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LEGAL DEPOSIT SECTION

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# Citizen

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## BRIEFLY

A renowned sculptor Professor Benedict Chuka Enwonwu is dead. He died in the early hours of Saturday February 5 at his Ikoyi home, Lagos, after a prolonged illness.

The late sculptor and 1980 national merit award winner was born on July 14, 1921, at Onitsha, Anambra State.

He was a sculptural adviser to the federal government between 1944 and 1971, and was appointed professor of fine arts at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, in 1971-75. Late Professor Enwonwu has held exhibitions both in Nigeria and overseas.

Alhaji Hussaini Adamu has been turbaned as the new emir of Kazaure. Until his appointment, Alhaji Hussaini was *Danburan Kazaure*. He succeeded the late emir, Alhaji Ibrahim Adamu. The appointment was approved by the Kano State military administrator, Colonel Mohammad Wase.

# Citizen

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## FROM THE EDITOR

**L**ong before corruption became a household hobby in this country the name of the Nigerian Customs Services had — correctly or unjustly — become synonymous with it. They are seen as the fat cats who feed upon the rest of us. That of course might have been the conclusion of malicious enemies. Customs officers might have been the finest and most upright public servants. In which case they must also be among the luckiest because they routinely become rich — very rich and very fast. This luck or, as it were, the lack of explanation for the get-rich-very-quick syndrome has helped perpetuate this image.

The detestable syndrome, however, seemed to have finally been accepted in recent years as thousands of youths abandoned their jobs and scrambled for transfer to the Customs Service. Many of them who succeeded got the epithet of **Border Sheikhs** a not inaccurate allusion to their

resemblance to Oil Sheikhs, the Arab mandarins who possess fabulous wealth. When the broom at last swept, it was inevitable that Customs will be called to account. Last month a commission was formed to reorganise the department and already the controller-general, all his deputies and assistants have been sent on compulsory leave.

But is the department as guilty as they allege? What is the allegation? How do custom officers see themselves? These are interesting questions that need answer. With reports from border towns by **Abu Mommoh (Katsina)** and **Akinyele Aluko (Seme and Ido-Iroko)** and a wealth of interviews, **Mahmud Jega** writes the story of Customs, which is this week's cover.



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## LETTERS

**Cameroun vs Nigeria**

Sir,

We write to express our appreciation to your editorial board for a cover story in January 24-30, 1994 edition captioned: **Deaths on the Eastern border.**

Plenty deaths indeed! The list included fishermen, traders and businessmen who were maimed and killed on the high seas by the Camerounian gendarmes in 1993 alone along fishing communities in Okobo, Oran and Mbo local government areas of Akwa Ibo State.

However, we want to state clearly that we have been victims of persistent attacks by the Camerounian army for more than two decades now without positive efforts by the Nigerian government to solving the border dispute. We are grateful that the present military government under General Sani Abacha is now out to halt the Camerounian menace for the first time.

The government should not only send Nigerian armed forces to Abana and Atabong, but should provide social infrastructures in the areas so that our embattled fishermen can return to the fishing settlements soon because we have suffered severe economic hardship for over two months now. Enough is enough!

Finally, we thank your magazine and other news media organisations in Nigeria for their co-operation and reports on our problems.

**Victor Offiong, Bassey U. Atteh,  
Anthony Bassey and Dominic E.  
Bassey**

*for and on behalf of Atabong &  
Abana Fishermen Association  
Okobo, Akwa Ihom State*

**Tyrants as democrats?**

Sir,

Thanks for zeroing in on the pro-democracy camp. Just one correction from the Kaduna angle: Malam Yakubu Aliyu, an economist and former vice-chairman of Kaduna

Branch of CLO, is the leader of Solidarity for Peoples' Rights (SPR); he is the protom national chairman. I am only in charge of legal services in SPR and I am satisfied with the leadership of Malam Yakubu.

**Jide Olagunju  
Kaduna**

Sir,

The executive committee of the Borno Coalition for Democracy and Progress held its meeting in Maiduguri and resolved as follows: As an organic affiliate of the CD, views the ongoing crisis within the leadership of the organisation with all seriousness and calls for urgent steps to resolve same once and for all. Parties to the crisis should observe a period of truce to allow for cooling of tempers and also make for unity of the leadership. BOCODEP reviewed the recourse by government to probe public institutions and personages and described as haphazard the way panels are constituted, their terms of reference spelt out and their procedure charted. BOCODEP particularly observed the lopsided composition of some of the panels especially the one probing the conduct of five exacting administrators, and noted that the panel was made up of purely military men without representation from the Bar Association, human rights groups, the bench or public spirited individuals. BOCODEP submitted that no matter the degree of allegations against suspects, it is pertinent to guarantee them justice free and fair hearing.

Their alleged crimes were civil and not military and wondered why civilians should not be part of the panel if only to guarantee fair and thorough inquiry, and also to ensure those with *prima facie* case against them are arraigned before a law court. On the forthcoming Constitutional Conference, BOCODEP expressed its readiness to submit itself to whatever decision the forthcoming CD convention will

take on the subject.

**Jibril B. Mohammed and  
Abdulkadir Isa  
BOCODEP, Maiduguri**

**Hail Chukwumerije**

Sir,

Uche Chukwumerije carried the nation together through intellectual approach of neutralising dirty propaganda against the government when agents of disunity were fast cutting the thin thread of national unity during the dying days of the Babangida regime. It was during his time that despite the vociferous attack from a section of the media on the people, yellow journalism got an-eye-for-an-eye.

Of course for that role, Chukwumerije made enemies from ethnic diehards but as time continues to heal wounds even his most ardent critics are beginning to turn around and stare at the realities. As they say charity begins at home, he is received honour from his *Umunneochi* community in the Isuikwuato Local Government Area of Abia State, with a civic reception, in appreciation of the job he did for the country. He has of course declined a traditional title freely and willingly bestowed upon him, which others in his shoes would have bought with a fortune.

Chukwumerije is lucky to have come from a relatively well to do family. So he has been comfortable enough to live decently all these years. He has been a man of principles who refuses to accept the lure of excessive comfort as a way of life. So he has served in a ministerial capacity without the slightest blemish of financial imprudence or the whiff of corruption. Chukwumerije has handled most challenging tasks at most trying moments of the nation and has excelled beyond contest. To him, there are no better honour than those credentials.

**Danliti Mohammed  
Kaduna**

Letters to Citizen, carrying names, signatures and addresses, should be brief and to the point. They should be typed double space and addressed to Letters Page, Citizen, G 11 Unguwar Kanawa, PMB 2334, Kaduna. The Editor reserves the right to edit, publish or reject all letters.

## Probe, but don't sell

**O**ftentimes it is long overdue that the government looks into the lifestyle of some officers of the Nigeria Customs Service. For many years, people have talked about incidents of Customs officers, some at their equivalent ranks of police constables and corporals, displaying for all to see extravagant tastes and lifestyles. Some said that senior officers own property of the agencies only dream of. Nice for nothing that many Nigerians see the service as a cradle of corruption.

Not all officers of the Customs partake in this corruption spree. It is even possible that a majority of them lack either the inclination or the opportunity or both, to be corrupt. The task of the Tarfa panel is to investigate these changes thoroughly, separate the grain from the chaff and flush out the bad eggs who give the service such a bad name.

Investigation of corruption and lifestyles is however not the only aim of the Tarfa panel. Another aspect of its mission is to examine the structure and operations of the service and identify ways to improve these. The prejudice of the customs is that its image as a corruption-ridden agency totally obscures all other things about it. Not many people will bother to listen if told that the customs, much like the police, suffers from a chronic shortage of facilities and equipment, including barracks accommodation, vehicles, communications systems and weapons to engage smugglers. Many Nigerians will say, well, even if you give them more facilities and equipment, what will they achieve, other than to aid their corrupt ways?

The truth of the matter is that if Nigeria must have a Customs force at all, then it should have a well-equipped and mobile one with good barracks and communications. Why, the customs do chase and interdict and often seize items from smugglers on land, in the lakes, rivers, creeks and in the sea. Every now and then, they get shot at and men have been killed while on patrol. The government must listen attentively to the need to retrain and re-equip the service even

while it tackles the issue of corruption.

The Tarfa panel also needs to look closely at the structure of the customs as well as at the procedure for clearance of goods at the ports, airports and land borders. The need to streamline the service's structure is important because previous reorganisation efforts, notably those of 1958, have not been in vain. In the last five years, the service has managed, despite everything, to collect huge aged, despite everything, and is now revenues for the government and is now second only to the NNPC on that account. What this means is that the service is not a hopeless case, as many Nigerians think.

In fact, an examination of the goods clearing procedure may go along way to address the problem of corruption. Work out a simpler procedure, especially at the ports, that's what to do. There is evidence that the sheer complexity of the goods clearance procedure is a huge incentive for clearing agents to bribe customs officers just to get their papers processed, even if when they meet all the requirements. The simpler the procedure, the less the need to bribe officers.

However, everything else said, we must warn the Tarfa panel and the government to resist the strong temptation to adopt the so-called "Indonesian model", which is the euphemism for privatising Customs Services. This is a very serious matter of national security, independence and public morality. The shortcomings of the service, such as there are, do not justify the privatisation of their operations. For if that were so, some Nigerians may wish to privatise the army on account of illegal interference in politics.

The panel must carefully examine the charges levelled against the Customs chiefs before it recommends any course given the possibility that greedily advocates of the "Indonesian model" are pulling all stops to discredit the service and its leaders in order to justify their own schemes.

The Customs service may contain a lot of rotten elements, but it needs to be revamped and reorganised and kept in public hands, not handed over to foreign or Nigerian businessmen.

## NDLEA's credibility

The ongoing trial of suspected drug pusher, Joe Brown Akubueze, has brought back the issue of the credibility of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, as an agency capable of fighting the nation's war against illicit drug trafficking. On December 16, 1993, the agency arrested the suspect at the Apapa seaport and seized from him two containers containing 649 wraps of heroine worth 19 billion Naira. The offensive drugs were kept in the custody of the NDLEA as provided by law. By February 1, when the suspect's trial began, and the trial judge, Justice Funmilayo Oni-Opaku visited the NDLEA Ikofo office to inspect the drugs (evidence) eight wraps had disappeared. The learned judge, in order to prevent further theft of the seized drugs, ordered their destruction. By February 3, when the judge's order was to be complied with, four more wraps had disappeared. The street value of the 12 wraps is put at 420 million Naira.

Angry and embarrassed by this white collar theft, Justice Oni-Opaku has put on trial no less than 10 of the agency officials including its director-general Alhaji Bappa Jama'are, who has been ordered to return from his overseas trip. The federal government, too, through the federal ministry of justice, the supervisory ministry, has ordered a departmental investigation into the

missing drugs.

The steps taken so far by the learned judge and the federal government deserve commendation in so far as they represent a clear attempt to shore up public confidence in the agency. For quite sometime, the agency has been the object of public criticism as activities of its top officials readily bring to question the credibility of the agency.

Speculations have been rife about drug law officers recycling seized illicit drugs. The speculations, beer-talk as they may well be, are against the background of allegations made by suspected drug couriers that agency officials not only collect protection fees from them but are collaborators in the illicit business.

Yet within its a little over three year existence the agency's leadership had changed hands thrice, one of them redeployed in controversial circumstances. With all this shaky background public confidence cannot be expected to be reposed in the agency.

Yet the NDLEA needs the confidence of those it purports to serve to succeed. Public confidence is earned when those who are entrusted with responsibilities are seen to be acting in conformity with and not in breach of the requirements of those responsibilities. Government must ensure that the ongoing investigations into the present scandal is thorough and culprits adequately dealt with in accordance with the law.

## Global disaster

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees, UNHCR, has reported that there are about 20 million refugees around the world in the last quarter of 1993. Iran has 3.1 million followed by Pakistan with 1.6 million and Malawi, with 1.05 million has the highest number of refugees in Africa from the conflict in Mozambique.

Besides actual refugees, whose number was only 2.5 million 25 years ago, another 24 million people are currently displaced within their own countries because of persecution, violence and human rights violations.

One person out of 130 is obliged to run away and abandon everything because of civil wars and conflicts. It said the massive

flow of refugees has definitely "eroded international solidarity", and sparked hostile, xenophobic or racist reactions.

We share the UNHCR concerns about the plight of refugees and the various reactions to them such as the toughening of immigration laws by the EC and the US, but it is to be noted that most of the current conflicts in the "third world" that has often led to massive exodus of people were planted there by these EC countries and the US. Of course, people can leave for any number of reasons, be it poverty, disease, wars, repression, injustice and wars, and there are plenty of these around the world, but we cannot preach humanity and reject compassion and good conscience. Those who instigate conflict should be made to pay for it.

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### PROCEDURE FOR ENTRY

- Individuals are required to send in, for assessment, original copies of the work which they have undertaken during the year 1993.
- Each entry should be accompanied by a comprehensive curriculum vitae together with two passport photographs of the entrant.
- A brochure containing the NMMA Guidelines and Procedures for entry is available at all media houses and the office of the Administrators of the Award. All entries must be sealed and treated in confidence.
- Entrants are advised to mark the top left hand corner of their envelopes 'NMMA '93'.
- Each entrant should specify the Award category the entry is meant for.

**CLOSING DATE FOR ALL ENTRIES:** Thursday March 31, 1994.

Entries should be addressed to:

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Award Panel of Judges  
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- Mallam Garba Wushishi's Prize for TV Newscaster of the Year.
- Cadbury Nigeria Plc's Prize for TV Reporter of the Year.
- TV Presenter of the Year.
- TV Soap of the Year.



## ADAMU ADAMU

with the bulk going into private pockets, at the country's 300 ports spread over 13,000 Islands. This so infuriated Indonesia's economic managers that they decreed an end to customs and excise duties. The ban lasted seven years.

While it lasted all procedures for export were simplified and levies and the five per cent export tax were abolished. A token import levy remained while an import tax administration fee and foreign ex-

overtook the purposed reforms.

Along the way, the Indonesian example has been mentioned — and may be adopted. If it is adopted, what has Nigeria to lose? In three years Dr. Mohammed tripled Customs collections from 6.4 billion Naira in 1989 to 18.3 billion Naira in 1992. Without mobility, efficient communications and other logistics, this is impressive. But it may not be. Much more must probably have

# Customs: the Indonesian example

**N**igeria and Indonesia share many things in common, perhaps because they are at two very different and distant ends of the world. Both are oil producers and are active members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Both are muslim majority states with Indonesia more obviously so. While the secular culture has not been generally accepted nor yet abandoned in Nigeria, Indonesia's generals, especially under General Benny Muordani, have enforced *pancasila*, a secular-religious amalgam designed to supplant Islam.

Both are very corrupt — often indescribably so. A culture of patronage and post-colonial elitism hang heavy over everything. And the 10 percent was as constant as the Northern Star.

In Indonesia the customs department became very corrupt. So corrupt indeed that reforming it was not just difficult — it became impossible. Every new law designed to tighten up points of entry to protect Indonesian industry and keep out unwanted or dangerous cargo ended up enriching customs men. You could smuggle anything from items as small as pins to such big cargo as live elephants so long as you can pay for it. Revenue from customs duties kept declining sharply over the years

change controls were abolished.

It virtually forfeited revenue from customs but it made very good and sensible use of the oil windfalls garnered during the oil boycott and the Iran-Iraq war by developing agriculture, education and transport.

And in less than two decades it had been able to reduce the proportion of those living in obsolete poverty from 60 per cent in 1970 to only 15 per cent in 1990. This impressive record is unmatched by any developing nation. But how much of it is due to the abolition of customs is unclear.

In Nigeria some things about the customs are very clear. During customs' centenary celebrations Chief Allison Ayida tried, but all he could say was, "Strange as it may sound, the Nigerian customs is not the worst in the world."

And it is not as if nothing was being done about it. In October last year customs boss Dr. Bello Mohammed promised sweeping reforms. He charged customs men with rudeness to visitors and citizens and extorting money. A month later, Alhaji Aminu Saleh, *Sarkin Yakin Katagum*, and secretary to the government of the federation, as finance secretary then, promised a shake-up in the Customs service to weed out the incompetent and the corrupt. Other changes, however,

slipped through customs fingers. But if we abolish customs as Indonesia did, we may lose at least 18 billion Naira annually and it may also kill our industries — the very few the structural adjustment couldn't crush. It may also flood us with drugs and arms — drugs to get mad on and arms to kill ourselves with.

But whether we copy the Indonesians or design an indigenous solution it is doubtful if it will work in the current Nigerian situation. People are too sceptical to believe anyone is serious about fighting corruption. And their attitude will hardly change, especially with regard to how they see Customs.

At the customs centenary dinner Chief Ayida observed that young university graduates now shunned the civil service. "Now it is Customs, immigration and the military and banking."

And since Customs apparently doesn't seem keen to use its motto, which is **Justice and Honesty**, the nation should borrow it. Let's be honest with ourselves and do justice to the situation — and probe the military, central banking, the politicians and journalists along with customs. Otherwise this and the next one will be barren exercises.



*Customs chiefs watch and wait*

Nigeria Customs Service

# The Augean stable?

Many Nigerians think Customs is the other name for corruption. Until they hear of pre-shipment inspectors

**T**he Magama border post, three kilometres beyond the small town of Jibia, Katsina State, was quiet when *Citizen* visited it last week. There were no ten-ton trucks, waiting to smuggle goods across the Niger Republic border, anywhere in sight. All that

stood by the road that afternoon was an old signpost erected by the Nigeria Customs Service, which bore its motto, Justice and Honesty.

The signpost stood alone, that is, except for the charred remains of the customs office block at Jibia, which was set ablaze last year when

irate towns people set upon the men of the customs service, all of whom had to be transferred out of the town until tempers cooled. The incident, *Citizen* learnt, marked the climax of a hot exchange of words between the customs men and the town people, as to who it was who gave Magama a notorious reputation. This deceptively quiet little border town is widely accused of contributing to the country's economic adversity. The people say that the customs officers do not do their work, and



**Babangida:** *pleased with customs*

the officers reply that the people it is who aid the smugglers.

On Monday last week, February 7, the Federal Provisional Military Government took a dramatic step towards disentangling the spate of charges and countercharges around the customs. It ordered the comptroller-general of the Nigeria Customs Service, Dr. Bello Halliru Mohammed, to proceed on "compulsory leave with immediate effect." Also ordered to go on leave were Dr. Mohammed's six deputies and a dozen assistant comptrollers-



**Abacha:** *"customs are corrupt"*

general. The order, the government said, followed its approval of the interim report submitted by the panel set up to reorganise and reform he service. The government then appointed army Brigadier-General S.O. Ango to administer the customs, "pending the final report of the panel and government's final decision on the recommendations of the panel."

The big sword of Damocles had been dangling over customs house at Wuse, Abuja since January 6, when the Abacha regime, for whom probes



**Diya:** *probes as policy*

is now a central activity, constituted an eight-member panel to "reform and reorganise" the customs. Major General Paul Tarfa heads the panel; other members include Mr. Ishaya Garba, Dr. Nuhu Abrekson and Dr. Stanley Macebuh. Other members are Mr. Wole Oyewo, Ambassador Othiga, Mr. Mike Ozeikhone and Hajija Halifat Abdulrazak.

**W**hen General Sani Abacha inaugurated the panel in Abuja on January 12, he delivered a stinging condemnation of Nigeria customs. "The public," he said, "views the customs as a conduit pipe for siphoning public money into private coffers. Specifically, customs officials are accused of deliberate acts of corruption and economic sabotage perpetrated in collusion with unscrupulous collaborators through the undervaluing of duties payable on imports and exports." The head of state then asked the Tarfa panel to, among others, examine the "public and private conduct" of customs-men.

On this point, the general appeared to hit the nail on the head. In many towns and communities all across the country, tongues are wagging about the men and women



**Dr. Mohammed:** *"the problem is collusion"*

of the Nigeria Customs Service. Even though they earn the same salaries as the police, the two services stand diametrically opposed in the public's view of their material affluence. Where policemen are thought to be at par with teachers in the poverty bracket, many customsmen and women belong to society's richest rungs. An anonymous feature article about the customs in the Vanguard of February 3 stated, "The style of living of some customs assistants and inspectors is comparable to bank executives, if not more. Some smart customs inspectors are proud owners of fine buildings at exclusive locations and ride in posh cars. At their houses, you could find all brands of choice drinks both local and imported."

plainly poor. However, there is a constant struggle by many of these officers to get posted to "lucrative"



Former customs chief, Musa places, such as, border posts, air and seaports.

How do so many customs officers become rich? Evidently, some connive with smugglers. At visits to various border towns at Jibia, Katsina

State, Illala, Sokoto State and Kamba, Kebbi State, Citizen picked up the same stories about collusion between smugglers and the customs. A source at Katsina said, "There are well known and very rich smugglers in this town, about three or four of them, whom the customsmen know and trust. Any other person who wants to smuggle goods must approach the customs through these people."

**H**ow is it done? A source familiar with smuggling operations at Kamba, in Kebbi State, told Citizen, "in the afternoon, the smuggler will go to the customs and inform them that he has so many trucks with such-and-such goods waiting to cross the border. He will then give money, which is shared by the customs, immigration, police, SSS and soldiers at the border post. Late at night, at the agreed hour, the trucks will come at top speed, the post will be deserted, and they will pass." The operation may head either way. The goods smuggled out of Nigeria are

# Not all are corrupt — Odangla

The area controller, custom and excise, Katsina State, Mr. Oche V. Odangla spoke to our man Abu Mommoh on his commands headaches and successes. Excerpts:

**Citizen:** What is the extent of the problems facing your area of command? And what measures have you put in place to address these problems?

**Odangla:** There are many problems. They are problems of tools to perform the job, vehicle, money, lack of barracks accommodation for officers and men of customs, and equipment. We have asked headquarters to look into it (these logistical problems) and we are waiting for their response.

**Citizen:** A few months back you addressed pressmen when your men impounded some textile materials — guinea brocade estimated worth 15 million Naira. Have

you been able to identify the smugglers? **Odangla:** We have been investigating it, still there is no result. The owners have not come forward to claim them. The drivers of the vehicles escaped, before my men got there. The goods are still in the warehouse.

**Citizen:** What will happen to the goods now? **Odangla:** The goods will be forfeited to the government. We have made reports to the headquarters. It is left for them to decide what to do with them.

**Citizen:** It is generally believed that men of customs seize in a while use one or two seizures of smuggled goods to create publicity. They say for one seizure, or so many have been allowed to go. What is your response to this kind of perception by the public?

**Odangla:** There are various ways of smuggling. It is either the smugglers beat the custom men on patrol or they collaborate with the smugglers. I am aware of the perception that we rarely collaborate with smugglers, it is not always so. It is very rare otherwise how can we be seizing their goods if we collaborate with them, they will definitely protest loudly.

mostly foodstuff, petrol, fertilizer and cement, while those imported are mostly textile materials, cigarettes, tyres and *tokunbo* vehicles. In the case of the latter, the smugglers conspire with some customsmen to issue fake duty certificates, reportedly printed in Lagos and Kano.

**A**t the Idiroko border last Wednesday, February 9, a young customs officer told *Citizen* that smuggling there is only a small scale affair. "The real thing," he said, "takes place in the north. Over there, people smuggle oil out with 16-tyre oil tankers, while here, some people even use Coca-Cola bottles. How much do you want to take from such people?" In truth, oil seeps out all along Nigeria's land borders, as well as in the rivers and creeks of the Delta areas. And in most of these places, customsmen allegedly collude with smugglers. The biggest spanner in the smugglers' works, *Citizen* learnt, are the Special Federal Operations Units, which are deployed at random by customs headquarters to stem smug-

gling operations. A source in Katsina told *Citizen* that some officers even alert the smuggling kingpins when the federal units are on hand.

While inaugurating the Tarfa



Acholonu: administrator, Katsina State

panel, General Sani Abacha charged that customs officers undervalue the duty payable on imported goods. How correct was this charge?

In the last 15 years, the method of

clearing imported goods at Nigeria's seaports and airports has been so much refined that it is now almost failsafe, on paper. Last November customs' Comptroller General Dr. Mohammed issued a lengthy statement to all importers to reappraise them of the clearance procedure. In summary, it said an importer should first open a letter of credit with a commercial bank. If the cost, insurance and freight, or CIF, value of the goods exceeds 1,000 dollars, then he must ask pre-shipment inspection agents to look at them. If they are satisfied with their quality, quantity and value, they will issue a Clean Report of Findings, or CRF, as well as an Import Duty Report, or IDR, stating the duty payable. Pre-shipment inspection agents are appointed by the federal government under the 1979 comprehensive import supervision scheme to control the quality and quantity of goods imported into the country. In 1988, they were given the added task of issuing the IDR, that is, they fix the duty to be collected by the customs when the goods arrive in Nigeria.

*Citizen: The perception is not altogether wrong, giving the lifestyle of your men.*

**Odangla:** What do you mean by lifestyle?

*Citizen: Customsmen drive flashy cars, build mansions and they are said to indulge in spending lavishly. So how do you defend your men from allegation of corruption?*

**Odangla:** These are isolated cases. I cannot rule out that few customsmen engage in expensive lifestyle. We are not saints, but that is not to say all custom men are corrupt. Otherwise the job will collapse.

*Citizen: Smuggling of petroleum products across Katsina border has been rampant. There is still shortage in the town, what are you doing about this?*

**Odangla:** We are tackling the issue of petrol smuggling. It has reduced drastically from the level I met it. The shortage of fuel is still there but not because of smuggling.

*Citizen: How much cooperation does your command get from the government and the local people at the borders?*

**Odangla:** The government has been cooperating with us. It is beautiful from the military administrator down to the other government officials. But for the people or settlers at the border towns, there is no cooperating with us. They are very hostile to our men. They even try to

stop our men forcefully from arresting the smugglers. The smugglers are very daring and at the borders, they are also hostile.

*Citizen: Have you had cases of the smugglers attacking your men with arms?*

**Odangla:** No. The smugglers are very daring, but we have not encountered any armed smugglers like the vehicle my men brought in this morning, the driver escaped, when my men asked them to stop, my men had to open fire. So they abandoned the car, there is a pair of slippers and a cap too.

*Citizen: I saw the vehicle when your men drove it into the compound this morning. How were the goods seized and what is the cost of the items?*

**Odangla:** The vehicle (a Peugeot 504 GL) was coming along Jibia this morning (Thursday 10 February) my men on patrol asked the driver to stop but he refused. So my men opened fire at the car. You can see the bullet holes on the car, the items seized are textile materials. They are 60 pieces of 10 yard materials. I have asked my officers to process the cost.

*Citizen: How has the ongoing probe into your organisation affected the morale of your men?*

**Odangla:** I cannot comment on that. It is subjudice. Sorry, I cannot talk on policy statement

The government took the drastic step of assigning that task to the four pre-shipment inspectors, namely Cotecna International, Bureau Veritas, Swede Control-Internek, and SGS, in 1988 in order to curb cases of undervaluation by customs officers.

When the goods arrive, a bill of entry is prepared by the clearing agent, which includes the CRF and IDR as well as the invoice and bill of lading. This is then presented to the customs at the port together with a certified bank draft of the duty payable, and is made out to the federal government of Nigeria import duty account. This account, lodged in the central bank, is controlled by the accountant-general of the federation and is out of reach of the customs chiefs. Besides, the central bank effi-

ports. One loophole in the pre-shipment inspection scheme is that goods whose total cost, insurance and freight (CIR) value is less than 1,000 dollars are assessed for duty directly at the Nigerian ports. Also, some importers manage to either fool or collude with the pre-shipment inspectors to mis-declare and thereby undervalue the goods. This, though, is a risky business and makes the goods liable for confiscation. All the goods seized daily by customs at the ports are cases of mis-declaration. Often this is done cleverly. For example, an importer of torchlight batteries might declare them to be "accumulators," which is technically correct, except that industrial accumulators are duty-free while ordinary batteries attract 300 percent



Kalu: duty waivers everyday?

the Apapa port, for example, is a notoriously chaotic place with hundreds of clearing agents struggling everyday to clear their clients' goods. An agent who fails to clear his goods in time risks high demurrage, pilfering, and ultimately, forfeiture and auction.

These corrupt activities of customs men are certainly known to the brass, if not exactly condoned by them. Speaking at a senior staff seminar of the service at Abuja on November 13, 1991, Dr. Bello Mohammed said in reference to smuggling operations, "The greatest problem here is that of collusion. It is a known fact that some customs offi-

### Dr. Bello Mohammed said in reference to smuggling operations, "The greatest problem here is that of collusion. It is a known fact that some customs officers collude with smugglers to run contraband goods through our ports, airports and land borders"

ciently weeds out fake bank drafts, and no cash payments are acceptable for this account. Also, all payments are receipted.

How then can anyone cheat? Prior to 1988, when pre-shipment inspectors were asked to issue IDR's and in effect fix the duty payable, the most visible avenue for corruption at the ports was for customs officers to, as the head of state said, undervalue the duty payable. Now only the pre-shipment inspection agents can undervalue, and since the customs computerised their port operations in the last two years, they, too, efficiently weed out cases of undervalue by the inspection agents.

Still, corruption persists at the

duty. In short, an importer of mis-declared goods must either fool pre-shipment inspectors and connive with customs, or collude with both

**T**here is another way in which customs officers at the ports make a lot of illegal money. In spite of computerisation and in spite of the fact that the customs service has already attained its peak manpower target of 25,000, clearance of goods at the ports is notoriously slow and laborious. Customs officers apparently contrive to slow down the process even further, and desperate clearing agents offer substantial amounts of money to the officers in order to get the papers moving. The customs' longroom at



Shonekan: petitions baffled him

cers collude with smugglers to run contraband goods through our ports, airports and land borders." The comptroller-general further said, "Fraudulent activities, such as criminal connivance with excise traders to defraud government of revenue, machining of bills of entries outside the Long Room, forging of bank drafts by clearing agents, are only possible through the active connivance of some customs officers."

**T**hese activities did not however prevent the phenomenal growth, since 1987, of revenue collected by the Customs Service. In fact, every year since 1987, the Customs easily exceeded the revenue target set for it by the federal government. In 1988, for example, they collected 4.1 billion Naira, or 26 per cent more than the 3.3 billion Naira projected. In 1989, they collected 6.4 billion Naira, or 68 per cent more than the 3.8 billion Naira projected. While the Customs chiefs boasted that this results were achieved due to "introduction of articulate and efficient revenue control measures which



**Olashore: he considered "Indonesia model"**

effectively plugged all revenue leakages", it was apparent that the massive devaluation of the Naira also helped to boost import duty reve-

nue. Even last year, despite the waiver of excise duties, the Customs collected 17.5 billion Naira, or 34 per cent more than the 13 billion Naira projected. Even after allowance is made for devaluation, there was a net increase in the revenue collected.

It appears that this huge increase in revenue generation, which made the Customs second only to the NNPC on that score, despite the other problems, boosted the personal standing of the Comptroller-General, Dr. Mohammed, and enabled him to survive the revolving-door policy of the Babangida regime. In 1991, the former president upgraded the then director of customs to his present position of Comptroller-General, equivalent in the public service to the Inspector-General of Police. General Babangida also granted the Customs greater autonomy, a board of their own with the minister of finance as chairman, and a new salary scale, all in 1991.

The former president could not however meet all the demands of the service. Since 1988, the comptroller-general had frequently demanded for more money to provide barrack facilities at isolated border posts, provide four-wheel drive vehicles for the anti-smuggling patrol teams, and install radio sets at the 147 border posts. The customs also lack good weapons; in 1991, then defence minister General Sani Abacha released a cache of G-3 rifles from army stores to the customs when they complained that their rifles were so old that they often cannot fire. There was also the problem of the joint customs-immigration air patrol. Though there are now three fixed wing Dornier aircraft and one helicopter in the fleet, which is kept in the office of the internal affairs minister, none of the planes can communicate with patrol teams on the ground. Also, the customs have more than 70 broken down boats for coastal patrol. Presently, they have only five sea-going boats to patrol 850 kilometres of coastline.

One of the customs service's biggest worries is for the physical



**Ibru: planes with no phones**

safety of its men and women. Many of them get killed in exchanges of fire with smugglers. Only two weeks ago, two officers were ambushed and shot dead as they escorted an arrested oil tanker to Maiduguri. Last year, four officers were killed at the Idiroko border by smugglers; two officers drowned in a boat accident while on duty at Calabar, and assistant superintendent of customs Stephen Bamidele was ambushed and shot at the Oshodi Mile 2 expressway, Lagos, by unknown assassins last November.

Not everyone praised the Customs. Late last year, the foreign pre-shipment inspection firm Messrs Cotecna sent a memo to the Interim National Government charging that the customs was collecting less duty than was provided for in the total Import Duty Reports issued by the inspectors. This fact the Customs acknowledged in their own memo to the ING, but they gave seven explanations for it. First, they said, goods imported by the President, diplomats, specialist hospitals and charitable organisations do not pay duty even though I.D.R.'s are issued for them.

Secondly, the Customs and excise tariff consolidation decree of 1988 gave the President power to grant duty-exemption to importers. General Babangida delegated this

power to his finance ministers, and between 1992 and 1993 they together granted duty concessions worth 4.15 billion Naira! This process still happens: Citizen learnt that the current finance minister grants exemptions to importers almost daily.

Thirdly, the head of state and the minister can also grant a deferment of duty payment. Last year, for example, the government allowed Messrs Julius Berger to defer payment of duty worth 500 million Naira on construction material imported through the Warri Port. Besides, imported goods issued with I.D.R's may get seized as contraband or may be forfeited if they are not cleared on time. They are then auctioned and the proceeds are kept in a separate account. Nor does the Customs collect duty on goods in transit to Niger Republic and Chad; these are simply escorted in their borders.

Nor that the pre-shipment inspectors were themselves free from problems. When they were first engaged by the Obasanjo regime in 1979, the task of the inspectors was to keep hazardous and poor quality goods out of Nigeria, as well as to prevent undervaluation of goods. But in 1988, the inspectors failed to detect the Italian toxic wastes brought into Koko Port, though they "inspected" it. They also inspected and cleared, among others, 114 containers of contraband goods aboard M/V Gold Hills in 1991, and four million dollars worth of sub-standard bulbs



Zayyad: privatisation would blow

imported into Nigeria, also in 1991.

**W**hile inaugurating the Tarfa probe panel last month, General Sani Abacha urged it to examine "the models of customs services in other countries especially the Indonesian model with a view to recommending appropriate modifications for our own system." One of the Customs' assistant controllers-general recently sent on leave told Citizen that the head of state's remark on this matter may be the key to explaining the travails of the Customs top brass. For, in June last year, a foreign firm, Bivak International, a

subsidiary of Bureau Veritas, one of the inspection agents, submitted a proposal to the then minister of finance, Mr. Oladele Olashore. In effect, Bivak asked to take over the functions of the Nigeria Customs Service on contract.

Bivak offered to collect import duty for Nigeria at the source of the imported goods, that is, abroad. It included in its proposal a detailed "operating procedure", a computer capability and data processing programme, a personnel training pro-



Abiola: had his choice for CG?

gramme, and a draft agreement ready for signing.

In return for the service, Bivak asked to be paid 0.66 per cent the C.I.F. (i.e. cost, insurance and freight) value of all goods imported into Nigeria, plus 15 per cent of any increase in the value of total revenue collected. A quick calculation by government officials showed, for example, that goods worth 100 billion Naira entered Nigeria in 1992, and that duty revenue that year increased by 5.2 billion Naira over the previous year. If Bivak had got this contract in 1992, for instance, it would have earned a total of 1.6 billion Naira.

It is this arrangement that is called the "Indonesian model." Last July, the Customs chiefs strongly opposed

**Goods worth 100 billion Naira entered Nigeria in 1992, and that duty revenue that year increased by 5.2 billion Naira over the previous year. If Bivak had got this contract in 1992, for instance, it would have earned a total of 1.6 billion Naira**

the proposal by Bivak, but the foreign firm had got aces of its own. Its proposal actually called for forming a "Nigerian company" with Bivak owning only 40 per cent of it, to manage the privatised Customs Service. Bivak had no shortage of Nigerian partners; at the last count, some top government officials were reportedly pushing for the deal to be signed.



**Obasanjo:** began pre-shipment inspection

Even if the Customs Service escapes the privatisation gale and even if the Customs chiefs escape charges of corruption, there is little chance that they may get back their plum jobs. *Citizen* learnt that many people, among them senior military officers, are actively lobbying to head the Customs. Many of them are convinced that if Dr. Bello Mohammed, a veterinary surgeon, former GNPP politician and general manager of a river basin authority could head the Customs, so can anyone with a managerial background.

The Comptroller-General's job is made especially tempting by his responsibility for auctioning the contraband and other goods seized by the Customs. Every day, dozens of people from all over the country converge at Customs Headquarters in Abuja, each with a note from a

minister, traditional ruler or a senior military officer. The Customs chief recommends to the minister of finance to whom the goods should be auctioned. If approved, these allocations are often as good as gold. But they may well prove to be the customs bosses' undoing. A senior official of the Customs told *Citizen*, "There is no way you can satisfy all those who come to ask for contain-



**Shagaya:** architect of 1988 reforms

ers. That means you make powerful enemies every day." But you can also help your friends.

The Customs chiefs may well have brought themselves down. Last



**Saleh:** wanted to reorganise

year, during the ING's brief tenure, several petitions were sent to Chief Ernest Shonekan's office urging him to remove the comptroller-general. Even though the petitions were anonymous, they clearly emanated from within the Customs House. Suspicion had pervaded Customs House throughout last year, and two deputy comptrollers-general were said to have secured promises from the SDP and NRC, respectively, to succeed to the top spot if their parties won. When the Abacha regime began to probe the judiciary and NNPC late last year, more petitions were sent by anonymous persons, and Customs was added to the list.

**W**hen *Citizen's* reporters visited customs locations in the wake of the order on their chiefs to proceed on leave, they found anger and outrage. "There is no security in government job any longer," an officer said at the Apapa port. "Our own jobs can also go at any time. Our time is up." At the customs officers' mess in Kaduna, another officer said, "They should go and probe the ministries, the tax office, and even the army. Soldiers have more to show in terms of corruption. Why should they single out customs? Why not go and probe immigration, prisons etc?"

Is the Customs Service as corrupt as people say it is? A senior official paused briefly and said, "Quantitatively, the amount of corruption in the Customs, that is, the number of corrupt versus the number of honest officers, is not higher than in any other government agency. Stories about our corruption travel far because we deal directly with people, importers and clearing agents." And also because of the public and private conduct of customs men.

*By Mahmud Jega with additional reports from Abu Mommoh in Katsina, Aluka Akinyele in Idiroko, Mannir Dan-Ali in Apapa, Abayomi Shoyebi and Yabagi Kolo in Kaduna*



# AREWA HOUSE

CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH  
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY



## Communique on the National Workshop on 'The State of the Nation: Which way Forward'

### 1. PREAMBLE

Arewa House, Centre for Historical Documentation and Research of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, based in Kaduna, organised a National Workshop on the State of the Nation on the 2nd and 3rd February 1994 at State House, Kano, Kaduna.

The Workshop was motivated by concern for the future of Nigeria, particularly in view of the impending National Constitutional Conference. Participants were drawn nationwide and out across all major interest groups. Enthusiasm generated by the Workshop was unprecedented. Forty-five (45) papers on wide-ranging topics were presented, followed by frank and lively discussions from which the following conclusions and recommendations emerged:

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 2. THE UNITY OF THE COUNTRY

The Workshop observes with delight the degree of social homogeneity already achieved such that the country is no longer the mere geographical dissonant voices, there was an overwhelming consensus in favour of the continued corporate existence of Nigeria.

To enhance this unity, however, there is need to redress existing imbalances in the rational distribution of political, economic, educational and employment opportunities in the country.

#### 3. SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

Years of military involvement in politics has led to distortions of the federal system of government. The Workshop calls for a truly federal system wherein the diversity of the country is reflected and local initiative guaranteed rather than the current disturbing tendency towards the concentration of power at the centre.

The Workshop observes that there is need to rethink the cost of governance by reviewing the number of states and local governments in the country.

#### 4. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Various suggestions for a system of rational presidency were made for which purpose the division of the country into several zones was proposed. The Workshop observes that such a system is a negation of democracy. It will entrench the much detested zono-regional tendencies in our political system when the nation goes to the polls merely to endorse as President someone who only has a zonal and not national appeal. The Workshop feels that there is no democratic substitute for a strong candidate who earns the confidence of Nigerians in a free national competition.

On the size of constituencies, the Workshop recommends that this should be the same nationwide. Local Government areas are unevenly populated and should therefore not be used as basis for representation to the national and state assemblies.

Voters' register should be reviewed on a continuous basis and not only when elections are imminent.

#### 5. REVENUE ALLOCATION

The Workshop emphasizes the need to regard the wealth of the country as a common national resource. The great degree of economic inter-

dependence of the constituent units of the country was recognised. Each part of the country complements the other.

Revenue allocation formula should balance both derivation and need. However, areas affected by ecological degradation such as desertification and erosion should receive proper recompense from the federal government. The case of oil producing states deserves immediate attention that it is desirable to accord them an increased share of the national revenue.

#### 6. CORRUPTION AND MISGOVERNMENT

The Workshop observes with concern the high level of corruption in the public life and society. If urgent remedial measures are not taken, no meaningful development of the country can take place. The Workshop urges leaders to set and live by good examples.

#### 7. CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

The Workshop welcomes the idea of a Constitutional Conference which should have power to discuss all matters pertaining to the future of the country.

On the mode of representation to the Conference, it is recommended that the overwhelming majority of the members should be elected by means of universal suffrage. Senatorial zones used in the last elections should be considered as suitable constituencies for this purpose. Nomination by government, the number of which must be small, should draw from the traditional rulers, the clergy, the academia, the military and other interest groups. Both elected and nominated members should be men and women of high integrity and knowledgeable who should be informed and objective.

The Constitutional Conference's recommendations should be subjected to a national referendum.

#### 8. CONCLUSION

The Workshop was historic and the enthusiasm generated so overwhelming. The large number of people who turned up reaffirms our collective faith in the unity and corporate existence of our country. Sessions had to be compacted and periods for recess mercifully brief. We apologise for this and extend our sincere appreciation to all participants especially General OLUSEGUN OBASANJO for giving the keynote Address and General MUHAMMADU BUHARI for his active participation throughout the Workshop.

Professor ABDULLAHI MAHADI  
Director,  
Arewa House,  
Kaduna.

## NIGERIA

## Health

**A harvest of death**

**A yellow fever epidemic ravages the south-east, wiping out hundreds of lives in quick succession**

**F**uneral songs have of late become almost a daily experience in Ihiala, one of the 17 local government areas of Anambra State. In the home of one man alone death visited on four different occasions in the last two months. The unfortunate man is Ichie Chukwumaeze Obiechina, a native of Uli, a town located along the Onitsha-Owerri road. For the red cap chief who, until recently, was a Cameroun-based businessman, it is a season of deep mourning, as he has lost, one after the other, his wife and three children to the killer disease.

Officially, just over a hundred others are listed as having died in the epidemic, with unofficial sources estimating a death toll of over 400. The worst hit area is Uli, which has a history of yellow fever attacks. Ihiala people suspect that the present epidemic was imported into the area around August last year by returnees from certain yellow fever prone parts of the country who fled their stations in the heat of the political impasse that followed the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential elections.

Health workers confirm that although the first incidents were noticed in September, it was not until November that alarm bells started ringing. By then 14 cases and five deaths had been reported at Our Lady of Lourdes, a Roman Catholic outfit and easily the biggest hospital in Ihiala.

Sensing imminent tragedy, the management of the hospital got in touch with the local government headquarters. Fooled by the results of the laboratory tests received from the victims, the hospital thought it was dealing with increasing cases of hepatitis. But the health department of the local government secretariat

thought otherwise. According to Mr. Joseph Nweke, assistant chief environmental health officer and chairman of Ihiala Local Government yellow fever control committee: "the mortality rate was what worried us. It was so high that we suspected that if it was hepatitis it would not be like that. Eight out of 10 victims were dying." Convinced that the problem was beyond its powers, the local government promptly contacted the state ministry of health, Awka. The ministry reacted without delay, sending a team of health workers to the affected areas. The team returned to Awka with mosquito larvae which after due analysis were discovered to be those of the *aedis* specie of mosquito, the yellow fever vector.

It was then that the federal ministry of health was contacted. The outcome was a visit to the affected areas by a three man team from the ministry. The team, comprising a medical doctor, a virologist and a higher environmental health scientist, arrived Ihiala on January 12 and went about collecting samples of blood of victims on admission in hospitals at Ihiala, Mgbidi in Imo State and Aba, Abia State. Tests on the blood samples confirmed that the strange disease ravaging Ihiala and gradually making inroads into Imo and Abia states was, indeed yellow fever.

Since then efforts to combat the epidemic have been intensified, with federal government expectedly leading the way, by making available an initial consignment of 50,000 doses of yellow fever vaccine. The gesture was backed up with a promise of another 50,000 doses of the vaccine by Mr. Silas Ilo, minister of state for health. Mr. Ilo, who was at Ihiala on January 20 to see things for himself, later visited Imo and Abia states,



*Nweke: we're worried*

where he delivered vaccines to be used to combat the yellow fever scourge.

As could be expected, the vaccines are making a great difference in the war against the yellow fever epidemic. In Ihiala alone, some 40,000 people have already been immunised against the disease, while many more are still on the queue, waiting for treatment. Both hospital and local government officials who spoke with *Citizen* at Ihiala expressed satisfaction with the way the Anambra and federal health ministries are managing the epidemic. Mr. John Obodozie, acting chairman of Ihiala Local Government Council, blamed the high death toll on ignorance and wished that the disease had been correctly diagnosed early enough. According to him: "At first the people of this area didn't know that it was yellow fever. They thought it was jaundice or malaria. Various medical treatments were applied to no avail. People started dying and we had to make reports to both the Anambra State and federal governments."

On its part, the management of Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital blamed the late identification of the disease on the absence of a yellow fever laboratory in the eastern axis of the country. It pointed out that with only two such laboratories in the country, located at Ibadan and

Maidugun, the chances for an early detection of any future yellow fever attack in the south-east were remote, as the disease has similar symptoms with hepatitis, malaria and jaundice.

The hospital management has, therefore, urged the federal government to expedite action and establish a good laboratory in the south-east "to make for easier tests and

quick combating of the various diseases that are epidemic in nature."  
By Isaac Umunna  
with Tony Oko in Ibadan

## NIGERIA

Abacha's regime

# No end in sight

The foot dragging of the Abacha government on its political blue print has heightened apprehension that the new leader may perpetuate himself in office

**H**ave they forgotten their political lessons? These are poignant questions for heated debate. What is, however, not contentious is that Nigeria's political class has lost 23 years of the country's 34 years of political independence to military rule. Yet, the politicians have found deep fraternity in the three-month-old regime of General Sani Abacha which is also expected to lay a solid foundation for democracy and guarantee national unity.

But this expectation has continued to raise serious apprehension in political circles and among political analysts. *Citizen* gathered last week that the delay in appointing sole administrators for the 589 local government councils nationwide was not unconnected with intense pressure on the office of the chief of general staff. According to a source, the decision on the category of people to be appointed was being influenced by two interests.

On one hand is the military's army of legionnaires who are lobbying for the appointment of retired middle level officers as administrators. And on the other hand are powerful traditional rulers who have their candidates among tested bureaucrats and newbreed politicians of the still-born Third Republic. *Citizen*, however, gathered that the military was more favourably disposed to the retired military officers. But the final list of appointees was expected to be sprinkled with the names of some politicians and civil



Abacha: how long?

servants.

Although the nation still awaited last week the names of local government administrators, political analysts have remained divided over the necessity for the deepening regime and pro-democracy elements in the society. Those whose names were mentioned frequently include Ambassador Babagana Kingibe, former national chairman of the proscribed Social Democratic Party, SDP and vice-presidential candidate of the party in the June 12 election; Chief Tom Ikimi, former chairman of the disbanded National Republican Convention, NRC; Alhaji Lateef Jakande, Alhaji Bamanga Tukur, Chief Melford Okilo, Mr. Solomon Lar, Dr. Samuel Ogbemudia, and Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, all former civilian governors in the Second Republic.

Others include hard core pro-

democracy advocates such as Dr. Olu Onagoruwa, Chief Ebenezer Babatope, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu, who was The Senate president until November 4 last year, and two former presidential aspirants Alhaji Adamu Ciroma and Professor Jerry Gana. Expectedly, they have all put up spirited defence of their decision to serve under a military dictatorship contrary to their oft-stated principles. But not many people seem to share their logic even as predicated, as it were, on the need to preserve national unity.

"If the politicians are concerned about the unity of the country..." asked *The Guardian* editorial of Thursday, December 2, last year, "why did it take an army general — senior representative of the institution that has usurped the people's sovereignty and humiliated the political class for a decade — to bring the politicians together? What argument did he use other than the offer of governmental positions?" This indeed, could have been the trick.

Professor Sam Aluko, a renowned economic guru was of the view that the political class was naive. Said he: "The fact that so many elite of the political class so readily accepted positions under the military regime shows the bankruptcy of the political class and the sagacity of the military." But the professor who had turned down appointment offers from successive government in the last 10 years has joined the Abacha team lately.

Professor Aluko, who was reported last last year to have ruled out the capability of the military to revamp the economy, was named last week as chairman of a 14-man national economy intelligence committee to ensure strict compliance with the goals of the 1994 national budget. Perhaps, his acceptance of a government job for the first time in about a decade might have been

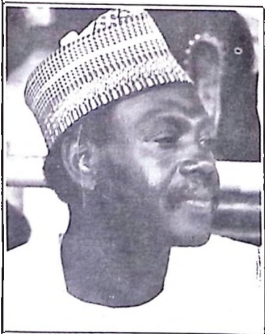


Ikimi: advise on what?

informed by the expressed determination of the new regime to lay a solid economic and political foundation for the country.

But the poignant question asked by *The Guardian* is, "how many times in the past 10 years have we heard this declaration of intention, and why has it been impossible hitherto to lay such a foundation? What new historical factors have now emerged to give us the hope that the present attempt will succeed?"

It does appear, however, that the political class was in a serious dilemma. Whether or not this is genuine and surmountable is subject to debate. But Professor Claude Ake, a renown political economist and director of the Port Harcourt based



Kingibe: a patriot or opportunist?

Centre for Advanced Social Science, CASS, has identified that dilemma. Said he at a public lecture late last year: "Nigeria is reeling from the antics of a political elite which is as allergic to democracy as it is neurotic in the pursuit of power."

True to type, those who gloat over politicians' insatiable appetite for power have not been disappointed. Despite the appointment last week of Chief Tom Ikimi as special adviser to General Abacha, stalwarts of the NRC still pick holes in the appointment of political nominees in the regime's cabinet. And their argument, according to Dr. Hameed Kusamotu, NRC's former chairman, was that although the Provisional Ruling Council, PRC is the highest ruling body "there is nobody there who shares the republican ideals and this is very disturbing."

Whatever might be the overriding urge behind the pursuit of office, the depressed state of the economy may prove to be the Waterloo for aspirations of many office holders. While jostling for political offices when the military upstaged the tottering interim government, *Citizen* gathered that office seekers had seen the opportunity as a way of furthering their political ambition.

There is, however, growing fear in political circles that the conduct of the political class under this regime was enough to undermine the very democracy they were warming up for. A former Lagos governorship aspirant told *Citizen* that the issue is no longer that politicians have mortgaged their hard-earned mandate to the military but that the country may not witness full democracy in several years to come.

Similar view had in fact been expressed earlier by Chief Arthur Nzeribe, a maverick former presidential aspirant of the defunct SDP who suddenly embarked on a solid pro-military campaign under the aegis of his discredited Association for Better Nigeria, ABN. Said he in a British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC interview shortly after General Abacha assumed office: "I have no

hope of our returning to a civilian rule in the next five years or even 10 years."

Coincidentally, events since then have tended to confirm his pessimism. For instance, the new regime has not been able to put forward a political blue print that would contain its expected tenure of office. Instead, the government had insisted that its tenure would be determined by the proposed constitutional conference. And this had expectedly received the blessing of hapless politicians serving under it.

*Citizen*, however, gathered that politicians such as Major General Shehu Musa Yar'adua (rtd), Chief Olu Falae and Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi may laugh last when the political engineering of the new regime takes off. "This is the time when we shall separate the boys from the men in politics," said Chief Falae at the launching of a book written by Dr. Jonathan Zwingina a former adviser to Chief MKO Abiola and now a commissioner in Adamawa State.

But with the seeming lethargy on the part of the government, it appears the time is no short distance. Twice the take off date for the constitutional conference had been shifted from January to March. Yet, barely two weeks to the new date, the Justice Saidu Kawu committee which was to prepare agenda and direct the conference was just setting down to business.

As the prospect of quick return to democracy denied by the day, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, a leading member of the Yar'adua group in the defunct SDP expressed disgust at the conduct of his colleagues in the political class. He told *Citizen* in a recent interview that those who took up appointments under the military regime are suffering from joblessness.

And with the deliberate foot dragging on its political blue print, Abacha's regime could be the longest "brief" regime in the country.

By Moyn Akoshile  
with Mannir Dan-Ali

# The trouble with the north

**T**oday, three broad based geo-political groupings can be identified in the north.

These are, the north-western (Hausa-Fulani states); the north-eastern (mainly Kanuri states of Borno, Yobe along with Adamawa and Taraba) and the middle belt (political groups). Even within the three broad groups allowance would have to be made for certain sub-groups who have found it difficult to go along politically with others in their various areas of classifications. Thus, the Kano-Jigawa radical axis can hardly be expected to share the same political bed with the largely conservative political disposition of the north-west. In the middle belt (Benue, Plateau, parts of Taraba, Kaduna, Adamawa, Bauchi and Abuja) and the geographical middle belt (areas that belong to this classification by reasons of geography and not by their broad political leanings i.e. Niger, Adamawa, Kwara, Kogi, Kaduna).

These cleavages are basically ethnic in character, but of late they have been reinforced by religious factors as well. It is now such that whoever wants to represent or speak on behalf of the north would have to confront such questions as whether he is Hausa-Fulani, Kanuri, or Tiv and or whether he is a christian or muslim. These differences in the north would not have been so alarming had they not assumed political dimensions. It is now a given fact that the middle belt and north-east groups along with Kano-Jigawa would prefer to relate politically with other regional political blocs in the country than with their regional north-western brethren.

Thus the north would find its position weakened at the proposed constitutional conference has to do with the military factor. Northern domination of national politics has been anchored on its control of the armed forces and key institutions of national security. This has been manifest since July 29, 1966 when

By  
Iliyasu Gadu

officers of northern origin struck to overthrow the Ironsi regime which had assumed power after northern political leaders had been killed in the first coup in January, 1966. The idea of the military anchoring northern political power was the result of shrewd calculations by the late premier of the north, Sir Ahmadu Bello.

This has served the north well such that to date military interventions have always largely favoured and accentuated northern political control of the country. Ironically, this is where the snag lies. Although it is quite obvious that the military as an institution would have to account for certain actions it undertook while in government, it must, however, be generally accepted that whatever indictment the military eventually suffers at the constitutional conference, the north, by virtue of its continual control of the military over the years, stands culpable.

If the truth must be told, the north has no one but itself to blame should it suffer a diminution in its pre-eminent status in national affairs. It was to Sir Ahmadu Bello's credit that he was able to recognise the potentialities inherent in the diverse cultures and peoples of the north. Whatever methods he may have used, in his political ascendancy he never sought to exploit the differences between the various ethno-cultural groups in the region. He was better positioned to understand and hence turn the diversities in the north into advantages because of his mixed parentage. His visionary decision to northernize the northern civil service as well as encourage young northerners to take up careers in the military services, though the subject of much negative comment in the south, was intended to strengthen the political position of the north regionally and nationally.

But the same cannot be said of his

political heirs and those whom he groomed to champion the cause of the north. For this, the Hausa-Fulani, Ahmadu Bello's ethnic group and the largest in the north, have to take the large share of the blame. Upon Ahmadu Bello's demise, the Hausa-Fulani political elite started pursuing a separate political agenda that came to give them political advantages over the other ethnic groups in the north. In doing this, they erroneously assumed that Ahmadu Bello's ability in ruling over the north lay in coercion and exploiting the ethno-religious differences, rather than consensus building. In this process, efforts were made by the Hausa-Fulani to institutionalise policies and actions intended to alienate and minimise the relevance of other northern ethnic groups in both regional and national affairs. Such policies were manifest in appointments into regional and federal bodies and institutions, location of establishments among other discriminatory social, political and cultural policies.

The other ethnic groups have reacted to this by emphasising their own cultural separateness and with time by pursuing political alliances with other groups in the country. This is what culminated in the northern voting pattern during the June 12 presidential elections of 1993.

As it is now, the north would want to hope that the constitutional conference does not go any where near recommending a confederal set up for Nigeria. To head this off, prominent northerners have been heard arguing against what they perceive as threat to unity and sovereignty of the country. But even that would not be sufficient to prevent the diminution of the north politically. Extemporaneous but complementary to the internal political developments in the north are the socio-political strides that have taken place in other parts of the country. The south-west in particular, with its domination of the professional

sectors and other decisive institutions of national affairs egged on by a vociferously partisan media, does not appear ready to yield any ground on the question of the basis by which Nigeria's unity should be structured.

Whichever way it happens there can be no denying the distinct fact that the south-west is poised to gain from the self-inflicted political misfortunes of the north. An indication of this is provided by what clearly is an involuntary endorsement by prominent northern political fig-

ures, General Shehu Musa Yar'adua, Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi and others for an unfettered sovereign national conference, which is a death-knell for northern political dominance.

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## Governance and the Nigerian economy

**G**iven what governance (even if ideally) entails, it can be asserted that Nigeria has been profoundly characterised by irresponsibility, indiscipline and lack of accountability in leadership and in governance generally.

It has, sadly, been diverted from essential objectives of desirable and necessary service to the people, and has been turned into crudely parochial, personal and self-serving racket. It is big business, requiring heavy capital out-lay as initial investment and it yields very high dividends.

Consequently, Nigerians, as distinct from their governments, (elected or self-imposed), have been economically and socially battered. They have been psychologically demoralised and politically demobilised, exhibiting such withdrawal tendencies that they are increasingly neither involved in nor concerned about processes of governance.

Yet the civil society ought to be concerned with matters of governance. It has to strive to monitor and regulate excesses and abuses of political power and authority conferred on those who govern. The civil society must, through organised pressures and censorship, expressions of discontent or revolt, define the context of governance.

Most of the problems Nigeria has experienced in the area of governance can be attributed to the phenomenon or misnomer of military rule. Prolonged involvement of the military in the governance of Nigeria has been very devastating and consequential on the economy and the Nigerian society. This is especially because many military rulers who have been involved in various

By  
Attahiru M. Jega

levels of governance have been not just irresponsible but also totally selfish and unaccountable to the Nigerian people. They governed with reckless dispositions, pillorying and plundering the nation's wealth and mortgaging its future to the imperialist, Western capitalist, countries. Through such programmes as SAP, they have sought to structurally adjust our country to the requirements of capitalism and imperialist countries.

Indeed, the role of the military in governance has led to the militarisation of our national psyche.

As a result of all this, governance in present day Nigeria is characterised by vandalism, banditry, plunder, patronalism and, indeed, prebendalism. This situation calls for a critical appraisal and concerted efforts to return to, and consolidate, the desirable ideals of governance for our growth and development as a nation and as a people.

It can be asserted that Nigeria's quest for better governance has to be linked to the struggle to end military rule, forever. There is hardly a place where military rule, which is essentially authoritarian, has resulted in good governance. If there is, it is an aberration.

Introduction, consolidation and expansion of democracy would provide a better foundation, and certainly a broader basis, for good governance, based on popular empowerment. Democracy does not necessarily mean good governance. But it is a necessary, even if not sufficient, condition for good, desirable governance.

To facilitate good governance, certain institutional and legal reforms may be necessary and desirable. But these have to be combined with other reforms in socio-economic and political processes for them to be effective and meaningful.

For Nigeria to progress and develop; for it to be able to contend with the current and devastating socio-economic crises, there is the need for a crop of leadership, as described, that leads by example. Only such leaders can generate confidence in the people, reduce their indifference or hatred for government, and make them actively involved and committed in the task of socio-economic reconstruction.

The people are likely to continue to be cynical, even skeptical, if not totally apathetic to the objectives and programmes of those involved in governance who do not lead by example.

Thus, the role of governance in the economy, and indeed in the society, is critical. Good or bad governance shapes the direction of any economy, defines its context and regulates its vitality and vibrancy. In the case of Nigeria, bad governance, nurtured and conditioned by military rule, has contributed significantly to the generation and sustenance of the economic crisis.

As things stand now, Nigerians have a very long way to go in the direction of good and desirable processes and structures of governance. It is a very depressing situation. But Nigerians must continue to strive and struggle for good governance, through civil society groups, in a democratic context rather than in a militarised political arena.

NNPC

## Calm before the storm

Anxiety mounts at the top hierarchy of the NNPC as its investigation panel quietly pursues its mandate which may herald a re-organisation of the corporation

**E**ven as the abnormal fuel supply situation in many states of the north takes a turn for the worse, top management staff of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation are pre-occupied with a different problem of their own. Unlike the fuel palaver which is so far from the ornate headquarters of the corporation in Lagos, and which in many cases they insist is not of their making, their present worry concerns the issue of self-preservation.

The corporation's top shots are now paralysed by the fear of the unknown which may follow the activities of the 10-man panel investigating the activities of the oil conglomerate. Indication of the serious unease at the corporation's top level is that discussions by members of that circle is dominated by the hushed talk of fallouts of the likely re-organisation of the country's number one revenue earner.

As the recent retirement of four of its leading officers showed, the corporation is not new to top level changes. However, the suspension last week of several customs' senior officers, following the recommendation of that body's investigating panel, must have given their counterparts in the NNPC, the feeling that they could also be in the firing line. Similarly, confidence among the top NNPC's top management is not bolstered by the cold shoulder the panel members give them. Unconfirmed reports had indicated earlier that the investigating panel had written to the NNPC to request for two million Naira for the accommodation of its members. Midway, however, the panel seems to have changed its mind about not only the money but also any close relationship with the corporation's officers.

The investigating panel under the chairmanship of Major General Emmanuel Abisoye (rtd), has among other mandates, the scrutiny of all payments from one million Naira upward for the past three years. It is also to identify recipients of irregular or improper payments and the amounts involved as well as make suggestions for effecting speedy restitution. Apart from these aspects, the one that may have had the NNPC top shots scared stiff is that which calls for a thorough examination of the present structure, organisation and functions of the corporation and make appropriate recommendations for improvement, and where necessary, total overhaul. In the same way that veterans of the civil service blames the 1988 re-organisation for most of the ills associated with it today, apologists for the status quo at the NNPC argue that frequent changes in the corporation will result in its breakdown. A managing director of one of the company's subsidiaries was overheard moaning that after spending 22 years in the industry he is saddened with the recent turn of events. Aret Adams, a former group managing director of the NNPC had also expressed similar views earlier.

Another sign of the apprehension in the higher rungs of the leading conglomerate is that some of its senior officials have already indicated their intention to disengage from its services. Although the number involved could not be confirmed, *Citizen* learnt that a number of such officers have already filed in their resignation letters. It was also established that the NNPC's company secretary Dr. C. Briggs, who was earlier detained alongside the former group managing director of the company, Dr. Edmund



Daukoru, former MD

Daukoru, in the 41 million dollar theft case has now been retired. An ironic twist in the tale saw the man who is said to have drafted the floating storage tank agreement that led to the theft charge against the retired officers now made the company secretary.

*Citizen* sources indicate that the former company secretary, a historian, depended on the legal expertise of his successor for aspects of his work that required such. On their part the junior and middle level officers of the corporation seem oblivious of the gathering storm which their sensitive bosses have picked on their radar. When *Citizen* visited the NNPC headquarters and other related offices in Lagos recently, they seemed more pre-occupied with the impending election of their local unions. A number of such officers who spoke to *Citizen* anonymously explained that their bosses might be worried about the activities of the probe panel only if they have skeletons in their cupboard. In any case, one of them added, "We know nothing of what was/is going on and therefore have nothing to worry about".

For now it may be too early to say who is clean and who is not until the Abisoye panel submits its report in April this year, and hopefully, the report does not share the fate of that of the Belgore judicial commission on NNPC which has since been gathering dust somewhere in government safe or filing cabinets.

By Mannir Dan-Ali

LASU

## Back from the dead

Hope rekindled among parents and students as LASU seemed to have pushed its tumultuous past behind it

The usually sedate atmosphere within the walls of the Lagos State University, Ojo Lagos was absent throughout most of that Wednesday as a human and vehicular traffic flowed into and out of the campus. By the appointed hour of the convocation ceremony the entire area around the administrative and faculty blocks of the university wore a carnival mood as an unprecedented crowd jostled to get close to the loudspeakers relaying proceedings from the enclosed venue of the convocation. Given the size of the crowd, it required a place at least 10 times the capacity of the venue if the people who came to witness the event were to all be accommodated.

The crowd consisted of parents, well wishers and many others who trooped in to witness the convocation of 1,014 graduands of the university as well as the conferment of doctorate degree on the works and housing minister and founder of the university, Alhaji Lateef Jakande.

Even as the ceremony was proceeding, one question in the minds of many was how the university is able to convoke students when it had been under lock for more than a year. A concession to that fact was made by the university when, a few days earlier, it announced the cancellation of the 1993 academic session. For the graduating students, however, they greeted the convocation with relief as they had almost lost hope of graduating owing to the endless crisis in the 11 year old institution.

Peace eluded the "eagle" university as a result of a combination of an over zealous administration and combative students and lectures. Trouble broke out at LASU in December 1991 when the former vice

chancellor of the university, Professor Jadesola Akande banned the university's students union. Even though an uneasy peace was restored, the battleline remain drawn as events of May 1992 were to show.

Not to be left out of the nationwide strike that broke out then, LASU students joined the fray. In the ensuing fracas one student was hit by a bullet and fatally injured. The death of the student and the university administration's handling of the whole affair only served to poison the already strained relationship between the administration and the students.

As if that was not enough trouble for one institution, another front was opened when LASU dons disagreed with the administration over the disbursement of six million Naira car refurbishing grant. The lecturers embarked on an indefinite strike action to press their case. Expectedly the students spent more time out of their classes as the source of crisis multiplied. It is little wonder that at the height of this endless palaver, the British Broadcasting Corporation rated LASU as the world's number one crisis ridden institution.

It took the stoning of the former Lagos State governor, Sir Michael Okedola and his entourage at the launching of LASU's development fund by elements said to be students of the university for the government to realise the serious nature of the trouble at that institution. Rather than getting to the root of the problem, investigations into the saga was used as an excuse for the expulsion of 34 students and the dismissal/retirement of 30 academic staff. None of the actions, however, followed procedure spelt out in the university's enabling edict.



Jakande: honoured

The move further inflamed the two groups with the lecturers adopting a sack-one-sack all policy. The student went further and demanded the removal of the vice chancellor and the registrar as a precondition for peace. To press their case the lecturers on April 4, 1993 simply resumed the strike they had just suspended. The pattern continued until the October 18, last year when the university was finally reopened.

Before then a visitation panel had been appointed. It identified underfunding and indiscipline as the twin evils bedeviling the fledgling institution. Much earlier than that period, the university's vice chancellor had thrown in the towel stating that she was no longer interested in the job. Professor Enitan Babawunmi was appointed in her place and has since been making conciliatory efforts to establish normalcy at the university.

With the spirit of give and take that now seem to be gaining ground it is possible that the university may enjoy a spell of peace; sign of this comes from the students who had earlier stood against repeating the second semester last year. When it was announced that the entire session had been cancelled there was hardly a ripple. The main source of worry for now, is whether the government will provide the needed fund to implement some of its observation in its white paper on the visitation panel. The report had highlighted that a lot of facilities are needed if the university is to function well.

By Mannir Dan-Ali with reports from Titiloye Amzat

CD

# Moving apart

The Campaign for Democracy's second national convention fails to patch up gaping holes in its walls

**F**or keen watchers of the coalition called Campaign for Democracy, CD, since November 18 last year, the outcome of its second national convention held at the Teachers House in Ibadan two Saturdays ago, was not unexpected.

Weeks before the convention the press war between the warring factions had intensified in spite of efforts by individuals within the organisation to mend fences. The battle line remained drawn between Beko Ransome-Kuti, the chairman of the two year old pro-democracy coalition and Chima Ubani, its secretary-general. The bone of contention had been an alleged undemocratic tendencies of the former culminating in his involvement in the General Sani Abacha coup. The latter, leading a group of young radicals including Chom Bagu, vice-chairman, and Glory Kilanko, treasurer, insisted that their chairman's romance with the general had compromised him and will certainly be a liability to the organisation in the days ahead. Kuti believes otherwise insisting that his parley with the general was in good faith and should therefore not be crucified. At all fora for the resolution of this problem, these mutually exclusive positions were rigidly held on to and it was clear that the Ibadan meeting would be a rowdy affair. It was.

The convention would have been a bumper success but for the walk-out staged by the Chima Ubani group. There were 120 delegates from 11 branches of the coalition and representatives of 72 accredited pro-democracy and human rights organisations across the country, who came to the ancient city to parley over the future of CD formed in

1992 to extend and deepen the frontiers of agitation for democracy. Unfortunately the convention broke down over alleged anti-democratic practices by the leadership. There were problems over accreditation of delegates and affiliates as the leadership, by now partisan, could not agree on an authentic list of affiliate organisations. Yet this was crucial to both sides as only accredited delegates could vote at the convention. The items on the agenda were important. It included a motion for the election of new officers and debate of secretariat and financial reports. It was over the first item that the problem that finally split the convention began. Although the vote that was taken showed that those who thought the chairman having explained his role in the Abacha coup should not be censured carried the day with 45 to 21 votes, the Ubani group who wanted the chairman censured felt that there were some underhand dealings in the counting of the votes.

But what really angered the group, said Tom Adanbara of the Abuja Alliance for Democracy whose organisation was refused accreditation, was that after the voting Ransome-Kuti bluntly refused his opponents recognition to contribute to debates on other issues. It was this, said Chom Bagu, the erstwhile national vice chairman "that necessitated the walk out. "We felt that we could not continue to be part of the sham that was going on" he agitated.

Among those who walked out including Bagu were Ubani and Kilanko. Despite the walk-out, new officers were elected. They included Beko Ransome-Kuti, reelected chair-



Beko: second coming

man, John Gimbason, deputy chairman, Gbenga Awosode, vice chairman (Lagos zone); Festus Iyayi vice chairman (Delta zone); Taiwo Otitolay, vice chairman (Plateau zone); Sylvester Odion-Akaine, secretary general; Joe Okei, assistant general secretary; and Okechukwu Nderibe, treasurer.

Although there were reports in the press that the Ubani group had decided to form a new organisation, Adanbara of AAD denied this last week informing that "what the group decided was that everybody should go back to its constituency and report what happened in Ibadan to enable us know our next line of action." Bagu corroborated this when he told *Citizen* "I did not resign from CD. I only resigned my position." Does this mean that there is still room for fence mending? *Citizen* gathered last weekend that efforts are on to reconcile the warring groups particularly in view of the oncoming constitutional conference. Insiders believe that only a united CD could give any meaningful direction to the trend and quality of debate. Will the peace makers succeed?

By Bolaji Adebisi, with additional reports from Samson Ojo

NIGERIA

NIPSS

## Polishing policy makers

The prestigious Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies continues its march towards excellence with the inauguration of the 16th batch of senior executives.

**K**uru, Plateau State: The cold harmattan wind blows gently across the rolling landscape dotted with hills. In the distance is the lake that completes the serene and picturesque scenery. The mid morning sunshine gives a deceptive feeling of warmth. The crowd moves towards an imposing red brick building that is the institute's auditorium where all ceremonies are held. Indeed, the event could pass for one of the numerous brainstorming sessions, workshops, seminars or conferences for which the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) is recognised. Established in 1979 by the Murtala/Obasanjo regime, "the institute serves as a high level centre for reflection, research, and dialogue. It attracts academics of excellence, seasoned policy initiators and executives and other citizens of experience and wisdom from different sectors of national life in Nigeria. They meet, reflect and exchange ideas on the great issues of society, particularly as they relate to Nigeria and Africa, in the context of a constantly changing world."

Last Monday marked the inauguration of the 40 odd participants nominated for the 16th senior executive course. The chairman of the NIPSS board of governors, Major General G.O. Ejiga (rtd), called on the participants to live up to the NIPSS motto of "towards a better society" by making substantial contribution to the intellectual discourse in the country. No one regime, according to General Ejiga, "has all the solutions to society's problems." The director general of the institute, Prof Nur Alkali then set the ball rolling when he observed in his address, that our nation and society

has moved into a new world of the survival of the fittest. To meet this challenge, Professor Alkali called for the intensification of the search for new ideas and new knowledge based on original and independent thinking. Such ideas, according to him, must "emerge from the realities of our lives, our practical experiences and the facts of our history, culture and tradition."

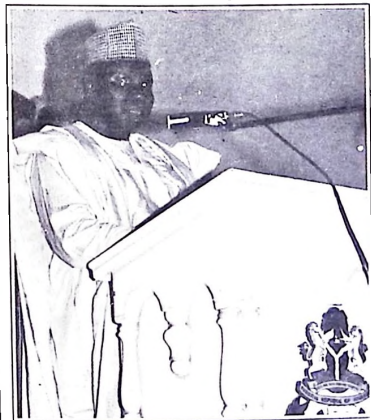
It was a timely call, with the proposed constitutional conference scheduled for the first quarter of the year. The director-general noted that all countries of the world undertake a stock-taking period with a clear objective of preserving their unity and integrity. Having succeeded in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, such nations have marched forward. Professor Alkali's panacea for the birth pangs the country is currently undergoing "is to accept and believe in the indivisibility of

Nigeria as a sovereign nation while throwing the searchlight on those areas that would unite and strengthen us further."

Talking about unity and building bridges, NIPSS is indeed a high level unity school with participants drawn from the three sectors of the armed forces, police, state governments and the private sector. Two heads of state, Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha are graduates of the institution while Chief Ernest Shonekan, head of the defunct Interim National Government attended the All Nigeria Conference on Foreign Policy held there in 1986.

NIPSS is a unique institute both in its goals and methods of achieving them as well as its peculiarities. There are no classrooms but the participants are divided into four syndicates. Permanent teachers are replaced by distinguished guest lecturers and a directing staff attached to each syndicate to guide and advise participants in their studies. This directing staff could be a major general while the principal is a director of studies and the provost is a director-general. They make it clear that they are also willing to learn from participants. As for peculiarities, it is a 10 month fully residential course where participants arrive at lectures in chauffeur driven cars, live in lake side chalets; eat three course meals with restaurant hands waiting on them, and undertake local, African and world tours. There are no telephones in Kuru and a register of participants' movement even at weekends is kept. Special passes are required for any absence and unauthorised trips are penalised. Kuru is about discipline, brainstorming and finesse.

By Bilkisu Yusuf



Alkali: it is survival of the fittest

## DISCOURSE

## Samson's law of self-destruct

**T**his law simply says that if you cannot improve your lot because of your own character flaw or others, bring everybody else down with you. Let's note that, from Biblical times, the chief reason, has been a personal failure.

Samson, those who are familiar with the story will recall, was a man with a considerable physical and divine strength. But he succumbed to prostitute's awesome beauty and lost his power. In the end, he took revenge on his enemies but it wasn't a sweet one because the house he pulled down on them also buried him.

I'm afraid that those fellow patriots who want to use their pruning shears on this country because they have not had "a fair deal" are behaving according to this Samsonic law of self-destruct. A respected columnist of a Lagos newspaper, who has assumed the role of a minorities spokesman, argued recently that Nigerians did not negotiate the "terms of our coexistence," when Lord Lugard lumped together the southern and northern protectorates. He was right, but I'm not sure he understood it in the same historical context as some of us listening did. Nigerians at the time they were brought together couldn't have "freely" negotiated the terms of their living together because they were conquered by a superior external force.

Something else set me thinking: this Samsonic tendency to self-destruct could be exacerbated by the victim's violent environment, too. A colleague, who has been in Lagos much longer than me said to me: "My friend, don't you expect someone who has just emerged from the humidity of Lagos, its snaky, nerve-racking traffic jam to have his senses complete. Half will have abandoned him." The friend exaggerated, but to be sure, the average Lagosian is prickly, and tends to shout at you,

By  
Tawey Zakka

may be not out of frustration and anger but to be heard above the constant hum of traffic and machinery.

Take the case of this middle-aged man, who looked every inch a gentleman until he began to speak on the state of the nation: whether we should stick together or go our separate ways. Of course, nobody questions his right to decide one way or another. But his reason is something else.

The gentleman was angry that his child was denied admission into a public school, funded in part with his tax, despite making the mandatory 400 cut-off points while another who got fewer points got through. "So let the country break up. Those who can swim will swim ashore; those who can't should drown."

The man, I found out later, was Igbo and had flown all the way from Kano, where he runs a successful business, to participate in a pre-national conference hosted by Vanguard Newspapers Limited. Did his indomitable Igbo entrepreneurial spirit take flight in the confrontation with the Lagos "phenomenon?" The voice that complained about government playing too big a role in the economy was demanding his child's share of the national cake, which is, ever getting smaller.

The north has held onto power for too long and Nigeria is the worse off for it that is the refrain one hears at seminars and lectures across the country. Again the environment may not have helped some people much. The north may have monopolised political power, but not all northerners have benefited. Political power and its economic and social perks have been used by a small group, which has as its credential only a decadent aristocratic pedigree, to exploit and ruthlessly suppress other people. But our southern brothers

are too culturally and historically myopic to notice the titanic struggles of the minorities of the north against its ruling class represented by the old NPC and NPN.

The Tiv riots in the 1960s, and lately the fighting in Zangon Kataf in Kaduna State in 1992, and the Mumuye insurrection in Jalingo, Taraba State, were but few examples of the ongoing struggle of the northern minorities to shrug off the yoke of oppression. To the extent that the south failed to see this, it lost an ally, a vital one.

**Let Nigeria  
break up if it must.  
But if it should  
stay as one country  
it should be because  
everybody  
has a stake in  
keeping it one**

On breaking up of the country, the question is who is afraid of losing out? Some self-appointed spokespersons of the north have been making believe the north would fare worse if one or two parts of the country broke away. True northerners who have watched their lot deteriorate over the years power has resided in this region would care less if Nigeria disappeared altogether. Those saying no are those who are afraid of losing their privileges. Let Nigeria break up if it must. But if it should stay as one country it should be because everybody has a stake in keeping it one, not because some people want to play the Father Christmas because of oil or some imagined advantages they have over others.

NEXIM

## Dusting the theories

Professionals gather to discuss matters affecting trade and the environment under the first NEXIM distinguished lecture series

The gathering had all the masking of an academic exercise. However, instead of the ivory tower crowd it was businessmen and women, bankers, environmentalists and other professionals who got together to listen and contribute to the first distinguished lecture series of NEXIM at Le Eko Mercedien, Lagos recently.

Professor Adeniyi Osuntogun, a

beginning of their effort of sensitising the public on issues of trade and environment.

Central to all other arguments in Osuntogun's lecture is his position that free trade and the environment occupy two different extremes. It is this unambiguous stance and his understanding of the trade instruments of the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade, GATT and the

agreements, according to Osuntogun do not promote the cause of environment. Neither do they make it easy for countries like Nigeria to compete with the big trading powers especially US and Japan whose trading interests the agreements seem designed to serve. Among several issues related to the impact of the environment on trade, are concepts of sustainable agriculture, and forestry, energy conservation, bio-technology, toxic substances, pollution and several others dear to the heart of the green fingered.

As if to promote the view that developing countries have no concern for the environment, it was pointed out that such countries "have generally objected to links between environmental protection and trade because they are concerned that minimum environmental standards will be used as yet another way to keep their goods out of the world market." An analysis of the Nigerian export situation in the era of non oil agricultural export and the present one of dependence on oil lead to the question of the need for both market and product diversification strategy. Professor Osuntogun unveiled the findings of a recent NEXIM sponsored study which identified Mexico, Morocco, Japan, South Africa and to a lesser extent, Algeria, Egypt and Kenya as having markets that hold the best promise for Nigeria. This is because the countries are relatively fast growing, have the necessary liquidity for import payment in addition to being "friendly and understanding."

Osuntogun's concluding remark noted that environmental targets are easier attained through co-operation rather than threats but whether the leading trading powers will harken to that is another matter. Dr. Ibijaro disagreed with the guest lecturer on some of his points on the environment. He also highlighted some of the environmental problems facing the country and what FEPA is doing. Dr. Salisu Ingawa of the Nigeria Export Promotion Council among



Ingawa and Osuntogun: for the environment

former academic and the guest lecturer did not disappoint his audience as he presented the lecture on emerging issues on trade and the environment and their implications on Nigeria's future export performance and direction of trade. As if to confirm the academic touch of the gathering, the lecture was followed by a discussion led by Professor Adekenya from the University of Ibadan and Dr. Ibijaro formerly of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency now commissioner of agriculture, Edo State. At the end of the day, however, the organisers in the words of Dr. Shehu Yahaya, NEXIM's head of research, were satisfied with what they consider the

North American Free Trade Association, NAFTA, which made portions of his paper read like a justification for the two. On its part, GATT is the major trade agreement among several countries of the world which seeks to provide a framework for international trade policy and a forum for settling trade disputes. NAFTA on the other hand seeks to promote the exchange of products, commodities and investment between the United States of America, Canada and Mexico.

Most of the lecturers' points were related to the two agreements mentioned as the lecturer tried to show how trade affects the environment. Whether by design or default, the

other contributions called the attention of the gathering to ravages of the environment brought about by trade practices not just in the oil com-

munities but also the tin mining areas of Jos which are now neglected. Environment conscious members of the gathering also focussed the atten-

## BUSINESS & ECONOMY

tion of the gathering of what could result if concern for the flora and fauna is not uppermost in matters of export trade.

By Mannir Dan-Ali

### Kadpoly introduces banking course

**K**aduna Polytechnic has introduced



**Tijjani: rector**  
three courses in basic, intermediate and advanced

certificates in community banking with effect from the 1993/94 academic session. According to a circular signed by the registrar, the academic board of the institution approved the programmes at its meeting on February 1, this year.

All the three courses are to be run by the department of business administration of the College of Administrative and Business Studies (CABS) on part-time basis and for one session.

### TWT Precision appoints two

**M**r. Rotimi Ade Adewunmi has been appointed the new general manager of TWT Precision and advertising outfit. He was an old LTV 8 personnel. Mr. Bayo Bamidele is appointed senior manager, research and corporate planning, he

was formally with the Concord Group.

According to Mr. Taiwo Ola (Jnr) the managing director of Precision, these appointments were made to beef up the management team of the company.

### NEPA holds energy workshop

**T**he National Electric Power Authority



**Hamzat: NEPA MD**

(NEPA) will hold a workshop on the impact of global changes in energy development between March 28 and 30, 1994 at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos.

The workshop will examine the techniques of power production in the event of climate change among others.

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### CIBN appoints head of public relations

**T**he Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN) has appointed Mr. Victor Tola Jegede as head of its public relations department.

An alumnus of the University of Lagos, Mr. Jegede has worked in several media organisations in varying capacities across the nation.

Starting his journalism career at the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* in 1978, Mr. Jegede rose to the position of senior sub-editor before joining the then Enugu based *Satellite* newspapers as senior features writer.

He became the features editor and Lagos city edi-

tor of the *Democrat* and the *Newsline* newspaper between 1983 and 1987 respectively.

In 1988, Mr. Jegede

moved over to *Newbreed* as associate editor and edited the



*President* before leaving magazine two years later. An associate member of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Mr. Jegede was until his present appointment the chief image maker of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN).

### First Bank immortalises Asabia

**F**irst Bank of Nigeria Plc has honoured its first indigenous managing director by naming its head office building on Marina, Lagos, the "Samual Asabia House." The First Bank chairman, Alhaji Mahmud Atta, who advanced reasons for the honour, explained that the bank was enormously indebted to the late former managing director. The bank chairman said the late Asabia played a major role in improving the bank's fortunes, adding that the former chief executive's conceptual ingenuity led to the erection of

the building some years ago.

At the ceremony, a cheque of five million Naira was presented to the University of Lagos for the Chief Samual Asabia Endowment Fund, to immortalise and propagate the late banker's business ethics.

The endowment would cover the university's professorial chair in business ethics in the master of business administration (MBA) programme.

By Abokoy Suleiman,  
Shoyobi Abayomi  
and Tola Sunday

## BUSINESS INDEX

### Nigerian exchange rate last week Central Bank

	Buy	Sell
S	21.7761	21.9960
£	32.3194	32.6459
FFr	3.7182	3.7558
DG	11.3376	11.4521
YEN	0.1989	0.2009
CFA	0.0735	0.0742

### West African Unit of Account (WAUA)

		\$ Rate	N Rate
Beccao	CFA	410.2295	0.0743
Gambia	Dalasi	12.9948	2.3417
Ghana	Cedi	845.6310	0.0366
Guinea	Franc	1279.0000	0.0242
Guinea Bissau	Peso	16700.1680	0.0019
Liberia	Dollar	1,3904	21.8853
Mauritania	Quduiya	163.8606	0.1857
Sierra Leone	Leone	807.1	0.0377

### International oil monitor

Bonny light.....	\$15.60
Premium Gasoline.....	\$150 - \$151
Brent (Feb) .....	\$15.25
Duba.....	\$13.30
Forties.....	\$15.45
Eko fisk.....	\$15.60
Urah Med.....	\$14.75
Iran Hysk.....	\$14.10
Es Sider.....	\$15.10
Suez Blend.....	\$13.25
W.T.I (pmest).....	\$15.85-\$15.88w
Gas oil.....	\$150-\$152
Heavy fuel oil.....	\$73-\$74
Naphth.....	\$134-\$138
Jet fuel.....	\$163-\$167

### Average Banks' Interest rates

Last week	
Prime.....	48%
Current.....	10%
Savings.....	25%
30 days.....	30%
6 months.....	32%
12 months.....	34%

### Lk's international commodity prices

Cocoa (Mar) London	£1,051 (tonne)
Cocoa (Mar) New York	\$1,072 (tonne)
Sugar (Tate & Lyle export)	\$283.00
Palm oil (Malay)	\$415.00
Gold (London)	\$384.60 (per troy Oz)
Gold (New York)	\$387.45 (per troy oz)
Gold (Hongkong)	\$387.85 (per troy oz)
Silver	\$30.5c (per troy oz)
Tin (London)	\$5,355 (tonne)
Tin (Kuala Lumpur Market)	14.15r
Cotton "A" Index	62.50p
Wheat (Chicago) (Mar)	\$371.25 (bushel)
Maize (US No 3 Yellow)	£128.0
Platinum	\$391.50 (per troy Oz)
Rubber (Mar)	\$126.75 (per troy oz)
Copper (US)	62.75p
Lead (US)	93.0c
Rubber (KL/RSS No 1 July)	35.00c
Cattle (Live weight)	226.0m
Sheep (Live weight)	121.47p
Pigs (Live weight)	187.85p
Soya Beans (US)	65.96p
	£204.0

Rite's Merchant Bnk	Union Bank Pic
7 days call..... 25%	Prime leading ..... 28%
30 days call..... 26%	7 days call..... 13.5%
3 months..... 28%	30 days call..... 13.5%
6 months..... 29%	3 months..... 14%
12 months..... 30%	6 months..... 14.5%
	12 months..... 15%

## Stock watch

### Nigerian Stock Exchange

Turnover	7.4m+	(948 deals)
Index	1663.5	(+420.5)
Lagos	5.8m+	(768 deals)
Ibadan	1.4m+	(15.7 deals)
Kano	1.4m+	(16 deals)
Onitsha	---	---
Kaduna	0.573mt	(17 deals)

#### Last line

Developing countries have among themselves amassed a debt of \$1.66 trillion as at the end of 1992: This was \$56 billion or 3.5% higher than 1991. By 1993 this debt was expected to reach 1.77 trillion or 6.5% higher than 1992. Nigeria's share of this debt was \$28 billion by December 1993. On regional basis East Asia, the Pacific, Central Europe and South East Asia showed the largest increases in external debt in the last two years.

By Shoyebi Abayomi  
with agency reports

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	30,000

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## AFRICA

## Sudan

**Unending war**

**Sudan remains in the grip of violence and misery as its perennial civil war escalates**

**T**he biggest country in Africa, also carries the notoriety of having a long running civil war, as it has remained torn apart for the greater part of its 38 year existence.

Last week, government forces launched a renewed attack on rebel bases in the south which led to panic in the area and set off another flight of refugees across the border into Uganda. This latest round of concentrated aerial and ground attacks was designed to strengthen government hold on strategic areas of the rebellious south. Pilgairé village, a strategic town controlled by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) was targeted for bombardment.

Sudanese watchers have become familiar with this annual dry season manoeuvres and offensive that were used by both sides to advance positions as movements were almost impossible during the rains. The rebels accused the government of tribal cleansing.

The Sudanese government has, however, denied its involvement in this latest round of hostilities. It claimed that the latest round of battle was a struggle for power within the rebel ranks. Sources, however, say that many people have been killed in this recent attacks and many more were wounded and thousands have also fled, swelling the ranks of refugees in Uganda. Aids agents have also suspended flights to war torn areas. The International Red Cross has started the evacuation of the wounded to hospitals in Kenya.

The root cause of the Sudanese civil war lay in British colonial policy of divide and rule, whereby the muslim Arab north was kept at bay from the Christian and animist negro south. Interaction between the

two zones was kept to the barest minimum. However, after independence in 1956, both sections who hitherto had remained almost separated had to live together. Stress soon developed in the country as the south accused the north of domination; the first round of civil war ensued, this ended in the 70's and a sort of truce was arranged.

This fragile peace was fractured by the erstwhile military strong man, General Jafar el-Nimeiri who imposed sharia on the whole country in order to strengthen his fledgling power base in the north. The south responded in rebellion and Colonel John Garang, the southern military officer who was sent to the region to subdue the rebellion reneged and became the rebel leader. A splinter group broke out of SPLA in the late 80's accusing Garang of autocratic tendencies.

The war in the Sudan is now three pronged; government against the rebels on one side and intra rebel fighting on the other. The adage that when two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers aptly fits Sudan. The total cost of the prolonged war was that there was a general insecurity in the country as only last week, gunmen opened fire at devotees in a mosque at Omdurman. In this attack, 19 people were killed and many more were wounded. The government blamed outsiders for the attack. Two of the suspected assailants Abdul-Bazi Yousif Musa and Yasir Mohammed Ali said to be West Africans were killed, a third was wounded. As part of this general state of terror, the Sudanese interior minister, Abdel Rahim Mohammed Hussein said that gunmen opened fire and caused panic in Riyadh, a wealthy suburb of Khartoum. However, the opposition party, the

Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) blamed National Islamic Front government for complicity in the attack. The party said that the attack was a result of the government's encouragement of all forms of extremism in the country. Another opposition party, the UMMMA Party said that the number of dead from the attack was quite higher than government's figure.

Another problem that resulted from the long Sudanese civil war was the massive displacement of populations that were thrown into refugee camps. The squalid state of affairs in the camps, the general misery and famine in southern Sudan drew the ire of the head of the Anglican Church of England, the



**Garang: the warlord resurfaces**

Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, who because of this refused to pay the customary visit to the government when he visited the country. He also criticised the Sudanese leader, General el-Bashir for human rights abuses. This slight from the clergy man led to a rumpus and the suspension of diplomatic relations between Sudan and the UK. The world food programme said about nine million dollars would be needed to provide food and medicinal aids for Sudan.

Sudan is now carrying a huge foreign debt burden and scarce resources are being continually wasted on a ding dong no win war.

*By Shoyebi Abayomi  
with agency reports*

Angola

## Crisis without end

Union for Total Liberation of Angola, UNITA rebels attack Cuito and Bie killing about 170 teenagers and elderly people

**A**ngola was gripped with fear and anxiety again as a renewed guerrilla warfare between rebel UNITA soldiers and MPLA government last week claimed many lives mostly teenagers and some elderly people residing in the central town of Cuito.

Report said the fight started as a result of announcement by Angola's state controlled radio claiming that the peace talks between UNITA and government has achieved its desired success, but Mr. Jonas Desmos, one of the active participants in the peace negotiation debunked the announcement warning that the peace talks are still in progress and that the consensus on peace as reported by the state radio was agreed only in principle.

In the central Cuito, the regional commander of government forces, Lt. General Alfredo Kussuwe was allegedly killed by UNITA rebels who took up positions around Cuito and Bie immediately after the announcement of the peace agreement. Buoyed by this new twist in the peace process the government army top brass have expressed doubt over the integrity of UNITA leader, Jonas Savimbi's persistent calls for a fresh truce and peace talks.

MPLA forces also dismissed Savimbi's earlier contention during a brief message marking his 59th birthday, where he alleged that his supporters were seriously suffering as a result of the war and then called for resumed peace talks. The government forces have, however, sworn to avenge the death of their war commander, Lt. General Kussuwe.

UNITA's military commander, Afrlando Ben-Ben has also issued a



Dos Santos: a new beginning

press statement in Huambo reminding all sides about their agreement on peace talks at Lusaka, more especially on the formation of a new Angolan police force which was the central focus and widely accepted



Savimbi: who profits?

by both sides as the major breakthrough of Lusaka peace negotiations. Ben-Ben also revealed that the agreement in Lusaka further guaranteed UNITA to provide up to 5,500 strong police people of the 26,700 strong police force planned for the maintenance of peace, law and order in Angola.

Michael McCurry, who also participated in the Lusaka peace talks, disclosed that the United States, Russia and Portugal have urged President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos and the leader of UNITA to reorganise themselves to give economic, political and social development of Angola a chance. But contrary to this, the UNITA leader had strongly criticised the trioka which brokered the collapsed peace talks. He also claimed that international arms embargo on UNITA forces and MPLA in the early 1991 peace pact had been violated.

Savimbi then reiterated that "Much has been discussed during Lusaka peace negotiations and both sides had reached agreement on areas of difficulties and also in related issues that can be easily compromised by the two parties, such as ceasefire, disengagement of forces from battle ground, killing of opposition supporters, resettlement of civilian politicians and fundamentally, the reorganisation of police force to reflect the cultural norms of "Angolans."

Meanwhile, the MPLA government has called on UN and the international community to maintain pressure on UNITA to force its forces out of Cuito and Bie so that the situation can be normalised, adding that since the UN mediator in Angola, Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye left for the funeral of late President Houphouët Boigny in Cote d'Ivoire the process of peace making between government and warring UNITA rebels has been deadlocked and that all the differences that were settled for long have been reversed by some unscrupulous elements within the UNITA forces.

By Yabagi Kolo  
with agency reports

## WORLD

## Bosnia

## Ripe for plucking

At long last Western leaders agree to air strike in Bosnia.  
Will they act?

**W**estern leaders spent several months before agreeing to take steps to halt the Bosnia's 22 month old civil war, ironically, after a renewed Serbs aggression of Saturday February 5 in Sarajevo.

In the period the Western leaders vacillated, the Bosnian Serbs killed and maimed over 300,000 muslims. Three weeks ago 10 children were slaughtered when Serb mortar shell fell on a playground inside a UN so-called "safe haven." Ten people were also killed on Friday, February 4, in Sarajevo suburbs when a mortar round landed on a crowd waiting on a food queue. The next day, the Serbs again bombed a Sarajevo market killing 68 and wounding close to 200 people, in what was described as the worst atrocity in the Bosnia's conflict. Police and survivors spent hectic time separating the living from the dead among mangled bodies strewn around the market stalls. Shortly after the start of the civil war in May 1992, a mortar attack killed 16 people in the line of Zegreb. The red line massacre prompted the UN to impose sanctions against rump Yugoslavia but did not deter the aggression ever since.

Many countries roundly condemned the renewed Serb atrocity. President Bill Clinton of the United States blamed the Serbs for the attack and called the UN to identify the culprits. He indicated his support for appropriate sanctions after consulting with US allies. Last week 51 US senators voted, allowing Clinton administration lift arms embargo on former Yugoslavia. Muslims have always argued to be allowed to defend themselves. In Rome, Pope John Paul II lent his support for military intervention. France also wanted

international intervention including the use of air power to secure the immediate lifting of the siege of Sarajevo. President Francois Mitterand had canvassed the same position during NATO leaders' conference in Brussel recently.

Gulf muslims also demanded immediate action by Islamic countries to help Bosnia. Newspapers in Gulf Arab said the world's reluctance to end the plight of Bosnian muslims was a conspiracy against Islam. Others fiercely attacked the 51 member OIC, for failing to support Bosnian muslims. Bosnian muslim President Alija Izetbegovic had blamed the city's Serb as the aggressor and renewed call to lifting of arms embargo on former Yugoslavia to allow the muslims defend themselves. A day of mourning was also declared for the victims. But UN commander in Bosnia said they could not pinpoint the direction the shells were fired, although it is known that the Serbs have besieged the city for nearly two years. They have used the mountainous topography to their advantage, killing muslims and Croats at will.

Last Wednesday, NATO ambassadors met in Brussel to consider the possibilities of using air power to break the siege of Sarajevo. The proposal of the meeting was at the request of UN secretary general, Boutros-Ghali for authority to approve air strike. The sticky issue has been who is to give order to the troops to respond if attacked in the so-called humanitarian mission. The UN secretary-general thinks power resides with him and not the commanders in Bosnia. The disagreement had led two overall chiefs of the UN 10,000 strong protection forces in Bosnia, the French general



Clinton: ready to fire

Jean Cot and Belgian General Francois Briquemoth to resign. Although the world appeared unanimous in condemning the deadly mortar attack in Bosnia, there is far less consensus on how to deal with it. European foreign ministers last week threw the matter over to NATO. They have tasked NATO that all warring parties in Bosnia withdraw from Sarajevo and impose unilateral ceasefire on Bosnia. All the parties have been given 10 days to comply or risk NATO's air strike. The UN security council resolution already gave the secretary general power to call air strikes to protect Sarajevo. But Russia is opposed to punitive action on Bosnian Serb alone.

Given past failure by the Western countries, observers doubt if the latest EC action will end the war. The UN declared safe zones since April 1993, have not saved them from Serbian aggression. Second, the resolution appears to punish Croats and muslims for the aggression of the Serbs.

Meanwhile, the UN commander, Michael Ross announced that the warring parties have agreed to a ceasefire effective 12 noon last Thursday. They have also agreed to meet in Geneva for peace talks later in the month. In ever changing war of aggression by the Serbs, it is not impossible that this ceasefire may go like others.

By Abu Mommoh and Ibrahim Saleh with agency reports

## China

## Another clampdown

China is in a new grip of terror, as religious intolerance is reinstated

China is at its old game again. Last week the state imposed wide sweeping restrictions on religious orders on the country; and the world is poised to witness another cultural revolutionary convulsions reminiscent of the ideological era of the 60s.

The most populous country in the world and the only super power of the Marxist-Leninist traditions, China is desperate to preserve communist orthodoxy. In order to achieve this objective the country's premier Li Peng recently signed decrees that censures religious practices in the country.

This new law, forbids foreign preachings in China. The officially sanctioned religious bodies are also prevented from engaging in what was officially termed "destructive, independent, unauthorised overseas financed activities." The importation of religious materials and religious books are also banned, the only exception were the ones needed for personal uses, and these are the ones amenable to the state's ideology.

This religious crackdown complements an earlier state control of the media, pro-democracy activities and the general cultural sphere.

Chinese leaders seemed frightened of the social and political impact of their opening-up policy, which has resulted in inflation and unemployment. They were quite aware that *perestroika* and *glasnost* hastened the disintegration of the former Soviet Union.

In 1989, the state brutally crushed pro-democracy agitations at Tiananmen square. In the Communist Party's view, new contradictions and threat of disorder could erupt if too much religious liberalism is allowed. Although China is very much aware of international criticism of

its human rights abuses, the state said its policies were determined by self preservation, that social stability must be maintained, thus the hearts and minds of the Chinese must be controlled and conditioned for ideological purity.

A brutal cultural revolution was unleashed on the country in the 60s in order to effect cultural, social and ideological cleansing. Millions died in the state of terror imposed by the Red Guards, and the current strong-

revivalism. In order to enforce this latest ideological orthodoxy, some Catholics have been jailed for contravening state laws. Some Tibetan nuns in Lhasa were detained for anti state activities, while recently troops occupied a mosque in the Qinghai province for alleged subversive tendencies.

This current round of religiophobia clearly belies an old Chinese xenophobia. In the past China was known for its grand isolationism and protectionism policies when Westerners were known as "barbarians."

Westerners imposed themselves on China in the last century; since then an ambivalent sort of relationship was maintained between the country and the West. This was characterised by Communist China's



A street scene in Wuhan, a suburb of China: how will it fair with the new clampdown

man Deng Xiaoping was one of those disgraced and jailed for anti state activities. He is now at the same historical stage of his own cultural

hatred and fear of capitalist infiltration and domination.

By Shoyebi Abayomi  
with agency reports

## PRIVATE EYE

# Sibling rivalry

In early January, the government in Yobe State announced with flourish that it had ordered the dismissal of 70 civil servants who (though civil is hardly appropriate) had perfected a ghost worker scam.

It was said that an investigation conducted in June of 1993 stumbled onto the syndicate of the civil servants who by then had deprived the good people of the desert of some 35 million Naira. They were no small fish, they were directors of finance, accountants and accounts clerks in various ministries and parastatals, who insisting on getting their rewards on earth and rather urgently, decided over a period of just two years, to relieve the people of this hard-up state of the few resources available.

Not only that, it was said that five of the civil servants, who include a former commissioner and a director-general, carted away 105,000 Naira through this method of ghost-working. The new military government decided that it would start on a clean slate by ordering the "civil servants" to refund the monies.

In fact, after the announcement, stories started emerging of the escapades of the "civil servants." Like the tantalising and fantastic one of one loyal "civil servant" who had one wife prior to his misadventure, suddenly acquired two more. He gave each a car and a daily meat allowance of 600 Naira!

It also emerged that most of the "civil servants" are bright youngmen who have lost faith in service and reward. They built houses and bought cars to reflect their new status. It was not surprising that they were caught. I wonder how it would feel like to carry a receipt that says one is a former thief!

Now, there is another story emerging; that though the thefts occurred, it was far less than on the grand scale the government made us to believe. Those who were said to have stolen

two or three million Naira, actually stole three to four hundred thousand Naira. It was all the politics of sibling rivalry between one section of the state, which dominates the civil service and another which thinks it ought to. Instead of engaging themselves in building a new state out of the dust of desert and ashes of desolation, hunger and poverty, disease and ignorance, they engage in deceit, intrigue and blackmail.

In the case of those who think they ought to dominate the civil service, catching up, in a healthy manner with the former, should occupy their endeavours, but they, with the encouragement of a former governor who comes from another part of Yobe that feels mightily aggrieved with the former, connived to discredit the former. The report of the investigation was instituted by the former governor and it was handled by a person from the latter area who feels he has to prove the point of his people's arrival by concocting stu-



pendous fraud cases, which was why he chose to hand over the report to the new, unbroken administrator instead of to appropriate person at the time who happened to come from the former area.

Now, this same person who represents the worst in this sibling rivalry has been made commissioner in that state to carry on with his "sibling cleansing." Do not get me wrong; those who steal public property ought to be incarcerated as far as I'm concerned, but it is amazing that in a state where most of the basic necessities of life are lacking and the little available are vanishing, people can actually have time to engage in pettiness and vendetta which are entirely unnecessary.

## Kabiyesi to the rescue

It is no news that commercial banks are joining the list of distressed banks; they caused distress themselves anyway. The latest casualty may be a merchant bank in Ikoyi Lagos; it may soon join the list not because of mismanagement, but by the unscrupulous practices by its general manager.

Having made a fortune in merchant banking, he set up a finance house with his wife as MD. There are never problems of deposits; he directs depositors to the finance house from the bank.

The bubble burst however, mid last year when he ran into the hands of confidence tricksters. Within a month, the GM had paid millions of Naira to the 419ners, who promised to get him dollars. Where does that leave depositors? Ag-

grieved and angry, I can tell you. They have been besieging the finance house in desperate attempts to collect their matured deposits.

To pacify them, the GM hopped to his home town in Osun State to bring an *Oba* to plead for him and save his neck from the furious and alarmed depositors. The *Oba* played ball and the customers have decided to respect his royal highness who pledged that they would get their money "soon."

For the general manager, he needs more than magic to get out of the money mess. But if the His Royal Highness' pledge fails, where will *Kabiyesi* hide his crowned head as some of the irate customers have vowed to recover their money even if that meant removing *Kabiyesi's* you know what!

# Transition (I)

**T**he dead passes on as the newborn begins another cycle. The seasons reflect this drama of life as spring matures into youthful and summer retires into middle age of autumn and the winter of life overtakes the living.

## And I die

The first cry  
Is struggle  
I passed through all stages  
Toil and sweat  
Achieved and retired  
I look myself  
In mirror full length  
Is this me?  
I asked.  
Years telling  
Grandfather white head  
Skin wrinkles  
I waited  
It came  
And I die.  
Funeral rituals done  
Remains in shroud  
For the cemetery  
Put in grave  
Sand topping  
My final home  
Other things  
This point beyond  
Not known

S.K.B. Lazarus

## Legacy of dying father

"Death overpowers me  
My son!  
I can now hear  
Its stealthy steps  
And the knell, being tolled.  
But before  
I cross the threshold of life  
Before I part with you  
I wish to give you these precious  
jewels  
Which have been my sole assets.  
These sparkling jewels will spread  
light  
And illuminate your world  
When the gloom of sinful thoughts

May trail in  
To dissuade you from right path.  
Temptations will come in your way  
In different forms, in different shapes  
'Don't heed to them  
'Don't yield to them  
Be steadfast! and conquer them.  
Your aim should not be to win  
The glittering but deceptive pearls  
Which may lead you  
Alas! my son  
To the unfathomable sea of sin.  
Don't woo the world  
It's shortlived  
It's like a bubble that comes and  
goes  
Appears with noise  
Then is seen no more.  
So,  
Clad yourself in spiritual shroud  
Live ready to die  
For, death, is inevitable, son  
At any time, it may come by.  
But,  
Strive to lead a successful life  
Struggle to earn good name  
As if, this world is permanent  
And you have come for good.  
Excel and always vie with others  
In the field of work  
For, rivalry with good intent  
Is praiseworthy my son.  
Don't live only, for yourself  
Be useful to all  
Help those souls  
That are in need  
Love your neighbour as you love  
yourself.  
Don't be prodigal  
Don't be a miser  
Allah detests them both  
Follow the path of the righteous  
Which is the best  
And moderate.  
Poverty of goods is nothing son  
Poverty of soul is great vacuum  
So, review your deeds, improve on  
them  
For, only deeds will go with you  
When you'll leave this world.  
You may be struck by blows of fate



Distress and misery may be your lot  
Don't languish then in grief my son  
For, divinity does this  
To try our faith.  
Neither oppress, nor be oppressed  
Fight for truth, ask for your right  
Shake off the yoke of tyranny  
Though, piety, kindness, brother-  
hood  
Should be your guiding light  
If goodness is undermined  
Or, truth is vainly flouted  
Don't dread the foes, strike them  
hard  
Remembering the sacrifice  
Of our great martyrs.  
Fight for truth  
Stand for truth  
Arm yourself with truth  
For, only "truth" can lead aright  
Breaking the mounds of sins.  
This is the legacy  
I leave for you  
These are those peerless jewels  
My son  
Which can never be tarnished.  
The death has now crept in  
At last  
I have to pay the debt of life  
To Allah, who now summons me  
To my final abode."  
This feebly said  
The old pious man  
Breathed his last  
And then  
Gave up.

Mrs. Shabih Zehra Husaini

## BOOKREVIEW

# The global bias

Title: *New perspectives in international news flow*  
 Editors: Dr. Charles Okigbo and Yahaya Abubakar  
 No of pages: 280  
 Year of publication: 1992  
 Publishers: Communication Research Projects (CRP)  
 Reviewer: Kabir Dangogo

**N**ew perspectives in international news flow is probably the first attempt by Nigerian mass communication scholars to produce a highly authoritative and comprehensive book on the controversial but somewhat nebulous new international information order debate. The 280-page book is not only very readable but also a useful reference material for mass communication students and scholars in Nigeria and beyond.

The 16-chapter book focuses on the lamentation by journalists and government officials in developing countries that the powerful Western media (i) under-report them, (ii) report them negatively, and (iii) distort the news about them.

Chapter one traces the origin of the international news flow debate, dating to as far back as 1948, three years after the founding of the United Nations.

Though in a balanced argument, the book articulates the position of the less developed and developing countries that the Western media are biased against them in their coverage of events in those countries, it attempts to explain "the variants of the Third World accusations against the West" in chapter seven, emphasising three of which it calls the commonest: imbalance, news and media imperialism.

Empirical data are extensively used to support the foregoing argument as advanced by a number of international mass communication scholars.

The book articulates this position in much the same way it attempts to knock off the same argument as postulated by other contributors in other chapters. For in-

stance, chapter seven deals extensively with a content analysis of five Nigerian newspapers, two radio stations and six television stations. The analysis sought to uncover the light in which the world was covered by these Nigerian media, and how much coverage went to the Western countries. Its findings: the Nigerian media did indeed focus on Third World events. They ignored the Western countries, and gave minimal coverage to the Eastern bloc.

Specifically, "the newspapers devoted about 88 per cent of their news to Third World events, while the radio and television stations devoted 94 per cent respectively" (P.94).

A clear picture, therefore, emerged from this study indicating that the Nigerian media cannot be easily exonerated from the charges of biased coverage. This finding supports an earlier hypothesis in chapter four that "historical ties such as are manifest in the British Commonwealth and the French community" (P.51) determine news coverage of Africa or vice-versa.

Another significant point the book makes to further explain the inherent imbalance in the international flow of information is the reference to the global inequality. It further argues that "the question of free flow of information on an international scale is an extension of the national principles of freedom of the press and free market of ideas (or is it free market forces?). But these principles, the book emphasises, are practically limited by various rules and regulations in various countries" (P. 26). Chapter 13 reveals the findings of a study on rural and urban news flow in Nigerian newspapers.

The study has established that "the Nigerian press neglects the rural areas in its news coverage, and it is primarily concerned with reporting activities in the urban centres, in spite of the fact that more Nigerians live in rural areas". A more disturbing aspect of the story is the revelation that the Nigerian press ruins more foreign news than rural news (P.229).

The book, however, establishes that bias in news reporting is unwitting, and inherent in the practice of journalism which cuts across cultural barriers. The problem of international news flow is addressed from our own perspectives, instead of perpetually subjecting us to a situation where foreign scholars keep telling us what they think is happening in our own backyard.

Second, the multiplicity of the views expressed from different perspectives makes the book more balanced, authoritative and a compelling reference material for mass communication scholars.

Much as the reader cannot fail to notice the foregoing features of the book, the distinct omissions can also hardly be overlooked.

One of the shortcomings of the book is the absence of a whole chapter devoted specifically to the political economy of the ownership structure of the mass media in developing countries. This would have shed more light on the necessity of this much-talked about but less-understood imbalance in the global information flow. It would also have brought into the open the need for these countries to restructure the ownership of their news media.

For a more meaningful solution to the information flow problem to be sought, less-developed and developing countries should begin to ask the same questions on the economic and political imbalance between their societies and those of the West.

*Kabir Dangogo is the principal public relations manager, Bank of the North, Kano.*

## SPORTS

Continental championship

# BCC Lions, Nationale rise up to Africa

Three top Nigerian clubs will begin their race this weekend to win African most prestigious soccer trophies. But will they be luckier this year than 1993?

**F**or Nigeria, football is definitely going to take up most of the discussions about sports in 1994. While much attention is currently focussed on the preparation of the national team, the Super Eagle for African Cup of Nations, taking place in Tunisia in March and the World Cup coming up in USA in June, some top Nigerian clubsides are also up and doing, squaring up for some of the con-

Lions) and CAF Cup (Bendel Insurance). BCC Lions, winners of the Mandela Cup (Cup Winners) in 1990 and current holders of Nigeria's challenge Cup, are hosting ASFB of Burkina Faso on Saturday, February 19 at J.S. Tarka memorial Stadium, Makurdi in the first round first leg of the championship. The following day, Sunday February 20, in Owerri, Iwuanyanwu Nationale, the country's 1993 national league champi-



Nationales's Oliver Opara (left) in action at a local league

eration of Africa Football (CAF) most prestigious club competition.

This weekend, three Nigerian premier division clubs — BCC Lions of Gboko, Iwuanyanwu Nationale of Owerri and Bendel Insurance of Benin — will begin their campaign in the continent's Champions Cup (Nationale), Cup Winners Cup (BCC

ons, will also play hosts to Zumunta FC of Niger Republic. On their part, the 1993 West African Football Union (WAFU) Cup Champions, Bendel Insurance will travel to Bangui in the Central Africa Republic, to meet Stade Centrafricain FC in the first leg first round of the CAF Cup.

The approach of these clubs to these continental championships is likely to be quite serious and business like if they hope to escape the dismal failures experienced by the three Nigerian clubs who featured in similar competitions last year. While it was a fact that Nigeria reaped lots of honours in football last year by winning the FIFA/JVC Under-17 soccer championship, qualifying for the Nations Cup and the World Cup; it was a total failure at the continental championships as all the three clubs — Shooting Stars of Ibadan, Stationery Warriors of Lagos and El-Kanemi Warriors of Maiduguri — who represented Nigeria in the CAF Cup, Champions Cup and the Cup Winners Cup respectively, returned home high and dry. That explains why they have adopted a very serious approach to achieve results in their 1994 campaign in the CAF championships.

But the outcome of the confrontations at the home fronts in Makurdi and Owerri this weekend should reveal quite a lot about how prepared are these clubs for the bigger and tougher challenges that they would encounter as these championships progress. BCC Lions of Gboko is a club with very high profile in the country's national league. They are also no rookies in continental championships. Following their victory in the national challenge cup in 1989 which earned them a ticket to represent Nigeria in Cup Winners Cup, they made it a resounding success by winning the continental trophy on first attempt in 1990. The following year, they made spirited effort to defend the cup but lost out in the quarter-finals.

But the return of the Lions to the Mandela Cup campaign in 1994 may turn out to be another success story, if no problem crops up to upset the solid and comprehensive pre-championship preparation they have put together. Among the assets they are banking on to rout their opponents and win the Winners Cup for the second time is solid financial and

## SPORTS

moral support from the parent company, Benue Cement Company. In addition, the Gboko-based club has in its fold some of the most skillful, experienced enterprising and highly motivated young players the country can boast of. And the Lions have something else — Coach Shuaibu Amadu, a man who is generally regarded as the luckiest and most successful of all indigenous coaches around. Cool and calculative, when the going gets tough, coach Shuaibu is a big plus for BCC Lions.

In the Lions' camp is also a high tide of ambition to bring home the Mandela Cup at the end of the year. The players and their technical crew are engrossed with what to do to repeat the 1990 Mandela Cup triumph.

Team handler, Shuaibu puts it succinctly but seriously thus: "The Mandela Cup is our priority of course. It has all the prestige much more than the other trophies. And we'll try not to do badly." Team captain, Bolaji Douglas confirmed the players' optimism about the continental championship when he said: "It's uppermost in the players' minds to perform quite creditably in the Cup Winners Cup this year."

**T**he stage is therefore set for the Lions' first trial on Saturday in front of their home supporters. The Lions are expected to have easy victory against ASFB of Burkina Faso. But if it turns out a different ball game then the Lions may have to re-examine themselves and make better preparation for tougher challenges ahead.

Iwuanyanwu Nationale can be tagged a veteran of the Champions Cup but unfortunately they have not been able to win the trophy once. Nationale have featured four times in the cup of Champions between 1988 and 1991 and have failed in those four attempts to capture the cup once. The question many soccer analysts are asking now is will Nationale be fifth time lucky? Extensive preparation has gone into their

continental campaign this year.

Right from the time they won the national division one professional league title which gave them ticket to the Champions Cup, the management has vowed to make this year a successful one. The old players who won them the league crown are almost intact, paving way for continuity. So is coach Alphonsus Dike, who knows the club like his living room having spent over seven years with Nationale. A few new players were also recruited at the beginning of the season to



Lions' skipper Douglas with the FA Cup



Amadu: the magician

further strengthen the club. But Nationale's biggest inspiration in their bid to win the Champions Cup this year is coming from the club proprietor and financier, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu. In an interview with an African Soccer magazine, Chief Iwuanyanwu predicted that the club would make it this time around. "We have learned from all our past mistakes and we seriously want to win." The business magnate also promised that money would never be the club's problem this year.

On Sunday February 20, at Owerri township stadium, Nationale will step into the pitch again to begin another hunt for the African Cup of Champions Cup. They will

be hosting Zumunta of Niger Republic, a virtually unknown name in African soccer. Niger, as a country belongs to the backbench of African soccer. So Nationale may be killing a fly with a sledgehammer. The tougher challenges lie ahead. But the hunting question still remain: Will Nationale be fifth time lucky?

WAFU Cup holders, Bendel Insurance will also on Sunday confront Stade Centrafrican in the high-altitude of Central African Republic. Insurance too are veterans of many sub-regional and continental competitions which have earned them quite a lot of experience. But currently they are on a very shaky financial footing. They lost their first 1994 season league match to BCC Lions 2-0, and at the end of the day team handler, Lawrence Akpokona promised to do well at the continental level. Insurance are known to do well in away matches, at least going by their records in the league and WAFU Cup last year, but if they fail to put their problem behind them before leaving for Bangui, they may have a bad start in their CAF Cup campaign. With necessary and financial support, Insurance have players of substance to bring home CAF Cup at the end of the day, but their current tenuous financial base may eventually be their undoing.

By Joe Olajuwon

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DEFINITIONS  
IN HUMOUR

West over Bosnia all combined to make the letter authentic. But it may have been authentically produced to elicit or dampen response from some quarters. The letter was

ina no longer exists as a viable state and its Muslim population is totally displaced from its land.

Whilst this may seem a hard policy I must insist with you and the policy makers within the F.C.O. and the armed services that this is in fact "real-politics" and in the best interests of a stable Europe in the future, whose value system is and must remain based on a "christian-civilisation" and ethic. This view I must inform you is also felt in every other European and North American government. Therefore, we will not interfere in this region to save the Muslim population or push to lift the arms embargo on them. The Muslims in the West must be made to see that they can not oppose our view of the world in the "New World Order" and that by the inaction of the so called Muslim governments of the world, in doing nothing to oppose the destruction of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina and not follow through on their pledge to do something by the 15-1-93 at the OIC conference. If the West did not rescue the Muslims, they are totally powerless to oppose us, as we control their governments.

Whilst I know you do not feel fully as I or the Minister of Defence feel on this subject, it is important that we all show a united front to those in Parliament and the country on this matter, especially after the "peaceful" attack on this policy by the former Prime Minister.

I expect all those that serve this government to obey "Cabinet Responsibility."

Yours sincerely

John M.

## A fake original

One magazine columnist called it **The letter John Major didn't write**. And he probably didn't, but the circumstances within which it was released (copies dropped into letter boxes and door chutes in some British homes last year), the world situation then and now, the propensity of conspiracy theorists to believe conspiracy and the transparent hypocrisy of the

allegedly written by British Prime Minister John Major to Minister of State Douglas Hogg. A sympathizer in the Foreign and Commercial Office gave the reason why he had to leak the letter. "I feel I must leak this document to those that will listen due to its pure evil contents in the context of the world situation today," he wrote. Here is the letter:

10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

Douglas Hogg  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
London SW1A 2AH

2 May 1993

Dear Douglas

Thank you for your indepth report on the current as well as a past situation in the Bosnia-Herzegovina region of the former Yugoslavia.

As you are well aware from previous discussions, both within the Cabinet and at other times Her Majesty's Government has not changed its position on any of the following policies:

1) We do not agree now or in the future to arm or train the Muslims within Bosnia-Herzegovina with military hardware.

2) We will continue to help impose and enforce the UN embargo on weapons to this region. While we are well aware that Greece, Russia and Bulgaria are supplying arms and training to Serbia; and Germany, Austria, Slovenia and even the Vatican are doing similar efforts on behalf of the Croatian and H.V.O. forces within the region, it is of paramount importance that we make sure that no such efforts are successful on behalf of the Muslims within the region from Islamic States and groups.

To this end and until the final outcome of the situation on the ground, i.e. the dismemberment of Bosnia-Herzegovina and its destruction as a possible ISLAMIC STATE within Europe which will not be tolerated, we will continue to follow this policy. Further, the mistake of training and arming the Afghan fighters against the forces of the former USSR and their becoming so called Islamic fighters now in other parts of the world, as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, will not be repeated with the Muslim population in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This could lead to serious problems in the future within the emigre Muslim population within the E.C and North America. Please see attached paper from the United States entitled: Iran's European Spring-board? dated September 2, 1992. Within reason these criteria are becoming more and more relevant, therefore, special attention by our internal security services should be placed on the muslim communities within the Western States, especially here in the UK.

3) Until the situation in the former Yugoslavia is settled we must at all costs make sure that no state that can be deemed "Muslim" is allowed any say on the West's policy actions in this area, especially that of Turkey. It is therefore, necessary to continue with the sham of the "Van - Owen" peace talks in order to delay any such possible action until Bosnia-Herzegovina

While the tone is not decidedly Whitehalese, it is accurate in recording the shameful steps in the great gang up against Islam in Europe. And despite what the letter said about Vatican involvement, His Holiness Pope John Paul II has at least on one occasion spoken strongly against the genocide more forcefully and more effectively than all the crowned kings and presidents of Muslim countries.

If Mr. Major denies writing this letter, he is advised to re-read it very well and to know that its content is exactly what Muslims believe he and his colleagues in Europe and the US are doing. Their errand boy is Dr. David Owen. There is in this world a day for calling to account. That of Europe will soon arrive.

Citizen, February 14, 1994



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