some, like tornadoes, sweeps and in their wake, beholding a new landscape. Like a blitzkrieg, the revolution in Gwagwalada Local Area Council of the Federal capital territory (FCT) with its local Council headquarters in Kwali, leaves a landscape devoid of all the objectionable features of old. What used to wallow in a forgotten age, now resumes, with vigour, to take a place of pride in a modern era. Gwagwalada Local Council has taken a great leap forward.

Gwagwalada Area Council is part of the new Federal Capital Territory, which came into being with the promulgation of decree 6 of 1976. Administrative necessity for the enhancement of an effective development in the Federal Capital Territory made it imperative for a decentralisation. This move led to the creation of Gwagwalada Development Area in 1981, alongside six other development areas. Then in 1988, with the continuation of administrative changes in the Federal Capital Territory, Gwagwalada with the six

other Development Areas, were merged in 1988 to form four area councils. This arrangement invariably gave birth to the new Gwagwalada Area Council which is made up of Kwali and Gwagwalada Development Areas with headquarters in Kwali.

Presently, Gwagwalada Area Council is administered by a care-taker committee headed by a seasoned Administrator, Mallam Abdullahi Umar. Mallam Abdullahi started his civil service career in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as the Development Secretary of Kwali Development Area. He was also the secretary of the FCT resettlement scheme, and the Secretary of FCT Tenders Board. He later was made Deputy Director in the Department of Corporate Affairs of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) during the civil service reforms of 1988. And with the desolution of the Local Government Councils in Nigeria in 1989, Mallam Abdullahi Umar was appointed Sole Administrator of Abaji Area Council. In the same year when Local Government Councils were recreated, he was appointed the chairman, care-taker committee of Gwagwalada Area Council.

The Chairman is assisted in his day-to-day administration of the Area Council by four Supervisory Councillors - that of Agriculture, Education, Health and Works. They are further assisted by senior staff of the Council, one of which is Alhaji Hassan Ahmed, the Area Council Secretary who is also the Chief Administrative Officer and Coordinator of all the Departments of the Area Council. Within this administrative set up exists the office of the Development Secretary which is headed by Mallam U.T. Sulciman. He oversees and coordinates the affairs of the Council within the two Development Areas of Kwali and Gwagwalada.

Gwagwalada Area Council is one of the largest Area Councils in the Federal Capital Territory with a 1/3 of the total population of the Territory. It therefore makes obvious the enormous challenges which the Area Council faces in providing basic facilities like water, access markets, and necessary facilities that enhance development for this vast area.

In its efforts to provide good drinking water to its populace, the Gwagwalada Area Council reexamined all sources of water supply in the Council and discovered that, due to the teeming population of Gwagwalada township, the hitherto existing water circulation was grossly inadequate. This consequently made the Area Council, in conjunction with Gwagwalada Community Development, to extend water circulation to various nooks and corners of Gwagwalada township. And to realise this objective, the Area Council expended a whopping N200,000 (Two hundred thousand Naira) plus labour, which was also estimated to be about N200,000. Efforts were also made to provide water through bore-holes to other communities like Kwali, Dobi and Paikon Kore. These have helped to



Maj. Gen. Gado Nasko (rtd):
FCT Minister



Chairman, Mallam Abdullahi Umar:
The motivator

SPOTLIGHT/GWAGWALADA



Athaji Umar T. Suleiman:
A/C Development Secretary

reduce to a minimum, the problem of water scarcity in the Area Council.

The health sector is another area that has received tremendous attention from the Council. This is manifested in the clinics constructed in various parts of the Area Council. It did not just stop at building health centres, but it made sure that these health centres were adequately stocked by purchasing large quantity of drugs for the use of inhabitants and to boost its drug revolving scheme. The Council is also aware of the importance of the primary health care delivery programme, and to this end, it has pursued with vigour, effective propaganda campaigns on the EPI programme in communities like Kwali, Dobi, Kwaita and other communities under the Area Council.

In the area of agriculture, the council's Agricultural Policy is completely in line with that of the Federal Government Agricultural Development. A large quantity of improved seeds and agro-chemicals have been purchased for sale to farmers at highly subsidised rates. The council borrowed a leaf from the Federal Government as regards the seriousness and vigour with which wheat production is pursued. It has already purchased twelve water pumping machines at a total cost of ninety six thousand Naira (N96,000) and three bags of improved wheat seeds for onward distribution to farmers. And in order to assist farmers to produce in large quantities, it introduced free extension services and tractor hiring scheme which it is hoped, will

transform peasant farmers into mechanised farmers.

In the council's effort to ease the persistent problem of securing fertilizer for farmers, a task force for the procurement and distribution of fertilizer was set up. The Task force guarantees that fertilizer is within the reach of every farmer operating within the Area Council.

The Gwagwalada Area Council has also made efforts to encourage livestock development. It has set up veterinary clinics in appropriate locations in the Area in order to provide the basic facilities for the growth of livestock production. One of such facilities is the N300,000 (three hundred thousand Naira) Dafa Veterinary Clinic. In furtherance of this pursuit, the Council has set in motion plans to entice the high concentration of Fulani cattle rearers into turning Gwagwalada Area Council to their permanent grazing area.

Gwagwalada Area Council has witnessed a great revolutionary development in the area of commercial activities. The Area Council, with an estimated 1/3 of the total population of the Federal Capital Territory, has attracted a tremendously increased commercial activities. Especially since the gradual transfer of the seat of government to the new Federal Capital Territory. The Area Council has decided therefore to tackle this increase by expanding most of the existing markets in Dafa, Dobi, Zuba, Kwali and Gwagwalada. This, it is assumed will go a long way in encouraging more investors, entrepreneurs and other traders to actually take advantage of the readily available market opportunities.

In the area of education, the Area Council has also made a tremendous progress in improving the standard of education in the area. In line with the national policy on education, the Area Council, in conjunction with the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Primary Schools Management Board, has expanded many schools and provided instructional materials to schools within the Area Council. This is part of the council's efforts to give the

people qualitative education. The Gwagwalada local Education Authority (GLEA) has set out to continue to assist the people in the area of education until the target of "education for all" is achieved in the year 2000. And to this end, the Women Adult Education Scheme was set up to change the social life of the beneficiaries completely for the better. A multi-purpose women centre setup at Gwagwalada is doing a lot in the training of women in many areas to further make the pursuit a success.

The transition to civil rule programme is highest on the list of the Council's area of priority. Personnel and vehicles were seconded to the secretariats of the two political parties. The assistance of the Council in both material and human resources made the party executives to effectively cover the Area Council. This enabled Gwagwalada to have the highest number of registered party members in the whole of the Federal Capital Territory.

To curtail the type of political hazards witnessed in the First and Second Republics politics, the Area Council set up stability committee charged with the responsibility of creating a political harmony and understanding in the Area Council. This laudable committee includes all the community leaders in Gwagwalada Area Council, the chairmen of the two political parties, the security officials of the Area Council, the Directorate of Social mobilization in the Council and a representative of



Mallam Hassan Ahmad:
A/C Secretary

SPOTLIGHT/GWAGWALADA

National Electoral Commission (NEC).

Gwagwalada Local Area Council

All said and done, it isn't as if all was a bed of roses for the Area Council, as it had series of problems to contend with in its effort at providing the best for its people. Some of these problems range from those inherited and the malignant ones it has had to tackle to the best of its resource ability. Some of these problems faced by the Area Council since its assumption of office include.

- (a) The neglect of rural communities
- (b) Few feeder roads
- (c) Lack of drinking water in the villages
- (d) Guinea worm infection in some areas
- (e) Commercial activities restricted to Gwagwalada
- (f) Illiteracy, most especially among women, very high.
- (g) No park for Gwagwalada and the market very congested
- (h) Water supply to Gwagwalada town very poor
- (i) Parents withdrawing their children from school with no reason.

To these enumerated problems, the Council has been able to find solution to solving them permanently or reducing them to a minimal. To this end, the chairman personally embarked on visits to the rural areas to know their problems. The Council constructed a number of feeder roads, some still under construction e.g.

- (a) Kilankwa 1 to A2 Road.
- (b) Peti-Kaduna-Lokoja Road.
- (c) Kilankwa 2 to Kaduna Lokoja Road.
- (d) Ledi-Dobi-Izom.

All Constructed at a total sum of N700,000. Culverts were also constructed at N135,000.

Based on the water provision on the reconnaissance survey carved out by UNDP (Kusafiya) project, the Council constructed bore-holes at Kwali, Dobi and Pai- each costing N103,000, 190,000 and 93,000 respectively.

- A new park constructed for Gwagwalada to be commissioned soon.
- Gwagwalada New market now functional.
- Water articulation exercise initiated

by the Area Council and got the blessing of the people and other agencies. It spent over N200,000 on this project.

The Council prosecuted parents for withdrawing children from school. Spent over N180,000 on scholarship awards to students in post primary institutions.

For the above projects to be maintain in future, there is a need for good revenue base. That is why we constructed a number of new markets in strategic places like Kwaita and Gada Biyu, put the new Gwagwalada market to use and Insha Allah, by the help of Hon. Minister, the Zuba ultra modern market will be commissioned soon.

On whether the Better Life for Rural Dwellers in the area have been able to better the lot of the people of the Area Council, it was made known by the Council that the chairperson of the programme in the Area has really made the Council to be interested.

- It has built better life centres in Kwali and Gwagwalada, fully equipped for home economics, Adult Education, typing, sewing, etc. Classes are going on in these areas and our rural ladies are really benefiting.

- It has also constructed structures to install machines for Gari processing in Kwali and Gwagwalada.

- It plans to build an ultra modern women centre in Gwagwalada similar to the one the chairman, Mallam Abdullah Umar built when he was at Abaji.

- Our rural dwellers (ladies) petty traders association won the best prize at the people's bank fair in Lagos. This comes as a result of the orientation offered them through the better life forum.

On the future plans of the Gwagwalada Local Area Council and the programmes mapped out towards realising them, it was realised that it wishes to

- Set up a very strong revenue base
- Become a major wheat producing centre not only in FCT but in the Nation as a whole.
- Create a sense of communal responsibility among the people
- Open up all the rural areas through

network of feeder roads

- Make the Guinea worm threat a thing of the past.
- Have an everlasting political harmony in this crucial time of transition
- Have a comprehensive rural water supply programme.

To realise these laudable intentions, the Council is to realise from the markets being built and those expanded, a good revenue base.

- There is a deliberate involvement of the communities in projects beneficial to them.

- In the past 11 eleven months, it has opened up about 57 KM of feeder roads. it has also made provisions for more in its 1991 budget.

- Effective liaison with UNDP (Kusafiya) to identify areas and made our budget plans on water supply based on the survey report.

- Constructed clinics in the Guinea Worm affected areas.

- Set up political stability committee.

The rural people are really actively involved in the Area Council's activities. The Council educate them on the need to evolve communal projects and assist them with materials e.g. the Gada-biyu market when the Council built a block of market stalls and the community made some themselves.

The Council aided the construction of clinics through communal efforts at:

- (a) Kwaifa the Council contributed N23,000
- (b) Iba dispensary the Council contributed N14,000
- (c) Isa Sarki the Council contributed N25,000

Mobilization is done through the village heads and the council's community development officers.

- The idea of cooperatives in the Area Council is just gaining grounds.

- The Council is soon to organise workshop on training of extension agents that will educate the people on the need to form cooperatives.

- The Area Council now make use of various associations to execute its projects e.g. the butchers association of Gwagwalada was used to renovate the Gwagwalada abattoir.

"Nigeria's Security Threatened"

— Usman Farouk

In recent time, there was an outcry by some Nigerians for the return of voluntary agency schools taken over by General Yakubu Gowon (rtd) government to their proprietors. While the debate raged on, our Deputy Editor, Mohammed Momoh Otu got in touch on November 9, 1990 with Alhaji Usman Farouk, a retired Police Commissioner and Gowon's Governor in the North-Western state to speak on the issue. Farouk also spoke on the implications of family planning as it is being espoused.

Hotline: *In recent times, there have been agitations for the return of voluntary agency schools to their proprietors. And as you are aware, the schools were taken-over by the government during Gowon's regime under which you served as a military governor. What actually happened that led to the take-over of these institutions?*

Farouk: The take-over of voluntary agency institutions by the federal government and the state governments of Nigeria in the '70s to the best of my knowledge and from the records available was necessitated by the situation in the country at that time. First of all, some of the schools were affected



by the war, especially those situated within the eastern states were damaged. The teachers had scattered and at the end of the war, the question of rehabilitation of the affected war areas and their people was upper most in our minds. In addition to this, there were certain issues that came up during the war. We discovered during the heat of the fighting that foreign countries and personalities tried to exploit the situation to their advantages by aggravating the problem at hand. They put out news items in their media urging the Christians within the Federal Army not to fight their brother Christians within the Biafra Army. There was a lot of things like that and we discovered that the earlier training given to us by earlier missionaries was very destructive. They trained Nigerians not as Christians but with the ultimate intention to using them at their own convenience. They did not produce nationals but they produced people who could be bent at will in the middle of crises. That was what happened. So we saw that the best thing for the country was to take over these ruined schools, change the whole philosophy of education in such a way that the next generations of Nigerians would be taught common syllabi and integrate national interest into the schools curricula so that future military personnel would be true Nigerians and not Muslim Generals or Christian Generals at least in the event of national wars. Eventually, when the decision was considered to be appropriate to take

over these schools, procedures were set in motion. Emphasis was placed on manpower development. Hence, we took very serious interest in whatever concerned manpower development and education. The procedure was that first, each state should go and address all the voluntary agency school and to find out what they were doing, their curricula, how much fees they were charging and how much had been collected since their inception. As far as Northern Nigerian was concerned, each registered voluntary agency schools in the North was supposed to be getting grant-in-aid and we decided to find out how much the government of Northern Nigeria had paid these schools. It was after this assessment had been done, that the state governments concerned met with the proprietors of these schools to negotiate what level of compensation to pay after deducting all that the government had paid for. So when the final figures were known, we paid them compensation. Thereafter, we expanded the schools. And then we integrated the whole catchment areas so that we mixed our students from various parts. In the Northern-Western state for example, students from the far North,

say Sokoto, were admitted into the Southern schools — Southern part of the Niger, thereby producing a sort of miniature unity schools. Children were put together so that when they go out there wouldn't be any need to say you were from so so place. And we discarded some of the injurious religious indoctrinations which—especially—Christians used to inject into the minds to hate their Muslim counterparts. When the whole process was completed, we found it necessary to change the names of the schools to remove the old bias which made some people think that they bore certain names that were Christian names so their children will not go to them. So we changed them to the names of people who are renown leaders in Nigeria like Queen Amina, Rimi College, and so on and so forth. And one of the schools in Minna was changed to the name of one of the leading personalities there.

Hotline: *To some people, the take-over was engineered by the Muslims because they wanted the Christian schools out of the way so that they could propagate their belief.*

Farouk: This is terribly false, because the take over of the voluntary agency schools in Nigeria was done by government led by mostly Christians. I say so because there were twelve governors at the time the take over was effected and out of these twelve state governors, only four were Muslims. And out of the Supreme Military Council — I think there were about 27 members under General Gowon, and the Muslims

numbered about eight. Nearly 75% of the Supreme Military Council members were Christians. So, the take over was done by a Christian government one may say. The take over involved both Muslim schools as well as the Christian schools.

Hotline: Are you in support of the recent statement by the President that voluntary agency schools would not be handed over to their original proprietors?

Farouk: I am in full support of the statement of the federal government because the take over was done in good faith. Not only that, after the take over, I think it was during the regime of Obasanjo that the decree was signed legalising the take over. So, you see, there is no question of Muslim doing these

things. So the whole thing to me, is based on mischief because the private schools proprietors of those days made their own money, they took their compensations.

Hotline: That is to say during Gowon's regime, it was a mere pronouncement ...

Farouk: Obasanjo signed the decree.

Hotline: Generally, if you are to assess our educational system today, what would you say about it?

Farouk: Well, things are in very difficult situation. I think those at the helm of affairs are doing their best under very difficult conditions. The country is so vast and the thirst for education is increasing everyday and resources available are limited. They are doing their best.

Hotline: Let me take you a little through some of your literary works. Your book 'Family Planning: The Islamic Viewpoint' I've read it and I came to the conclusion that you view the whole idea of family planning from just social and religious perspective ignoring the economic aspect of it.

Farouk: I did not ignore the economic import of family planning because in the book, I mentioned that if you have too many people inside your room and you feel you cannot cater for all of them, the first thing to do is not to start an instant reduction of the people but first of all take a census of the food available. It is when you find that the food available can only sustain certain percentage of the people for a particular period, then the question of reducing the people could come in. To the best of my knowledge, in Nigeria, we have not done that. One, we don't know how many we are in the country, nobody up till today can tell you this is the actual population of Nigerians. Two, we have not carried out the census of the food available including our resources, potentials, gas/oil reserve etc. All these are supposed to be done first and I'm sure, if we do it, as far as I know, the resources we have in Nigeria can sustain twice the number of the current estimated population, it can sustain up to 200 million people. What is



Benue state alone can feed Nigeria

worrying Nigerians is urbanisation, they look at the population in Lagos and they say things are exploding, the countryside is there, the vast countryside unoccupied, kilometres after kilometres, there are no people there. Two-thirds of our arable land is not cultivated. Benue state alone can feed the whole of Nigerians if we order our priorities well.

Hotline: You talked about foreign influences, and people trying to use that to reduce the population of Nigerians because of the security aspect of it and so many other things.

Farouk: The foreign influences – they have got too many targets. First, to destroy our culture completely so that we'll become like Europeans and Americans where you have free sex escapade. That's the whole intention. In Africa as a whole and Nigeria in particular, both Muslims and Christians, nobody likes to see his daughter being impregnated before getting married. And that fear is acting as a sort of break for us in child bearing. But if we accept European and American doctrine, if government legalises the use of pills and abortions as ways of getting rid of pregnancies, then all of a sudden, we shall be faced with sex explosion all over the place. This is the intention of the foreigners, open sex, immorality, decadence and indiscipline so that we are at par with them. So sex will be free, do it in the car, in the motor park, in our universities, our institutes of higher learning become sex spot. You see sex in open gardens. The second intention is that they want to interfere with the youths. You see they want to make sure that we don't produce youths in such numbers that will be able to take up arms in the next fifty years. Because if you start reducing the population today by preventing birth or causing abortions, in fifty years time, the number of people who ought to have been born, or who should bear arms in the event of war wouldn't be there. The Armed Forces, Police, the Custom and Immigration only recruit youths between the ages of 18-25. So, if you start today by limiting the number of them being born, in twenty years time, you'll find that to recruit that class of people, you wouldn't find them because they have not been born. That's the secret aim of the foreign powers. So, a time will come when Nigeria will be short of manpower at a time when we need the manpower. So our only alternative would then be to recruit mercenaries or to sign defence pact with those major powers. Otherwise, why should these foreign powers keep pumping millions of dollars by way of grants, by way of instrument of destruction. Instead of that why don't they give us rice to augment our food requirements. And, if I may draw an analogy, say your garden is over populated with trees and you feel you have to reduce the number, the logical thing to do is to destroy the old trees, you don't touch the young seedlings, you destroy the old trees. If we want to reduce the population, then we should remove the aged, but not to go and destroy the potential replacements. Removing the aged unnaturally is itself criminal. The press should bring these things out, it is something very serious and very dangerous. It seems the press itself is divided. It's really out of ignorance. People should sit down and examine this thing very well. Those who are campaigning for family planning are the same people conspiring to debase the Nigerian society.

DISCOURSE

They want us to behave like Europeans and Americans. If you see all the drugs – cocaine, heroin etc going into Europe and America – Europe is decaying and they want us to go down the drain with them.

Hotline: What is your advice to the younger Nigerians?

Farouk: Well, as far as this family planning thing is concerned, honestly, I want people to go and sit down and think about this. Anytime Nigeria wants aid, the World Bank will come and dictate to us, it gives us stringent conditions, but if Nigeria says she wants \$10 billion for family planning, within 24 hours, that money would be made available. Why? The money is meant to destroy pregnancies, children who have not been born. A nation's security is hinged on her active population. The major powers know this.

Hotline: So how do you relate this to Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI)?

Farouk: Last year, at a public lecture, I mentioned that even the EPI is dangerous, nobody would believe me. Recently, they discovered that one of the syrups (Paracetamol) being given to children was a killer. Even the ones that are being given now, you'll find out that one day they are the cause of deaths. You find out that you bring your child healthy to a clinic, after a dose of one of these drugs, the baby's sickness worsens and eventually dies. Look, a man who gives you money to destroy a pregnancy, do you think that same man, would give you medicine to make sure those that have been born should live? It's because we have been brain washed, this is the trouble.

Hotline: Maybe you got the idea wrongly. It says, do not have a baby if you know you cannot take proper care of it. It says, do not carry a load that will bend your neck. No child begs any parents to bring it to the world anyway. Chew what you can swallow and not what will get stuck in your throat, otherwise there would be no joy in eating.

Farouk: No. Islam is not saying no to family planning. I am not saying no to family planning, but there are at least five to six methods by which we are allowed to practice family planning or spacing out child bearing. And my advice to all Muslims is to stick to the Islamic method of birth control. After all, this thing has been tested. It has been practised for over two thousand years and it has worked without recourse to this new method of human destruction. Also going back to the take-over of voluntary agency institutions, you'll find that in one of the write-ups I did, the philosophy behind the take-over was to integrate Nigerians from South, East and North so that they'll live and grow up together as one nation. That was the same policy that led to the establishing of Unity Schools and from there up to the National Youth Service Corps, NYSC. You see, it's all connected. Ibo, Hausa, Yoruba and children from other tribes are brought up under common syllabi from here they move up to the Unity Schools where they meet again, and from there to the university to NYSC. It's a big philosophy – in the end, you produce better Nigerians than ourselves. That is the concept.

Hotline: Do you still see the concept now as relevant?

Farouk: It's working now, its quite relevant.

Hotline: Some people are saying that the NYSC should be scrapped, that it has outlived its usefulness.

Farouk: Maybe they have not examined the concept very well. I hope they acquiesce themselves with the philosophy behind the NYSC. It's a well articulated philosophy for Nigeria's unity and stability.

Hotline: Can you now tell me the five ways by which family planning is practised in Islam?

Farouk: One, Islam requires patience and restraint on the part of the male. A child is supposed to suck the mother's breast for a period of 24 months before she is ready to have another baby. So, if Muslims know their religion very well, child spacing will be about 36 months. Two, adoption of safe-period-method whereby husband and wife have sex when pregnancy is least likely. Three, the withdrawal method – a situation whereby the husband and wife have sex but the husband discharges his semen outside the wife's body. Four,



EPI is dangerous

the termination method – that is an agreement by both parties (husband and wife) to put a stop permanently to the wife getting pregnant if it is established by doctors that further pregnancy will be injurious to either the mother or the unborn baby or both or may even lead to death of either or both. Five, the couple could plan any other

method so that there is no direct discharge of semen into the woman. The use of condom or durex I may say is the same or an improvement on this method.

Hotline: Ain't you theorising? As you've said, theory is often time different from practice. Consider the ecstasy, temporary loss of one's body control or what some people refer to as "momentary madness" during love making. Also consider the possibility of accidental discharge. So, all these five methods are no fool-proof against unwanted pregnancy.

Farouk: That is why we must recognise the power of Allah. He does whatever he wants to do no matter how we the mortals try to prevent certain things from happening. Even the Prophet of Allah did say in one of the Hadith that: "There is no harm for a man to discharge semen outside the body of his wife if he desires no child." But Muslims should bear in mind that this notwithstanding, Allah can create whosoever He intends to create. You see, Allah's power is beyond our knowledge. Even, all the methods such as the use of condom and durex, I.U.D and even abortion have not proved one hundred percent successful. Do you want to tell me that because you've tried to prevent your wife from getting pregnant by adopting various methods available but she still gets pregnant, the pregnancy has to be terminated? It is criminal to do so because you are challenging the power and will of Allah.

"War With Israel Still To Come"

The standpoint of World Muslim League on the Gulf Crisis.

By Muhammad Hassan-Tom

The World Muslim League, global Islamic authority with jurisdiction over the Islamic shrines as well as over Islamic law, is a representative body of the world's outstanding Islamic scholars and other religious workers. The aim of the League is to foster Islamic law, aid and development. Comprised of Islamic jurists from 52 countries, it has its headquarters in Makka Al Mukarramah. Since its formation in 1962, it has tried to give the Muslim world a common source of thought and direction as well as forge common consensus on vital issues of international importance.

Between September 10-12th, 1990, 350 members of the League, among them representatives from African, Asian, American, European and Soviet Muslim communities met in Jeddah, north western city of Saudi Arabia. Nigeria was represented by Sheikh Abubakar Mahmoud Gumi, versatile scholar and a founding member of the League. Other notable scholars include Dauda As'ad from the US, Rajah Jar Wadi from the France and Dr. Shamsuddin Diadra and Sheikh Baba Khanus from the Soviet Union.

Dr. Abdullah Naseef 52, the Secretary General of the Muslim League told this panel of interviewers last September in the temporary headquarters of the League in Jeddah that "There was unanimity among members in the condemnation of the invasion which was unanimously defined as against the spirit of Islam and of brotherhood. It was an inhuman attitude towards human rights and freedom." Dr. Naseef, said further that the forum passed a resolution to call for the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the 3,500 tanks stationed by the aggressor along the Saudi Arabian border."

Commenting on the sore outrage expressed by millions of Muslims outside the Saudi Arabian Peninsula

over the presence of non-Islamic, Judaeo-Christian and pagan forces assembled in Saudi Arabia as a safeguard against Iraq, Dr. Naseef, himself a Saudi said, "it was necessary for the emergency." He said that the presence of multinational mainly American troops in the Kingdom is a result and not a cause of the Gulf Crisis. "The real problem is with the invasion" he said, "without the invasion and threats, these troops will not have been invited." The League scribe further said that no other option was open to the Saudi authorities since "even from our calculations, we have seen that invitation of Muslim forces is not possible at this time."

Asked why the League has never considered and supported a Pan-Islamic army, principally to fight against Islamic enemies like Western countries and Israel, Dr. Naseef said that the idea was mooted in the League several years back but the concept has not been very well developed. However, Dr. Naseef pointed out that this issue came under more urgent consideration at the League's September meeting, and may not be far from realisation. He added that the military contributions of Egypt, Morocco, Syria and Senegal to the build-up in defence of the Gulf, already has the makings of a pan-Islamic army.

Dr. Naseef cited the divisions wrought in the world Muslim Ummah by the Gulf Crisis as immense and damaging to it's (Ummah) growth and development. One panelist asked whether these present divisions into pro-Iraq, anti-Iraq, and neutrals- do not have historical basis in the inequality of wealth among Muslim nations, and the blossoming romance between some conservative Arab States and the West principally Europe and America. Why, for instance, do the kingdoms of Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Oman the UAE and formerly Kuwait, maintain close mutually beneficial relations with European countries and the US which created and continue to harbour a state

called Israel on Arab lands?

"We must not mix issues" said Dr. Abdullah Naseef. "Israel is a major problem in the Arab and Muslim world and the war with Israel is still to come. Muslims should calm down and treat matters with wisdom, and understanding of the Quran and Sunnah". But meanwhile Israel continues its usurpation of Arab territories, unleashing regular doses of murder, looting, rape and inhuman degradation over defenseless Muslims and Christian Arabs. In three years of the popular uprising (intifadah), by unarmed Palestinian women and children, Israelis have thus far murdered over 850 people and destroyed 50,000 homes in Palestine and the occupied territories. Elsewhere in the world, Israeli policies have supported terrorism, guerrilla insurrections as well as clandestine operations including assassination and spying. Israel till today serves as outlet for South Africa's exports of raw materials and manufactures to EEC member states and the US, where Israeli goods enter duty free. Israel is South Africa's biggest trading partner mainly in commodities like diamonds, coal, and steel. The whole relationship between the world's only racist states is made possible by the slave wages still payable to black South Africans.

There is little wonder therefore that a large proportion of Muslims and other genuine freedom fighters worldwide are not satisfied with the efforts of the Saudi dominated League to bring lasting peace in the Gulf Region and elsewhere. Dr. Naseef himself admitted as much when he said in another breath that there was a real conspiracy by the US to interfere and manipulate the Middle East, in particular, the Holy lands of Islam. The perception is that the entrenched ties between the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States put a limit to the participation of the oil rich kingdoms in the liberation of Palestine and the curtailment of US might and interference in the region. Muslims the world over now ask: Where and when is the alternative to the shackled Muslim League?

The Chad Again

Perennial civil war rekindles in Nigerian's northern neighbour, but the cause remains elusive

The uneasy peace that loomed over the clouds of Chad, Nigeria's northern neighbour has once more been shattered by a recent Libyan-backed rebel attack on the northern part of the country. It is a echo it seems, of a crisis that had bedecked the ravaged and impoverished state since its Independence in August 11, 1960. A nation with scars that cannot conceal the fact that both the past and the present of the impoverished land have been one unfortunate continuum of carnage and destruction.

The Aouzou strip, which is the bone of contention between Libya, and Chad is a 100,000 square kilometre Oasis at the

alliances in Europe, the French and the Italians tried to re-adjust the boundaries of their colonies in Africa. This was a move by the French to lure Benito Mussolini, then Italian dictator, away from German axis, and in compensation hoped to give out a piece of Africa.

This was a promise that culminated in the agreement in 1935, between the French leader, Pierre Laval and Benito Mussolini of Italy, to sign off the Aouzou strip to the latter who was then the imperial lord of present day Libya. This is why Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, claimed ownership of the strip in northern Chad. For Libya, the pact between Mussolini and Pierre Laval of France in 1935 in Rome, cedes

the Aouzou strip to Italy. And the secret agreement believed to have been conducted in Tripoli, the Libyan capital in 1973, between Muammar Gaddafi and Chad President Francois Tombalbaye,

confirmed Libyan ownership of the disputed strip. This confirmation, according to reports, was necessary in order to enhance Libya's aid to the Ndjamen government and to discourage Libyan support for the Front de la Liberation National Du Tchad (FROLINAT) led by Ibrahim Abatcha and which incidentally was engaged in rebellion war against the legitimate government of the day in Chad.

The subsequent Chadian government of Hissane Habre, however, disagreed with such claim of ownership of the Aouzou strip by Libya when he described the Benito Mussolini-Pierre Laval January 7, 1935, Treaty of Rome as obsolete. It is believed that the treaty did not have any legal instruments and legal values to make it authentic. It is also claimed in official quarters in Chad

that the treaty never went into any meaningful effect as the instruments of ratification were never exchanged between the two parties.

The relative peace that the country had been enjoying since 1982 was however disturbed recently when the Chadian troops were engaged in a fierce battle by rebels near the North-Eastern border town of Tine. It is believed that an estimated 2,000 dissident troops armed with sophisticated weapons and led by a former Chadian army chief of staff, Idris Debby, made the attack. The dissident troops were reported to have crossed into Chadian territory from the Libyan-Sudanese joint border where they forced Chadian troops several kilometres away from the border town.

The battle that pushed the government troops further into Chadian territory, went on for four days, after which it was reported by the Chadian high command, in N'Djamena, the state capital, that the government troops have succeeded in routing the rebels and pushed them farther back into where they come. This clash has guaranteed a series of accusations and counter-accusations from both the Chadian and Libya-Sudanese authorities. First it is believed by the Chadian authorities that the invasion was engineered by both Libya and Sudan through Chadian dissidents residing in both countries.

The Libyans and Sudanese were quick to dissociate themselves from the invasion and the renewed hostility. Libya was also quick to claim that Chad was embarking on a campaign to smear the image of Libya. It is reportedly claimed by an official report from Tripoli that "what is going on in Chad... is an internal conflict. Libya does not occupy Chadian territory and has no expansionist plans".

But Gaddafi has a record to his credit of meddling in the politics of Chad (the Goukouni Weddeye-Hissane Habre imbroglio). According to reports, Gaddafi is believed to see Chad as part of an "Islamic empire" which extend deep into Africa. It is further believed that he is interested enough in the Aouzou strip to want to make war.

By Danjuma Bawa



Hissane Habre of Chad

Libyan Muammar Ghaddafi

Chad-Libyan border. It is an area that is said to be rich in valuable mineral resources such as uranium, gold and tin. The Libyans have been in occupation of this vital strip since 1973. But in 1987, the Chadian forces, backed by superior French and American supports, forced the Libyans out in a blitzkrieg operation that advanced as far as the Libyan Matan es Sarah military base.

In colonial days, African countries were exclusive properties of the colonising powers who shared it out among themselves without minding existing borders marked by religion, language, culture and tradition. This sharing out of the vast continent was done at the historic 1884 Berlin conference. Indeed, one of the causes of the second world war was the sharing out of colonies. While looking for

Language of the 20th Century

Finally, it is now vain to debate whether the hegemony of the world is not complete; whether the contemporary human person in Mexico, USA, Lagos Nigeria, Qatar in Persian Gulf and Sydney in Australia, is not much the same in outlook, culture and communication means. The world is truly a village, though our status and standing in this entity might not be of equals.

The black, the white, the tan and the yellow, we all pride ourselves on speaking the seven main languages of the white Western world: English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. The slightest proficiency we hasten to celebrate and men of letters everywhere salivate at the Nobel and other white Western awards. We, everywhere, in Alabama, Bangui, Cairo, Delhi, Hong Kong and Tokyo, extol, employ and raise the banner of these tongues, even though the milk which comes from their world views and civilisation, does not, by any judgment, go round.

Yet Western languages dominate the Twentieth Century because of years of Western imperialist conquest and imposition. For the mentally colonised, these languages remain agents of delirium, deception and foggy comprehension. But worse of all, is that as a reflection of the civilisation wherefrom these languages emerge, they contain some of the vilest and hideous words ever founded by lexicon man, and also some of the crudest and most impolite.

Languages and words do not exist without actually denoting some real or potential characters and meaning. If English language is so rich and profuse with grotesque and ugly characterisation, it is simply because the English world is full of ugliness, wickedness and horror. Words that portray the reprehensible character suffuse the language. Man, English man, could be a sham, humbug, prude, fop, pretentious, self-conscious, prim, priggish, mealy-mouthed,

Title: *Rogel's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*

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Reviewer: Muhammad Hassan-Tom

sanctimonious, smug, arch, sly, namby pamby, simpering, hypocritical, shallow, hollow, high-sounding, conceited, swanking, posturing, posing, bogus, insincere and phony; or any of a thousand other foul characters.

Then at school, despite the modernity and celebrated prodigiousness of Western scholarship, the school-age child will attend classes to learn Greek, empty jargon, rigmarole, gobbledygook, hocus pocus, gibberish, gabble, double Dutch, double-talk, nonsense, rubbish, balderdash, rot, drivel, tripe, piffle, verbiage, rant, boasting, eye-wash, clap-trap, poppy cock, humbug, hokum, baloney, patter, prattle, yammer, babble, gobble, jabber, jaw and yak. At the end, his head should be filled with all that is inane, insignificant, trivial, tripe and fatuous. But by this time, he has already come of age, and there is nothing the hapless parents can do, save to wed him to a good match and launch him into society. Son of a pessimistic and unfortunate civilisation, his bride will have blemishes, scars, weals, moles, marks, flaws, defects, disfigurement, deformity, stigma, blotch, smudge, smear, stain, spots, birthmark, pimple, plook, cyst, warts, acne eczema and harelip. In addition, she will be unrefined, boorish, discourteous, coarse, barbarian, lawdry, cheap, gaudy, shameless, common, low, sordid, indecorous, indecent, ribald, rowdy, churlish, loutish and uncultured.

This is not even all the danger that he will meet; not by half. The rest of his life, he will meet hindrance, impediment, frustration, hampering, shackling, handicap, shackle, chain, cross, mortgage, debts, clogging, deceleration, meddling, interception,

obtrusion, picketing, sabotage, hostility, boycott, blacking, ban, embargo, hazard, bottle-neck, tether, snag, stumbling block, trip-wire, hurdle, ditch, fence, crosswind, cross currents, impasse, dead lock, stalemate, cul-de-sac, blind ally and dead end.

The generation of such a stock and manners will be disadvantaged, stymied, held up, delayed, stuck, marooned, stranded, left high and dry etc. They will trip-up, upset, undermine, siffle, choke, gag, muzzle, suffocate, repress, quell, hamper, trammel, fetter, arrest, hold back, disable, crowd, jostle, elbow and squeeze one another. Everyone will be stopped up, kept out, banned, barred, debarred and effectively countered from the pursuit of spiritual growth and physical happiness.

With such a background, the English person can be expected to have a truly horrible life, to be ended naturally on a note of nihilism, and the aid of suicide. But before this, being totally deprived and deranged beyond the most beastly humans, he can be expected to be ruthless to his surviving parents and other fellows. He will hang, behead, guillotine, electrocute, execute, stone to death, string up, lynch, dispatch, get rid of, deal a death blow, shed the blood of, put to the sword, lance, bayonet, stab, run through, shoot down, strangle, garrote and choke them. If that fails to extinguish the irritating lot, he may suffocate, smother, stifle, drown, pole-axe, sandbag, bum, immolate, sacrifice, butcher, cut down, shoot down, mow down, annihilate, exterminate, liquidate, purge, wipe off, fix, settle and rub out the cantankerous objects.

Thus the circle of ugliness, bestiality and horror ill-hidden under the veneer of a fragile civilisation goes on. 'Native', inferior languages in Africa and Asia are facing imminent death. It is not just from neglect; nay, symbols of identity that they are, they wane under the physical reality of slavehood - white enslavement of other races. Will there be a new circle in the 21st century?

The Many Hassles of Christmas

Welcome to December, the month that ushers in Christmas – the season of pomp and pageantry for Christians all over the world. Christmas is a celebration begun many years ago in commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ. The most exciting thing about the month of December is the joy of having successfully scaled through eleven turbulent months; an opportunity many people didn't live to enjoy. Seeing the year gradually come to a close, is worth celebrating in itself. To the living therefore, Christmas should as a matter of necessity, be celebrated in a grand style hence every machinery is set in motion towards achieving this all embracing feat.

Most southerners from this part of the great divide, start saving for Christmas as early as January (sounds outrageous doesn't it?) and when December finally sets in, 'war has begun' or the scramble for, and acquisition of resources to squander during the Christmas celebration. That tells why most people get terribly broke every January. Too many palavers accompany this season so much so that there is what has now been made known as the phobia of the 'Ember months. All over the places, people are afraid of an invisible spirit of catastrophe which has turned a period of sober reflection and rededication to God, into an avalanche of traumatic and bizarre experiences all in an attempt by some people to make quick money by all means. Ritual killings become the order of the day as reports of missing people increase. The vogue now in Lagos and other big cities in the country is the case of mission genitals, money doublers and dupes of all sorts who perpetuate their dubious acts in full swing at this time of the year.

Ever wondered why fuel scarcity is more like a recurring decimal every Christmas season? Well, most dealers

hoard the substance in order to create artificial scarcity which will in turn be an opportunity to sell at higher prices. Money! Money!! Money!!! No wonder the Holy Bible referred to it as the root of all evil. And this has been proven before our very eyes.

The most horrifying experience, is the exploitative tendencies of motorists in the Christmas season. Taxi and bus drivers capitalise on the (artificial) shortage of fuel, to escalate transport

*You
Celebrate
the Birth in
Vain if You
Drive
to Kill*

fares. Travelling during this season therefore becomes an exclusive luxury as passengers pay such exorbitant fares that could leave even the most generous millionaire cowed.

If transportation problem during Christmas hovered around fare hike alone, it might as well be pardonable, but the sudden disappearance of vehicles at motor parks is rather irksome. Consequently the few available cars are overloaded so much so that there is hardly a space to let down a pm. As a result these over used cars breakdown incessantly, and the number of 'off the road' vehicles keep increasing while the populace keep suffering under the scourge of immobility. In order to make as many trips as possible within the shortest possible time, motorists resort to

excessive speeding which in itself, has claimed several thousands of lives. Luxurious bus drivers are worse culprits of this offence. The introduction of road marshals through the Federal Road Safety Commission doesn't seem to have tamed the monsters on our roads. These drivers device all forms of tricks to escape the prying eyes of road marshals who monitor the roads to check excessive speeding and ensure that only the required number of passengers are carried by motorists. Vehicle owners stuff passengers like sardines and force them to stoop down when road marshals appear. All sorts of dehumanising treatments are meted to helpless travellers all in the quest for money.

Motor park touts or what is commonly referred to as 'Agbero' make matters worse for travellers. You can spot them all over the place trying to cajole passengers into vehicles "Onitsha by express" "Ibadan strait". They even go as far as dragging or pulling intending travellers and their luggage into the car they are working for (and you know, the more people they lobby into the car, the fatter their pay).

Make no mistake, these touts are pilferers too! They drop your luggage carelessly and it vanishes. Yours sincerely was at Owerri and Onitsha recently to assess the situation. The fact however remains that motorists are having a swell time.

Prices of food stuffs and clothing also escalate during this season, as market women try to have a piece of the action too. As Christmas comes every year, it is important for people to learn from their past mistakes and try to make subsequent Christmas celebrations more peaceful and free from hazards. Afterall, experience as Aldous Huxley put it, is not just what happened to someone but what one does with what had happened.

Wishing you all out there a wonderful Christmas but please be careful with money, so you don't join the pitiless, succour-less league of 'brokers' come January. Happy Christmas in advance.

By Joyce Echieze

Of Professors and Vanity

This is law: a university professor is the last person to engage in trifles and triviality.

His belief when it takes root is firm and his commitment is iron cast. He is the last person who is going to admit that he is backing a vain scheme. In Nigeria where men are lethargic in the pursuit of success, professors give such a refreshing wind of action wherever they go. Think of the Udoji national bonanza, of the Cooky political bureau, of the Lukman Opec saga, of the Gambari diplomatic scores, of the Soyinka literary laurels, of the Ogbemudia railway revolution, of Humphrey's solid NEC(K). Then think of Jerry Gana's MAMSER, a roaring success, one that is said to have even overshoot its goals.

There is a compelling reason why professors have to exert themselves this way. Their failure is not of the same consequence as the failure of the less educated. They supposedly command the apex of learning and what they cannot work by such skills cannot be worked out any way. Some professors therefore feel so very vain, believing that with them lies the knowledge and power which only can deliver society. Professors and other intellectuals are thus programmed to equate their failure with the woeful failure and abject humiliation of their entire world view and system. Little wonder then, that they work the extra hard bit, and come off a little better than the average. This country is truly full of lethargy.

Any wonder therefore that Mamser, so full of intellectuals so full of the intellectual bug is described as a roaring success? The executive and senior management stratum of the Directorate for Social Mobilisation, MAMSER, nationwide is mainly staffed by doctorate degree holders from various universities; sober, cool, calculating eggheads proud and conceited beyond doubt. This is not necessarily negative for if knowledge cannot confer rightful

pride and some conceit, then nothing else can. Professors and other eggheads are compulsive speechmakers and whether in a classroom or board meeting they talk big and with a certain, cocksure solid certainty. When it comes to the defence of what they are doing, they speak with the tones of a god.

Recently, the Kaduna state Director of MAMSER, Dr Andrew Nkom sought to clarify the question whether or not Mamser may be considered the baby of the Babangida Administration. Said he: "People wrongly think MAMSER is the baby of this administration. No mistake about it, the baby of this administration is the political Transition Programme, and MAMSER is just the baby-sitter." Dr Nkom further warned that everyone has to be cautious what he does to government's baby or else reap unsavoury consequences. He also sounded and implied that Journalists, especially the press, constitute the greatest detractors to the programme, something akin to the six infant killer diseases, against which both baby and baby-sitter have to be protected.

With knowledge as with all the higher human attributes, self-effacing humility is the first law. Alas, dogmatism and insistence on individual perfection are all too common traits with eggheads, who are ironically best placed to know better. Is Mamser true and good simply because intellectuals and other "learned" people occupy its role positions? Must MAMSER directors, mere executors of government's will, serve also as image-makers and implacable trumpets of policies and policy-makers? Is it probably part of the pact or contractual agreement reached between government and these lofty employees?

Nigerian society and indeed the society of the third world is not sure of the utility of its academic intellectuals anymore. For while they are not empty of fine words and long grammar, their pontification remain barren in the actual

conditions of the people. Disease grows faster the more we produce doctors, hunger the more we produce agriculturist and illiteracy the more we graduate teachers. The more elites are produced the more the quality of life deteriorates. In the human rat race for the abundant life, academics have not proved better than the rest of us. Neither in politics or management or the promotion of progress have they done any better.

Academics are nothing. The great men of human civilisation - the prophets, the scientists, the leaders, all men of great deeds and words - none of them was an academician. The architect of the Islamic civilisation known for its high literacy, was an illiterate. So was Saladin, the horror of the crusaders, who singlehandedly put fear into the Roman state. Shakespeare did not go to any elaborate school, as Dickens, who left school for work at ten. Einstein was a dunce by western school standards, and Washington, perhaps the greatest statesman of modern times, was not noted for pedantry. And of course, Julius Caesar the colossus of his time, actually hated the sight of academics.

The world has not found, with few exceptions, the tolerable nor useful academic. A race of one sided seekers after truth, they often get enmeshed in illusion and fantasy of the written word. Whereas as Emerson wrote "books are for the scholars ideal times", academics soak away their intellect in "the transcriptions of other men. They forget that grammar is made in the work yard and books are but private readings of such universal truth". The true scholars in Nigerian society, in any society are those who witness its development and investigate its phenomena and are in touch daily with its reality, these are the countless journalists, soldiers, students and other mobile public and private servants. To them must the evolution of the Nigerian intellect be traced, the day it emerges.

By Shehu Abubakar

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AIDS as Man's Nightmare

Sani Omolori Usman

Man has, over the years, got the special taste for questioning the rationality of the precepts handed down to him by nature and divinity as necessary for his own good and for the smooth functioning of his society. Pounding his chest for expression are questions like: why is it this? why is it that? why is it not like this? and why is it not like that?

Many are sleepless today because of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). No cure has been found and many dread contracting it. What is more, it could be their own husbands or wives or children carrying the deadly disease. Therefore, while devouring any article or news on AIDS, some would pray to read in-between lines that a cure has been found.

Man's plight gives great satisfaction to AIDS which, from its corner looks at his helplessness and smiles triumphantly for, it has succeeded where gonorrhoea and syphilis failed. For the threesome, the aim is to check the dangerous trend in man's sexual life. It is therefore a great achievement to them to witness one victim die after another; a dream transformed into stark reality.

You may ask why should these diseases want our extermination? But leaf through some history books. You will discover some very ugly things about human beings. One of such things is that they have, from time immemorial indulged in indiscriminate sex and sexual perversions. They have always faulted the natural and divine limitations set upon them in their sexual life as reasoning animals who are not only cognate, but who are also distinct among themselves. Human beings cannot jump on one another as lower animals do. Lady A must be exclusively for man B. But where lady A serves man C in addition to man B, discord, hatred and quarrel may erupt and get fostered. Adequate note of these peculiar human traits is taken by the principles upon which we must operate. In sharp contrast with the animal life, everyone

cannot be everyone's husband or wife; there must be privacy; marriage must be contracted and ownership established for unity, love and understanding to exist among men. But the case has been the other way. It has been rape, adultery and fornication every where. To curb these abuses on nature, gonorrhoea and syphilis came. They so much succeeded in limiting our sexual lust that before you finished visiting two brothels, you would have succeeded in contacting one of these much dreaded diseases. Their success was, however, limited by man's discovery of various preventive and curative measures against them. Only few ignorant or careless people die of the diseases today.

After emerging partially victorious in the battle with these diseases, man discovered yet some other faults with nature and divinity. He questioned why it should be male to female and not male to male or female to female or human being to animal. To redress these supposed faults on the part of nature and divinity, he took to sodomy and lesbianism. Low animals also sexually appeal to him. Some men would announce to the world that they are homosexuals. James Baldwin, a renowned author, informed us in his autobiography of his homosexuality. AIDS has come as a consequence of these perversions and indiscriminate promiscuity. The disease which is either via sex or through incision may come one's way through injection or blood transfusion.

AIDS is a stubborn, destructive and unwanted tenant that has man's body as its house. Whichever way its Human Immune Virus (HIV) comes into the stream, it does that so stealthily that before the streams realises its presence, the HIV might have been successfully, but unknowingly and regrettably donated to many other houses that drank from the diseased house. Crooked as the entry of the HIV into the house is and small as it is at such entry, it soon begins

a systematic elimination of the tenants that have maintained and protected the house. Before the all-powerful AIDS, the tenants (antitoxins), coming with man from his birth, have no alternative than to surrender and pack out of the house one after the other, leaving the HIV to fill every part of the house. By the departure or the death of antitoxins, the house becomes devoid of protection; it becomes weak; every part of its structure pains; it loses weight. This, in medical sense, means that it is incurable. If the human body were to be a house of bricks, it could be reconstructed, but it is not. It is a human body which, unfortunately, when destroyed, remains irreconstructable and useless forever.

The situation is not all that hopeless as we have these tips from AIDS: Never you prostitute your eyes. It will be better if you wear a dark spectacle to veiled beauties from your otherwise searching and hungry eyes. Better still, you go on fasting; at least, it will control your indulgences. And when you attend any social gathering, keep your head low always. Men and women should beware when the promiscuous among us make advances or when some one tries to chat you up, be curt with her. The cautionary steps you are taking now are inadequate. With no end to blue films and pornographic film pictures, casual sex can never be avoided.

Believe it or not, AIDS is already succeeding in curbing our sexual excesses and regular announcements of figures of AIDS victims (now 600,000) may put a complete stop. Sadly enough, the success of AIDS is the human debacle that has laid many to rest and brought many wide awake at night and alive in the day, praying and striving to find a cure. Ride on man and heed, for AIDS is deadly. I pray we get a cure, but if we do, will we not fault nature and divinity much further? Take this: human deviations are always the causes of human nightmares.

Usman writes from P.O. Box 26, Okene, Kwara State.

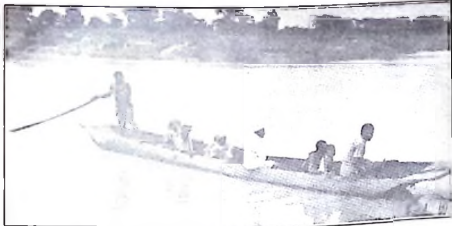
The Spirits of River Kaduna

An investigation into a dark and mysterious order where human destiny sits side by side with spiritual forces. By Adamu Abdullahi

These days, pick any newspaper or magazine and you are likely to read about people claiming to be bestowed with some powers that enable them to perform incredible feats. Just mention any problem, they have the solution to it. They claim they can heal or cure any disease; they can predict and avert disaster; they can make a woman who has been childless for years have a baby; they can cure a woman possessed by witchcraft; they can secure a job for a young school-leaver who has been

the presence of evil spirits or water mermaid which they alone can see and communicate with.

One of such phenomenon that has existed for hundred of years is the belief in the powers of river overseers or *Sarkin Rafis*. These people are said to have the powers to cause any type of mishaps on rivers. It is believed that without their consent a bridge cannot be built across a river and people are forbidden to cross such by any means. In the event of a boat or canoe mishap,



Canoe men tread softly not to provoke spirits

jobless for years; they can cure impotency; the list is endless; just name it, they can do it.

Some of these "men of miracle" say there is nothing beyond their capabilities but the power of God. Others tell you point blank that their prowess is based on their ability to call on the spirit. Their mode of operation is based on the use of odds and ends including white rocks from the sea, snail shells, certain organs of a black cat, or dog, roots, herbs, barks, etc. There are others who prohibit human beings to visit certain locations, and objects at certain period of the month or the year like rivers, trees, rocks etc because of

rescue operations or the recovery of drowned bodies would not be possible without consulting them. The list of their prowess is endless.

Mallam Rufa'i Dan Kalgo, a 57-year-old man has been combining his moderate farming activities with what he describes as the unenviable duties of *Sarkin Rafi* at one of the busiest crossing points where people are ferried across river Kaduna in the portion of the river to the East of Ungwan Rimi. According to Mallam Rufa'i, he has been performing the job for the past 12 years, a post that one gets strictly through inheritance. In Mallam Rufa'i's case, however, he inherited the

post from his uncle and that was because the uncle did not have a male child.

What really does the job entail? According to the *Sarkin Rafi* the duties are to provide guidance and advise to anyone that has cause to use the portion of the river for whatever purpose. Such people include canoe drivers and their passengers as well as fishermen and those who desire to learn how to swim. Most of the canoes used to ferry passengers across the river belong to his family, which is an extended one, and the canoe drivers are members of the family. In most cases one never attain the post of *Sarkin Rafi* without a thorough knowledge of how to drive a canoe and some swimming expertise, and they begin to learn the act at about 5-years old. By the time a child is 10-years old, the family decides whether he is suitable to inherit the post and from that time he starts receiving special training that would prepare him for the responsibility. Part of this preparation involves vigorous training instructions on the ability to stay underwater for between 15-20 minutes. He is also taught vigilance while submerged and the ability to identify objects like rocks as well as creatures that dwell in the river such as the various species of fish, crocodiles, tortoises and even snakes. Through the recitation of certain incantations and the application of some specially prepared concoction on the body as well as the consumption of diets prepared with selected herbs, roots, and barks, the trainee is immuned against the various harmful creatures of the river. He also acquires the powers to identify those innocent looking creatures that could lead to one's doom. Knowledge is acquired on perception of imminent danger through signals provided by wave undulation.

Is there then some supernatural power that enables them to confront strong and dangerous creatures like crocodiles and pythons underwater? Mallam Rufa'i refused to go into details on how the *Sarkin Rafis* are prepared to confront such dangers; he, however, said there is nothing supernatural about their ability to deal with such a situation "but we have the natural gift to predict

MYSTERY



Prof. Babs Fafunwa: Don't they need special education?

the exact situation of the river at any given time either when inside or outside the river". "When, for instance, I am in the river and there is impending danger, say, the approach of a big crocodile, the change in the movement of the waves alerts me and I will know by instinct from what direction it is coming and I will be prepared for it," he explained.

Sarkin Rafis do not use any weapon to confront such dangerous creatures. They merely recite the appropriate incantations taught to them and, according to Mallam Rufa'i because they have some degree of immunity through the specially prepared diet and concoction, they become as strong and as cunning and deft as the hostile creature. Some of the creatures, he said, "have the ability to cast spell on the person they are attacking and he can become partially paralysed. In such a situation what we do is to recite a special



Fishermen: Catching fish, earning nothing

incantation meant specifically for such an eventuality and this makes us invisible to the creature".

Apart from these natural river creatures, Mallam Rufa'i claims there are others he called "Yan Ruwa", this could probably be what is elsewhere referred to as mammy water. According to him the "Yan Ruwas" are human beings and "only those of us bestowed with the power are able to see and communicate with them"

He expatiated: "It is through this communication with them that we are able to know when there is impending disaster like when a canoe or boat would capsize or when one or more fishermen would drown. At other times we are able to know that some disaster would occur in the river through our dreams which we've been taught to interpret or through some signs on our body like the continuous batting of the lower lid of the left eye".

Virtually every year, a number of lives are lost in that portion of the river where Mallam Rufa'i is the Sarki and most of the time the people drowned are passengers being conveyed in canoes which the Sarkin Rafi claims belong to the family. Others drowned are fishermen using their own canoes. Why then have they not been averting such disasters?

According to Mallam Rufa'i "We normally warn against the crossing of the river by passengers and its use by fishermen when there is such impending danger. That, however, invariably depends on the nature of the communication we hold with the 'Yan Ruwa' and the nature of the signs we have had. I can't tell you exactly what the signs are but we know from their nature whether to advise against crossing of the river or not." The *Sarkin Rafi* claims that if they sound the warning not to use the river when the signs indicate that they should not, then a terrible misfortune would befall the family and descendants of the disobedient *Sarkin Rafi*. Moreover, when the use of the river resumes, about five times the number of people that would have been affected if the warning had not been sounded would now be

affected because the disaster was only put off and not averted". He, however, refused to agree or disagree on whether the lives lost by their failure to warn the people is a sort of sacrifice to the "Yan Ruwa".

Whenever there is drowning, it is not all the time that the bodies are recovered and in some cases it takes up to three days to recover some. With the powers they claim to have both inside and outside the river what takes them so long to recover them?

According to Mallam Rufa'i, some of the bodies may be swept down stream and outside his "area or jurisdiction" and in such a case it becomes the responsibility of the Sarkin Rafi in whose "domain" the body might be. "Since I am only immuned to operate in a specific area, all my powers become impotent the moment I meddle with waters outside this area and this applies to all other *Sarkin Rafis*". For the other bodies within his domain, the Sarkin Rafi says he has to get "permission" from the 'Yan Ruwa' before ordering rescue or recovery operations because without such permission, "anyone who gets into the river with the aim of recovering the bodies would die and the body would never be recovered."

"Sometime, we get immediate permission to recover bodies, and at other times, we are given up to four weeks before attempting the recovery and we are usually told how many bodies to recover at a time". He further claims that it is believed that the bodies that are never recovered are those of people who never actually drowned. "They simply transform into 'Yan Ruwa' and sometimes we see and communicate with them," he stated.

Apart from a bit of farming, Mallam Rufa'i gives out the family canoes to those who paddle them and turn in a percentage of the days earnings. In addition the *Sarkin Rafis* get some sort of stipends from the local government under which they operate because apart from providing the canoes and ensuring their river-worthiness "we generally supervise the activities of the paddlers to ensure the safety of passengers and their luggage".



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No! Woman, No Cry

Don't get me wrong! I don't have any soft spot for the Jamaican reggae singer Jimmy Cliff, from whose music the title of this piece is drawn. Fact is, I couldn't think of a more catchy caption; a rather soothing one to the storm tossed, deprived and grossly battered Nigerian woman. Another female chauvinist you would say (doesn't really matter if that's what fighting the cause of women is all about, women constitute half if not more of the Nigerian population; yet in many sectors, they are not seen as full members of society and are yet to be accorded full recognition in decision making process in the country. In many parts of the nation, girls are married off at very early age against their consent. As a result, many of them suffer psychologically or are physically maimed for life by brutal husbands. Everywhere, women are handicapped and are crying out for help.

Women have a lot to offer this county in both economic and socio-political dimensions. The fact is, integrating women into the mainstream of the nation's political and socio-economic activities is not only feasible but is also of uttermost importance, since there are no genetic barriers restraining women from performing same professional

duties as men.

The marginalisation gap between the sexes is simply uncalled for and should as much as possible be bridged. It's high time Nigerian women got de-programmed from such stereotypes as confine them to menial jobs and household chores. The time for brooding is past. "Weep not child" says Ngugi wa Thiongo, a renowned East African writer and I would like to relate this to women. Enough of mediocrity and inferiority complex.

As the bedrock of society, the importance of involving women in the economic rehabilitation of this nation, need not be over-emphasised. Most people fail to realise that the main economic activities of this nation are done by women; we cannot therefore implement an effective economic reconstruction programme without recognising the indispensable role of women. In the early sixties, women embarked upon such ventures as tailoring, farming and petty trading as means of supplementing their families income but today's women have gone nuclear: from big time contractors to fashion designing (which apparently is in vogue) and have also recorded good success in small and large scale industrialisation. Various professional

bodies have also had their fill of women participation. Little wonder then why we have such organisations as the National Association of Women Engineers (NAWE), National Association of Women Journalist (NAWOJ) among others. Women have also distinguished themselves in the banking industry. The Institute of Chattered Accountants of Nigeria, ICAN, was as at last year, headed by Mrs D.B.A Kuforiji Olubi. The People's Bank headed by Mrs Maria Sokenu is also recording tremendous breakthrough.

At every given opportunity, women strive towards excellence. Government should therefore see women as assets rather than as liabilities and work out modalities for harnessing the resources inherent in them. This should be demonstrated by providing enough incentives to enable them embark upon profitable ventures.

The federal governments determination to elevate the status of women for meaningful contribution to national development through the establishment of the Better Life for Rural Dwellers programme and the Commission for Women should however be commended. A whole lot needs to be done if we must get maximum participation and co-operation from the women folk.

As home managers, it is of paramount importance to fully integrate the women into the economic recovery programme. Obviously, Nigerian women are determined to be achievers just like their counterparts in the developed countries. With full government support, the era of women redundancy would be a thing of the past. The federal government should therefore ensure that at least 40% opportunities are reserved for women in both the economic and political sectors. Ours is the tale of a new dawn: Nigerian women have woken up and the sky alone is their limit.

Permit me therefore to recast with all optimism the song of Jimmy Cliff: No! (Nigerian) womans no cry.

By Joyce Ehieze

Women have a lot to offer this county in both economic and socio-political dimensions. The fact is, integrating women into the mainstream of the nation's political and socio-economic activities is not only feasible but is also of uttermost importance, since there are no genetic barriers restraining women from performing same professional duties as men.

Another Long Wait?

The glamorous Challenge Cup slips through the dribbles of northern clubsides.

The current assertion by many soccer analysts that most, if not all Nigerian club sides have no reliable and stable goal poachers was proved right in this year's Challenge Cup final. The final was played between Rangers International of Enugu and Stationary Stores of Lagos. As a result of the inability of any of the two teams to score even a single goal after 90 minutes of fireworks on Saturday, November 17, an order was passed for a replay of the match. Four days later both teams clashed once again and this time around a winner emerged. In the tension-packed encounter both Stationary Stores and Rangers International were unable to score any goals during the regulation and even allotted extra time. There was only one way out. Penalty kicks. Both sides were able to score their first four penalty kicks. But Emma Okocha who casually took the last spot kick for Rangers missed the net while Adeshina Shobayo of Stationary Stores made no mistake. The Football Association (FA) Cup was not leaving Lagos as Stationary Stores emerge the title holders, while the hope of many Rangers fans that the cup was ending up - in Enugu was dashed.

To qualify for the challenge cup finals, Rangers International emerged as the winner in the group B preliminaries played in Port Harcourt. Emma Okocha, the same person that missed his crucial penalty kick against Stationary stores in the finals, scored the lone goal in the quarter finals replay against Calabar Rovers thereby giving Rangers a place in the semi finals. In the semi final encounter, the 'coal city' boys played against the defending champions, B.C.C Lions of Gboko. The B.C.C Lions which is a source of pride to many soccer fans especially in the northern part of the country ever since they lifted the Challenge Cup in 1989 was edged out of the 1990 edition after losing by a lone goal to Rangers in the

semi finals. With the defeat of B.C.C Lions by Rangers, the stage was set for the ensuing finals.

Stationary Stores emerged the leader in the group D preliminaries played in Sokoto and just like Rangers Internationals did not find it quite easy to get to the finals. They remained in Sokoto and played their quarter final match against the El-Kanemi Football club of Maiduguri. Adeshina Shobayo scored the lone goal that put an end to the Maiduguri Warriors dream of getting a place in the semi finals. Saturday, November 10, will always be remembered by both players and supporters of Stationary Stores because it was on this day that their dreams of lifting the 1990 Challenge Cup almost got dashed. Ranchers Bees of Kaduna held on to their one goal lead scored through a penalty kick. Up to the last few minutes of the semi-final encounter, however, just when all hopes were nearly lost, the former famous Lagos Flaming Flamingoes surprised everybody by equalising and bringing the game to an end in a stalemate. In the subsequent replay of the semi-finals between these two teams, Ranchers Bees were shoved out of the race after losing 5-3 on goals aggregate (penalties) to Stationary Stores. The Bees were once again denied the chance of lifting the challenge cup and their defeat also saw the end of the northern hope of retaining the Challenge Cup.

Forty five years ago, the maiden edition of the Challenge Cup competition, then known as the Governor's Cup was played in Lagos. Since then the F.A. Cup competition has come a long way with many teams at different times lifting the trophy. A perusal of the list of past winners reveals that Kano XI, who emerged champions in the 9th edition of the challenge cup competition in 1953 were the first northern side to clinch the trophy. In the

subsequent years up to 1988, the FA cup winners have always emerged from the southern part of the country. B.C.C Lions of Gboko, however, made an impressive breakthrough in 1989 when they succeeded in clinching the trophy. For the second time the much coveted Cup crossed the Niger into the northern part of the country. To many soccer-loving northerners a jinx had been broken and many of them naively attributed the success of the Gboko team to the fact that the finals was played for the first time up north at the Tafawa Balewa Stadium in Bauchi. (FIFA banned the use of the National Stadium in 1989 after some fatal mishaps).

The failure of the defending champions, B.C.C Lions of Gboko to retain the trophy and of Ranchers Bees to lift the Cup for the first time ever drew a lot of criticisms from many of their ardent supporters. Such people attributed the misfortune of these northern club sides to poor officiating and lack of effective and reliable strikers on the part of both losers in the semi-finals of the challenge cup competition. With regard to the Ranchers Bees, the management and financial crisis that beset the club since the opening of the current football season were also pinpointed as reasons for the club's defeat. Others took the defeat of their favourite teams more lightly and philosophically. A prominent example is the Kaduna state Governor, Colonel Tanko Ayuba, who fully aware that football is a game of win some, lose some, gave the Ranchers Bees team an unprecedented reception that contained a pleasant surprise package, despite the fact that they lost in the semi final stage of the competition.

Having emerged as the winners of this year's edition of the Challenge Cup competition, Stationary Stores of Lagos will represent Nigeria in next year's Mandela Cup competition involving other African countries. In the meantime, they have every right to bask in glory as winners of a trophy that has proved extremely elusive to many other club sides.

By Mohammed Bashir Salau.

PEOPLE

The quintessential old breed, Alhaji Yusuf Dantsoho, 64, former national field organisation secretary of the Defunct NPN in the Second Republic and one time Kaduna local government chairman, is one seasoned politician willing to give the newbreed a chance, calling only on government to give them a free-hand. "I don't think you can be proud of what you did not do or



Dantsoho: A Spent force

something that has been done for you. This is where I think things went wrong. People should have been given the chance to form their own parties.

Dantsoho openly chaffs about the unfairness of the blanket ban and condemnation of former politicians. Said he "A chance was given to us by God. We achieved Independence for this country. If we were not there, this country would not have been what it is today. We have achieved much and we are proud. The late premier, Ahmadu Bello is more popular today than he used to be when alive because of the works he has rendered.

Clinging to the toga of political righteousness, Dantsoho said that nothing in fact was wrong with the past democracies. "We were just deprived of our right to serve this country. For instance, a bag of rice cost N33.00 in 1983, now it is N600.00. The military talks of soaring cost of living, hospitals becoming mere consulting clinics. These things are still there. Schools don't have benches, or desks or teachers. They are charging us for nothing. One day, God will judge".

In the manner of an elder, Alhaji Dantsoho refused to pass a judgment on the performance of the newbreed thus

far. "It is too early to judge. I don't want to discredit them, I want to encourage them because they are our children, they are part of us" he said.

Mooting Mallam Ilyasu A. Mohammed for the first time carrying his shoe shiner's toolbox, the first thing that strikes you about him is his immaculatness. His modest dresses are always neat and well-laundered, something that is not common with people who earn money by polishing and mending shoes. Mallam Ilyasu is also a gentle and courteous almost to a fault - an attribute that is generally lacking in others that engage in the trade.

This "Shoeshiner" is not an ordinary one because he is a Sergeant in the Nigeria Police Force attached to the Ungwan Rimi Police Station in Kaduna. Mallam Ilyasu, who is 42 and happily married, hails from Gar village in Alkaleri local government area of Bauchi state. He joined the police force on November 22, 1974. Before then, Mallam Ilyasu had been a vulcaniser, mending and patching tyres and tubes, a mechanic, a drillman assisting in the



Sgt. Ilyasu: Down to earth cop

manufacture of bolts and nuts as well as a clerk in a commercial Company. He was promoted to the rank of a Sergeant on June 1, 1990. For a man of Ilyasu's level of education (primary school leaving certificate) to rise to the rank of a sergeant within 16 year is no mean feat.

Mallam Ilyasu says he learnt the art of shoe-shining some 10 years ago and takes a lot of pleasure in doing the job. How does he feel being a sergeant and polishing peoples shoes, some of whom

may be his juniors in the police? "What is wrong with polishing your junior's shoes as long as he pays for it." Mallam Ilyasu retorted.

He is tall, fair complexioned, young and upwardly mobile. He is all over Kaduna town and if you patronise any NANET fast food spot and you liked what you had, the man to applaud is Ini Akpabio. But he tells you, "We are only doing our best. The key is commitment. We in NANET believe in money for value, staff upliftment through training, reasonable salaries and response to changes in society."

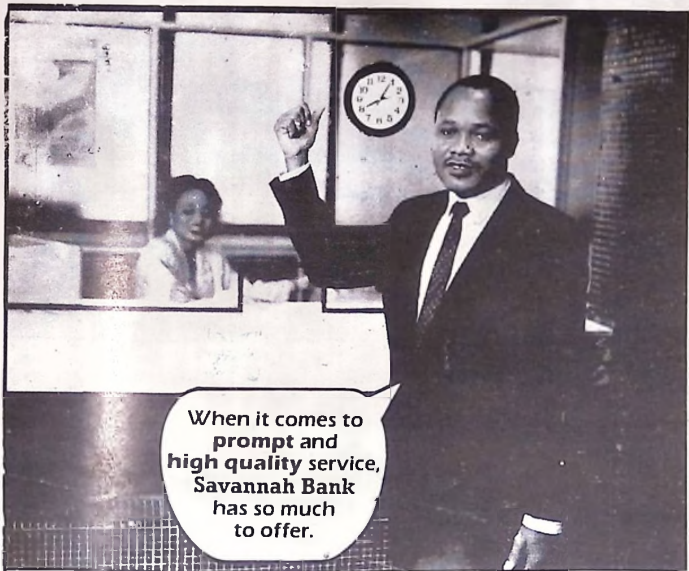
Ini, 29, is the General Manager of the popular NANET hospitality outfit. He has occupied that seat for two years now. But he has been in the business since it was incorporated 20 years ago. After obtaining his first degree from UNILAG, he proceeded to England for a masters in international hotel management. As his parents gradually disengage from the centre stage of the business, the manager is generally putting resourcefulness, creativity and innovations into it. The result? Six new outlets have joined the family. Three more are on the drawing board, and efforts are on to meet the tourism and catering needs of Kaduna and environs.

Ultimately, NANET will be synonymous with entertainment. Presently audio visual entertainment goes with feeding as neatly garbed personnel attend to client.

For one whose pastime is travelling, Ini, getting used to being a father, works hard, but he says his work schedule is no different from other executives.



Ikpabio: Food is it



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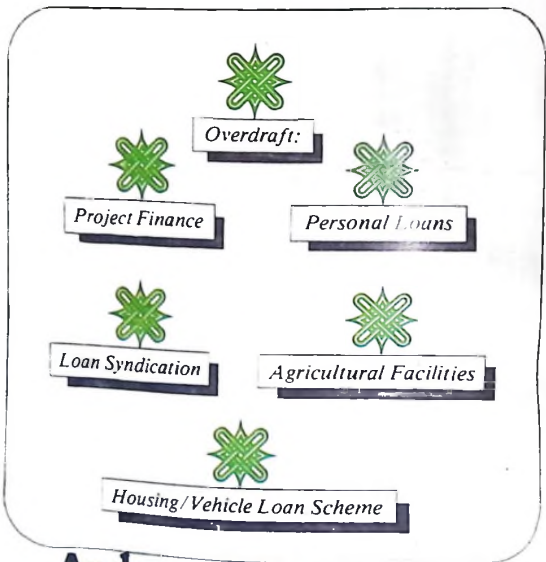
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