

Hotline

'THE GREATEST WEAPON IS TRUTH' - SARDAUNA 1966

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# Hotline

NIGERIA'S INTERNATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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## NIGERIA

# SOCIALISM IN

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# LETTER TO YOUR CONSCIENCE

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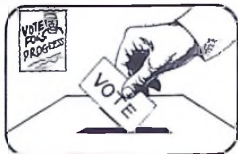
Mamser for **SOCIAL JUSTICE**



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# MAMSER

## FOR A NEW SOCIAL ORDER

# Hotline

NIGERIA'S INTERNATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

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## FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

# Fragmenting An Ideology

Whoever says socialism as an ideology is not good is either bad himself or simply an ignorant fellow. For any ideology that calls for a just and fair system of distributing wealth, for any ideology decent codes of human existence is no doubt an acceptable one. Socialism preaches this. But we are saddened that the operators of this system those who the masses have abundant hope upon are themselves no longer in control of this man's ingenious invention. It is indeed very sad where an individual aligns himself to man's main hope of temporal salvation and yet for suspicious reasons turns it to a tool of personal gains. What image are we creating for the masses, those under-privileged humanity, those whose plight we use as a stepping stone to fame, those whose support and sweat push us to positions of power when we ourselves only claim socialism but in deeds remain something else? Our concern in this edition is not primarily to castigate the ideology (those we are forced to it for a purpose). Our concern is to be a mirror to the socialists-the true socialists, so that he can look at himself again and again towards reassessment and come out with something concrete that can further enhance the teachings of Marx. For instance dear comrades is it not shameful that when the leftists camp came out with one of the most beautiful magazines, a powerful and effective propaganda tool for the struggle we should stay aside and helplessly watch it being torn apart? Is there no redemption? why is it that since the days of generations before us, the days of our seniors who struggled to import the system, up to the present day generation, socialism has not been able to make any significant impact politically? Socialism does not begin and end with reading Marx; one way of making it look sincere is for its practitioners to cleanse themselves first and not be guilty of what they accuse others for.

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*Bello Akko*

Bashir Bello Akko,  
Editor.

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the *Hotline*

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# Contents

Letters.....	4
Publisher's Corner.....	5
Commentary.....	6
Viewline.....	7
<b>Cover Story I</b>	
Prologue.....	8
Socialism.....	9
Lest We Forget.....	18
<b>Cover Story II</b>	
Black Gold.....	19
<b>Nigeria</b>	
IBB.....	23
Old Politicians.....	24
Economy.....	25
International.....	27
God the Immortal.....	28
Health.....	29
Dillaliya.....	30
Law.....	31
Random Ramblings.....	32

Cover Design by Gabriel T. Gwajime

## Plea for Nwobodo

Mr President, in the name of Allah and humanity; in the belief that to forgive is divine; in the conviction that milk of kindness flows in your veins, please, release Jim Nwobodo.

— Publisher.



## REFLECTION



Governor Mukhtar of Kaduna was stoned by religious fanatics in Kaduna...

—Nigerian Tribune, Saturday, 10th September, 1988

Was the governor really stoned? The Nigerian Tribune could have done better by going to the scene of the action and knowing the real thing. The question really is: Why does the Nigerian Tribune

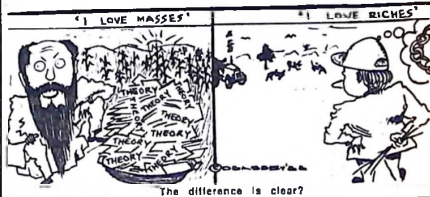
cry religious wolf now that we are all preaching religious harmony?

## HUMAN LIFE

The Borno State Director for Social Mobilisation (MAMSER), Dr. Aliyu T. Adamu has said the Directorate was set up by the government to achieve a "peaceful change" in favour of the masses.

— New Nigerian, Tuesday, September 6, 1988

Well said, Mr. MAMSER. But wait, someone once said in far away America that, "he who makes peaceful change impossible, will definitely make violent change inevitable". We only hope some people are listening.



## Available Mistakes

I am a regular reader of your magazine *Hotline*, because of its approach to national issues. And for this reason, when I see the magazine make a mistake, I have to point it out.

*Hotline* issue No. 44 (July 25 - August 7, 1988) made two mistakes. One on the Editorial Desk while the other on page 46 column 3. In the Editorial Desk, you referred to Bayo Lawal as Group Captain. Well, he is Air Commodore Bayo Lawal - An Air Commodore is equivalent of an Army Brigadier, the former is lower. The second mistake which occurred in Page 46 column 3, where the picture of Vice Admiral Patrick Koshoni was published but under it, it was written Aikhomo (sic). Well, Vice Admiral P. Koshoni is Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), while Vice Admiral Augustus Aikhomo (sic) is the Chief of General Staff (CGS).

I sincerely hope *Hotline* will take care of this in future.

*Shiaondo Igbazenda,  
NNS Urhiaepe,  
Sapele, Bendel State.*

*"Our errors, caused by the almighty printer's devil are rightly regretted. However, take note that the spelling of the CGS's surname is Aikhomu.*

- Editor.

## Flag Independence

Your cover story "Who Owns Nigeria?" (July 11-24) was a highly revealing, thought-provoking and poignant analysis of how the foreigners (notably the Asians) in conjunction with some unpatriotic Nigerians have ruined our economy and subverted the essence of our independence.

The government needs to go beyond indigenisation decree to stem this ugly tide of economic sabotage. The economic arm twisting being constantly employed by these set of economic bandits had made nonsense of our nationhood and rendered it into a sort of flag independence.

It is high time, our leaders stood up to face these monsters squarely in the interest of progress and stability. As for "who owns Nigeria?", the answer is obvious,

the Asians (Lebanese) in *Constitution*  
*Rogers Edo, Ochela,  
Bank of the North Ltd.,  
c/o P.M.B. 2148,  
Kamba, Sokoto State.*

## Re: The Evil of Beauty Contests

I am a keen reader of the "Women in *Hotline*" column of your magazine. However, in edition No. 45, page 39, "The Evil of Beauty Contests" by Bukky Okeniyi is a hidden outcry of nature's physical deprivation of some ladies. If what you have, is good why keep it to yourself.

Beauty contest is not only based on facial beauty - you need other special talents as well. Bukky Okeniyi would have been too happy to help God if she had a hand in her creation.

*Tijjani Zion,  
Kurna Asabe,  
Kano.*

## Expose Other Side

My friends sometimes wonder aloud why I buy your magazine (that is, when I see it), and I tell them I want to know how the other side is. I believe your magazine presents the views of the core northerners, and though I disagree with your style and language, it still provides an alternative viewpoint.

Reading your worthy commentary in the July 19th to 24th edition, I observed that you generalised your condemnation of heightened ethnicity and tribalism in the Armed Forces, especially, the N.D.A. This to my mind is an admission that the northerners who overpopulate and dominate the officer rank of the Army must be the perpetrators of these potentially divisive tribalistic acts. This conclusion is sound because I know you will not hesitate to name the tribe and if possible, the names of the individuals involved if they were southerners.

I will therefore advise that to live up to the ideals expected of your magazine, you should not fail to expose the skeletons in the cupboard of northerners too. One thing you should know is that northerners are also guilty of the many

southerners. And another thing, by getting the magazine to more distributors in Lagos. Could you believe some people do not know what is *Hotline* here!

*Jevi Edibe  
Marina, Lagos*

## Correct This Impression On Ajaokuta

As a regular reader of your paper magazine I am always enthused with the manner you use your journalism to inform the misinformed but unfortunately I was, to say the least, disappointed, one aspect of your write-up on Ajaokuta Affairs ("Politics of Steel" which appeared on your issue No. 45 August 8th-21st, 1988. It reads in part thus "Igala now supercedes the as a major language spoken in Ajaokuta". Historically, the entire Land acquired by the Federal Government for the establishment of the Steel Complex which stretched up to 24, 185 hectares below the five (5) Clans who are the actual Land-owners. These clans are Eru, Egegu, Achinkpa, Ikere and Ogodo. Of these clans only the first, that is, Eru, Bassa-nge speaking people, outnumber the rest four (4) are Igala speaking people. Generally speaking, the vast majority between kilometer 30 and kilometer (zero) along Okene - Ajaokuta Expressway is owned and dominated by the Igalas. The name of the area Ajaokuta lends credence to this. Hence, it is that this area falls under Okene Local Government by political landscape do not make it wholly an Ebirra speaking area. Thus, I find it very difficult to construe what the reporter intends to inform the public about by such expression.

In conclusion, for the interest of peace and stability let it be known that the Ebirras and Igalas miscegenate hence the call for unity between the two races.

*Baba A.  
Chief Secretary  
Ajaokuta Community*

Reactions to our stories, which must be brief and precise, should be sent to *Hotline* Letters, P.O. Box 1111 Kaduna. Letters are subject to editing.

# Hello... Hello... Col. Mark?

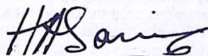
Hello, honourable Minister. I would have very much liked to speak to you on the telephone and make this a two-way conversation, but the reasons why I cannot will be made very plain to you as you read this. You see, none of the telephone lines at my office and house (four in all) are working. Two of them have not been working for over three months. Since you have national communications in your ministerial portfolio, you probably understand how distressing it is for me in the communications (press) business to be unable to communicate. I am, frankly, tired of talking to the officials of *NITEL* in Kaduna to no effect. Hence, this communication to you. This is neither the time nor appropriate medium to make a post mortem assessment of your stewardship of Niger state, but as an indigene of that state I do recall much talk about your celebrated "leadership" style. I would have thought that with your reputation of being not only a firebrand, but a hard-nosed disciplinarian, we might have expected by now a significant improvement in the telephone services nation-wide, but I'm sorry to report that in Kaduna, telephone services are worse than ever. Almost every day, I have the occasion to witness telephone lines down. Some of these, particularly on Waff Road near the *Durbar Hotel* and (interestingly enough) the *Air Force Training Command*, are an obstructive nuisance to passing pedestrians on the walk way, and could pose considerable danger to life and health if these lines are electrically "alive." I don't know if they are alive or not, but I have observed that most pedestrians, aware of the potential danger cross over to the unsafe side of the road to avoid the risk (we Nigerians know ourselves!). In addition, my sources tell me that since your much publicised campaign against the theft of telephone cables, rate at which cables are being stolen has increased. (Perhaps sabotage is one of the dubious results of firebrandism.) I can appreciate your obsession with *international direct dialling (IDD)*, but tell me, honourable minister, wouldn't it be more prudent to ensure, first, that our *domestic* telephone lines are serviceable and in good working order? My private line in my office has been out of service since late May, yet when your telephone repairmen occasionally come "to look into the matter" I get the strangest feeling that what they are actually "looking" for is that kind of gratuity that Nigerians have become famous. Since I am not inclined to bribery, I have come to the belated conclusion that perhaps this is the reason why my telephones can't get fixed. This suspicion has been underscored by the fact that periodically, about once every two weeks, that one particular telephone rings normally, but when I answer the 'phone someone on the other end identifies himself as a *NITEL* technician making a test. Thereafter, the phone reverts to its now semi-permanent condition of disrepair. Ironically, *NITEL* is never late in billing me for its inadequate services, nor have I yet refused to pay the bills levied on all of my non-working telephones. But to add insult to victimisation, I read recently in the *Democrat Weekly* that the very telephone of which I have been speaking was among those scheduled to

be cut off for non-payment of bills! Bills or bribe? That was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. I am, frankly, challenging you, honourable Minister, to do something about this intolerable situation. There are thousands of telephone owners in Kaduna and elsewhere around the nation who are experiencing the same disgraceful treatment from a parastatal under your ministry. Unlike me, they don't own a newsmagazine in which they can publicise their plight. The damage to your reputation as "a man who can get things done" has already been considerable. The telephones did work, however sporadically, under your predecessor. If you would salvage what is left of your reputation, a short term emergency strategy to improve the telephone service in the country is in order. And by this, I mean a strategy where something positive in fact happens, not a barrage of televised publicity posturing on the *N.T.A. Network News* designed to convince thirty million cynical viewers that something is happening, when in fact it is not. If you have occasion soon to sit in self-reflection and attempt to evaluate your own performance as a minister, I would strongly suggest that you take account of the many things you said you would do while in office and measure them against what you have actually accomplished. Perhaps, too, you may need to look at your leadership style. Firebrands have a way of burning out! What is even more disturbing to me personally and as the corporate head of a prominent Nigerian newsmagazine is that the lack of functioning telephones actually affects among other things our accessibility to newsworthy personalities, candid long-distance conversations within the country and abroad, and obscure facts and information conveyed reliably over the 'phone. We now have to send our reporters out several times to see people to get information or schedule interviews that could have easily been done over the telephone. This has affected our production schedule as well. The more unnecessary legwork our reporters and editors have to do, the longer it takes to get our magazine out. Can all of this be happening because I refuse to pay bribes to vagrant telephone repairmen or corrupt accounts clerks? Or is there a more subtle motive behind this kind of sabotage?

I am beginning to wonder if the perennial problems with my office telephones is not a covert attempt to proscribe my magazine. Has *Holline* been proscribed, honourable Minister?

\*\*\*

*I have not abandoned my efforts to seek the release of Jim Nwobodo, but I am establishing a space for him on page three that will be a permanent feature of this magazine until he is released.*



Alhaji Hassan Sani Kontagora,  
(Magajin Rafi).

# Swimming in Troubled Waters

Local government administration occupies an important position in the affairs of most nations. In Nigeria, it is referred to as the "third-tier" of government, with the state and federal governments being the "second and first tiers" respectively. In the current exercise of political transition to civil rule in the country, there is no doubt that local government officials have vital roles to play and must play them effectively if the transition programme is to succeed. We at *Hotline* have continuously stressed the importance of the local government as perhaps the most important tier with regard to balanced national development and political mobilisation of the populace for effective participation in the nation's political processes. Who is closer to the people than the local government?

Recent developments in Anambra State where a local government chairman was removed from office by the federal government has given us considerable food for thought. Dr. Sam Orji, the Chairman of Enugu Local Government Council is said to have been removed from office because of his insubordination to the Anambra State government, complacency and "actions, utterances and activities...detrimental to the political transition programme".

To date, no specific charges had been brought against Dr. Orji. All we have heard thus far from competent sources is that since Orji assumed office as the Chairman of Enugu Local Government after the December 12, 1987 local government elections, he has not been on the best of terms with his councillors. It seems, according to our sources, that he has had serious conflicts with the Council Secretary (whom he has alleged is the Anambra State Governor's in-law) on policy matters. Neither is he on good terms with the governor, Col. Robert Akonobi. It seems that Dr. Orji plunged in the turbulent political waters of the state and quickly got in over his head. In Nigeria, public office holders seem to find it difficult to discern the fine line between arrogated power and the statutory powers of office. While it is clear that the local government chairman is the chief executive of local government council, he is first and foremost an elected member like the rest of the councillors. If anything, he is first among equals and needs the cooperation of the rest of his council if the local government is going to achieve anything at all. Secondly, local government councils depend upon both the state and federal governments for their finances to execute their programmes. The state and federal governments need the cooperation of the local governments to ensure that state and federal programmes reach "the local government areas. Thus, the need for a mutual, productive relationships among the three levels of governments.

While we abhor the idea of a local government council

being starved of funds because of the intransigence of a chairman, we would be irresponsible if we did not caution local government council chairmen to be prudent in their dealings with their respective state governments. Whether the state governor is elected or not, he is still the chief executive of the state. There is a saying that "one should not bite the finger that feeds him", but when "biting" becomes inevitable, the bite should be "diplomatic."

It is ironic that the issue of Dr. Orji's official misconduct (financial impropriety) as the sole administrator of the Anambra Vegetable Oil Limited (AVOL) resurfaced in the wake of this recent controversy. This, according to some observers and government sources, should have disqualified Orji from participating in the last local government elections. The question that arises therefrom, is how did Sam Orji escape the scrutiny of the sharp-eyed(?) National Electoral Commission (NEC)? Orji was said to have presented a letter exonerating him of all charges from the indictment of the investigating panel commissioned by the Anambra state government in 1976 to look into the financial improprieties of AVOL. Based on these documents, the NEC cleared him to contest the Local Government elections. Who exonerated him? Did the NEC fail to check the authenticity of the letter before giving Orji clearance? Was such a letter written in the first place? Our sources claim that Orji recently was retried on the same charges *in absentia* while he attended a meeting of Local Government Council Chairmen in Kaduna and was indicted all over again. If this is true, does this mean that a citizen in this country no longer has the right of "due process"?

With the suspension of Orji on September 1, 1988 effected by the Chief of General Staff, we wonder if a dangerous precedent has not been set for those who will hold public offices from 1990 to 1992. Between 1990 and 1992, Nigeria shall practice what appears to be diarchy. Will the President who is a military officer, have the power to remove any recalcitrant elected civilian governor? What will be the relationship between the states and local governments after 1992, for instance, in a situation whereby in a state, the governor belongs to a political party different from that of a particular local government chairman? Can the governor remove him for being intransigent? Or starve his council of its legitimate funds? We should also be made to know what "actions, utterances and activities...detrimental to the political transition programme" are.

Dr. Orji, with his detention and subsequent arraignment before a military tribunal on the political transition programme seems to have succumbed to the turbulent currents of our political culture, but until these and other issues are cleared up, he may not be the only public officer swimming in troubled waters.

# Socialism For Sale!

It was Saudatu Gana Uwaisu, the rebel feminine-marxist who once lamented "I love socialism, but I hate the socialists. If they are not stinking dirty in appearance, they harbour a heart dirtier than a sty. Staying close to a Nigerian socialist makes me want to vomit". Miss Uwaisu is not known for exaggerations. Call a radical or a socialist or a marxist or a revolutionary, these Nigerian ideologues will step forward.

The Nigerian socialist is a special breed of humanity. His face is bearded *a la* Karl Marx (he is not an animal so let us not call it a mane). His robes are not tarted, but they are also not clean, not even modest. His pair of jeans can stay ages without being washed. His canvass shoes or pair of slipper shoes are either torn or worn out. He is not dirty, he is a category of the socialists. if he is not this socialist; the radical, the revolutionary, then he is the other socialist, the marxist, the newbreed, the do-as-I-say-but-don't-do-as-I-do.

He shouts for emancipation, for equality, for absence of exploitation, for morality, yet he does not dress like his driver or his house-boy but like Mr President or the honourable minister. He doesn't eat the food his cleaner eats or the housemaid to his wife but he prefers coffee and biscuits and snacks and the *a la-carte*.

Who are the opportunists in our midst that pose as messiahs of the masses? Who are the rebels of the system, rebels who hardly understand their rebellion? They are rebels because it is fashionable

**"Who are the opportunists in our midst that pose as messiahs of the masses?"**

to accept that which is new even if it is that which is taught to you by those you don't know. They are rebels. Rebels because in their world, confrontation with the mighty bestows fame, albeit a pseudo one, and they want to be famous. They are rebels because they are lazy to practice the dictates of the founded faith and the rules of the ordinary environment. They are rebels because they have enjoyed the sanity of a system and would also want to enjoy the insanity of the system.

Who are the confusionists in our midst who preach manhood to man and manhood to woman? who are the confusionists that build, support and protect an edifice and yet crave for its destruction when they know they possess not the energy, the heart for a new ivory tower? The confusionist, so insincere to his ways, so confused to his goals, can become a governor, use his right hand to abuse his inherited institution, query a first class emir and yet use his left to pet the same institution, in search of the peoples' support, by unduly promoting a third class chief to the first class status.

They are that student who remains the misguided radical boy of the mob instant, and then later, the good boy, the *moderate* of the larger world. Or they can be the University lecturer, so vehement in calling for the demolition of man's inhumanity to man, and yet remain the vampire who culpably sucks the moral blood of the gullible female student to a sad blackmailing end.

Have you seen the female socialist, the moving chimney on the campus, the brewery tank in the club, the noisy barrel on the dias, whose lust for a caucasian boyfriend-husband is uncompromising, if nothing, at least to enhance her social status? They are not only on the campuses, they are even in the larger world. Atheist, citizens of dual identity, calling for poverty, dreaming of riches.

They say they are the atheists - never believing God, not even in His existence. They are the hardened believers, those whose stay in power was characterised by continuous call for a new land owner-



**By Bashir Bello Akko**

ship formula, and yet they own countless acres of farmland, courtesy of traditional rulers. They are many, once vocal for an egalitarian society, but now trusted with sensitive government organs which keeps them in millions of Naira and in the cosy warmth of protocol: They are on leave from the masses. Do we then say that all Nigerians are potential capitalists, exploiters etc. etc. bidding time for the slightest opportunity to reach the "wanted land"? Are Nigerians, all generations of Nigerians, more capitalist than the capitalists themselves? Like a weasel kingdom, the socialists are for now against themselves, making an easy road for the others.

*Sincerely yours, in lighter mood.*

**"Who are the confusionists in our midst who preach manhood to man and manhood to woman?"**

## **PRELUDE** **The Russian Parrot**

I am the man, the revolutionary,  
The antidote to the mercenary.

Teaching the masses to engage in fights  
Against those who infringe on human rights.

Call me the blade that cuts loose  
All the political hangman's noose.

I walk in the towns, crawl in the jungle  
My aim is to preach the Class Struggle.

But how come they call me the Russian Parrot  
Who eats and survives on American Carrot?

Is it because I dine with the Classes  
And from time to time wine with the Masses?

Or because at home my beautiful wives  
Eat roasted lamb with sharpened knives?

Or because my children right from birth  
Eat ice-cream and play in the garth.

And have everything they would love to eat,  
Not just sour milk and goat-head bellies?

So what if other kids have sunken eyes,  
Skeletal limbs and protuberant bellies?

Am I fake because ladies of charms  
I prefer to have as Comrades-in-arms?

Or because I see the dentist for my teeth  
And advise the people to see the black-smith?

Who dare blame me if there is a revolt-  
If people die is it my fault?

Who says I teach, "A head for a tooth"  
A slogan seen on the toilet booth?

Just because I hate the Northern Oligarchy  
And in their stead prefer Anarchy.

Because the masses say I am always right  
No matter what I do out of sight?

Clapping their chuffed and chappy hands  
As I stand and curse our Father Lands.

Am I the monarch of blasphemous mongrels  
For drinking my beer through the nostrils?

Or when the Mullahs say "The end is near"  
And I reply to them, "Aluta Continual"?

Just how come they call me the Russian Parrot  
Who eats and survives on American Carrot?

# The Gospel According to St. Marx

By Shehu Abubakar

Brothers and Sisters, I shall take for my text today from the Gospel According to St. Marx, Karl Marx, the Man and his Message...

Karl Heinrich Marx was born on May 5, 1818, in Trier, a city in the Rhine province of Prussia, now a part of West Germany. Marx was one of seven children born to Heinrich Marx, a Jewish lawyer and philosopher and Henrietta Marx nee Pressburg, a Jewess and native of Holland. Marx's father, aside from his prosperous legal practice, was known as a "man of the Enlightenment," devoted to the writings and philosophies of Immanuel Kant and Francois Marie Arouet Voltaire, the foremost exponents of the philosophic movement that swept Europe in the 18th century. "The Enlightenment" brought a period in Europe marked by the questioning of traditional doctrines and values, a tendency toward individualism, an emphasis on the idea of universal human progress, the empirical method in science and the free use of reason. Heinrich Marx was one of the early agitators for a constitution in Prussia, notorious for its militaristic, oligarchical form of government. Undoubtedly, young Marx was greatly influenced by the social-political activities of his father as evidenced by the fact that he was later to become the actual and spiritual progenitor (along with Friedrich Engels) of Marxism as practised by most socialist movements prior to 1914. Marx-Leninism Marxism embellished and elaborated by Vladimir Illich Ulyanov Lenin and later by Josif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili Stalin) the doctrine of Communist parties established after the Russian revolution, Maoism (Mao Tse-tung's Chinese version of Marxist-Leninism), Trotskyism (Leor Trotsky's anti-Stalinist variant of Marxist-Leninism), the Titoist variant of Marxist-Leninism of Josip Broz Tito and the Marxism of Fidel Castro.

Records of Marx's education begin at around 1830. Marx's early schooling (1830 - 1835) in Trier, is said to have taken place in the liberal Rhinish environment of the period. Lewis S. Fuer

describes the high school that Marx attended as "...suspected... (by the Prussian government)... of harbouring... liberal teachers and pupils... the school was under police surveillance." In 1835, he entered the University of Bonn studying such subjects as the humanities, mythology and the history of art. In 1836, Marx enrolled in the University of Berlin, where he studied law and philosophy. In Berlin he was introduced to the writings of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the profound German philosopher who introduced (among other seminal concepts) the dialectic in western thought. Marx was greatly influenced by Hegel's writings (even though at first he found them "repugnant") and joined the voguish Young Hegelians. At this time, Marx also came under the influence of a young theologian, Bruno Bauer, who theorised that much of the Bible was not a historical document but "human fantasies arising from men's emotional needs." Bauer also postulated that Jesus was not a historical figure. Many writers have speculated that while Marx's adolescent writing had been full of lofty Christian sentiment, he was greatly affected by his father's forced conversion to Christianity (for professional reasons) and his own subsequent baptism at the age of six. Marx, who was said to be proud of his Jewishness and the intellec-



Marx

tual (as well as religious) tradition it fostered, secretly harboured a bitterness against the Christian religion which flowered into atheism under the influence of Bauer. (It should be noted that in spite of this ethnic pride, Marx was to be later known to have "aversions" to several other ethnic groups, including blacks of any kind and Russians.)

In 1841 Marx began reading Ludwig Feuerbach, who in the minds of many of the Berlin Literati had effectively criticised Hegel's "mysticism", establishing "real man" as the basis of Hegel's "Absolute Spirit." Greatly influenced by Feuerbach, Marx in his own formative philosophical thinking "materialised" Hegel's dialectic, making it the foundation of his own philosophical thought. The period between January 1842 and February 1845 saw Marx becoming the editor of the Rheinische Zeitung, a liberal democratic newspaper, marrying Jenny von Westphalen of Prussian Scottish parentage, making a deeper social commitment to political radicalism, the beginning of his lifelong association with his collaborator, Friedrich Engels, going to Paris to study the communist societies of French and German working people, being expelled from Paris by the (Francois Pierre Guillaume) Guizot government, travelling to Brussels and renouncing his Prussian citizenship. His important writings of this period aside from his many and far ranging editorials for the Rheinische Zeitung were "On the Jewish Question" (1843), "The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844" and "Toward the Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right (1844)."

The year 1848, after two years of radical social activism (especially with the working class movement there) and revolutionary writing ("The Holy Family", 1845 and "The German Ideology" both co-written with Engels), Marx and Engels having joined a secret society, the League of the Just, made up mostly of emigrant German craftsmen, were asked by this group to formulate their political programme. Marx and Engels succeeded

getting the organisation to change its name to the Communist League, and from December 1847 to January 1848 they co-wrote the "Communist Manifesto" thought by most Marxist scholars to be his most important Marxist work along with "Das Kapital"

When in 1848 revolution broke out in Europe (France, Italy and Austria) Marx was invited back to Paris by a member of the provisional government. Just in time, as it were, because the Brussels government was moving to expel him from that country. In August, Marx organised Rhineland Democratic Congress, a coalition between the working class and the democratic bourgeoisie.

While Marxist scholars suggest that most of Marx's written works are radical critiques of philosophy, all seem to agree that Marx made a fundamental contribution to social, political and especially economic analysis by examining such concepts as man, knowledge, matter, nature not as separate philosophical abstractions as was the case with most philosophers of the period and before, but in their dynamic relationships to each other and how those relationships are the basis of historical, social, political, and economic realities.

I will not attempt today to cover everything that Marx has said and written. Let it be known that there are thousands of works in existence on Marxist thought. It is my intention to merely tease the lay man with a few of the classical assumptions of Marxism in as brief and

simple a manner possible. It is hoped that the reader will be inspired to conduct his own private research on the subject if only to find out what all the "to do" is about Marxism.

#### On Man:

Marx's conception of man was first elaborated in the *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. "In this work, he writes "...Man is first of all a natural being. As a natural being and a living natural being, he is endowed on the one hand with natural powers, vital powers.... these powers exist in him as aptitudes, instincts. On the other hand, as an objective, natural, physical, sensitive being, he is a suffering, dependent and limited being.... that is, the objects of his instincts exist outside him, independent of him, but are the objects of his need, indispensable and essential for the realisation and confirmation of his substantial powers..."

In other words, man as a living entity needs things that exist outside of himself to survive and prosper. The things that man needs to sustain his natural powers and his life may be obtained by producing something (production) to exchange for them. As basic needs, food, clothing, shelter, propagation and self-defence, are satisfied. Other needs surface, the development of his aptitudes, intellectual and artistic abilities etc. which man must also satisfy. Man's ability to produce is used to satisfy needs both of the higher and lower order. In fact, according to Marx, all human activity is based upon



Nyerere of Tanzania: introduced African Socialism.

satisfying needs. By his labour, man becomes more human. In his conflict with nature, which he conquers through his labour, he comes to know himself and what he is capable of doing. Through labour, man fulfils himself and becomes truly free. (Amen).

#### On Alienation

According to Marx, under capitalism, man is not really free. Capitalism alienates man from himself. The more man produces, under capitalism, the less he is able to satisfy his needs because the capitalist exploits man the producer by not giving him full value for his labour. Man creates goods by his labour. The value of these goods can be no more or less than the amount of labour used to produce them. The capitalist in giving the worker less than full value for his labour, shamelessly pockets the remainder. Thus the worker creates a new value that he cannot enjoy, that is enjoyed instead by the capitalist. In creating new values which he cannot enjoy, he creates new needs which he cannot satisfy. And because he cannot satisfy his needs through his labour, he is alienated from his world and from himself. (Amen)

#### On Social Reality

Marx hypothesised that the real basis of society is its economic system. The economic system is made up of the sum total of the relationships and interdependencies men and women enter into when they produce goods or services for that society based upon the stage of development of the "material forces



Lenin: practicalised Marx's theory



Cuba's Castro: faithful adherent of Socialism

production." On the economic infrastructure is built, legal and political "forms of social consciousness" of the society. Man's behaviour is essentially economic, therefore his social consciousness is based upon the collective economic activity of his society. (Amen)

#### *On Capital and Surplus Value*

Capital, according to Marx, consists of the things man the producer has created but are not his to enjoy or consume, an "enormous accumulation of commodities" which when sold for a profit are transformed into the extra money needed to buy the means of production, including labour power—accumulated goods devoted to the production of other goods. In his analysis of the mid 19th century British economy in *Das Kapital*, Marx showed how the capitalist provided money for the purchase of raw materials and the production of finished products. The products were sold at a profit and the profit was invested into expanding the existing means of production or creating new ones. Because the capitalist controlled the means of production, he could devalue the labour power of the worker in terms of costs to himself. Labour power is the human ability to produce goods or services in an economy. Under capitalism, the value of labour power is the cost of reproducing that labour or the amount of money in terms of wages to enable the worker to provide for himself the necessary food and shelter necessary for him to live and produce children (children of workers in mid 19th century England were a source of additional cheap labour). While the capitalist paid a subsistence wage, he employed the worker for longer hours than the wage paid for, getting additional value in terms of extra labour, which resulted in more goods produced at cheaper labour costs.

Marx believed that surplus value created by the exploitation of human labour is fundamental to the existence of capitalism. Says he: "Surplus value is produced by the employment of labour power. Capital buys the labour power and pays the wages for it. By means of his work the labourer creates new value which does not belong to him, but to the capitalist. He must work a certain time in order to reproduce the equivalent value

*"Capital buys the labour power and pays the wages for it. By means of his work the labourer creates new value which does not belong to him, but to the capitalist. He must work a certain time in order to reproduce the equivalent value of his wages."*

*of his wages. But when this equivalent has been returned, he does not cease further hours. The new value which he produces during this extra time, and which exceeds in consequence the amount of his wage, constitutes surplus value."* (Amen)

#### *Class Struggle*

Marx conceived that a society under capitalism, having evolved through pre-capitalist social formations such as feudalism etc. consisted of two predominant social classes, the bourgeoisie, the owners of the means of production and the proletariat or the workers. The interests of these two classes are diametrically opposed. The bourgeoisie whose interests centre around the expansion of capitalism, the increase in profits and the preservation of their social class values exist only through the exploitation of the worker. The proletariat whose interests centre around getting full value for their labour, being able to enjoy all of the values their labour creates and being able to satisfy all of their needs can only protect its interest by opposing the interests of the bourgeoisie, violently if necessary. Workers must seize control of the means of social production if they are to liberate themselves from alienation and the subhuman existence created by bourgeois capitalists: the bourgeoisie must defend their interest at all costs against the proletariat who are determined to take what they have away from them. Thus a class struggle ensues. (Amen)

#### *Revolution*

Revolution, according to Marx, is the inevitable outcome of capitalism. Capitalism is fraught with contradictions which increase the longer it exists. It experiences crises often and at regular periodic intervals. The advent and predominance of the machine in the social

production process will create an army of pauperised workers and peasants who will, when they can bear no more the exploitation of the bourgeoisie, revolt and overthrow the bourgeoisie, thus establishing the basis for true communism, social equality and democracy. (Amen)

I have reviewed for your edification a few of the passages and comments from the Gospel of St. Marx. I refer to it as such because of the tendency of some Nigerian Socialists, Marxists and Communists to deify the man, and take his writings and utterances as "matters of faith" betraying his analysis and demonstrated in looking at the skills he and chanted. His legacy to be memorised. Socialist in general and to the African Socialist in particular is not so much the content of his analysis of 19th Century Europe and the principles derived, but the method of that analysis. Using and improving upon that method of analysis with Africa as the subject of analysis might lead to the discovery of slightly different hypotheses, and if proven, principles in the twentieth century to explain the often confusing and contradictory phenomena that characterises Africa and our own Nigeria. It might also lead to some viable African solutions to African problems. It would certainly occupy our more serious and pre-eminent scholars, theorists and propagandists of leftist persuasion in more useful pursuits than engaging in interminable power struggles, personality cults, or having to fend off the presumptuous ambitions of their students and proteges who are quite "revolutionary" in the efforts to take over the coveted public spotlight. Can I get an (Amen)?



tion has a strong tendency towards capitalism, although the government controlled economy in form and structure, its various planning bodies and five year plans etc. seem to suggest a mixed economy of both capitalist and socialist elements. When one examines Nigeria's national objectives, especially those calling for a just and egalitarian society etc. it is clear that there was marked socialist input when those objectives were formulated. Socialism is difficult to precisely define but generally refers to a social order where the ownership and control of means of production as well as political power are in the hands of the producers (workers). In such a society, class distinction and all other forms of discrimination have been eliminated. Wealth is equally distributed or at least every citizen has an adequate income to live on and provide for himself the necessities of life.

Capitalism, in converse, refers to a situation where the means of production are in the hands of a few powerful individuals. Karl Marx, the German economist/sociologist/revolutionary is generally acknowledged as the seminal influence in socialist thought. He is the proponent of the doctrine known as Marxism. Marxism since the late 19th century has become the ideological and intellectual understructure of socialism. Marx regards the whole of human history to be one of class struggle. He believes that man stands at the foundation of nature and that man must produce to fulfil himself, that consciousness emerges

from the social existence and material conditions of man. History has recorded the oppression of man by man primarily for economic reasons. One class is determined to have at the expense of all other classes, depriving them of the ability to satisfy their needs, to fulfil themselves and to become fully conscious of who they are. Such opposing classes are constantly in conflict. Marx championed the worker whom he believed to be the real producer in the world and source of one of the world's most important resources - labour. He believed that capitalism, which emphasises market product, division of labour, and the division of society into antagonistic classes alienated the worker and the capitalist ruthlessly exploited him, but in doing so was sealing its own doom for the worker would one day rise up and sweep capitalism from the face of the earth.

In Nigeria, the concept of socialism seems more academic than real. The tendency to amass unlimited wealth seems to be the desire of many Nigerians. This cannot but mitigate against a sincere propagation of socialism as a national ideology. Within the comfortable confines of the prestigious ivory towers, socialist academics condemn the capitalist class to all who would hear. They indict the rich and accuse them of having stolen public money. They direct scathing criticisms against the government for some of what they see as its anti-people policies. But like our hypothetical Okon, far too many of them seem to practice the ideology of opportunism. Talking loud enough to be heard by those who make public appointments.

*Dr. Mahmud Tukur*, the Head of Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria does not see anything unusual in the allegations of directionlessness against Nigerian socialists. Taking a broader historical perspective in an interview with *Hotline*, he said: "There is nothing happening in Nigeria which did not happen elsewhere, say in the Soviet Union. There have always been true socialists and false socialists. So I don't think there is any way in which Nigeria is different from other countries. People who say there are no socialists in Nigeria and point to all

kinds of alleged examples do not know the history of the socialist movement outside Nigeria. All those things that seem to be true in Nigeria were also once true in Russia, China or Vietnam, yet it did not stop the revolution from taking place."

Dr. Tukur did not only see socialism as practicable in Nigeria, but also compulsory. Nyere because the only alternatives to socialism in Nigeria might be death or starvation. He lamented that "right now people are starving from the middle class down." In his own words, "if you go to the graveyard, you'll find that 90% of the graves are those of small children who cannot withstand the attack of such things as malaria, pneumonia because they are too famished, too weak through hunger. This is not because there is no food in this country, it is because of the economy we are operating. Food is either hoarded or exported. It is not used for feeding people. And our industries are collapsing because we have attached ourselves to the world imperialist system since we are capitalists. So long as we are capitalist, we have no alternative but to subordinate ourselves to America, Japan, Western Germany and Britain."

*Alhaji Shehu Musa*, Secretary to the Government under Alhaji Shehu Shagari and Chairman of National Population Bureau and described by some as a leading Nigerian capitalist does not see the nurturing of socialism in Nigeria as being easy. He does not take Nigerian socialists that seriously, saying that "it may be very difficult for them to realise that goal... (socialism)... in view of the fact that the Nigerian system of the extended family and being our brothers' keepers is our own type of socialism." Since such a system encourages individuals to acquire private property and own business without the supervision of the state, Alhaji Musa believed that it also makes them to spread the profits of these economic efforts within the extended family. Furthermore, the onetime SG pointed out the hypocrisy of some Nigerian socialists by saying that "some so-called socialists in Nigeria seem to be more capitalist than the typical capitalists of the western world."

Perhaps one day, socialism will meta-



Tukur: socialism compulsory

# Let's Take A Look At Socialism

By Adamu Isa Mohammed

In this day and age, when one refers to himself as a socialist, it is best to ask what kind of socialism does he practice. (That word *practice* is critical. While British socialist, C.A.R. Crosland has described socialism as "a set of values, or aspirations, which socialists wish to see embodied in the organisation of society..." those values and aspirations have to be transformed into a set of consistent, reflective behaviours.) You are likely to find that the answers you get vary considerably.

Most socialists agree that the Industrial Revolution brought about what may be described as inimical social and economic relations and dislocations e.g. injustice, inequality and suffering caused by the capitalist mode of production, a free and uncontrolled market and for some, acquisitive individualism. They aspire to a world community of producers (workers) who have wrestled the means of production and the machinery of government from the capitalists, and where social equality and democracy prevail. While they agree on the foregoing general concepts, on specific ideas and issues there is little agreement. On the issue of controlling the means of production, there is sharp disagreement on whether all the apparatuses of production should be nationalised or whether only key industries should be nationalised. With regard to the control of the economy, some advocate that the entire economy should be under strong centralised state control, while others advocate that the "market" only should be under the control of socialist planners. Concepts of government range from decentralised communities of workers, centralised worker controlled government, strong central governments working through governmental planning boards, to the re-distribution of wealth, some advocate absolute equality in income, while others advocate an adequate income for all. On the elimination of class differences, some advocate that status should be eliminated entirely while others counsel that there should be some distinctions between decision-makers and those who carry out decisions. Small wonder that there is so much confusion

and enmity among African socialists. (The reader is invited at this point to do wider reading on this subject. As 1992 approaches, there no doubt will be a lot of talk about socialism. A full discussion of the subject is certainly not in the scope of this article. The writer is merely attempting to highlight some of its more salient historical features. Any prominent personality or movement omitted is strictly the responsibility of the writer.)

Socialist scholars place the origins of socialism in its modern sense (some socialist ideas and concepts can be traced back to Plato and Sir Thomas More) at around 1830 in the writings of Comte Henri Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and Francois-Marie Charles Fourier (1772-1837).

These two writers were Utopians intent on establishing model societies, Saint-Simon, a social order ruled by experts, and Fourier, a harmonious, non-coercive social order based upon love and compassion.

Robert Owen (1771-1858) was an industrialist, the owner of textile works in Scotland. He distinguished himself early in his career as being a model employer, catering to the needs of his workers. He believed that workers should cooperatively own the means of production and should establish cooperative industrial communities emphasising rational enlightenment as a predominant form of education that should be afforded the workers and their families. Other writer/activists of note during this period were Louis-Auguste Blanqui, a democratic populist, Etienne Cabet, a utopian, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, an anarchist. All, however, were overshadowed by the emergence of the synthetic genius of Karl Marx.

From the emergence of Marx and Engels, socialism has gone through various phases, variants and revisions. After 1848 and the revolutions in France, Italy and Austria, Marxism spread rapidly in Germany, France and elsewhere on the continent, but did not really take root in England where Marx was based until well after his death. It was rivalled in

Germany by the rise of German Social Democracy (1869). Social Democracy as formulated by Ferdinand Lassalle, wanted the "bourgeois state" to provide the necessary capital to emancipate labour from capitalist domination. Marx, however, wanted nothing to do with the bourgeois state and so the socialist movement was split at least in Germany between the followers of Marx and Lassalle. Similarly in France, the Parti Ouvrier, established in France, the Parti 1875 was considered by Jules Guesde in an assortment of phalangeist socialist parties reflecting the influences of Blanqui and Proudhon and others. Britain in 1880s saw the rise of Fabian socialism, an evolutionary, moderate (and some have said intellectually elite) form of socialism based on non-Marxist principles. Syndicalism (1892 to 1902) grew out of the trade union movement in France and was based upon the idea of the effective use of the general strike. Unions were designated to control the means of production. Guild socialism emerged momentarily in Britain in 1913, their notion was that means of production should be in the control of the major socialist movement to emerge during this time period in the United States was the Socialist Labour Party under the leadership of Eugene V. Debs. Rather than orthodox socialism, this party was an umbrella for various leftist movements ranging from reformers to anarchism with Marxism in between.

Populism, the notion of a cooperative commonwealth of the peasantry was the radical tendency in 19th century Russia. Radical Populism soon found its expression in Tsarist assassination. The radical fringe of the populist movement (influenced by Bakunin) lost faith in the possible revolt of the peasantry and formed it self into an elite group alienated intellectuals-cum-political assassins and terrorists. In the 1880's two major trends in Marxism began to emerge. Georgy Plekhanov founded the first Russian Marxist organisation, Osvobozhdenie Truda (The Liberation of Labour Group) fashioned on the lines of German orthodox Marxism. In 1902,

Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov (Nikolai Lenin) advocated that socialism could only be achieved by professional revolutionaries capable of mobilising the workers and peasantry. This movement was destined to overshadow orthodox Marxism, and Lenin (ironically with the help of Leon Trotsky who later attempted to split the Marxist-Leninists under Stalin) by the time of the 1917 Russian Revolution) to become the dominant force in Soviet politics. Lenin transformed Marxism to Marxist-Leninism. Since the death of Lenin in 1924, Soviet Marxist-Leninists and communists through out the world following the Soviet line, divorced themselves from most socialist parties in the world blaming them for the European revolution that never happened and calling them "social traitors" who had colluded with the bourgeoisie to maintain capitalism. From that point on, European socialism and Marxist-Leninism took separate paths of development. Marxist-Leninism further developed under the ruthless efficiency of Joseph Stalin and socialism fracturing into dis-

parate, contentious fragments of Marx's synthetic vision.

Socialism reached Africa through the agency of Africans educated in Europe and, particularly in the Francophone countries through European settlers, educators and civil servants, who were socialists and communists. Algeria and later Tunisia in their national liberation movements linked their struggle against colonialism with socialist ideas. Ahmed Ben Bella, Houari Boumediene, Habib Bourguiba, Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Senghor, Ahmed Sekou Toure, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Patrice Lumumba, Amilcar Cabral, Obafemi Awolowo, Aminu Kano and Nelson Mandela just to name a few have all been associated with some form of socialism or the other. African socialism however has been just as fractious and factionalised as European socialism with personality cults just as prominent in the fray as differing ideological perspectives. It has taken on, in addition, an insidious tribal and/or regional character. Socialism as a national ideology in many African countries has

found difficulty taking root because on the list of national priorities of developing African countries is rapid industrialisation and modernisation, which are the very evils that socialism emerged to eradicate. Finally, far too many African socialists have used the pop psychology of socialism opportunistic to attain power and position in their societies and once having gained such have conveniently forgotten their social ideals.

What is the future of socialism Africa and elsewhere? It is fair to say that millions of people still believe in the possibility of a free, democratic and egalitarian society, where the means of production are cooperatively owned where wealth is equitably distributed and political power emanates from the "people." How to bring those conditions about has been the problem plaguing socialism since its inception. Everybody talks about revolution, but nobody wants to die.

## The Traditional Woman And Socialism

By Abubakar Abba Tahir

Although ideological theories may give direction and substance to man's existence, he can never really appreciate the realities of the world until he lifts the veil of ideology. Perhaps, that is why the traditional African woman unconsciously castigates ideological dispositions and decides to live within the confines of her revered traditional conception of life.

Convention has it that the traditional woman is brought up in a communal way. This is evident the fact being that from the cradle to maturity she finds place in the company of fellow women with whom she socialises. Passing through the various stages of development - infancy, childhood, adolescence - adulthood, she enjoys the company of her groups in her early life and that of her wives and other associates in later years.

During this life string, she finds that she is living within a subsistent economic system as opposed to exploitative capitalism. Going by this reality, she

traditional woman naturally becomes neither exploitative nor materialistic as she has no surplus to accumulate for personal reasons. All her life is therefore characterised by tending for the family's survival. Her role in the society, to her, is to bear children, take care of the matrimonial home and serve her relations.

She is as reserved as she symbolises enviable decency and morality. Restricted to tradition as her life is, she does not clad in unnecessary elegance, glamour, splendour or exuberance. Her traditional affiliation does not allow her to dream of luxury and sophistication, not even the lure of a flashy car. The house she lives in is modest. She may be enlightened in world affairs though, but formally, she is unlettered. Her social bearing like that of other orthodox socialists rests on collective efforts rather than on the individual. The belief she holds embraces respect for religion, nationality and kinship which goes on to

say that she cares for all.

As conservative, primitive, orthodox and medieval-minded as many could perceive her, she is never directly concerned with any ideology. In reality, she is the real proponent of the orthodox socialist doctrine coined by Karl Marx instead of the distortionist radical perception of socialism.

For the trado-woman, she is never caught in that ideological mesh. She understands the world around her thus she works by that understanding.

Although she is not introduced to the modern perception of Marxist Socialism, it is not a misnomer to call her the real socialist. Of course, she is a by-product of traditional communist world. There is every cause to assume therefore that the destiny of the misdirected, fire-spitting radical socialists in the country, looms large on their ability to take precedence from the traditional woman or else they remain as confused as industrial smoke.

# Animal Farm: A Recourse For Nigerian Socialists

By Yusuf Ali Addy

Eric Blair (whose pseudonym is George Orwell) was born in England, in 1903. A one-time soldier, broadcaster, socialist critic and renown novelist, he was brought into limelight through his brilliant novel, *Animal Farm* published in 1945. Though he has written a couple of books and articles, his indictment and satirical exposition of socialist dictatorship in *Animal Farm* and later *Nineteen Eighty Four* made an impact on the audience of his time. These well-acclaimed books became and are still relevant in accessing the sincerity of those who profess socialist ideals in this country.

As a preamble, one would want to debunk the idea that socialism is an ultimate goal, which once reached, would outrightly become a dictatorship. Socialism must be seen as a process of achieving an equitable distribution of wealth, material or otherwise amongst the citizens of a nation. It is evident today that socialism hardly adheres to this format. It has of recent undergone changes in the eastern bloc; thanks to Gorbachev's 'prestrioka'. Orwell therefore might be excused as he was faithfully informed by Stalin's Russia.

In as much as the book is considered a capitalist propaganda, it reveals man's inexhaustible greed for wealth and power under the guise of displaying egalitarian principles.

*Animal Farm*, is a story of a group of animals who, having been pushed to the edge with suffering, hunger and starvation, decided to revolt against their human masters. They resolved to reorganise and run the activities of the farm based on egalitarianism. Their idealistic intentions were subverted by the pigs who assumed total authority. The pigs headed by Napoleon, progressively, wisely but treacherously distorted the laid down principles for their selfish interest. In the end they wittingly made the rest believe that "All animals are equal but some are more equal than others".

Using the book to access and determine the sincerity of Nigerian socialists makes one wonder whether socialism as preached compared to its practicability is not all a bogey. It is not only known but felt that the Nigerian masses are wallowing in poverty and social deprivation. Since the ideals of socialism generally appeal to the down-trodden, they cherish the system compared to others. Their desire was registered through the Political Bureau set up in January 1986, to fashion out a suitable political system accepted by all. However, it is something different whether it was accepted or not.

Do we in a point in time ask ourselves, who is responsible for or are in a position to champion the course of the oppressed? It has always been the case that those who are learned in the theoretical jargon of socialism and especially within the walls of our campuses arrogate to themselves this sacred but tasking duty. Our labour union leaders are also not left out in the group, and just like the pigs in *Animal Farm* who considered themselves cleverer than others, they acquire the position of agents of conscientization. After a lot of paper-preaching in various symposia and seminars, fire-brand write-ups choke our dailies and magazines to their credit. These earn them the hearts of the people. Those in government then become jittery of their popularity, decide to let them have crumbs of the 'cake' by appointing them chairmen and directors. No sooner have they settled down to serve their nation and people, than they begin to carve power positions for themselves in the scheme of things. This is not different from the pigs headed by Napoleon and Snowball, as they soon begin to stash away the milk from the cows for their exclusive use, just after the rebellion.

Even among these group there is always conflict as to who will occupy the position of 'Chairman' or 'President' during elections. The cracks in the walls

of ASUU is getting wider, based on that natural human desire for higher aspiration. The same applies to the NLC and NANS, until the government launched a "masterstroke" to proscribe them all.

The personality clash between Napoleon and Snowball over priorities is comparable to the saga of the 'Analyst Crisis and many others.

The masses represented by Boxer and Clover, the two cart horses who can hardly read or write are made to believe and accept the slogans, decisions and commandments of Animalism. The sheep complement the hard-working horses in accepting the principles of Animalism by constantly chorusing "Four legs good, two legs bad". Boxer even coined a motto for himself; "I will always work harder". With the help of the Squealers in our midst, who are eloquent in speech and can miraculously turn night into day, we register our acceptance of this class of 'socialists', 'progressives' and 'patriots'. They more often than not make use of various diversionary techniques, reducing our problems to either colonialism, indiscipline, moral decadence or lack of patriotism. Napoleon once said that "the truest happiness lay in working hard and living frugally", to make the rest animals work essentially to feed the pigs.

While our kind of socialists always stress the point of changing the system for the betterment of the common-man, they surround themselves with riches that are not easily noticed, besides they wisely stash money in foreign accounts and investments.

These are the group of people we must be careful of as we approach the take off of the Third Republic. They are now busy forming cliques, associations, clubs and committees, scheming things for the lift on the ban on politics come 1989.

We must be able to weigh their sincerity before we decide to give them the mandate to represent us.

# Nigerian Socialism: What Sardauna Said

The alliance of the N.C.N.C. and the Action Group in two brands of socialism cannot provide a good honest government for Nigeria. Before I say why, I think I must remind you that nothing is further from Socialism than the practice of these two parties. In them are men avid for wealth, men who use every means fair or foul to become rich and to have material power. Never have the principles of socialism been so debased...

The Alliance was first founded on hatred. It was intended to be a union of the South against the North. It is not an alliance for the unity of the federation. Quickly there are men sensible to see that any alliance of the South against the North is fraught with extreme dangers and will spell destruction on our federation.

The Action Group was once the government in Western Nigeria. It succeeded in squandering the wealth of the region and bringing it into financial and moral ruin. Independent commissions and the courts have proved the disaster into which the West was plunged by the action of men who sought life more abundant for only themselves.

Many people in the North and South also are bewildered why anyone in the North should also join an alliance whose fundamental purpose is to unite the South against the North. There is no cause for wonder. Look at the men in the Northern Progressive Front - a group which is only progressive in spreading confusion and is only capable of producing a state of personal abuse. The population knows that members of the Front have only produced unrest in the Northern Region and have no respect for its institutions. It is known that members of the Front encouraged all forms of activity to disturb the peace of the North. They have for years castigated all national institutions of the country however good and their allies in the Action Group and N.C. want us to abandon all our ways of life and a system alien to Africa. Through the false sympathy they spread they have gained a few sympathisers abroad but have never been able to obtain the

sympathy of our own people. We know they are being used as tools to accomplish their master's ambition for a section to dominate the rest of Nigeria.

...No one can take the Northern Progressive Front seriously, not in the North anyway. To take one example, for years members of the Northern Progressive Front, particularly the venomous N.E.P.U. have called their Northern brothers backward and feudalistic. They have never been able to see anything good in the actions of the North. They have in the past ridiculed and humbled our institutions particularly chiefs. Today they have a new tactic. They pose themselves as the champions of Northern institutions. They are loud in their praise of chieftaincy and busy all over the place sending clandestine messages seeking the support of chiefs on false promises.

...But of course the party never at any time seriously considered that it can form a government. It is formed only as a nuisance force to disrupt authority and deter progress.

...We are informed that the alliance led by N.C.N.C. will bring socialism to Nigeria. They are not yet decided which brand of socialism it will be. There is one brand in the N.C.N.C., which is pragmatic socialism and the Action Group had made brand which it calls democratic socialism. The N.E.P.U. has made no claim to a brand of its own. Whatever brand of socialism ultimately gains the upper hand within the alliance, you can be certain that it has no chance of being applied on Nigerian soil. For there is no socialism of any kind within the ranks of the parties comprising U.P.G.A. The richest men in Nigeria are these so-called socialists. When given the opportunity to serve the nation they have again and again chosen to serve it only for their own interests and that of their friends and relatives. When they have had opportunity to govern, they have invariably neglected duty and honour in favour of personal gain. It is sad to make these comments but you know them to be true and I cannot deviate from the path of truth.

*In Work And Worship (Selected Speeches).*

# Re:- Black Gold: Let's Say The Truth

By Basahir Bello Akko

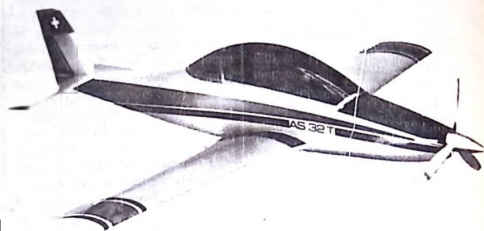
To your Conscience,

Why, Nigerian's, why? Despite our common bond; the common colour of our skins, the common historical experience, the common geographical boundary, and common political destiny, yet we remain prisoners—quite avoidably—of the dirty tricks of ideologies and self-serving power-plays? Why, indeed, after 28 years of independence must we be so immature in our quest for viable nationhood, so unpredictable in our selection of priorities, so gullible to the foreign vampires who constantly teach us to be their brothers' keepers rather than be our own brothers' keepers?

Dear Nigerians, when shall many of our leaders learn that petty jealousy does not augur well for national development? When shall we know that a citizen in need is one deserving our patriotic encouragement—not scorn, not undue suspicion, not crucifixion? When shall we accept our own, those who have our own blood as a priority over those already privileged, who too have their own parents?

We, as Nigerians, apparently have a problem: That we constantly prefer living in the shadows of others rather than to accept the reality of being ourselves. We are a people with a past. We must be a people with the pride in our own accomplishments, our own inventions, aiming for a tomorrow that we ourselves have created. Must we be capitalists or socialists? Or shall we be Nigerians?

When Adam Smith oiled the machinery of capitalism, his main target was Europe, not what we know now as Nigeria. Karl Marx was not a Nigerian. He didn't even acknowledge Africans as full fledged human beings. We were not included in his world order. Shall we then accept these Europeanisms unchallenged, as the whole truth and not subject to the testing of their validity against our own collective experience? Can we not demonstrate our own original thinking, taking what is good of that which is foreign and discarding that which is not, rather than trying to force-fit wholesale the theories of foreigners on our own unique human experience?



A product of Black Gold Group: Assembled in Nigeria.

If, in our attempts to establish an ideology, we fight ourselves, lose our affinity, our patriotism, if indeed in being capitalists or socialists we disown our own and run ourselves as a nation, shall we as a country migrate to America or Russia and tell them "I, we cannot survive as a proud nation, so here we come as your slaves". This, of course is the dilemma of a few Nigerians who read our cover story on the Black Gold Group and its President's (Sunny Okogwu) agony (Hotline, No. 45). Interesting enough, one Bitrus Keenam of Hayin-Gada, Jimeta, Yola could not contain his dissatisfaction (Hotline, No. 46) with our story. As has become our custom of late, we will respond to interesting reactions to our publications, if only for the purpose of further clarification.

Dear Mr. Keenam:

Let us take the points raised in your letter one by one. You said, "I see the title 'Agony of A Citizen' a misnomer. A man who talks in millions of Naria cannot be said to be in Agony - at least not financially". I am sure, Keenam, the issue is that of understanding our language. The agony to us, is not necessarily that of finance, but one as seeing a

purposeful dream deferred.

The question of *satisfaction* or *agony* does not always lie with money or the lack of it. You may have power, you may have wealth, you may have education and yet lack satisfaction. How many millionaires today are discontented? How many scholars agonise over elusive formulae? How many powerful leaders spend sleepless nights trying to assess their effectiveness or their popularity in the perceptions of a fickle public. For one to have a vision and a patriotic urge to do something for the betterment of his country; for one to invest in that vision, and nurture the faint, positive stirrings of a dream coming into being - only to see it dispel in front of one's very eyes because of the petty jealousies and the malicious obstructions of men - you might agree with me that such an experience is indeed an agony.

You also wrote that Sunny Okogwu might have done well by being "explicit on how he came about the money invested in the Black Gold venture". Perhaps one day he will. But frankly, is it any of your business or mine? Okogwu has not been indicted for any financial misconduct. However, if you feel morally

obligated, I'm sure that with a little initiative, you might satisfy your own curiosity. That is, after all, what we have done

The issue of Okogwu's wealth, though clearly out of context in the present argument, was answered by him in our last interview (excerpts carried in *Hotline* No. 45) for our general interest, let us recapitulate what he said:

**Hotline:** Your source of wealth seems to be a subject of controversy. I know it is a difficult question, but our readers will certainly want to know...

**Okogwu:** What is the yardstick of measuring a wealthy person? Plenty of money? beautiful car. good influence? Honestly, I am not now a wealthy man in its truest sense. I may be fashionable, or something else, but not really rich. You see, when companies are launching their new or improved products, they use some money generally called a finder's fee and a penetration fee. Finder's fee is for the search of market and penetration fee, to establish the market. I was lucky. I went back late '70s to be contracted by some Swiss companies to find market and establish it for their defence and aircraft products. I worked hard and succeeded in many cases. And as my success was becoming manifest, other foreign companies too invited me to the same partnership and compensated me. Instead of squandering my earnings, I saved a lot and at the end of the day, instead of bringing back these earnings in foreign currencies, I opted for an investment which is Black Gold. The records are available for anyone interested to come and see

Mr. Keenam, you also mentioned the controversy of the existence or otherwise of Dornier in Nigeria, and challenged us to come out with the true picture. The fact is that Dornier existed as a multi-national corporation in Nigeria with a virtual monopoly of supply, maintenance and personnel training of all aviation related needs of Nigeria's Air force. But as the needs of the country were becoming unaffordable to it, coupled with the increasing awareness of Nigerians on the inherent dangers to Nigeria's national security, a subsidiary company, with Nigerian front men, was registered called the **Nautical Industrial Engineering**

#### And Project Management Company Limited (AIEP).

Gradually, the title Dornier gave way to AIEP which is now established as a company of Nigerian entity. The fact remains that AIEP is still Dornier. For instance, the premises and investments of Dornier is what AIEP parades as its own or its area(s) of specialisation. So when Black Gold's investment became a subject for sale Mr. G. HUEBNER, Managing Director of Dornier, signed the protocol of understanding between Black Gold and AIEP-Dornier on behalf of its chairman Mr. Geuz. In short, Dornier bought over the investment under the name AIEP-Dornier, corresponding on the letterhead of AIEP.

You also questioned the sincerity of "Sunny trying to convince... (us)... that the President made no contribution to the Black Gold venture." It is sincerely not our concern whether Okogwu "fronts" for anyone or not for such is not the important point.

You also questioned Okogwu's silence "all these past three years since Buhari/Idagbon killed the venture." Let me take you to an answer again from Okogwu himself in that interview we had with him.

**Hotline:** Why the silence all this while when you could have sought redress through consultational means?

**Okogwu:** You see, I am such an obedient citizen I wouldn't want to challenge any authority. I have never fallen foul of the law and will want to continue living on



Huebner: Dornier or AIEP?

a clean slate. When the highest ruling body, the Supreme Military Council misunderstands your good intention; who again do you appeal to? When the government finally fell, my in-law took over, and for me to talk then will seem as if I now take advantage of an in-law to achieve a goal. I look at that as rather immodest. I take solace in the fact that no matter how long, one day the truth must prevail. even now, it is very much against my conscience that you people (*Hotline*) have forced me to talk. There is always an end to a suffering, even if it means death."

Your letter, Mr. Keenam, also posed the question: "Was the amount (Dornier paid) so meagre that Sunny is now complaining"? The answer, to our estimation, is yes and yes again. Let me reproduce for you the relevant portion of the document of purchase, dated 4th December, 1986 which Mr. Geuz, Chairman of AIEP-Dornier signed in taking over Black Gold's investment: Phase One hereinafter indicated.

1. (a) Twin engine Simulator
  - (b) Single engine Simulator
  - (c) Helicopter Simulator
- Total = Naira 50,000.00 (Fifty thousand Naira)

Furthermore the Offeree (AIEP) agrees to overhaul and update these Simulators and as soon these Simulators will generate income the Offeree (AIEP) will reimburse to the Owner additionally Naira 20 per flying hour up to a total amount of Naira 50,000.00.

2. (a) Projector
  - (b) Magic Board
  - (c) Audio/Visual aids - complete
- Total = Naira 22,000.00 (Twenty two thousand Naira)
3. Hangar/Hall
- Total = Naira 1,928,000.00 (One million nine hundred and twenty eight thousand Naira).

For your information, a simulator is a machinery complete with aircraft engines and facilities for necessary training, often with extras that can make advanced aviation training possible. Because a simulator has added advantages over an airplane or a helicopter, its cost exceeds that of an actual aircraft. Some of the advantages of a simulator include:

COVER STORY/BLACK GOLD



BGG's Simulators: Costlier than three aircraft, cheaper than a Peugeot car.

- a) Extra fittings and sensors for safe and effective pilot - training.
- b) Zero air-accident that could have impaired instructor, trainee and even aircraft's survival;
- c) Zero fuel consumption
- d) Zero aircommunication charges for flying aircraft.
- e) No need for change of tyres/shock absorbers necessary for landing - take off of aircraft etc.

Yet three simulators, that of a helicopter (which is often twice the price of an ordinary aircraft) were bought at only N50,000. Imagine the price of one aircraft even in 1986, and of course a helicopter, which costs more, and then think of the price of 3 simulators costing N50,000! Can you imagine the price of just one Peugeot 505 car costing more than 2 aircraft and a helicopter put together? Do you know how much in freighting them alone these three simulators can cost from Switzerland to Nigeria? Let us be serious, is it not sheer robbery to price these items, bought in far away Switzerland, in hard foreign currency, at only N 50,000.00?

Dornier fabricated information to show that the simulators were not... after all, functional: "...the offeree agrees to overhaul and update these simulators..." What do you need to "overhaul" and "update" in these virtually new machines?

The second set of items bought were more underpriced. Do you know what a magic board is? In a simple language, it is a magnetic board capable of doing

wonders in aviation trainings. On it are automated whether conditions, geological possibilities, aviation directions etc. which a fixed training miniature aircraft can fly. You can write on it and indeed manipulate the board for any training situation to a prospective pilot.

Add the audio package comprising sets of sophisticated training cassettes, sets of films, complete library trainer books, aviation training projector all at the cost of only N22,000.00? Where else on earth will value in excess of millions of naira be reduced to a mere N22,000? Are we really talking about fairness?

Then imagine a Hanger/Hall for parking aircraft, repairs etc... It is incredible how unmitigated exploitation can reduce an airplane hanger /hall to a mere N1,928,000, a cost too low to even pay the architect's fee, a cost even experts see as not up to 1% of its actual value and yet do we still talk about a fair deal?

Let us now take your last observation: "Was Dornier not really bailing Sunny out by buying Black Gold Group since he was no longer free to use the equipment without clearance? The simple answer here is No. Dornier was not bailing Okogwu out but merely enhancing his interest. In any case, why is it that Dornier should be the one that will bail Okogwu out and not Nigeria or Nigerians? Do you think Dornier will leave its home base, Germany, to come and bail Sunny out for the fun of it? Who needs Black Gold's investment more - Dornier or the Nigeria Airforce? What of Nige-

rian Civil Aviation Train... Zaria which is bedevilled w... equipment and training facili... of Nigeria and Airways that spen... its pilots and maintenance and... What economic sense does i... encourage Dornier take over... later loan at criminally low pr... government out the same equip... little experience in the aviat... Black Gold's facilities are the b... most modern in Black Africa. The... Black Africa. Its innovations... among the most modern of av... innovations. Why shouldn't our i... ment be the beneficiary of this r... investment by a fair take-over if a... individual is considered incapable of ma...

Why do we have to sell out our c... efforts at innovation, only to turn our... and advertise our impotency? *Hott*... was able to trace the Document OFA... ciation prepared by Black Gold... Partners, *Repair AG Attenhelt*, Sw... zerland, which if honest and carried... the later, could have made Black... Group's products, like its traineraircra... the most modern, and cheapest around... For instance, its Bravo series are mo... advanced of their class, which, as an... example, could have replaced our fast... ageing Bull-dog series. Its AS 32 model... jets. Its spare parts, maintenance pr... grammes could have saved government... and privately owned aircraft a lot of... headaches in distance and cost for serv... icing and general maintenance, which... are often now done abroad.

We might have achieved genuine tech... nological transfer if, going by the docu... ment, we encouraged and/or supported... this investment. Excerpts from the docu... ment reads:

- initial contract for 25 AS 320218a aircraft
- first 5 aircraft assembled in Switzerland and overflown to Nigeria
- 10 aircraft assembled in the first year in Nigeria with the assistance of 2 Swiss instructors
- 10 aircraft assembled during the

# COVER STORY/BLACK GOLD



**Bravo: Best replacement to the ageing Bull-Dog**

second year in Nigeria without the presence of Swiss personnel

Sifting through the files of Dornier-AIEP and those of Black Gold, let us see what actually transpired and then make our deductions. Sunny Okogwu was advised to sell off his investment to a more established aviation company by a airforce personnel. He did not object because he took their words as authority. Two weeks later, AIEP-Dornier contacted Okogwu on the pretext that they were tipped of Black Gold Group's intention to sell off its investment. They packed the items (phase 1a, and b) in containers and left. Months later, no word or money came from them.

Black Gold Group got jittery because of their silence and sent them a word of reminder. AIEP responded via letter Reference C/ego/077-87 dated 17th February, 1987 informing him that the "company's assets" in consideration will fetch him "share capital of 2 million Naira in our company". He will be also given a balance cash of N50,000. The letter was signed by Chairman, Genz himself.

Black Gold Group understood the contents and forwarded protocol of understanding for payment. AIEP/Dornier then wrote back, April 27th, 1987, Reference MD/G/MF/AZ/404/87 stating that "the proposal which you had stated in the said letter is acceptable with the following conditions, that we will pay for the shares of N2,000,000.00 within a period of 8 months and the N50,000.00 which you have indicated as balance due to you". The letter was signed by Mr.

Huebner for the Chairman. Black Gold Group on April 27, 1987, sent another letter signed by its President, Reference BG/3113/SQA insisting on bank guarantee and formalisation of the protocol of understanding for payment. AIEP considered this an apparent slight on its integrity, and conveyed its feelings, via a letter dated 30th April, 1987 Reference C/ego/324-87 and

**We still believe, as a matter of principle, that Nigerians should be allowed to act on their initiatives.**

signed for its Chairman again, Mr. S. Genz. The letter re-confirmed that "we are ready to pay the total amount within a period of six months effective from 1st May, 1987 to 30th November, 1987 inclusive".

The letter then warned "we are not prepared to give any further guarantee other than this letter of commitment which we assure you as a reputable organisation such as ours, that there would not be any need for a bank guarantee on this amount which will be paid to you regularly as indicated above".

12th May, 1987, Black Gold Group, based on the agreed six months payment period drew a payment schedule for

Payment of its due - Shares		Amount
Nos.	Date Due	
1.	8-6-87	330,000
2.	8-7-87	430,000
3.	8-8-87	450,000
4.	8-9-87	250,000
5.	8-10-87	100,000
6.	8-11-87	2,000,000.

to be endorsed by AIEP. Certainly, such a document was irritating to Dornier, at least not after all the assurances Dornier gave. Huebner then replied, May 18th 1987, via letter Re: MD/ego/339-87 stating that "in view of the fact that we are a company of trustworthiness, we do not commit to its obligations, we do not consider the need to have your formal schedule of payment executed for the amount. We confirmed that we will stand firmly by our commitment in our earlier letter to pay the whole amount of N2 million within six months".

Black Gold Group was not convinced because its President wrote a letter re: other dated nor with reference, stating "Mr. J.S. Okogwu of Black Gold Limited, now give one month's notice of the termination of that agreement with effect from 10th April 1987". The letter concluded "You may therefore wish to pay cash of N50,000.00 balance due to me".

One interesting aspect of this is the inconsistency of the amount paid Black Gold Group. Sources at AIEP, Kaduna insist that the deal was for N4 million Naira while records and Okogwu himself insist on only N2.05 million. The full amount is yet to be paid. The records at Savannan Bank, Kaduna, the bank of Dornier's Huebner, were not straight on the figure, but instalmental payments on periodic basis were traced on the relevant ledger card.

So Mr. Keenam, it is not because we lack the relevant documents to tighten those "loose" ends. We still believe, as a matter of principle, that Nigerians should be allowed to act on their initiatives. The best option we believe in, is for government to consider taking over Black Gold's investment and accordingly mature it to maturity for Nigeria's benefit.

# IBB: Consistency Cum Contradiction

Watchers of Nigeria's political scene in the last three years may have no cause to doubt the sincerity of President Ibrahim Babangida to return the country to civil rule in 1992. He has consistently, both in his speeches and actions, demonstrated that, he would not eat his words on the 1992 target date.

The President added spice to his promise by fashioning a gradual, rather than a hog-washed programme for the change of baton. This according to the President, is done in order to establish a democratic government which will proceed political learning, institutional adjustment and re-orientation of political culture in Nigeria.

Guided by Nigeria's political history, and with a clear vision of what the art of governance entails, more so the failures of those who had had the opportunities to lead Nigerians to the *promised land*, Babangida took a decision unprecedented in the nation's history. A decision that borders on leadership and commitment to national goal. He would not like the same mistakes of the past (first and second republics) to repeat themselves. To avoid such mistakes, the actors and actresses who had stayed long on the stage must be asked to give way to new ones to act out their roles. On September 23, last year, he clamped a ban order from participating in the third republic politics on all the erstwhile leaders both civilian and military in Nigeria, sending to the abyss, the political aspirations of thousands of people. Decree 25 of 1987 was enacted to give legal teeth to the decision.

In the president's words, "we have to put the past behind us and create an atmosphere that will encourage the emergence of new leaders whose motives for going into politics is service and patriotism".

Though, the objective is laudable, it has to a great extent, been contradicted by

**By Mohammed Momoh Otu**

some of the actions of the president. How can the wheat be separated from the chaff without proper winnowing? Agreed that the ban on certain categories of people from the third republic politics is justified, can the new breed take over the mantle of leadership without adequate knowledge of the art of governance?

Since the president came to power on August 27, 1985, appointments into public offices have favoured those who were supposed to have quit the stage in



*The President*

accordance with Decree 25 of 1987. Most of the chairmen, managing directors and members of boards of parastatals, banks and other industrial concerns in which government has interest had at one time or the other occupied leadership positions in this country and are supposed to be victims of Decree 25 of 1987. Some nominated members of the Constituent Assembly belong to the categories of persons banned under this decree. All these actions have put the sincerity of the president on encouraging the emergence of a new set of leaders, in doubt. The recently constituted National Population Bureau is a good example. Its chairman, Alhaji Shehu Musa (Maka-

nan Nupe) was the Secretary to Shagari's government during the second republic and he belongs to the categories of persons banned from participating in the third republic politics. There are versatile who are young and agile that could have been trusted with the responsibility of census enumeration.

The political transition programme is well spaced, spanning a period of five years. The president could have objectified his idea of encouraging the emergence of new leaders by exploiting the five years period to groom the youth for leadership positions. This is why for August 27, 1988 threat of banning any new breed politicians found flirting with those banned, negated the momentum of change he chronicled. He seemed to have not addressed the role money plays in Nigerian politics. Funds for electioneering campaigns are enormous and only members of the old brigade who, to the chagrin of the young ones, are still being given preference in appointments into positions of trust, could finance such campaigns. The experiences of the December 12, 1987 local government elections should have served as a guide before further decisions on the political transition programme are taken. Some promising candidates had to withdraw their candidature for want of money to finance their electioneering campaigns thus, leaving the stage to the sponsored candidates of the "money-bags".

Taking the membership of the Constituent Assembly into consideration, most, if not all the elected members are in the millionaire bracket. The government did not help matters, as nominated members belong to the same class as the elected members. With the composition of the Constituent Assembly, one is skeptical that the third republic constitution will be a mass-oriented one. One has waited patiently to hear CA members deliberate on the plight of rural dwellers, the unemployed (social benefits), destitutes and the helpless in our midst. Rather, they dissipated their energies on constitutional provision to legitimise coup de' tat. What an irony!

**"Funds for electioneering campaigns are enormous and only the old brigade ... could finance such campaigns."**

# Old Politicians Again?

By Musa M. Ajogi

Common sense dictates that in every situation there is limit to human endurance. In the same vein, he who moulds opinion is said to be greater than he who enacts laws.

The popular notion which says that in Nigeria, when a person is unscrupulously discredited, he can still be accorded a high degree of respect even when his offence is against the state, is not only a sad commentary but a ridiculous model in the life of a nation.

If one goes by daily reports and activities of banned politicians, the developments therein signify that they are determined to resurge into the power games of the third republic.

To perpetrate the reality of their political ambition they have turned the federal capital territory Abuja and the Constituent Assembly into their political base doing all the lobbying and making tenders for future political portfolios openly.

They pretend to be saints this time around, they claim to be assisting the federal government organs to instill morality and political ideas on the newbreeds.

Some Constituent Assembly members who preferred anonymity confessed to *Hotline* that the occasional calls at the Constituent Assembly by some banned politicians have virtually slowed the business of the house.

According to them, the banned politicians still command a reasonable degree of influence among some members in the house adding that any time "they come around", the entire house gets confused and its attention distracted.

Some members suggested that the federal government should enact a decree which shall prohibit frequenting the assembly by unauthorised persons so as to ensure effective deliberations.

Yes, this is a good and timely suggestion; besides, the attitude of the banned politicians is not only un-becoming but disturbing. This attitude bears ample testimony that the politicians have not

learnt any lesson from various punishments meted to them owing to their corrupt practices in the second republic.

For how long shall history continue to repeat itself in Nigeria with the same people in the political scene?

The federal government had unequivocally told the people of this great nation that all the first and second republic politicians including military officers who held public offices in the past have been banned from partisan politics.

For, now, the ban on politics is still in force. It was a blanket ban on this category of people with charges specified to the latter. One would not want to capitalise or take for granted the speculations that this government is being portrayed as being in a league of telling the nation one thing and doing another hence it will amount to an orchestrated "disinformation" campaign.

Be it as it may, we are living witnesses to the fact that the army sacked the civilian government of the 2nd republic. They brought the civilians before the law, sentenced them and their property forfeited to the federal government.

What political right has these people who now behave as if they have done nothing against the country to address

Nigerians again on morality? Are they proving to be above the law or under-rating the ability of the federal military government?

Nigerians once again are disappointed seeing the same politicians, not hiding their heads in shame after presiding over the liquidation of the nation's economy.

The federal government on the other hand seems to have under-estimated the havoc which the old politicians are capable of doing to this government if allowed to continue with this misbehaviour.

It is however the view of several Nigerians that those politicians who looted the nation's treasury be kept out of the nation's political firmament to prevent them from contaminating the new blood of the new political generation to whom this regime has pledged to hand over the mantle of leadership.

On the basis of this verdict, it is health to assume that federal government is giving too much prominence to the banned politicians as if other Nigerians have no conscience. For now, one would like the federal government to regularise the nation what it is doing to effect the ban order so as to render the unparliamentary plans by the old politicians ineffective. This no doubt will elicit people's support for the government than the intermittent hues and cries over their activities.

On the whole one would as well like to remind this government that the people of this country will hold the entire army forces responsible for the failure of future democracy in Nigeria.

While one expects the government to abide by her decisions on gazetted sensitive issues as the ban on old politicians, one would like to say that Nigerian should not wait to be reminded that patriotism enjoins every citizen to rally round the federal military government to prevent these political enemies of our national cause. Behold, Nigerians are tired of them, the newbreed should be given free hand and should be allowed to learn from the mistakes of their mentors.



*Aniagolu: can he stop the uninvited guests?*

# Nigeria's Economic Predicament (I)

*By Bukar Petrol*

Although Nigeria attained her independence from Britain in 1960 and chose to remain in the Commonwealth, its economy was almost completely controlled by the British. Businesses like banking and insurance, textile industries, flour and cement mills, breweries, oil extraction, tin mining on the Plateau, tin smelting and cotton gineries are in the hands of foreigners. Others were general merchandize, import, export, petroleum marketing and exploration. Industries such as the electricity generation and distribution, coal mining, river transport, railways, telecommunications, shipping, airways etc., were all owned and manned by the Nigerian government.

Prominent among the British colonial firms that dominated in exploiting our economy were the U.A.C. group of companies, John Holt group, Barclays Bank, Standard Bank, Royal Exchange Insurance Company, British Petroleum, and Amalgamated Tin Mines Company on the Plateau minesfield. Some companies from France and other European countries, like C.F.A.O., P.Z. and A.G. Leventis were also in collaboration with British in exploiting the Nigerian economy. They imported and exported ninety-nine percent of commodities into and out of the country. The few manufacturing firms in Nigeria were also under British hegemony.

The situation remained like this with very little changes until the advent of oil into our economic scene. The first decade of independence, agriculture was the life wire of the nation's economy as majority of Nigerians did nothing but subsistence farming. People were either cotton, groundnut, cocoa, palm, ginger, gum arabic, beans, kolanut and other agricultural produce farmers.

In 1967 for example, a bumper harvest was recorded. Groundnut pyramids, heaps of cotton, gum arabic, beans, ginger etc. were displayed in Kano, Gusau, Gombe, Funtua, Zaria, Maiduguri, Katsina and many other centres throughout the federation. Similarly, substantial increases in other agricultural commodities were recorded in all parts of the country.

In the first decade of independence, our railways functioned efficiently while our flights moved on schedule. Government hospitals and clinics did not complain of drug shortages and other essential facilities as a result of financial crisis. We had very few unusual retrenchments, retirements or dismissal and almost all Nigerians were gainfully employed mostly on the farms.

At that time, educational institutions particularly primary and secondary schools as well as other centres of higher learning were not disrupted because of shortage of fund, since all our boarding schools operated normally. Our embassies abroad equally carried out their duties normally while we ably met all our foreign commitments.

The success might be due to the fact that in the first decade of our independence, when petroleum was insignificant to our economy, people were not misguided. Most people were contented with their standard of living. Most of them could afford two square meals a day. Most could afford two sets of dresses. Moulie, pick-ups, benched lorries and railways were the main means of transport. There were fewer social clubs, hotels and drinking pubs. Yet people were relatively satisfied with their life style.

*The aspirations of most Nigerians no longer corresponded with their level of productivity. Ostentatious living became the golden rule and to aggravate the situation, some Nigerians embarked upon anti social activities.*

The problems which bedevil us today such as debt servicing, large scale corruption, kickbacks and all forms of ills were rare in Nigeria. The Nigerian economy was a subject of praise by the industrialised countries because all business with Nigeria were purely on cash and carry basis. Even at the peak of the civil war, when General Yakubu Gowon was at the helm of affairs, all our deals with foreign countries were on cash.

In the second decade (1979-80) however, the situation dramatically changed due to the oil bonanza and the attitude of our countrymen. Leaders were no more thinking, working and planning positively in the national interest. A majority of our people abandoned farming and took up unproductive endeavours such as middlemen, favoured contractors, sycophants, distributors and fake company directors, most of these pursuits were of course inimical to Nigeria's forward march.

People suddenly changed their life styles and were all expecting a false paradise. The aspirations of most Nigerians no longer corresponded with their level of productivity. Ostentatious living became the golden rule and to aggravate the situation, some Nigerians embarked upon anti social activities. Small wonder, currency trafficking, dubious contracts deals, large scale office and bank fraud, robberies, import licence racketing and many other heinous acts that almost destroyed our fatherland became rampant. Reports of large scale corruptions, kickbacks, arson, robbery with violence and other criminal activities became the order of the day.

The advent of oil in the Nigerian economy did not only render most citizens arrogant but almost made them mad. The great British dramatist, William Shakespeare was indeed right when he said, "Those whom the gods want to punish, they first make mad". Nigerians were indeed crazy since most of them lost a sense of reality and lived in a make-believe world of illusion and fiction.

They did not only abandon their farms which provided them with a means of livelihood but they also gave up their

own traditional foods of yam, guinea corn, millet and maize for the American wheat and rice. We soon became major importers of these commodities. We patronised European lace and brocade materials and embarked on the importation of luxurious cars, furniture and private jets instead of buying machinery for industries to absorb the increasing number of school leavers. We almost forgot that we were a developing nation and therefore, our economy cannot compete with those of Europe, America and other industrialised nations of the world.

The apparent dynamic Nigerian economy of the first independence decade began to collapse in 1970s and 1980s as we incurred alarming debts. Tragically, we are today indebted to the tune of one hundred and twenty billion naira or an average of N1,200 per head of our population, which questions our credit worthiness.

Projects introduced by successive governments of the federation as a result of the oil bonanza since 1970 include the Udoji salary award, Festival of African Arts and Culture, FESTAC, trade fair complex, universal primary education, UPE, national stadium complex, national theatre complex, development of federal capital Abuja, construction of roads and bridges in Lagos, and the proliferation of universities from four to over twenty. Others are the establishment of forty breweries, eight motor vehicle assembly plants, balloon and steel projects, indiscriminate construction of airports and seaports, purchase of defective aircrafts, initiation of eighteen River Basin Development Authorities and the creation of mushroom states and local governments. These schemes as well as the reconstruction of express highways and various state based projects are now described as "White Elephants".

Cost inflation of these projects was another calamitous dimension. These were due to the influx of oil revenue. The government therefore sunk billions of naira into these programmes. What are the effects of these investments? Most of these ill planned projects which were not a priority of the nation have brought untold misery to our country. Prominent

First and foremost, we must develop some love for our country. Much as there are so many despicable things happening, Nigeria is our home and we must strive to make it habitable.

among the misplaced policies was the Udoji salary hike in the wake of the oil boom. This catastrophic salary increase and adjustment sparked the 1973 inflation and mass importation of food stuff, construction equipment, schools materials, unwanted medical facilities, luxurious items and general wares.

On the establishment of steel projects, beer breweries, motor vehicle assembly plants, the staging of FESTAC, Lagos roads and bridges, development of airports and seaports, the purchase of aircrafts and balloon projects, I would stress that these were a waste of money because the nation was not yet ripe for such gigantic projects at the time of their execution. They could be aptly described as a reckless diversion of the nations scarce fund into grandiose schemes.

Except for the development of federal capital territory of Abuja which was envisaged or projected for completion in fifteen years from the time it was started and some few roads and bridges throughout the federation as well as other essential industries, these projects were overly ambitious.

Successive governments of the country therefore, must share the blame for poor planning and reckless utilization of the nation's scarce resources. Permit me to disagree with those Nigerians who solely blame the civilian administration for wrecking the Nigerian economy. I say this because out of the 28 years of our independence, civilian administrators have ruled for only nine years while the military has been in power for nineteen years. Of the nine years that civilians governed this country, five were during the first republic i.e. from October 1960 to January 1966.

Both the military and civilian administrators must share the brunt of the criticism for poor leadership. Indeed, at the time the military handed over power to the civilian administration in October, 1979, the national treasury was not only

empty but huge debts had been accumulated by the previous administration. This made things very difficult for incoming civilian government to live. Unfortunately, the civilian government of the second republic were equally reckless in their spending. It is thus ironical that the military men in Al especially in Nigeria always blame civilians each time they intend to con power. Regretably however, at the end of their administration, they always perform a catastrophe or below that of the civilian government they have overthrown.

However, the present administration which inherited this sad burden is determined to improve the situation. I explain why despite the difficulties they launched MAMSER and DFR which I hope will perform to justify its establishment. Their objective is to rhetorically to improve the well-being of the common man. This effort will however, be futile if some measures are taken. First and foremost, we must develop some love for our country. Much as there are so many despicable things happening, Nigeria is our home and must strive to make it habitable. An attitude of always blaming, cursing and instigating the nation does not serve the interest. Americans, British and French are proud of their nations. We must develop that love and pride to our country.

Secondly, there is a sharp dichotomy between what our leaders preach and what they do. The maxim seems to be what I say not what I do. Otherwise, how can we explain the fact that those who preach probity, integrity and honesty are in the forefront of some nefarious deals. How can we explain the prevalence of corrupt deals with the complicity of leaders.

We should also develop efficient management skills, work harder and plan carefully. More than anything else, we should manifest more honesty and sincerity in all our dealings.

(Alhaji Bukar Fe'rol, 1st Vice President, Borno State Chamber of Commerce & Managing Director, Marghi Enterprises Limited, P.M.B. 1073, Maiduguri, a Veteran Journalist)

# Jesse Jackson Made Me Miss My Flight

By Shola Oyedele

My host lives in that part of Lagos where taxis are not easy to come by. I thus had to get ready very early in the morning to avoid missing my flight. Before 7.00 a.m. my host came to the visitor's room to inform me he was leaving for the office. He asked his houseboy to provide me with breakfast.

But before he finally left, he said, "You may wait for your breakfast at the sitting room. As a matter of fact, I would like you to watch this recording. I assure you, you will never be the same again". Trust journalists, the instinct to caution oneself, to refuse to believe anything until all the facts are revealed and be dispassionate is always present. I thus took his assurance with a pinch of salt though I did not say so.

He slotted the video tape in the machine and the colour television's 24-inch screen came alive with a close-up of Rev. Jesse Jackson, the black Democrat presidential aspirant and civil rights leader. I did not have the time to wonder what my host would want me to see on Jackson. I knew history has thrown him up as the first black presidential candidate in the United States of America. I knew he stood shoulder to shoulder with Michael Dukakis to clinch the Democrat presidential nomination. I knew the latter had beaten him to it. I knew 'white supremacy' has denied him of being nominated for the Vice-Presidency also. So what new thing would my host want me to know about the reverend gentleman?

Before I could relay these thoughts, Jackson bellowed: "My right and my privilege to stand here before you has been won in my life time by the blood and the sweat of the innocent". It was the beginning of an address at the National Convention of the Democrats at Atlanta, Georgia. I immediately remembered the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, the murderous organisation that swore to see to the extinction of blacks in America; the struggle of blacks in diaspora towards gaining socio-political and constitutional recognition in the societies where history has placed them; then the attempt on the life of Jesse Jackson himself dur-

ing the Presidential campaigns.

As if reading my thoughts, he went on to say: "Many were lost in the struggle for the right to vote. Jimmy Lee Jackson, a young student, gave his life. Viola Liuzzo, a white mother from Detroit, called nigger lover, brains blown out at point-blank range. Schwener, Goodman and Chaney, two Jews and a black, found in a common grave, riddled with bullets in Mississippi. The four darling little girls blown up in the church in Birmingham, Alabama. They died that we might live". At this point, my eyes became misty.

Jackson continued, "Dr. Martin Luther King lies only a few miles from us. Tonight he must feel good as he looks down upon us. We sit together, a rainbow. The sons and daughters of slave-masters and the sons and daughters of slaves sitting together around a common



Jackson: "keep hope alive."

table, to decide the direction of our party and our country." At this my moist eyes became dry again.

Rev. Jackson went on to forcefully argue on how the different strata of the American society could evolve a common ground for the higher ground of profound economic, social and political achievements. He drew the analogy between his pet postulation, the abstract, and Jerusalem, the physical. Because Jerusalem was an "intersection where many trails met", it became the birth

place of three great religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The village "provided a cross road where different people, different civilizations could meet and find a common ground".

After a thunderous ovation, Jackson, as articulate as usual, continued by saluting his fellow contestant for Democrat nomination, Mike Dukakis. According to Jackson, Dukakis had "run a well-managed and dignified campaign". He praised him for not condescending to demagoguery. "I have watched a good mind fast at work, with steel nerves, guiding his campaign ...without appeal to the worst in us". Pointing out the differences between them, he said "Mike Dukakis' parents were a doctor and a teacher. My parents were a maid and a janitor. There is a great gap between Brookline, Massachusetts and Hancey street in Green-ville, South Carolina. He studied law. I studied theology. His foreparents came to America on immigrant ships. My foreparents came to America on slave ships. But whatever the original ships, we are now in the same boat".

Then the articulate Jackson expounded on Reaganomics, the economic principle of the American government that gave too much money to the rich and too little to the poor because it believed the poor had too much money. He also touched South Africa, showing utter disgust with apartheid by referring to it as a terrorist state. He also expressed his belief that "we can have peace in Central America" and Middle East; that Namibia should be free from imperialistic shackles. He reiterated his commitment, and that of his party to total support for the front-line states in their struggle against South Africa. He did not forget to mention the danger of drugs. He looked forward to a time when doctors would work in the interest of "public health" rather than "private wealth".

Then he roared, "My work to keep America strong and make America better is ancient and endless, we can win. When I stand tonight, it has a meaning to

*Continued on Page 28*

# Nigeria's Geopolitical Landscape...

The editorial at page 3 of the *National Concord* issue of 15th August, 1988, on the proposed political arrangements for Nigeria is dangerous to the extent that it confirms a north-south dichotomy: the symptom has been mistaken for the disease which, basically is politico-religious-military in character. The important thing is to take advantage of our cultural relations.

First, the Igbo-speaking people on both sides of the Niger in the south demonstrated the cultural affinity between east and west in the south during the civil war. Second, the Idah people north of the Niger have similar affinity with Ika-Igbo

who also have similar connection with the east. Third, the Kanuri people have Gombo facial marks, the same as some Yoruba people: from the Kanuri in Borno who say that the Yoruba are their 'lost brothers' to the Tiv in Plateau noted for the 'Adire' cloth material used on important occasions to the Okene and Ilorin people who complete the connection between the north and west. And what about the real north-east and north central?

Sokoto and Kano which represent the spiritual and commercial centres may be dissimilar in some ways but they have so much in common. The old Ilorin prov-

ince which shares a common border with Sokoto also shares with the latter same cultural affinity. Where then comes the eventual north-south political arrangement? It was an army colonel (the Ikemba) who said that "the best soldiers have no imagination".

The right and obvious solution is to dwell upon our common cultural characteristics and use our productive forces to forge a citadel of democracy which monopolistic religious or military political power can undo. When there are several possible solutions, "the right one is probably the most obvious".

## ...Towards The Definition of Religion

No matter the despair confronting an individual or nation, however hopeless it may seem, all religions testify to the fact that "no evil befalls without his knowledge, but as believers we are supposed to take it manfully without any hopeless despair" - page 70 of "tenets of Islam" by Nurudeen O. Alao, A.A. Allaaya and Abubakar Gimba. The booklet was launched at the NIA Lecture Hall on Saturday, the 13th of August, 1988 where I bought a copy.

I would have loved to have been invited to the launching which was scheduled to be attended by Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki and Alhaji Gambo the Inspector-General of Police. On Sunday, the 7th August, 1988, I was privileged to attend, without invitation, the induction of the Primate of the Cherubin and Seraphim Paradise Church of Nigeria, a service which Alhaji Lateef K. Jakande attended and his surrogate read the lesson.

As we journey back to God, it is impor-

tant to reflect at this particular time that most important booklet Tenets of Islam; in addition to the above quotation the second quotation reads:-

"Any Hadith not in consonance with the spirit of the Holy Qur'an ought to be examined".

It only remains for me to add.

1) Let all other religions re-examine their doctrines on a continuing basis;  
11) "Allah knows Best".

Articles by S.O. W.

### Jesse Jackson

Those who are down, those who are tired and bent. Don't give up. Hold on for the morning comes. You can make it if you try. At this point, the audience have been transformed in a frenzy of cheering, waving banners, bunting and flags. Jackson paused and waited for the ovation to subside. When it did, he asked "How do I know? and provided an answer by relating his life history. "You see Jesse Jackson on television, but you don't know the me that makes me me. Jesse Jackson is my third name. I am adopted. I never spent a night in my daddy's house. I really do understand". Before that he had said "I am the son of a teenage mother, who was the daughter of a silver mother. I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth but a shovel in my hand. Born in my mother's bed. She couldn't afford hospital care. My mother

was a working mother, went to work with rags in her stockings so that I could have new socks and not be embarrassed at school. I really understand. We didn't eat there o'clock on Thanks Giving Day, because momma was off cooking some one else's turkey. We'd play football to pass the time till momma came home. Around eight we would meet her at the bottom of the hill, carrying back the leftovers from Ms Marshall's table. I really do understand".

The story was really touching, to say the least. Just then the camera focussed on some of Jackson's audience among who was former President Jimmy Carter. Many wore tear-stained faces while many more dabbed their tears with handkerchiefs. Jackson read the mood and lifted his voice, "Hold your head high! Stick your chest out! You can make it! Hold on, the morning comes.

Suffering breeds character, character breeds faith, and in the end faith will disappoint.....keep hope alive!

The standing ovation as Jackson rounded off with these words of encouragement cannot be described. Some went to the swell of emotion in their arms waving frantically. Jackson was hugged, congratulated and kissed.

At the end of the speech, I discovered that my breakfast had been brought and taken. Who took the breakfast? I was the only one in the room. It was me; but I was so engrossed I ate my breakfast absentmindedly. Next I looked at my watch and discovered I had only about fifteen minutes to get to the airport. I silently prayed the plane would be late in taking off and rushed to the airport. The plane had left. I remembered my host's word: "You will never be the same again". Yes, really!

# Typhoid Fever

By P.B.D. Audu

## Introduction

The recent surge in the diagnosis of this disease in the Kaduna metropolis and its environs has been accompanied by an increase in public awareness of the existence of the disease. Sadly, the public has remained more or less ignorant about the nature and the consequences of the disease. This article hopes to educate readers by shedding some light on the subject.

Typhoid fever is an illness caused by a germ, called salmonella typhi. Its source in a community is invariably either a person suffering from the disease, and excreting the germs in his stools, or a chronic carrier who may or may not have had the active disease in the past, but is shedding germs, via his faeces, into the environment. Infection is acquired when contaminated food or water is consumed. Because heat destroys the germs, uncooked foods like salads and unspiced milk are often incriminated.

The germs enter the mouth and travel to the small intestine, in whose wall they multiply. From this focus, they may spread to the rest of the body and create havoc.

## Symptoms and Signs

The chief complaints early in the illness are high fever, abdominal pain and discomfort, and vomiting. There may be accompanying diarrhoea, with frequent passage of stools which are watery and may contain mucus. Less often, constipation is the complaint. In this case, faeces is well formed but the bowels are opened less regularly than per previous habits. General body weakness, joint and muscle aches and pains may abound. By the end of the first week of illness, if untreated, the patient looks very sick and moribund.

## Complications

If untreated, the disease may be overcome by the body's natural defense processes, usually over a period of a few weeks. If this does not happen, progres-

sion of the ailment may lead to severe and sometimes fatal consequences. Since the walls of the intestines are affected, the latter may perforate. Unless urgent medical attention is given, death may ensue through overwhelming infection (peritonitis) or through excessive loss of blood, from the site of the rupture.

"Typhoid psychosis" is a recognised clinical entity, where patients with symptoms. May respond to imaginary voices of imaginary people by talking to himself.

He becomes convinced that people around him, who are in fact, trying to help him, are conspiring to do him harm. In return, he may attack them. Medical personnel have often fallen victim to these so-called delusions of self persecution.

Other complications may result from spread of the germs to organs such as the liver, bone or brain.

## Diagnosis.

Usually, the complaints with which the patient comes, and the findings on clinic examination, suffice, to make a diagnosis of typhoid fever. The much talked about "typhoid blood test" (actually known as "widal's test") is an immunological test, with the following basis: in response to infection by germs, the body - over a period of days to weeks - produces a certain substance to destroy the germ. The level of this "antibody" can be measured, and if it is extremely high, active infection is inferred. The widal's test has often been used to diagnose typhoid in patients with other ailments; this is because, certain flaws of the test are not taken into consideration. For example, those individuals who had typhoid fever in the not-too-distant past will still have an elevated antibody level. A widal's test might thus be interpreted as positive when the patient's pending problem is anything but typhoid fever. The test may also be negative, in people who have typhoid fever, but are yet to begin producing sufficient quantity of

antibody. It is therefore suggested that serial readings of the test are used. If the antibody level is found to be rising steeply, then the diagnosis of typhoid fever can safely be made.

Of all tests available, the most conclusive is a "blood culture". In this test, the germ is demonstrated microscopically in the blood. Thus there is little room for doubting the diagnosis.

## Treatment

Adequate dosage of appropriate antibiotics as prescribed by the doctor, usually bring about clinical cure of the disease within seven days, but treatment must be continued for a minimum of fourteen. The psychiatric complications mentioned above, usually subside after antibiotic treatment. Special "antipsychotic" drugs may be used to control the psychiatric symptoms during the early stages of the disease. Perforation of the intestine requires urgent surgery, especially when associated bleeding is copious.

## Prevention

An individual can take a few simple measures to complement the meagre efforts of the health authorities, in preventing outbreaks of typhoid fever:-

1. Obtain your drinking water from a clean source. Tap water suffice, it may be boiled and filtered as an added safeguard.
  2. Wash your vegetables thoroughly before preparing your salads. If you grow your own cabbage, carrots and lettuce in your backyard, don't use human faeces as manure.
  3. Wash your hand thoroughly before and after eating and using the toilet. Discourage defaecation near water sources, like wells.
  4. Finally, 3 doses of the vaccine TAB given at intervals of 4 weeks, then one year, provides long term protection from typhoid fever for you and your family.
- Dr P.B.D. Audu is now with Savannah Polyclinic, Box 56, Zaria.

## Keke

Na wayas-o, if man no die from hungry, "express" go quench im life. Once upon one time, one Dornier oga who are an engineer returned to his papa's land - Nigeria, from *Amrica* to serve the nation in Dornier Nigeria Limited Liability Company. Mr. *Amrica* was lodged in a hotel as accommodation was in scarcity. Mr. *Amrica* got bored one bedeviled weekend and went to *shak* (drink heavily) *kain-kain* (local gin) in 'Honey moon' *abi* 'Sweet Sixteen' restaurant some where in town. (You know these 'sun-rise', 'moon-shine' and 'baby cool' chopping parlours are most efficient in selling strong spirits). Any way-o, Mr. *Amrica* was not drink. Na so he talk, but it didn't seem his *krokro* eyes were neat when he hopped on a *keke* (motobike) to convey him to his *gida* (house). Oya-o, zoo-o-o-m, and off they skidded along Dawaki Road, Kaduna. They were very close to Mr. *Amrico's* *uno* (house) when at Sultan Road junction along Dawaki Road, *keke* man bumped into multiple broken tars. Kpiki-Kpiki went 'express'. Mr. *Amrica's* borom also danced *akuete* on the passenger seat as the *keke* tossed up his bottom up, down, up, down. The jigida dance caused by the gallops caused *Amrico* to *sumer-sault* from his passenger seat, and, *kpum!* *Gbos!* he tumbled and laid *postrate* on the *hanya* (road). His cat-like waist was *sprained*. No be joke o. Meanwhile, *keke* driver thought *Americana* was still sitting tight and, *zoom!* he sped off having passed the bumps. One good Samaritan came along about two *minis* after later, watched *Amrico* on the ground and saw that *Amrico* was not an armed robber faking fall. *Amrico's* bottom bones, plus face, knee, elbows were all sore, sore. His shirt and trouser *nko?* Ah! trouser *tia* for front, but small *sha*. Se you get? Mr. good helped *Amrica* na to a clinic and later to house. *Keke* nian did not come back-o, where? *Amrico* did not see *Keke* leak light. *Express* man may have feared what looked like a mysterious appearance of his midnight passenger. You know *blackman* and *superstition*. Some time *sef*, *Keke* man would tell village *peoples* say he carried *dracula*

or ghost, not knowing that poor passenger for *don go meet Chineke* in heaven in that fall. Life in Nigeria is too *kpakoish* (hard). Small time now, you'll need to be *hyena* to survive.

## "Public Toilet"

*Olodumare!* Checkout another *harzadous*, catastrophic, calamitous, shamefulness fall of the century!! It was Monday, September 12, in the year *nineteen hundred and eighty-eight* at 11.20 a.m. in morning break of day light. I slapped into the Central Market, Kaduna to buy *ncha* (soap). I was on my way to Kawo. So, I stood by Broadcasting Road near Malali car park where many *destitutes* reside, waiting for a bus heading to



Kawo. If you are know this corner I am talk so, close to where large posters are sold, you will picture better what I am about to *tory*. This corner is best described as a *public toilet*. People freely, comfortably, *merily* stoop along the road peeing or *shaiting* in a way it looks like they are begging passers-by to look and snap their black, yellow, fat, thin and bony bottoms. The corner eh? oozes *pathetically*. Swams of *ijiji* (flies) do the *bonfire* dance around countless heaps of *faeces*, both *shaits* that have caked up from the sun and new ones freshly contributed by running stomachs and normal stomachs. A splash of the gutter's stagnant bubbling black water can maim your nose for life. When you stand at this corner, you must do 'eyes front' unless

you do not want to eat for months. (Sorry for the digression). Any way *sha*, one gentle man in sparkling white caftan stood waiting for a Kawo-based bus too. Soon a rickety-SAP-bus came crackling along. Kao, Kao, Kao, the filthy conductor spat out into the air. Passenger started surging forward. I dey look there *Ijus tando* (waited) there because I didn't feel like being compressed *sam-sam* (all) or forced to smell an ampit or teeth not washed for decades. Then the black gentle man in snow-white caftan moved to get in. SI-u-u-sh! went his white slippers which he unknowingly dug into a cake of yellow faeces. Gbam! He was flung into the garbade of wet dung via the smelly gutter, before he seriously crashed on the dung, his right leg was lost in the gutter full of indescribable stinking water. As he finally fell his leg splashed this water on himself and some people around. Yuk! I looked away. But you know eyes always go where you haven't sent them. So, I looked back. *Che!* *Che!* *Che!!!* He was a sight! His white slipper plastered with ugly *shait*, his shite, o! let me save you the trouble. It was like what was scooped out of a latrine bucket. (Are you irritated? Thank your God you did not see it live!) Quick, quick, one time, left, right, left, right, like a mad *doggie-doggie* he matched home. Who for carry am? Not even the rickety-SAP-bus. I just hope he dug his body in bleach and acid to be clean. To *bathe* (bathe) in assorted human, animal *shait* plus urine, plus spittle, plus rotten vegetable wastes, *kai, walahi!* is not what should happen to a dog not to talk of a human being. Dokita, admit him o. Cancer and plant and toxic waste must grow from his body.

## Lotion

Eh hen! Them have started manufacturing face creams and skin lotion in Europe with *embrayo* stored in the freezer. That's right! Everything, them go use to make cosmetics for woman. One day, we shall rub this *kain* lotion for face and the face will melt or it will completely *commot* from the head. *Walahi!* God has been very kind to technology. So *tay* he dey look as man *de use* *unborn pikin* to make *Ude* (pomade).

# Law, Morality and Religion in a Secular State (I)

By Yahaya Mahmood

I have never called for the introduction of Sharia law for Muslims without calling for Customary law or Christian law for Christians. I am more concerned with the development of the law for posterity. So that we can one day come up with a body of law that can be referred to as the Nigerian Common Law.

There are three groups of Nigerians I know, who share three different views about the Sharia. There are those in the group I belong, who think that giving Shari'a the status of a state law (and not just a customary law) is a right to Muslims and not a privilege. Just as giving the Customary law a similar status; who believe that enacting the English type of Matrimonial Causes Act is just a codification of Christian marriage and giving it the status of a State Law; who believe that giving full effect to the provision of S.35 of the 1979 Constitution will in any way affect non-Muslims. And failing to give effect to it is hypocrisy and unconstitutional. That every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the freedom to manifest and propagate one's religion or belief in worship, teaching and practice and observance is a fundamental right. But we also share the view that at this stage it (Shariah) should apply to all civil matters only where all the parties are Muslims, or where they submit or choose Islamic law to govern the relationship. And that the present Area and Shariah courts need proper reform and orientation before the system is fully introduced.

The second group are also Muslims who are more concerned with political gain of saying that the Shariah must either be introduced or there will be trouble. In the third group are some non-Muslims who for no reason other than politics say that if Shariah is introduced, then Nigeria is no longer a secular state. The former who I believe are very few, can, with little patience, control their intolerance, and be a little more objective. The latter, who are very few and equally vocal and threatening, should appreciate the fact that secularism, itself,

is a Christian doctrine which seeks to separate that which is God's, with that which is Jesus's.

The title of this article is a book edited by Basil Mitchell, a professor of Philosophy of the Christian Religion in the University of Oxford. It was published by Oxford University Press in 1970. The book was based upon the Edward Cadbury Lectures delivered at the University of Birmingham in the spring of 1966. He said in the preface:

*"The question then arises whether the law can always be neutral where such differences are concerned; and, if not, how in a democratic society the content of the law in matters of controversy should be determined. Since much of the traditional morality of our own society has been deeply influenced by Christianity, and the law with it, the role of religion cannot be left out of account. Hence it has been necessary, for purposes of illustration, to indicate what I take to be the Christian view on a number of moral questions, and this has inevitably involved some edogmatism and over-simplification. I do not want to prejudice issues about which Christian and other opinion is divided; only to question whether such issues can always be relegated to a 'private sphere.'"*

Section 10 of the 1979 Constitution states categorically that "the Govern-

**"Whether a man should be allowed to take more than one wife is something about which every society has to make up its mind one way or the other."**

ment of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion. How does the establishment of a Sharia Court at Federal level affect this provision? The answer depends on the group you belong. If you ask me, I will say, no way at all. If you ask someone in the third group he will tell you that public funds are being used to establish religious courts. He will forget that the official calendar we use is the 1988 after the death of Christ. That most of the English Common Laws imported into Nigeria are purely English ideals endorsed by English Churches and Courts.

The Matrimonial causes Decree 1977 is a Federal enactment. Every Nigerian has a right to choose to marry under the Decree. It is based on English Matrimonial Act on which Lord Deulin said;

*"Whether a man should be allowed to take more than one wife is something about which every society has to make up its mind one way or the other. In England, we believe in the Christian idea of marriage and therefore adopt monogamy as a moral principle. Consequently, the Christian institution of marriage has become the basis of family life and so part of the structure of our society. It is there not because it is Christian. It has got there because it is Christian, but it remains there because it is built into the house in which we live and could not be removed without bringing it down. The great majority of those who live in this country accept it because it is the Christian idea of marriage and for them that is only true one. But a non-Christian is bound by it, not because it is part of Christianity, but because, rightly or wrongly, it has been adopted by the society in which he lives."*

What stops Nigeria enacting as part of the Matrimonial Causes Act, Islamic and Customary concepts of marriage, and giving Area/Shariah and Customary Courts jurisdiction to hear petitions in such marriages. The fact will remain that a Muslim will go to Shariah Court to dissolve his marriage, a Christian will go to the High Court or the Customary Court. (To be concluded).

# The Social Capitalists

Socialism is a general term for the political and economic theory that advocates a system of collective or government ownership and management of the means of production, distribution and exchange of goods and services. Because of the collective nature of socialism it contrasts to the doctrine of the sanctity of private property that characterises capitalism. Where capitalism stresses competition and profit, socialism calls for cooperation and social service. Socialism arose in the late 18th and early 19th centuries as a reaction to the economic and social changes associated with the Industrial Revolution. While rapid wealth came to the factory owners, the workers became increasingly impoverished. They were underpaid and overworked and forced to live in shums.

In the 1840's the term communism came into use to denote a militant leftist form of socialism and Karl Marx and Engles used it to describe the movement that advocated class struggle and revolution to establish a society of cooperation. In 1848 Marx and Engles wrote the famous communist manifesto in which they set forth the principles of "scientific socialism", arguing the historical inevitability of revolutions conflict between capital and labour. In all of his works Marx attacked the *socialists as being theoretical utopian dreamers, who disregarded the absolute necessity of revolutionary struggle to implement their doctrines.*

How does the Nigerian "socialist" fit in the situation described above? Admittedly, Nigeria had undergone a sort of industrial revolution by establishment of import substitution industries such as textile mills and vehicle assembly plants almost all of which were initially owned by foreigners and still mainly controlled/managed by them. Trade unions sprang up, all over the

country to "challenge" capital and their number reduced to 42 and this number may be further cut to 19. In the universities there are academicians (lecturers and students) that style themselves "socialists" or "radicals", the best known being the group centred at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria - the so-called collective.

Does any of the so-called Nigerian socialists fit into the description of socialists as envisaged by Karl Marx and Engles in the 1840's. Has any of them engaged in class struggle and revolution to establish a socialist society in Nigeria? The answer is No, unless by "struggle" one refers to noise making in the press and radio. The Nigerian "Socialists" were what Marx and Engles dubbed as being "theoretical utopian dreamers, who disregarded the absolute necessity of revolutionary struggle to implement their doctrines. Most of them shout socialist slogans to attract attention of those that will assist them in feathering their nests. The late Chief Awolowo once said that the trouble with the Nigerian Leftists was that the moment they joined a political group, they started looking for avenues to line their pockets and before you can say Jack Robinson, they turned sharply from left to Right - 180 degrees turn. No wonder the Babangida administration shuns the socialists. I, Chief Rambler advise them to go back to school and learn the true tenets of their doctrine as preached and practised by Karl Marx and Lenin - Marxism-Leninism-which is now being thoroughly overhauled by Gorbachev, the General Secretary of Communist Party of the Soviet Union who introducing social capitalism into his country economic system.

Sai an jima,  
Yours Rambler.

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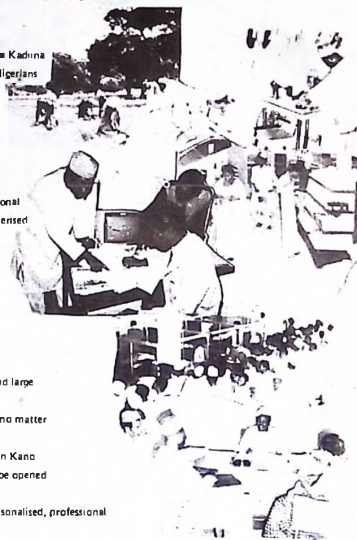
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*Hotline*

13 JUL 1990

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# Unmasking the Young Millionaire

When a man has achieved a certain level of renown or distinction in society, often, he becomes the cynosure of public attention. Such a man, whether he likes it or not, hardly can afford to lead a cloistered life. When he is not involved in one kind of controversy or the other, he is sure to be involved in some business engagements or to be involved in some social or public function.

A man of tremendous wealth can hardly be an obscure personality, even if he chooses to be. Social dynamics demand that he remains in the limelight. It cannot be otherwise.

To achieve renown is not easy. Neither is it a day's task. It is usually the product of the cumulative efforts of an individual, which, when it matures, is often seen by some to be a fluke and by others, as the result of hardwork. Nigeria is full with men of this calibre; men who achieved renown in their various callings and vocations.

Ahmed Muktar Mohammed a.k.a. Aruwa our lead cover choice, is one such man. Aruwa's story per se is not necessarily a peculiar one. It is the same old tale, a *grass to grace story*. Not many people are fascinated by this kind of stories anymore. But tarry a bit, there is a difference here. A myth attaches to this particular story. No one before now, has been able to unravel this myth. Many have tried. None succeeded.

In response to an avalanche of requests and letters on this issue, *Hotline* decided to take up the challenge. To do a thorough job, we divided ourselves into groups. Senior Staff Writer, Jude Okoye Ifodi, who anchored the story was in Lagos to chat with this "mystery" man. Reader, Ifeoma Ezieze and Staff Writer, Aminu Kado rummaged through the morgue and turned up useful pieces of information while I held series of talks with relations, friends and foes of the subject, in Kano and here in Kaduna where he was born and brought up.

I therefore have the pleasure to inform you, dear reader, that what we serve you in Aruwa's story is a collector's item, a refreshing package. It is indeed, unravelling the man that is Aruwa.

## Benue: A Den in Our Midst

It sounds like a fairy tale, but it is true: Benue is a state with tremendous difference. Endowed with vast arable land that is properly utilised in producing abundant food for the state, the people of Benue, despite this natural endowment, still swim in the rivers of rural poverty. Benue is a state with dense population; a people of pride and hardwork. But Benue State is yet to fully utilise its human resources to a reasonable level of development of the state. Benue State is a state of rich cultural heritage with beautiful music, variety of dances and marvellous artifacts. But Benue State is yet to refine this proud possessions to full global recognition. Benue State has promising human settlements; towns and villages needing just a little lift to become models of excellence. But Benue State still remains a no-city-state, except the capital town, Makurdi, i.e. which when considered by Nigeria's standards, is still a town. Benue is simply one state needing a messiah to pull it out of its natural and man-made problems; because even that capital town, Makurdi, still lacks necessities like town-service taxi's, good residential buildings, potable and regular water supply and constant power supply as well as telephone services. And many more. Will the current military governor of the state, Lt. Col. Fidelis Makka, turn out to be the expected messiah? This is the story of Benue State as never told. And the plight of its people and their governor.

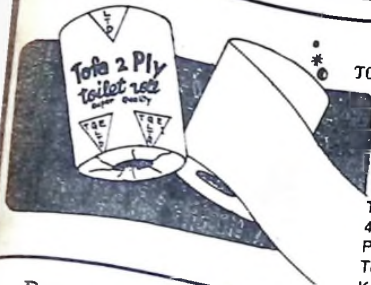
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## CONTENTS

	PAGES
Editorial Desk.....	1
Contents.....	3
Letters.....	4
Publisher's Corner .....	5
Commentary.....	9
<b>Cover I</b>	
BENUE.....	10
Reporter's Diary.....	16
<b>Cover Story II</b>	
ARUWA.....	17
ISLAM.....	31
Miscellany.....	35
Dillaliya.....	37
LIFE.....	38
Geology.....	40
Agriculture.....	41
HEALTH.....	42
Business/Economy.....	44
LAW.....	45
Women In Hotline.....	46
International.....	47
Police Affairs.....	48

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## REFLECTION



"Security Forces in Lagos have reportedly discovered another operational base of last Sunday's botched coup plotters after an intensive investigation into their activities."

- *The Punch*, 30th April 1990

IT will behove Maradona to seek more for the hidden roots of that rebellion. Perhaps even those currently organising strikes and otherwise being unruly at work should be scrutinised more closely. Like stray bulleters, all the stray plotters or their sympathisers could yet pull another coup on the nation. The nation should beware.

## OVERHEARD

*Kaduna is a wonderful place if you know your way around. In fact, it is the best city in this country. Most people like it because it is the one place that is home away from home. In fact, we find that it is sweeter than home, because home is where you go and confront all sorts of controversy and raise dust and Kaduna is where you come to cool off in anonymous peace.*

- Major-Gen. Yar'adua (Rtd) (Speaking to a friend)

# Dear Reader...

Very much against our wish, again, *Hotline's* cover price has changed. Enough has been said about the sky-rocketing prices of printing materials that we need not to bother you, dear reader, with all the stories about that. So bear with us on this current Ten Naira (N10) cover price, at least till the economy improves. Thank you for your continued patronage.

-Management.

## LETTERS

### 'Godfather for the President?'

In as much as it can be said that the North has been until very recently, a strong united and viable entity it must normally be accepted that the strength, unity and leadership role of the North in politics are attributable to the influence of Islam.

It is worth mentioning that your writings all along seem to be directed towards expressing undue regional chauvinism which in actual sense is but a pretence just a disguise within the North itself. Coming by prevailing situation in the country, of which your magazine has been a very active analyst, it will no longer be easy to ride on the mythical 'One North, One People' political horseback to power again.

Abba Dawda,  
College of Education,  
Sorgo, Zaria.

\*\*\*

I read your cover story titled 'Godfather for Mr. President?' *Hotline*, February 26, 1990. I thought that the eleventh paragraph should have read that "And the Muslims too who are not left behind in financial activities such as the Mambina killings and burning of churches and looting in Kano, Maiduguri, Jos, Yola and Kaduna respectively."

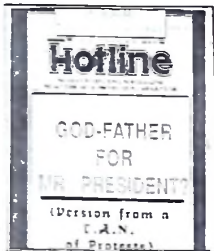
Muhammad Zakiyau,  
Yola.

### Of Religion and Regional Politics

I am a regular reader of *Hotline*, and I wish to express my disapproval of the plunge of your magazine into the very depths of regional, religious and ethnic politics. There is no gain saying that such political dialogues ingrained in ethnic and religious chauvinism, are counter productive and against the corporate interest of all.

The unfortunate and regrettable bond of some individuals refusing to outgrow the obsolete political methods of the first and second Republics or the political activities and statements of some religious leaders motivated by selfish reasons and who are more concerned with the promo-

tion of elite interests, should never tempt a civilised press to degenerate into the abysmal mentality or understanding of such individuals. In your bid to establish the true position of things on such issues, you need to be more careful as to your methods and language to avoid, inadvertently, sowing the seeds of discord. I think that truly patriotic Nigerians ought to pursue and foster the unity and progress of our country as a nation and not sectional unity or progress. A sincere effort intended to resolve the conflict of interests in a society, is not supported to create other complex conflicts in the



process. It is wise for all who are committed to the process of nation-building to cautiously guard against such mistakes in the interest of all.

Abdullahi C. Nwagwu  
Famana, Katsina State.

### Federal Character

It was appalling reading the letters in your February issue sent in by readers who feel the Federal Character column should be stopped because "it has done and is still doing an incalculable harm to the society" especially among the youth.

It is disressing that they want the column cancelled when none of them could stand and accuse it of publishing false facts.

I am of the opinion that the column should be continued because we can't discard facts for lies, rumours and hearsay as everybody is entitled to the truth. If some do not want it, others do. Salvation lies in saying the truth at all times without fear or favour and no matter the

1990

For as the late Sardauna said "The greatest weapon is truth".

Abdulsalam Mohammed

Ungwar-Rimi G.R.A., Kaduna.

### Version from a C.A.N. of Protest

Your article on CAN's unnecessary protests is very timely. This shows how ready CAN is to destabilise this great country of ours. Thank God the Muslims are a peace loving people, if not, this country would have been through another war—a religious war. But no matter what CAN says, through any means, it will never move any Muslim to action. As Muslims are enlightened, civilised and tolerant, they will never be threatened by CAN's utterances.

Haruna A. Ahmed,  
U.D.M.H., Sokoto.

### North: Still Disliked by the Misguided

It is honestly an interesting and revealing piece. It brought out clearly the seething internal conflicts in the monolithic entity that is the North.

However, I will like to correct the grossly erroneous and misleading impression (created by the piece) that Ningi in Bauchi State is a predominantly non-muslim area and an ally of southern politicians.

In this wise therefore, I implore you to peruse into history and literature and you will come out with those facts, that Ningi as a LGA has over 90% (ninety percent) Muslim population; and a LGA that has never been the domain of any southern political party.

I would also like to seize this opportunity, through this medium, to call on Hudahuda Publishing Company, Zaria, publishers of the book "AHMADU BELLO: SARDAUNA OF SOKOTO" to make amends with regard to a similar expression made in the book.

Sule Habu,  
NACE, Katsina State

Reactions to our stories, which must be brief and precise, should be sent to *Hotline Letters*, P.O. Box 1265, Kaduna. Letters are subject to editing.

# Tribute To A Soldier's Soldier

*We hoard our friends,  
As misers do their treasure.  
Of things granted by nature,  
Friendship is most valuable.*

I STOOD rooted, perplexed and transfixed to the spot as the impact of the sad and disturbing message sank in. My first reaction was one of shock. I didn't hear, no, it had to be somebody else; no, it certainly wasn't happening to me, it was incredible ... My uncomprehending senses were numbed with shock, but the reality stared me in the face. I just lost a gem of a friend, Lt. Col. Usman Kakanda Bello, the *Aide-de-Camp* to President Ibrahim Babangida, in the botched coup of April 22. A victim of occupational hazard and classical act of treachery, Usman Bello was shot dead by colleagues he trusted.

All leaders have aids; they constitute an indispensable part of their retinue of staff. They come in different shapes and sizes, varying in their loyalty to their masters, as in their ethics, priorities and perception of their duties. From the transparently honest, loyal, principled and courageous, to the treacherous, smooth, sweet talking, self serving opportunists and sycophants who litter all corridors of power. Sadly, there is a superfluity of this latter group in Dodan Barracks, and a manifest draught of the former.

Amidst this cesspool of routine iniquities, sycophancy and treachery, the few diligent, loyal and courageous officers like Col. Usman Bello must stand head and shoulders above the rest. He was a rare species. A refined and socially humble soldier of tremendous industry, though often hard when it comes to the ethics of his chosen career, he died the way he lived, in action and duty, doing what he knew best how to do, fighting for the cause he believed in. With his last breath he protected the President from his "friends" and enemies. History's hall of fame is dotted with heroes who laid down their lives that others may live. Col. Usman Bello's name is the most recent addition to this roll call of honour. May his sacrifice be appreciated for its worth and may Allah in his infinite mercy grant him eternal rest.

As for the trigger happy dissidents who perpetrated the bloody mayhem, they deserve no less than what they brought on others - death. Beyond this, there are crucial lessons to learn from the sort of carnage produced by those murderous demagogues. Apart from being a sad commentary on the state of our security services, it is the sort of treachery, a leader, no matter how resilient, should not witness twice. Granted, the uprising assumed the dimension it did because it was hatched, from

stories we heard, in conjunction with insiders, the very people entrusted with protecting the President. It is precisely for that reason that someone close enough to the powers should have sensed the danger. It is indeed a worrisome spectre for a regime that prides itself in an efficient; reliable and dependable security network to have been taken so much unawares. How on earth did the planning, troop mobilisation and execution escape the eagle eyed, hawkish security apparatus? Where were the intelligence whizkids, the self acclaimed coup busters and security lords?

Unless adequate and convincing explanation is given, the nation will regard them as woeful failures. Which means to give them another opportunity to fail will probably mean an extremely suicidal affair. The ever increasing complexity of our contemporary security predicaments demand that inept, inexperienced intelligence personnel should recognise themselves for what they actually are, a moribund and archaic lot with a penchant for wasting valuable time on irrelevant, mundane issues, while antipopulist intrigues and heinous adventurism are hatched under their noses. No spirited defence could shield them from ineptitude, complicity or negligence if they fail to convince the nation on why they left even the President so susceptible at an hour of extreme danger. If they are men of honour they should tender their prompt resignation. For once, admirers and detractors of the President, not the least the innocent victims of the affair seem to be in unison: The security system is overdue for an overhaul. The time is now!

Usman, may you live in perfect peace and for us your friends we are proud to have had a patriotic, courageous friend whom we can raise our heads high to be identified with. Even in death.

## Lest We Forget

*Mohammed Haruna's piece on the April 22nd coup, 1990, today, Sunday April 29, 1990 titled The Black Sunday makes an interesting reading. I am even more particularly interested in his views on our slain friend, actually a brother, Lt. Col. Usman K. Bello. It is no doubt a good appraisal of Usman's sterling qualities as a person and as a soldier. However, there are few places with semantic circus in the write-up that nearly betrayed the motive which if it is true could amount to biting the finger that fed the author (Mohammed Haruna).*



Alhaji Hassan Sani Kontogoro  
(Magaji Rafi).

## Orkar's Journey To Madness: This We Believe

WHEN day dawned on Sunday April 22, 1990, Nigerians woke up in the embrace of uncertainty, confounded by the lone voice of the national radio intermittently announcing the birth of a bizarre "revolution." In Third World parlance, the event was quickly identified as a *coup d'etat* and in Nigeria, the eighth of such occurrences and the fourth unsuccessful attempt.

The mutiny involving junior military personnel led by one Major Gideon Gowon Orkar, claimed to be a "well conceived and executed revolution", a statement not without kindred in fallaciousness elsewhere in the proclamation broadcast where it was claimed that the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces was under effective arrest and even the dissidents have "commanded their Babangida and other government key officials trials for unabated corruption, mismanagement of national resources..." Such then was the lunatic vehemence and intensity with which the band of mutineers conducted their revolt, which came to an abrupt end twelve hours later, leaving behind many questions one of which we hasten to ask.

Is the Major Orkar mutiny a simple *coup d'etat* or was it a revolution as was claimed? For one, a revolution must have widespread followings; must have a broad support base; and above all must have identified champions and an articulate and articulated purpose. Clearly, therefore, Major Orkar's strike enjoyed none of these and the whole affair turned out distasteful and disgusting to the broad spectrum of Nigerian society. The consensus, of course, is that Nigerians are anxious for positive changes but ethnic chauvinism and sectional hatred compounded by secessionism, do not appear to be on any scale of preference. It is gratifying that Nigeria has come this far as a nation, to resist with uniform vehemence and outrage any move in this direction.

It is not untrue that some African countries still remain one huge scenario of political instability. From Cape Town to Cairo and from River Senegal to the very jaws of Victoria Falls, scenes of political intrigues are constantly being played out, sometimes at too great a cost. Indeed some African nations and governments are yet to devise a formula that would ensure a peaceful change of government. Most states have turned fascists and their leaders too despotic while even some of those states with democratic pretensions have become little more than a pseudo-democracy in which an oligarchy (usually from one ethnic base) operating on a one party state lords it over

the rest of the population. Some really sore cases border on the disgusting, involving as they do bloody fraternal slaughtering among the nation's populace. Nigeria of today is a lucky state, blessed with a leader whose major concern is to build a buoyant tomorrow for today's generation; whose programmes appear a little harsh but are doubtlessly necessary if Nigeria has to move on the much desired path of national development. What misguided critics, the Orkars of our time, fail to understand is, there is no development in this world without a little price for it.

Talking of African countries, Sudan and Ethiopia, two drought-stricken and impoverished African countries will suffice here as examples. Sudan for instance is one country where the level of internal political strife has reached such a crescendo as to be almost unbearable. From the days of the iron-fisted rule of Ja'afar El Nimeiry to date, this big central African country of Sudan has been embattled with serious internal upheavals in which the fear of ethnic domination occupies the centre-stage. Up till today, Sudan is still battling with this problem; the problem of who dominates the country, the North or the South.

Ethiopia is another country that presents a pathetic picture. From the time the militant regime of Col Mengistu Haile Meriam dispatched the imperial rule of Emperor Haile Salessie in 1974, this poor and economically backward nation has known no peace. Apart from confronting the ravages of drought, hunger and disease Ethiopia, for many years running now, has been prosecuting a war against Eritrea, a tiny (fisher folk) community on the northern fringes of the country who feel their total marginalisation from the scheme of things. Ethiopia was no longer condonable, hence their unyielding bid to secede from the rest of the country.

Short of admitting the failure of his government improve the social, political and economic lot of his people, Col. Mengistu, in the wake of the socio-economic political changes now gripping Eastern Europe and other parts of the world, recently announced changes the ideological thrust of his government in order to seem to be moving with the changing times. But all Ethiopia is a classic case of a country that has refused to recognise and accept changes that are inevitable. In spite of her lean resources, Ethiopia is heedlessly prosecuting a war whose cost in terms of human and material sources is colossal. What is more, it is a war that nobly

## COMMENTARY

seems to be winning. But Ethiopia is not alone in this folly, and Ethiopia's case is merely a palpable illustration of what is happening in the rest of Africa.

For fact of sheer enormity alone, however, the Sunday April 22, 1990 attempted *Coup d'etat* in Nigeria led by a Major Gideon Orkar "on behalf of Middle-Belt and South", will pose subject matter for national rumination, for a long time to come. But even of much more significance to the corporate entity Nigeria, is the newly manifested public attitude to national political affairs, especially those concerning the military.

At the same time that Major Orkar was "headboying" his puerile attack and wanton carnage at Dodan Barracks, Nigerians from every imaginable section of this country were indifferent to the news bits on the affair that trickled in on the radio. The pervasive feeling was that it was after all a military affair. It was reported that life went on unhindered in most places in Lagos, even near important military locations. From all the states of the federation, the initial reports were of a calm and indifferent populace. Even the rank and file of soldiers themselves were unmoved. While the Orkar Gang was being routed, however, (and this operation lasted till 1.18 p.m. of that day), a newspaper correspondent at the scene described Dodan Barracks as "donning a confounding calmness, appearing much like the seat of a government beset with a military revolt." Col. Chris Garuba, Commander, Corps of Artillery and former governor of Bauchi State led government forces in the shooting exercise, while Lt General Sani Abacha, Chief of Army Staff and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, headed the routing operation.

But it was only after the mayhem had quieted on that Sunday afternoon, that the ire of the nation was roused. Major Orkar's little stage *joke* had claimed in its trail an unspecified number of lives, (it is officially described as the bloodiest in the nation's history) and wreaked extensive damage to especially Dodan Barrack buildings. The whole attack got so close to its target (the President), that the President's *Aide De Camp* and exemplary patriot, Lt. Col Usman Kakanda Bello, lost his life in active duty, safeguarding his very important charge. Two days later, the compounds of Dodan Barracks were still liberally littered with empty bullet shells.

Although the ferociousness and blood-thirsty nature of the Orkar mutiny horrified the public, what shocked everyone were the reasons for the aborted revolt, broadcast on Radio Nigeria (FRCN), Lagos, that Sunday.

The general attitudes expressed by members of the public to the mutineers attempt at seizing power were two: outright laughter, or sheer incredulity. Now, supposing that "revolutionary" assault had succeeded and a new regime along the line of the 'Revolution Statement'

were formed and Nigerians asked, so, how and when the people of "the middle belt and southern parts of this country" meet and resolve to change things. What then?

The point is that if the intended *revolution* was the collective decision (as it purports) of the people of the middle belt states and those south of the Niger, then it may well be a legitimate resolution, binding on the rest of this country. But was it? And if it were, would the "revolutionaries" have resorted to carnage and sectional violence, even before trying available constitutional means?

Clearly then, the Orkar mutiny is a gross mischief and a trifling with national destiny. Indeed, the more the implications of that mutiny sink in, the more fortunate this nation seemed to have fared by the kind intervention of fate, which the country surely deserves, at least at that time when it was going simultaneously through the combined religious celebrations of Ramadan and Easter.

Furthermore, we note that national exhilaration over the prompt suppression of the uprising is not totally unconnected with the realisation by Nigerians that IBE's government is, at least for now, a necessity if this country intends to remain as a corporate entity with a common goal of national development. Lately, neither government nor the people of this country have said that things were really as good or the going as easy as they could have wished. But in moments of national trials, wishes alone cannot override the need for tolerance, which happily enough is still the watchword of millions of Nigerians who are patriotically willing to sweat out the mercurial forces of SAP. Though General Ibrahim Babangida may not have entirely sold the SAP package to Nigerians, yet it is clear that no objective critic in this country now thinks any other military government will perform remarkably better than this one.

Of course it was an occurrence that cannot be discounted easily, proving there was some national anxiety that attended the question of the President's safety on that Sunday of the operation. In the week immediately following it, there were much congratulations and thankfulness among Nigerians. All these being an indication that Nigerians prefer their President alive and well as against the insinuations of the so-called revolutionaries.

Of every particular concern to us at *Hotline* is that the attempted *coup d'etat* may have sown a very poignant and dramatic seed for further national discord. Here, it is enough challenge to our nationhood that any group of elite Nigerians would want to literally divide the country, by force of arms and against the popular wish. The rebellion has succeeded in making one section of the population view the other with suspicion and who knows for how long this feeling will linger and where its conse-

## COMMENTARY

quences will end? In this sense, the attempted military push is too enormous in scope to be labelled a coup d'état: it was a brazen secessionist move, and right at the time that most people assumed the search was on for the stability of greater Nigeria. For, we are in complete agreement with analysis of experts who are of the opinion that had the attempt succeeded, then it was likely to be followed by another senseless civil war. In any case, it would have tantamounted to a declaration of war on certain peoples of Nigeria. Perhaps, the National Council for National Awareness, NCNA statement summed up the whole argument: "No group of people could organise a coup in Nigeria based on tribal sentiment and selfishness and expect to succeed".

We believe that Nigeria has a lot to stay together for, and the possibilities of the Federation are well-near infinite—considering the industry of the East, the commerce of the West and the agriculture and political capabilities of the North. If the genetic determination of all is harnessed, then all the conditions for viable 21st century nationhood, and beyond, exist. And in dispassionate fact, no one can even say of any one state in the Nigerian federation that it contributes more than the others to the national wealth. There are simply no indices to show that Plateau or Benue States, for instance, are more productive than say Kano or Borno States. For example, whereas Bauchi State generates as much as about 60% of its annual revenue internally, Benue State depends for as much as the same percentage of its revenue from the Federation account, which is to show the low level of economic activity in the state. And yet nobody complained that because Benue does not contribute much, it still gets its due share. Granted that one may accept even an ignorant argument that the oil-producing states now contribute so much to the revenue of the nation. But one may hasten to ask that before petroleum assumed the dimension of Nigeria's economic mainstay, from where did the country get all the resources that kept the nation buoyant till the discovery of the oil? In the same light, even a non-expert knows that oil is not a permanent, not even a long-lasting resource commodity. The day our oil (cheats!) runs out, where would Nigeria fall back in getting substitute resource items? From whose hides and skins from whose cotton and groundnuts and indeed other agricultural products. From the oil states?

Still on a comparative note, despite Bauchi State's economic contribution, what has been its share of very top military ranking? What has been that of Borno State? To our knowledge, Bauchi State has more of its indigenes as even a first-star general in any of the military forces. The same thing can be said of Borno State. Will Borno, or any of the NCNA's Benue states, do anything such as engage in the

military hierarchy of Nigeria? Such disadvantaged states of the so-called core North (others prefer to call it northern North) have not asked heavens to fall because of this seeming lack of privilege. For any one section to want to divide the country on the pretext of an unfair revenue allocation formula based on "derivational" argument which in itself is mischievously over-blown, is therefore, only a reflection of selfish motivations. Nigeria is not just the biggest black nation on earth; it ought to remain the one proof that the Black man can organise himself in great big formations. If the process is begun now to divide the country, what hopes are there ever for the pan-African union of our dreams? And this in a world that is moving fast towards reunification and the elimination of national barriers. By 1992 when it is hoped that a Third Republic will be born in Nigeria, the European continent would have been well on the way to a United States of Europe, and the two Germanys to one nation, and the two Koreas, a united country.

It is because of this that we at *Hotline* believe that NOW is the time to begin to tackle this problem of political instability resulting from misplaced fear of ethnic domination and national unity. We believe that we cannot conquer these problems by pretending that they do not exist. The fear of ethnic domination in our body politic is one problem that demands urgent and permanent solution. A veritable and pragmatic programme of activities should therefore be designed in order to educate those misguided skeptics on such dangerous fears and suspicions, especially protagonists of a so-called minority groups in our midst. Perhaps, the day Nigeria insist on religiously applying a formula based on quota system then Nigeria will know who should open his mouth loud enough and cry against the existent scheme of things in sectors of our national life.

The present situation in the country therefore, represents the dawn of a new and eye-opening consciousness: the consciousness that peace in this nation would continue to be elusive for as long as a section there believes, rightly or wrongly, cheated and marginalised. This is why the Federal Government should look beyond what is apparent and search for what is fundamental in lessons we are bound to learn by this recent flash madness. To search for and destroy the roots of the smouldering discontents, no matter how minute, or and for all, is a duty which we owe not only to ourselves but to posterity. We no longer can afford to condone a tradition of senseless slaying of our fellow compatriots on the grounds of some perceived grievances.

Far, therefore, from treating the recent abortive or attempt as an organised attempt by a section of the country to destabilise the nation, government should

## COMMENTARY

approach the matter with caution and objectivity, refraining from acts of vendetta against indigenes of the so-called Middle Belt and the South. After all, we do not believe that voices of a few misguided and drunken fellows is a true representative voice of either their majority ethnic brothers or even that of their regional compatriots. A good example is Nigeria's experience in the civil war where a few selfish Eastern elites dragged their fellow brothers into a war of destruction, the consequences of which we still shiver to think about. Government should realise that coup plotters in many a universal case, are not the true and authentic representatives or opinion leaders of their ethnic background or regional interests. Neither are they by any stretch of imagination, patriots.

**Hotline** condemns in its entirety, the actions and intentions of Major Orkar and his cohorts. We are firmly convinced that the dissidents were motivated by factors other than those of pure national interests and we are particularly appalled that the reasons given for their dastardly act could not possibly exist in the minds of sane and reasonable men. We regard their purported allegations as both infantile and asinine and we regard the men themselves as a bunch of rascals. That is why we believe that they must pay the full price for the gravity of their unfortunate and grisly action.

We shiver to think what could have befallen Nigeria had the coup plotters succeeded, God forbid, with their wish of eliminating Mr. President. Will the masses of this country sit and watch the flow of blood by trigger happy uniformed personnel? Will the military officers and even their civilian counterparts, especially those marked for a vicious attack sit and watch when brutal death knocks at their doors? Will those excised states simply sit and watch some people take away their sovereignty with a whim bearing an ethnic toga? Where could Nigeria have been today? More annoying is the plotters' windy speeches, placing childish and over-stretched accusations that lacked the least attempt to substantiate.

The decision of government to bring the April 22 mutineers to book in line with military ethos and discipline will be a highly welcome development, at least to serve as a lesson to those wishing to break the unity of the country into pieces. We wholly endorse this move not only because of our recognition of the fact that culprits and transgressors must be punished as a deterrent to others but also because of our unshakeable belief in the continued unity, peace and stability of this country. It is our firm conviction that no part of this country is greater than any other part or parts and as such, no part should constitute itself into a threat to the rest of the citizenry. And while the country is now busy looking at the problem of undisciplined soldiers as national security risks, the method of recruitment into the Nigerian Armed Forces should be scrutinised and over-hauled. The penchant for giving superior consideration to academic qualifications, beyond the more vital issue of individual

character should, in our mind, be reviewed.

As for some international implications of the *coup d'etat*, even without documented prove yet, it might not be too far-fetched to suppose that the Orkar Mutiny, even if executed by citizens, owes its inspiration, conception and sponsorship to foreign elements bent on causing destabilisation in Nigeria. Among the important results of a warring or unstable Nigeria is of course, the retardation of the decolonisation process in Africa and especially, the current recharged assault on the apartheid rule in South Africa. Not only this, Africa's attempt to launch itself on the path of development in this decade of the 90s, would have been effectively nipped in the bud, as Nigeria's *developing* posture and its spirited attempt at evolving a democracy will have been wound back by several decades. Of prime importance to the nation and to Africa is the continued existence of Nigeria as a nation now in genuine search of exemplary nationhood. Another result perhaps no less calamitous is that a lot of attention will also have been shifted from the more urgent trouble spots of the beleaguered Third world, especially places like Palestine for instance, where Israeli suppression and brutality are at their zenith, and close to a million Soviet Jews are billed for luxurious settlement in occupied territories this year alone.

Because of the irresponsibility of the whole affair, therefore, we can not advocate a policy of appeasing even the stark unreasonable as some media may imply by saying that the claims of the plotters ought to be scrutinised further! We do not demand that one interest be gratified at the expense of the others. All we are saying is that peace and sanity must be allowed to prevail; that all these senseless coups and counter coups must stop; that Nigerians generally are fed up with these coups especially since they have never really proved elixir to our problems.

The present administration in the country should take another hard and close look at the situation in the country; a situation which seems to make social upheavals inevitable. There are still stark evidences of corruption here and there. Several serving and ex-state chief executives have been indicted of glaring cases of abuse of office while many serving and retired military officers are known to lead scandalously opulent lives. The society itself is one with a sick social structure; with bribery and corruption permeating every fibre of our national life. These are issues that must be addressed.

We at **Hotline** have unqualified belief in good government as an antidote to civil unrests, and guided by the noble principles of equity and good conscience, such a government can never fail to carry the people along with it. It is only when too many people are suffering and too few people are enjoying that a state of tension exists. Nigeria is one country with a common suffering or common joy. Each may have his respective way of suffering or enjoying but the fact remains that a rose remains a rose by whatever name it is called.

# BENUE: Sketches Of A Den

By Bashir Bello Akko

The clouds that hovered round the horizon started to clear. The powerful rays of the sun had broken through the misty air and penetrated through the window louvres to announce to him that the morning was growing old. He stretched and yawned and lay flat on his luxury bed, gazing at the fashionable light hanging from the ceiling as if in it lied eternal salvation. Then the alarm clock began to ring to warn him that the time was going ahead of the morning's eight o'clock. His right hand made for the noisy clock and reached out to stop the ringing bell. He finally came out of bed and went through the rituals of the morning before starting late journey to the office to start the work of the day.

It was not so much of an eventful day, at least to a commissioner with his portfolio—going through the dailies, conferring occasionally with a few aides and then booking an appointment to see the military governor, Lt. Col. Fidelis Makka, for a not too important state matter. Meanwhile, the governor had just finished going through reports of the misdeeds of his Benue State Commissioner and had in-

ended taken a decision to relieve him of his post. The governor was not in a hurry to announce to the state this important decision and so waited till the hour of 10 pm. Five minutes ahead of three, the governor picked his casual pen and wrote on a neat memo sheet, a press release announcing the removal of the commissioner. He summoned an aide to give him the sealed envelope to deliver to Benue State Radio for its 5 o'clock evening news bulletin.

The aide was leaving the government house, the commissioner was coming to the government house in his chauffeur-driven official car, sitting comforta-

bly at the back seat and enjoying the cozy warmth of a government vehicle. He waited to see the governor, a waiting that did not yield fruit. As he was sitting down with every air of authority, waiting to see 'Oga', the air waves were busy announcing his removal from the executive council.

At the end of the wait, without seeing the governor, he ordered his driver to head for 'house' before his lunch went cold. Approaching his house he noticed an unusual crowd forming in front of his home. And behold when he came close

to a state, in a place called sand-sand. Because its paint was brown, the dirt was covered. Or at least made invisible. Two completed blocks of building and two opposite ones at various stages of completion, cycled by a low wall fence, are the most prominent features of the hotel. The rooms (they call them suites) are not, by hotel standards, spacious. But they are self-contained. The first block, containing only guest rooms, had functional air conditioners (or so we were told), but had no electricity to put them to use. The second block, housing the bar, a dance hall and only one guest room (where I lodged) had light but with no functional

air-conditioning system; the only air-conditioner in my room taking a new role of being a "sound system" that produces incoherent noise rather than some cool and purified air, when put on.

It was the day Nigeria was playing Zambia in the semi-finals of the last Africa Nations Cup at Algeria. Because we were on tour, we had selected Ankpa as the nearest town to us to spend that night, Monday 12th March, 1990. We were led to the "best hotel in town." I looked



Governor Makka: Surviving the miracles of Nigerian's 'Bermuda Triangle'

enough to his surprise, all the people were for him as sympathizers on the unfortunate news. This was how he got to know he was no longer a commissioner in Makka's cabinet. The first and only person to know that this commissioner was on the way out was Makka and Makka alone. Not even an aide or a typist knew that the commissioner was going, until when the news came on air for the citizens to know. In a political hot bed like Benue State, only an odd-style of administration can ensure effective control. For this is Benue, Nigeria's most puzzling state.

Now to my first impressions of the

for the sign-board bearing this Hotel's name. There was none. I asked about it and was told the hotel was called "Sand-sand." And truly, the environment was so sandy there couldn't have been a better name. I wanted to watch our Super-Eagles play. But no!, "Sand-sand" has no television set. It was time for dinner, and I and my colleagues were really hungry, but, no!, "Sand-sand" has no restaurant.

I moved in with my towel and tooth-brush into the toilet for a bath and a brush. Of course anybody cherishing cleanliness and hygiene will hardly enjoy a visit to this toilet. There was a bathe

## COVER STORY/BENUUE

and a water-closet (WC), but no sink for a brush. I took my mind away from the toilet and listened to the radio commentary of the football match which ended after 10 pm. We then set out in search of food to eat—even if it were tea and bread. It looked like the whole of Ankpa was already in bed, before eleven o'clock, for we could not see any living soul on the streets except well armed members of *vigilante* groups that harassed us with embarrassing questions. We resigned to hunger for the night, with rumbling stomachs, and started a new nocturnal fight with man-eating mosquitoes that all along had been rehearsing a parade of combat and a music of nuisance to the ears.

A memory of Ankpa is not necessarily the only image of Benue State, but Ankpa, like many settlements in its class, typifies the true state of Benue State. Bordering six (6) other states of the federation (Anambra, Cross River, Gongola, Plateau, Kwara and Bendel) and with an international boundary with the Cameroun Republic, Benue State is a vantage geographical location. With abundant fertile land, Benue is popularly referred to as Nigeria's food basket. And indeed Benue is an agricultural state.

The Tiv-land for instance, is a haven for yams. From Konshisha to Kwande, from Guma to Gwer, from Gboko to Ushongo, from Vandeikya to Katsina-Ala, every Tiv local government area gives yam cultivation a place of pride. For while Makurdi, Guma and Katsina-Ala local government areas double as zones of exceptional fish production (courtesy of Benue and Katsina-Ala rivers), the same three local governments, including others like Ushongo and Gboko, produce so much fruits, especially citrus (oranges) and mango that the fruit produce of that zone alone is enough to supply half the country.

Tivs, as the largest tribe of the state, are not only agriculturally-oriented; their cultural heritage, African in every respect, is no doubt one of the richest in modern Nigeria. In music and dance, the Tivs are perhaps second to none, especially when they start a near possessed ritual of their two most popular *Kwagh-hir* and *Swange* dances. The Tiv woman,

generally beautiful and industrious on the farms, and with an extra passion for cigars, is that typical African woman as a child-making machine and a domestic labourer.

Far away from the Tivs are of course the Igalas, Benue's second largest tribe. Having the largest share of sandy terrain, and with nature not being too kind on them as they remain plagued with natural disasters, prominent of which is soil erosion, the Igalas still remain dogged enough to eke out a living on their rains devastated farm-lands. As yams production is a passion in the state, no local government area of these people, from the newly created Olamaboro to the older ones of Idah and Dekina, Ankpa and Bassa, is left out of mass agricultural produce. And it is not yams alone these local governments boast of, but in palm oil and palm wine produce, and of course the hunting of game in search of the bush-meat, prominent of which are the grass-cutter and the antelope, the Igala land is unmatched by any standards.

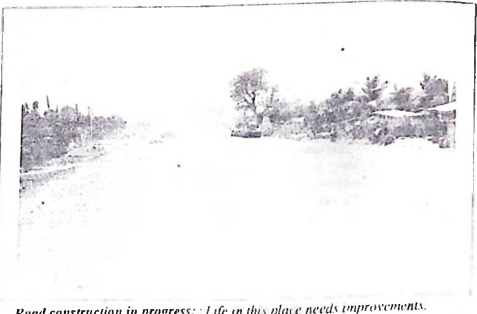
Next-door neighbours to the Igala's are the famous Idomas, whose manhood pride is in joining the armed forces. Being the third largest tribe in the state, Idomas appear to be the most tolerant people of state. As agricultural people in Benue State, yams production is a communal ritual with the Idomas. But beyond yams production is a culture of miscellaneous fruits and other foodstuff production. For instance, banana and plantain are virtually in excess produc-

tion, pineapple and cashew are not just products for leisure, while palm-wine and garri are no doubt in high commercial supply.

But these are not the only tribes of Benue State. And not the only foods Benue State produces. Smaller tribes, forming the minority political factor of the state are in abundance. With the Tivs: Guma and Makurdi local government areas share tribes of the neighbouring Plateau State, Katsina-Ala and Kwande local governments have with them the overlapping Jukuns of Gongola State, and in fact, Kwande even shares especially the Fulani tribes with the Cameroun Republic, while Vandeikya Local government has tribes with affinity to the neighbouring Cross River State.

The Idomas share their land most prominently with the Igedes, a tribe so interwoven with Idoma that the thin line of separation is virtually fading out. (In fact, the current traditional head of Idomaland, i.e. the Ochi 'Doma, Abraham Ajene Okpabi, is Igede by tribe.) While Oju L.G. area shares its land with tribes of neighbouring Cross River and the Igbos of Anambra State. All other local governments of this area, i.e. the newly created Ado and the older one of Okpokwu, and even the more interior one of Oturkpo, all have with them friendly Igbos as indigenes of the state.

The Bassa Kumo and the Bassa-Nges are the two most prominent minority tribes of the Igala land, although Idah and Olamaboro local governments share



Road construction in progress: Life in this place needs improvements.



Interior of New Makurdi Stadium Complex: Moving a step forward into modernity.

tribes with neighbouring Anambra and Bendel States.

All these minority tribes of Benue State, being so few individually, are often over shadowed in Benue scheme of things where the majority always have the way and the say. It is not that those smaller minority tribes are totally insignificant in Benue scheme of things, but the contention being more prominent among the three major tribes, whose intra-contention as guided by the majority-minority syndrome, is so powerful that all other things take secondary importance.

Benue State is not the only state embroiled with the conflict of minority-majority syndrome. Not almost all other states have similar affliction of tribal and sectional politics. What isolates Benue State's case however is the intensity which the conflict is often made to assume. For instance, its neighbouring state of Plateau has its share of sectional internal politics mainly between the upper and the lower tribes of the state. But Plateau State's internal politics is one guided more by patriotism of self-development or advancement at the expense of one another, whereas that of Benue State goes at least one step ahead of this to assume a bitter rivalry culminating in the suppression of one tribe by another.

It is jokingly stated that Benue is Nigeria's "Bermuda Triangle" in which no matter how powerful a leader is, this triangle will finally subdue him; the difference between these triangles being

while the actual Bermuda works on miracle, Benue's situation works on the real. In Governor Fidelis Makka's words, while addressing the state on the occasion of his first year in office as Benue State's Chief Executive, he stated: "when I was appointed the military governor of Benue State, many people sympathised with me. There was an avalanche of advice. I was told to be mindful of the Benue Triangle. I wondered what Benue Triangle was all about. On arrival at Makurdi, I noticed a triangle along Gboko road. So I said to myself this must be the dreaded triangle I have been advised to treat with caution. Later, I discovered that it was not the triangular field that was referred to as Benue Triangle, but the three major tribes in the state." The three major tribes being Tiv, Igala and Idoma respectively.

Benue State is a no-city state, comprising of only four major towns, namely, the state capital, Makurdi, the Tiv capital, Gboko, the Igala capital, Idah, and the Idoma capital, Otukpo. The state badly needs a city to reach to the standard of an ideal state. But while the lean resources of the state would not allow the upgrading of all these towns to the status of cities, tribal politics of the state is making it difficult, if not impossible, for any state administration to uplift one or two of these towns to a city status. Until, of course, the coming of the current governor, Lt. Col. Fidelis Makka to the state who is attempting to brave all odds in putting the state on the course of positive progress.

Firstly, Benue is a state of abundant human and agricultural resources. But untapped resources of a state, no matter how buoyant, remain a wasted wealth. The internal revenue generation drive of the state, despite all these resources, is pitifully small that it does not add up to total of forty per cent (40%) of the total income of the state. Which leaves it state basically with only the subvention accruing from the federal government. A state in this state is indeed a state of misery because even the federal government is not in a buoyant state as to release such needed subventions when and how much due.

It is often said that most privileged Benue indigenes prefer to go out of the state in utilising their talents or resource instead of staying back home and joining hands to take this potentially great state to enviable heights. And in so doing, the state is deprived of such valuable revenue base that can be harnessed and utilised for the betterment of the entire state. Advancing arguments on why the state is comparatively poor, some observers believe that it is merely a reflection of the general poverty that pervades the state from the urban settlements to the countryside. They further argued that Benue State is not fortunate with so many rich people as indigenes like some more fortunate states, examples being Kano or Imo States where their wealthy indigenes join hands with their respective governments in developing their states. They gave an example of how such wealthy indigenes construct roads on schools or health centres for their communities, free of charge, or give generous donations to their communities or governments for the overall welfare of their people.

To a large extent this could be true, but at times it is not just being wealthy that determines one's positive contribution to his state of origin. In most cases it is a matter of the heart and the reflection of unified front and collective resolution towards self-advancement. The case of Niger and Bauchi states is a good example where rural and urban poverty manifest, but out of such poverty emerges an individual or a group that show exceptional sacrifice to ally

## COVER STORY/BENUE

plight of the people. If the will-power is there, there are enough relatively wealthy Benue indigenes that can meaningfully contribute towards the general upliftment of the state.

As the saying goes, Rome was not built in a day. So it would be a tall ambition to expect Benue to just rise up one morning and find in its midst cities dotted with skyscrapers and such other facilities that make a human settlement modern. Development in each state normally comes in stages, in which case the sense in opportunity cost becomes the best option. Benue people generally see Makurdi as not their capital, but as a capital of a state they assume they are not part of. Even the Tivs who live closest to Makurdi still look at the town as an alien human settlement unbefitting of their state. Any capital that is not Gboko is not their Capital. In fact it is on record that some Benue indigenes even regard Makurdi as a Hausa town, having derived its name from the Hausa word *Maikudi* (which was later twisted by non-Hausa to *Makurdi*.) They even went to the extent of tracing the origins of Makurdi to a Hausa settlement that sprung on the bank of the Benue River due to fishing activities and marketing within the locality.

So when in late 1988, the state government proposed a 30 million Naira, fifteen kilometre dual carriage roads for Makurdi township to uplift its image as a state capital, enough protests and petitions greeted the decision, that made the government nearly abandon the project. As a near-disastrous concession, similar projects had to be approved for all the three ethnic headquarters, namely Gboko, Idah and Otukpo at the expense of more laudable and pressing budget programmes. The state government is yet to fully recover from this wide deficit of 9 million Naira extra budgetary expenditure.

The coming of Lt. Col. Fidelis Makka to Benue State was probably one thing Benue State had to contend with. Makka came to Benue a frightened governor, already being told of the complex nature of the state as well as being warned of the devastating powers of the Benue Tri-

angle. But the military part of him played its role and he pulled himself together to face the onerous task, discharging his assignment without fear or favour. First thing he did was to curtail the flow of malicious petitions into his office. And it became a law that anybody found engaging in baseless petition writing would stand dismissed provided he or she draws salaries from the government. To that extent sanity was instilled. Then the governor adopted a non-aligned posture to segments of the state. Anybody, from his commissioners downwards, that is found wanting in his duty was summarily dismissed, a dismissal often heard first on the air like that of his commissioner earlier referred to in this write-up.

But what do you do with a state without a capital, a befitting capital? What do you do to a people who allow ethnic rivalry to degenerate to a level of near enmity, which by extension constantly widens the gap of disunity, when unity is the badly needed pivot for a meaningful progress? Makurdi is a state capital, but today Makurdi and indeed the whole of Benue State, cannot boast of even a single recognised town service taxi. If you are at Makurdi, a whole state capital, or any part of Benue State you must learn how to move about in town without the comfort of a town service taxi. To compound issues, there are many places in town, like the G.R.A. where buses do not ply at all, and the few motorcycles on 'express' service are so scarce that one may stay a whole day without catching a

single one. And this is not a fairy-tale.

When Makka came to Benue State Makurdi had virtually no vital township roads. Then he started with the controversial fifteen kilometres dual carriage roads, fully fitted with street lights for a state capital. That was accomplished with grumbling from some indigenes. Then came the question of commissioners' village, a settlement area prepared homes to all top government functionaries of the state, including police and armed forces personnel like the air officer, Air tactical command, Makurdi, and the state police commissioner. But the village was constructed without access roads which made living in those quarters rather unbearable. It was a state for the beautiful edifices locked in an area that you reach with tears. So the governor awarded a contract for rescuing the VIPs settlement which was undertaken amidst loud protests from those who regarded it as a wastage. That was late October 1989.

From the commissioners' quarters the governor discovered the necessity to open up other locked-up vital areas of the state as well as opening up link-roads to divert traffic away from congested spots. So a contract was awarded for a road link Makurdi - Aliade road with Otukpo road that passes by the provincial headquarters in Makurdi. A place like Radio Benue, hitherto housed in a small enclosure, and without any reasonable access road was rescued by the governor. A contract was then awarded



Unknown soldier at Makurdi Square: A wanted edifice for today and tomorrow.



*Benue Hotel: At last a sleeping place for visitors.*

awarded for a befitting office complex, and another contract for a road linking the radio house with Otukpo road was awarded, being the only link road to or from the radio station.

Since Benue State was created in 1976, its state capital had no befitting place for public functions including national celebrations like those of independence and children's day. On such occasions, make-shift structures would be hurriedly erected at Government College's football pitch, Makurdi, to serve as a temporary public square. People are then left to hang around, standing, without shade, for as long as the event lasted.

The governor viewed such absence of a public square as a state embarrassment and as such ordered for the construction of a befitting multi-purpose public square, currently in the final stages of completion. In fact the President of the nation, General Ibrahim Badamasi Abangida was hosted to a public reception in the same venue, named after him (Abangida Square) during his last visit to the state. Of course critics had a field day condemning both the radio and public square projects as wasteful ventures and as examples of embezzlement of state resources.

The radio house office complex, it was said, was built at a cost much higher than that of a political party office, which remains bigger than the radio office complex. But the state has reacted, dismissing such a comment as baseless, and as such saw it as only of the ignorant or the mischie-

vous. They indicated that building office complex of a radio house entails special constructions like the news room which are often coated with sound-proof materials and heavy lighting system as well as studios that are specially built to accommodate the heavy gadgets and equipment normally installed in such buildings.

Another problem Makka found out on assuming office in Benue State was lack of even a single standard hotel, not just in the state capital, but virtually all over the state. The gigantic Makurdi Sheraton Hotel project has been abandoned for years at an advanced stage of completion. The proposed state hotel was merely on paper with no attempt to make it a reality. So he commissioned the singer turned businessman, Bongus Ikwue, to go ahead and construct a standard hotel for the state which is completed and was commissioned on the 4th of November, 1989. Benue Hotel is now a reality in the 4-star category and placed under the management of Nigeria Hotels Limited.

Makka also found that despite Benue being a sporting state with a very significant national impact in especially football and basketball, not a single standard stadium exists in the state capital. And with international matches coming to the state, the governor found the need for a standard stadium complex imperative. So he commissioned a company, Solel Boneh, to construct a standard stadium at the sports centre on College Road, Makurdi. The complex is now virtually

completed and with it, the dualization of the same college road to give the environment a befitting image. It was not just college road that needed reconstruction, but even the road leading to the state secretariat needed a befitting rehabilitation, a need translated into action by the award of contract to tar the road.

From public utilities, the governor also came to the rescue of the prominent academic institutions of the state. For instance, the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, could not move to its permanent site because it had no money to pay compensation claims on its new site. Makka came with a large heart and donated 15 million Naira to the university which finally enabled it to settle the prominent compensation claims, and has since moved to the new site. Even the College of Agriculture, Yandev, was battling with acute accommodation problems for its students till Governor Makka came in with a 3 million Naira grant for the completion of its student hostels.

Benue is a state without industries. In fact the whole state can boast of only one major industry, Benue Cement Company (BCC) of Gboko, at least until the newly established Taraku Mills, at Taraku in Gwer local government. To consolidate the state's share capital in BCC, in preparation of its proposed privatisation, Governor Makka released 8.5 million Naira for buying shares in the company. Also, Governor Makka invited a Korean team to come and study the possibility of setting up cottage industries for the state. Negotiations are now at an advanced stage towards this programme.

But most importantly, an expanse of land off Ankpa road was carved out and is now enjoying fast infrastructural development to serve as the industrial layout of the state. Already, access roads have been constructed linking portions of the layout while efforts are at advanced stage for providing the layout with adequate water supply and constant electricity supply. Some of the incentives offered to prospective investors are: free land and supply of all necessary infrastructures. Already, the governor had demolished the old Makurdi market sited on the bank of River Benue and

moved the traders to a new market complex off Anka road.

Rural areas have not been left behind by Governor Makka's new approach to Benue State. For instance, 8 million Naira was released to the rural development agency for sinking 100 bore-holes in rural communities of the state. Also, health centres were planned and constructed in phases for all the local government headquarters and other needy communities of the state. The State Directorate of Foods, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) was invigorated, its leadership changed and made more dynamic and given the task of intensifying projects of rural development. Since the new leadership took over, all projects undertaken by the State DFRRI passed the standard set by the Federal DFRRI, particularly in areas of rural electrification and rural feeder roads.

But beyond the isolationist leadership style of the governor in which he lacks even a standard *aide-de-camp* (ADC), there are still problems the state government needs to solve. Firstly is the question of a revenue base which the state would do well to establish. As the governor himself pointed out in his first anniversary speech "Benue State is ... with vast resources but whose revenue drive is still not commensurate with the potentials." As the governor had identified "the activities of the revenue collectors" as one of the impediments in this direction, then the appropriate organ responsible for revenue collection should be made more dynamic and the activities

of fraudulent revenue collectors should be kept in check.

Secondly, the state needs to strive and achieve a reasonable measure of ethnic integration so that Benue would talk with one voice, act with one hand and aim for a common goal. Even the governor remains "disturbed by the frequency of land and boundary disputes and the resultant loss of lives or enmity that such controversies have caused between communities." As the governor indicated in that anniversary speech, "the main perpetrators of these occurrences are elites who spitefully spur the rural people to violence." There is no doubt a sense in what the governor stated that "no one is justified to spill human blood over land." Like what happened in a recent disturbance between the Tiv Communities of Gwer local government and the Idomas of Otukpo local government.

Thirdly, the state needs to intensify programmes of rural mobilisation towards embarking on self help projects by the respective communities. If the abundant resources of the state will be fully tapped and appropriately utilised, then Benue State should actually take the lead in rural wealth and its subsequent development. But even in its present underprivileged position, communities should strive to greatly sacrifice and donate to themselves the little they can afford towards communal projects. Its people should not wait till they are rich before initiating projects meant for its comfort.

In Benue State, water is a major problem in almost all the rural areas. A situ-

ation whereby villagers have to trek endless kilometres to fetch even the little water that can keep body and soul together is not a healthy one. Being one of the pillars of living, water to the rural communities should be on the priority list of the government.

Primary school education appears to be another neglected area. Most of the classrooms (if at all they exist in some areas) in rural primary schools are simply a sortid sight. The buildings, often thatched or at best built with mud, appear more like sties with no sitting benches or writing tables or even chalk and dusters and the likes, necessary for imparting knowledge. Benue State government should complement efforts of the Federal Government's National Commission for Primary Education in improving the outlook of its primary schools.

In the area of transportation, a state without a town service taxi in 20th century Nigeria is simply an unpardonable scandal. If the private sector is not interested in this segment of public transportation, then in the interim, the state government should move in. *Benue Links*, the state's mass transport agency should purchase and commission a few cars as town service taxis, while the state-government enters into a gradual negotiations with some wealthy state residents who need to convinced that there is a need for the sector to later take over from the government. If necessary, the government can dangle some incentives to those who may pioneer this programme in the private sector. Of course, Benue people should not forget he devastating effect of bush burnin, which appears to be eating away their aridant arable land.

Benue's symbol of strength is the lion, and the state is regarded as a den. In its fourteen (14) years of existence as a state, it has probably witnessed more military governors than any of its peers. In fact, Lt. Col. Fidelis Makka is the longest serving military governor of the state who it looks, has found a way of taming the lions. How long he will hover in the horizon of Nigeria's Bornu Triangle, how long he will remain in this den of the middle belt without being devoured by the human lions is still a political question.



Rural road without a bridge: Life in this place needs improvements

# See What Jokolo has Done to NASCON!

Rome was not built in a day is a saying which has long gained universal acceptance. But I would divert my attention from Rome and say that the National Salt Company of Nigeria (NASCON) Ijoko Ota was built in almost a "day." This assertion however is bound to raise eyebrows from among critics who do not believe in miracles. But hold your peace, meanwhile, by the time you finish reading this article, you may have cause to agree with me.

Prior to my March 3rd visit to the Company, I've never had as much as an insight into the salt company itself or its Sole Administrator, Major Mustapha Jokolo (Rtd.). I had arrived Ijoko Ota (which is about 20 minutes drive from Lagos) on the 3rd of March, prepared for my reports on the commissioning ceremony of the new complexes which was scheduled for that day. Right there at the gate I was made to understand that the ceremony had been postponed but that I could wait to see the 'Sole' (workers there refer to the sole administrator simply as 'Sole').

D-day: 6th March, 1990 was the day of the commissioning ceremony of the new administrative block, warehouse and creak rooms. This occasion, an epoch making event in the history of the company came at the nick of time, two years after the coming of Jokolo to take over this erstwhile heavily indebted salt company that was at the verge of total collapse. And you may agree with me that reviving such an ailing company not just to 'breaking-even' point but to a point of making fantastic profits, in just under two years, is indeed building Rome in almost one day.

The ceremony which had the Minister of Industries, Air Vice Marshal Muhammadu Yahaya as guest of honour, also attracted the Governors of Lagos and Ogun States include other men of timber and calibre (permission from Oga K.O.). *Good soup na money make am.* The tastily furnished ultra modern structures were constructed at astonishingly low rates. For instance, the administrative building with 24 offices, boardrooms, creak rooms and adequate washrooms was

constructed at the cost of N900,000. A modern and strong warehouse with 20,000 metric tone capacity of finished products was built at a cost of N950,000.

Upon inception in 1979, NASCON experienced a number of managerial problems which nearly grounded the company to a halt. The timely appointment of Major Mustapha Jokolo as the sole administrator of the company is a major step in the reactivation of the salt company. Major Jokolo, with the precision of a soldier, restored cordial relationship amongst the staff. This was evident from the fraternal way and manner I witnessed the senior, intermediate and junior workers of NASCON interact. Salt-tasting drinking water was a plague to the company before the present administration embarked on the construction of fresh water borehole with treatment and over head tanks which now meets the water requirements of the company. NASCON which never had a standard workshop, now flaunts an ultra

modern workshop for electrical and carpentry services. Suffice it therefore to say that Major Jokolo came, saw and conquered NASCON. The story of NASCON from grass to grace is the reward for putting a man worth his salt, in a salt company.

After going round the factory, I was convinced that modern manufacturing procedures and quality control measures are applied in the manufacturing of NASCON Salt. Its varieties include table salt, kitchen salt, butter and industrial salt. I was made to understand that the company in recognition of her excellence received the international award for quality and for the best trade name in 1988/89.

NASCON is undoubtedly taking the bull by the horn in improving the salt industry in Nigeria. I say more grease to your elbow (and of course more spare parts to your machines). Hoping that the sky will be your limit as you grow from strength to strength. Kudos.

## Nigerian Airways; Cause for Alarm

Murtala Muhammed Airport. Sunday 11th March, 1990. This day, the usual hustle bustle that often characterised this environment was absent. The first sign of trouble began when *yours truly* lost her ticket booklet right there at the airport! The only luck I had was that my boarding pass was still handy and after some interrogations by the airport officials I was finally checked into the aircraft Boeing 737. Ten minutes after take off a handful of the passengers were already snoring (I find it personally irritating sleeping on board an aircraft. Count me out!) then came the fasten your belt signal and "... ladies and gentlemen visibility is poor and the landing aid in Kaduna is under repairs, so we're taking you to Jos instead..." A few inaudible murmurs followed but fizzled out almost immediately. About fifteen minutes later, another "... ladies and gentlemen we are running short of fuel and cannot continue to Jos. We're going to the nearest airport - Abuja, and if the

situation in Kaduna doesn't improve, we'll fly you back to Lagos..." This was the climax. Panic took over and one could feel uneasiness in the way people hurried in and out of the washroom. (*Who said life no dey sweet?*)

When the aircraft finally landed at Abuja, the speed with which men of substance rushed out to join airport taxis rather than continue with the Flying Elephant (is it Eagle now?) was alarming. Trust Nigerians, the taxi drivers capitalized on the situation to make quick money (one hundred Naira per head from Abuja to Kaduna which normally would be N15). *Yours sincerely* was among the few who had the guts and courage to join the aircraft back to Kaduna after assurances that everything had been put in order.

Nigeria Airways please spare us future embarrassments by doing the necessary groundwork before carrying my countrymen in your Aircraft.

By Joyce Ifeoma Ezieze

# Man In The Mist

## (Aruwa's Rise From Grass To Grace)

By Bashir Bello Akko

His maternal kin know him as Ahmed Umar, the name his paternal half brothers bear, for they were born of a father named Malam Umar of Kontagora Road, Kaduna, a man whose hometown (village?) is still in the rumour mills, but who speculators prefer to trace his origins to a little village called Bebeji in Kano State. Bebeji is also the village of the famous Dantata family.

But the man changed his name — unknown then even to his immediate family members. He was in far-away America when from Ahmed Umar, he came to be known as Ahmed Muktar Mohammed. And even this name, Ahmed Muktar Mohammed, is ordered and re-ordered in various permutations by people, many people, who are yet to know which is the *first name* or the *middle name* or the *surname*.

His only name, popular and correctly called, is Ahmed Aruwa. And how did he get this popular alias, *Aruwa*? Nobody, not even Aruwa himself, it is suggested, could say with a fair degree of certainty. His peers and colleagues, those who grew up with him, insist that Ahmed Umar was nicknamed *Aruwa* (which in Hausa means *In the water* or *Of the water*) because of his youthful passion for water. At any of his leisure time, if Ahmed was not under the shower, bathing, then he must be at the river (Kaduna) or stream or pool, swimming. So whenever they sought for him, they were sure of finding him *near* or in some water — which earned him the name, *Aruwa*.

To some of his adversaries and rivals, those who claim knowledge of him right from their juvenile days, Ahmed Umar was a delinquent, always against the conventions of his time and taking solace from the maddening experiences of his formative days in drinking. And whenever he drank, people around used to

refer to him as *The man of the water* (because as a fashion then, beer was popularly called *water* in Hausa). As time went by, whether he drank or not, his popular name was simply *Aruwa*.

But Aruwa himself gave a different story. At the time of his birth, his mother went through labour alone, and delivered of him without the assistance or even the presence of anyone. It was only while giving him his first temporal bath that her sister came around and saw what

**Aruwa's hopes were to erase a past, a past of sorrowful experiences and unfortunate events. He wanted a clean and buoyant tomorrow that could wipe clean the tears of the past.**

happened. Because that child was in warm water, enjoying his bath, and because he had to wait for the seven traditional days before he could be given a proper name, she in the interim, nicknamed him (*child*) of the water, which is *Aruwa* in her native Hausa language. All these are hypotheses, hypotheses confirming Aruwa as a man in the mist right from the moment of birth.

It is not just Aruwa's name that is in the mist. No. Even his place of birth, some people insinuate, is a subject of controversy. In his mother's house at Karaye Road, Badarawa, Kaduna, relatives were positive Aruwa was born at Kano. In fact, his aunt, who is supposed to have given Ahmed the name Aruwa, in their words, actually witnessed this unusual birth at their Sabon-Gari area abode in Kano town. But Aruwa's brothers-in-

law gave a different story; that Aruwa's mother, Hajiya Fatimah Uwani, after getting divorced from Malam Umar of Kontagora Road, Kaduna, left for her hometown, Hadejia, with pregnancy. She stayed with her family to give birth to young Ahmed Umar, before finally getting married there at Hadejia to an Islamic scholar called Malam Hassan Hadejia.

Aruwa himself and some of his paternal half brothers, disagreed and insisted that the man was born actually at their Kontagora Road residence in Kaduna. In Aruwa's words "I have never even visited Hadejia before the age of twelve." Aruwa's mother is not forthcoming on telling *Hotline* Aruwa's true place of birth. In her opinion, as her aides made us to understand, "this is too trivial an issue to warrant a public debate... After all", an outspoken aide concluded "Aruwa was not born in outer space."

Assessed in an international currency like the dollar, Aruwa comfortably falls in the millionaire club. But in Naira and kobo, Ahmed Muktar Mohammed, is no doubt a billionaire. From a childhood of near penury and real suffering, the man grew out of grass to a graceful height. From a background of near poverty, the man, Aruwa, grew to an adulthood of super riches and international status. And perhaps, no aspect of his life has attracted greater controversy than the transition from a pauper of some sort to his present princely wealth which no doubt makes him larger than life.

In the rumour mills, often oiled those jealously distant from him, Aruwa is simply that Nigerian who woke up one morning, penniless, got through hard-drug business, and before the sunset, he was already swimming in millions of money. To people of this belief, it is no way a man of Aruwa's age and background could fall on so much wealth within so short a time by any legitimate

## PRELUDE TO COVER

or decent means. But will a man of such a dirty past really swim in the waters of freedom and security as Aruwa does today?

Yet to others more charitable in notions, Aruwa got his wealth through his American wife. The story they tell is that Aruwa was in America, mainly for a study programme. Then he met this American spinster, an only child to a rich but old American. They fell in love and started dating each other. As love advanced between them, death knocked on the door of the mortally sick American father of the spinster. The man died, leaving behind a vast fortune for his only child, Aruwa's girlfriend. So Aruwa's darling woke up to so much money and assets that comfortably qualified her for the millionaires' club. Being fond of Ahmed Umar, she was generous with a portion of her fortune to him.

Aruwa's hands in business are wonderful. In under one year, the story continued, Aruwa had ventured into businesses that tripled the money this American girl gave to him. Aruwa was not certain whether the money given to him was a gift or a trust for investment. So he took her the money and its fantastic interest. Aruwa to have tripled this amount in a short time must make him a business genius. She immediately recognised in him a business acumen unmatched in her experience. And coupled with her most sincere affection for him, she invited him to join her as a husband and a business associate to take control of her vast em- pire. This, according to them, was how Aruwa hit a gold-mine.

But how true are all these talks about Aruwa and the way he made his money? Understanding how Aruwa made his money could be traced to his youthful personality. Born in a polygamous family with many brothers and half brothers, Aruwa did not find life at that stage any easy. To compound issues, Aruwa's mother got divorced, leaving the young Aruwa in the care of foster motherhood. As a result, in such extended Hausa family, the brothers rivalry was more of an acceptable fashion which nearly subdued the very young Aruwa to a total life of blood brutality and despair. Aruwa even with the death of their father,

Aruwa's life in the Kontagora Road family house was anything but comfortable. To worsen his plight, his mother's attempt to secure her children's due share of inheritance from their late father's belongings, was beset with rancour, creating an *impasse* between her and Aruwa's other family members that finally led to a court case handled by an area court at Magajin Gari, Kaduna. This did not help relations between Aruwa and his half brothers, all of them living in the same house. She later found favour of squatting, in her cousin's house at Abubakar Kigo Road, Kaduna, who is Alhaji Hassan Hadejia, the famous Shettiman Hadejia, before his change of residence to Bakori Road, Kaduna.

But the unflattering experiences Aruwa encountered in his family house had apparent psychological impact or actually depression on him. He became hardened in life and something of a juvenile delinquent. Conventions to him became an obscure set of customs deserving little respect. He gave little attention to educational pursuits and sought solace in the glitter ways of youthful exuberance. This, of course, made him a target of constant scorn even from those he regarded as mentors.

Matters came to a head that Aruwa, believing in his ideals, stuck so much to them that he found it almost impossible to leave his family house to a kinder environment, not even to his uncle's house, Hassan Hadejia. He chose to remain in his family house, with all the sour events that could befall a fatherless child of an absentee mother. Bitter as those experiences were, Aruwa still found enough lessons in them to learn. He tried earning his living through various ways that never paid off, ways that sometimes even brought him face to face with the law.

Aruwa learnt the difficulties in easy survival. So he became pushful and smart. Even at that age, Aruwa's mode of dressing was something else; gayish and attractive. His smartness was almost phenomenal, enabling him fit into groups that were even above his social standing. Airforce was one unit Aruwa saw, smart and fashion crazy, that fitted into his world-view. So with an over-

powering passion for flying planes, he enlisted as a junior officer to realise a dream. But beyond the show-case, a fad in the Airforce, a source of fascination for many a young man, was a discipline and rigorous training, coupled with set conventions that taught Aruwa new lessons. But new lessons without an opportunity to learn how to fly planes was not Aruwa's priority in the airforce. Being a pilot was one opportunity the airforce denied him, so he opted out of the airforce to search for another means of realising his dream or atleast, to search for greener pastures.

Aruwa's hopes were to erase a past, a past of sorrowful experiences and unfortunate events. He wanted a clean and buoyant tomorrow that can wipe clean the tears of the past. So he got more determined to sweat for a living that would ensure a better tomorrow. He shuttled between Kaduna and Kano and Lagos to earn a living. And later left the country where he found wealth, abundant wealth of his dreams. And with this wealth an added resolution to remain as much as possible, unconventional.

Aruwa's dressing is unconventional, at least, by Nigerian standards. Or how else could a millionaire of his status often appear in public functions with a *cow-boy hat* and *monkey-jacket jeans*? Although Aruwa is a core capitalist (and he concurs to it without the least apology), yet in marriage he combines the two worlds of the West and East picking each from the left and from the right. Never married to a Nigerian or even an African, Aruwa enjoys the cold peace (not war) of an American wife, *Queen*, and a Romanian junior wife, *Laila*. With them, Aruwa is a proud father of three daughters, Jamila, Samira and Wahidatu, and an only son, El-Amin. At least on this aspect of his life, we have not found the man, Aruwa, so much in the mist.

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*In this prelude is a galaxy of rumours and speculations surrounding the man, Aruwa, and his life, which is well treated in the following pages of the story. This prelude is raising questions, questions that come from the people. And the story addresses itself to those questions, while the interview is the man's authoritative voice.*

# ARUWA

## Rising Profile of a Silent Millionaire

**A**hmed Muktar Mohammed (Aruwa) was not born with a silver spoon in the mouth. He was born, like most of us, in circumstances that could hardly be described as very special or very propitious. His father, Mallam Umar, with three wives and four sons before Muktar was born, a staff of the printing division, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Northern Nigeria had enough trouble maintaining his large family.

So at the time Muktar was born, there was no cause for any special or elaborate preparations. Indeed, no special gunshots heralded his arrival, nor were there any ceremonies or festivities to mark his birth. There were no special coats for the new-born baby, no colourfully displayed bunting, no orgies of merriment. Everything was perfectly normal; just as it used to be.

From this very humble origins, the young Muktar took his proper place among his peers. In Kaduna where he was born and brought up, he got immersed in activities and programmes that were in line with his humble estate. From Kaduna Junior Primary School (now the premises housing Fire Brigade by Ibrahim Taiwo Road), Kaduna, under the Headmastership of late Mallam Ibrahim Soba, he moved to Maiduguri Road Primary School also in Kaduna where his contemporaries included *Hotline* Publisher, Alhaji Hassan Sani Kontagora, Abdallah Hamman, Abbas Mu'azu and Audu a' Lagos just to mention a few. Those were good old days, he recalls.

As a growing youth, there was nothing eminently precocious about Muktar. He loved sports, played active football, was a good swimmer; just like his colleagues. Muktar was not particularly brilliant. He does not remember ever coming top of his class in their examinations nor was he ever a dullard. Ever. From those early days, he had always

managed, he recalled, to maintain, at least, an equilibrium position in whatever circumstance he found himself.

Always determined to succeed, Muktar had toiled late and early. Even without the benefit of a secondary school education, (his father had died while he was in the primary school) the young Muktar had managed through private studies to obtain O'level GCE papers. And when it was time for choosing a career, Muktar who had always nurtured a secret ambition for flying an aircraft, opted for a career with the Nigerian Airforce. Enlisting in the Airforce as a recruit, this still callow youth, came face to face, for the first time in his life, with regimented life. He therefore began to know the ropes adjusting to his new environment and new circumstances in no time.

He learnt to snap to attention to orders from his superiors. He learnt to observe the etiquettes and proprieties inherent in his new calling and he also learnt to keep away from the taboos.

Ungrudgingly, Muktar bided his time. Nevertheless, however much he tried to cope with his new job, he found out there was still that lack of fulfilment. Life in the airforce had, as yet, not been able to open the flood gate of his dreams. He had not proved the *open sesame* he envisaged. How otherwise could it be? After all, he had enlisted in the Airforce to learn how to fly. But here he was learning all manner of odd jobs like maintenance or servicing of an aircraft various other assortment of manual labour. But he was not destined to remain in this condition for too long.

The watershed of his career came in 1973. The Nigerian Airforce had conducted an examination to select qualified candidates for a training programme overseas. Among the list of successful candidates, of course, was Ahmed Muktar Mohammed. It was a big break the young man had been waiting for, an opportunity that would lead him on the road to realising his dreams. Seizing this golden opportunity,



*Determined to contribute my own quota.*

the young Muktar proved in this as well as in later events, that he was ready to make to allow a good opportunity slip by.

Arriving the United States of America in the summer of 1973, Muktar did not have any misgivings at all in seeing about his legitimate goal. But first he had to finish with his regular programme for which he was then enjoying a two-year scholarship under the auspices of the North Central State government of Nigeria. At the expiration of the two-year scholarship, Muktar had a problem renewing or updating his scholarship because North Central State government officials thought that the programme he was gunning for — flying — was more or less parochial and therefore not relevant to the government.

Muktar swallowed hard but he did not give up. He took up the matter with the Federal Government. And the Federal Government responded, favourably, with an enabling scholarship. The journey had begun. And by this time, Ahmed Muktar Mohammed had parted ways with the Nigerian Airforce. Thus he settled down, a private person, to pursue the one vocation that had been his burning passion — flying.

Leaving the shores of Nigeria for America at the time he did in 1973 could be said, without doubt, to have been the turning point in Muktar's life, in his initiation in his career. But being in America is one thing, he observed; making good use of the enormous opportunities that the America of those days held, another. Here again, Muktar was

frustrated with making the second momentous decision of his life. He had to choose between killing a prey to the seductive life he found in this great land of opportunities and settling down to distinguish himself in this same society where hard-work, dexterity and resourcefulness were sure to be rewarded. Not surprisingly, he settled for the latter. The reward was not immediate. But it did come, gradually but surely.

Combining his studies effectively with petty business, Muktar soon hit on a goldmine shunting between Nigeria and America buying and selling merchandise of every sort that appeared to have any profit potentials. Through reliable Nigerian friends and relations, Muktar first established a thriving business buying and selling watches as well as branching out into any other small time business that held the least promise. Since foreign exchange was then as he recalled, not a big deal in the country, he managed to accumulate quite a tidy sum which he re-invested or re-ploughed into other going ventures within the U.S.

Thus, before he was through with his piloting programme, Muktar had started enjoying the confidence and good graces of the mighty and the lowly, a situation which *Hotline* gathered was largely enhanced by Muktar's straightforwardness and business acumen. He was shortly to move in as a resident guest with Daniel George, a retired U.S. court judge who had been bewitched by the young man's steady charm besides having recognised in him, the makings of a successful businessman. It was at this

point that Muktar met with and married his American wife.

Growing up in America under Daniel George's roof and fatherly tutelage also proved to be a milestone in Muktar's career. Daniel George was like a father figure to him. And like his late father whom he remembers with effusive fondness, George exercised a reasonable influence over his life, enabling him to conduct himself in a worthy and becoming manner, "far from the maddening crowd." With George, Muktar was later to enter into some business relationship culminating in the incorporation of a company, *Afro-American International Co.* with head office in Miami U.S.A. Having bought George and other directors of this outfit out, this company now solely belongs to Muktar.

One success gradually led to another and within a short space of five years, Muktar has managed to establish a business empire with very strong international connections. Not only has he been able to maintain a very formidable clientele (some of whom he refuses to disclose their identities because of the security implications of their business) he has also managed to establish a business culture in which bureaucracy and red-tapism have no place. The result has been phenomenal.

From *Afro-American International Co.*, Muktar now sits astride four other U.S. based companies including *Protective Casualties Insurance Corporation*, *Nautical Engineering*, a Corporation that designs and manufactures boats, *Commercial Sand & Turf Co.*, from where the Nigerian counterpart derived its name as well as a Company, *United Air Charter*, operating charter flight services between Miami — Orlando — Atlanta and Charleston. This is not to mention his holdings or business interests in other countries around the world. In London for instance, his *TURBAY FARM* situated between Windsor and Maidenhead covers an area of land estimated to be about 100 acres.

Like a rolling stone, Muktar rolled from one business to another. Assured and always on the look out for that golden moment, he never less an opportunity to improve himself generally, especially his



Enormous opportunities in Nigeria

## COVER STORY/ ARUWA

financial capacity. He prospected. He invested. But unlike a rolling stone, he did gather some moss, lots of moss. Nevertheless, all these moss (business successes) could not deter him from pursuing his academic ambitions.

Having successfully completed his piloting programme at Burnside - OTT Aviation Training Centre, Miami, Florida, serving briefly with United Airlines, Muktar decided to break new grounds. This time, he took up another programme, Electronics Engineering at the McMaster University, also in Florida, USA, passing out later to face full time business. Since then, Muktar has been busy consolidating his gains as well as exploring new business possibilities.

Little was known about Aruwa before he left the country for America in 1973. He had neither a very distinguished background, a particularly inspiring public career nor a compelling academic records that would command attention. He left Nigeria, so to say, an ordinary person. So, when he returned to Nigeria a wealthy man, a very wealthy man, a lot of eyebrows were raised. Some people thought this sudden transformation, from grass to grace, was nothing short of a miracle, a mystery which no one has been able to fathom with definitive certitude. Yet, to others, it was just a stroke of good-luck. How did Aruwa make his money? Speculations have indeed been rife.

These speculations have been many and varied, and, have so far, defied a consensus of opinion. Some of these speculations link Aruwa's source of wealth to his American wife, some to underhand, shady deals like cocaine and foreign exchange transactions. Almost none of these speculations took into consideration, the man's own industry, enterprise and resourcefulness. *Hotline* took up Aruwa on this mystery.

Explaining the source of his wealth, Aruwa pointed out that in addition to being hardworking and honest, he enjoyed a singular opportunity of being a student-businessman, a situation which he observed, was made possible by the fact that he was not only enjoying government scholarship but was also living

in an apartment where he paid neither house rent nor any bill for that matter. This, he said, made it possible for him to save money and invest in some profitable ventures.

Critics and detractors of Aruwa have argued that the man's source of wealth is at best questionable. To these, Aruwa's explanations may well be a reincarnation of a scene from Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* or an encore from the fantastic accounts of Sinbad the sailor in the *Arabian Night Stories*. This may indeed be so. But there is no denying the fact that Aruwa's own story in spite of imputations to the contrary, sounds quite persuasive. However, isn't it natural, he rejoined, to expect a man who has managed to achieve a certain level of distinction in society to be the butt of many, the grudging millions who

that a man in his position should not expect to find favour in the eyes of all, pointing out that he wishes his adversaries well in spite of their unrelenting efforts to run him down.

Aruwa does not believe in publicising his charitable activities. He is a very discreet giver. And whatever he gives out, sources close to him revealed, he does so, not with a view to attracting public attention but because of his innate conviction that the society's needy deserve to be rehabilitated. Discreet as most of these charitable activities may be, *Hotline* gathered from inside sources that Aruwa at one time bought about 50 Peugeot cars of different models which he generously distributed among relations and cronies.

Other largess like N250,000 to the *Namibia Solidarity Fund*, including



Answering the people's call: Aruwa at a public function.

cannot lift their heads above sea level?

For the most part, Aruwa has indeed remained an enigma. To his friends, Aruwa is simply wonderful, good, loving and caring, an intelligent, determined, firm and dedicated business executive. To his enemies, the man is just a shark, haughty, dubious and profligate. But to his friends and foes alike, Aruwa has only goodwill. He may not have been familiar with the life and times of America's foremost statesman Abe Lincoln but like Abe Lincoln, his lodestar, he maintained, is "with malice towards none and charity for all." He told *Hotline*

scholarship to 10 Namibians to study hard-core science programmes, and N50,000 donation to Plateau Publishing Company Limited among many others cannot remain quite discreet because they were made at public functions.

Aruwa has indeed come a long way. From a rather insignificant beginning, he has managed to carve out a *niche* for himself, not as one of the nouveau-riche who cashed in on contract kick-backs or on the grafts and chicanery attendant upon high public office but as one of the few Nigerians who have established a solid financial base from outside

## COVER STORY/ ARUWA

country. Thus when he came home in 1977 to invest in Nigeria, it was, he said, with a determination to "contribute my own quota towards economic recovery and self reliance especially in farming and in promoting small-scale industries as well as in providing employment opportunities to many Nigerians."

That 1977 witnessed the birth of *Afro-American International Company*, a subsidiary of his U.S. based company which now deals in all sorts of communication equipment. At the time of its inception, its main job, consultancies with F.C.D.A. was collecting data with particular regards to communication and water projects. It was also involved with linking Lagos — Abuja — Minna and Kaduna by phone.

In 1981, *Allied Ranch Nigeria Limited* came into being. With its head office in the farm, kilometre 6 along Abuja Road, Kaduna, Allied Ranch was originally designed as a buffer, a kind of repatriation of profits made from other businesses which represent an investment.

*Hotline* investigations show that the farm has well over 1,000 heads of cattle and about 65 horses 45 of which are Argentine. There are also two dams. We also gather that the land cleared for maize and millet alone represents over 7,000 hectares while the farm boasts of such equipment as tractors, graders, borehole drilling machines and other kinds of farming implements which are sometimes given out on hire.

Allied Ranch also has a subsidiary farm in Nassarawa, Plateau State which was cleared in 1987. It is known as Grain Production Unit. Our findings indicate that this farm which is about 11,000 hectares, has yet another subsidiary in the Rice Cultivation Farm in Hadejia with 1,500 cleared hectares. According to a conservative estimate by estate valuers, Allied Ranch Nigeria Limited has a total asset of about N50 million with a staff strength of about 300 workers.

Besides the above mentioned business ventures, Aruwa has also made a mark in other capital investments like in the area of housing and landed properties. His family home in Kontagora Road, where his mother lives at Karaye



*Aruwa's protege: Ranchers Bees of Kaduna.*

Road, Badarawa in Kaduna, his private homes in Ikoyi, Lagos, at Rabah Close in Kaduna as well as in his farm in Kaduna not to mention the homes he maintains overseas, in America and United Kingdom are all edifices which add up to the making of the enigma called Aruwa. Speaking of his landed properties, he observed: "if I tell you how many houses I have, I will be lying. But most of these houses are occupied by my establishments and their staff except few such as the I.B.W.A. building in Kakuri, Kaduna."

Perhaps, the single most important factor that made Aruwa's name a household word in Nigeria especially the Northern parts of the country was Ranchers Bees, formerly known as D.I.C. Bees Football Club of Kaduna. By 1986, D.I.C. Bees officials and management were finding it increasingly difficult to financially manage and maintain the club. D.I.C. Bees was indeed tottering on the brink of a precipice. Until Aruwa arrived the scene. How did he do it? Said he: "I was out of the country at the time staying in London. One of my brothers telephoned to tell me that D.I.C. Bees was collapsing and needed to be resuscitated. He asked me to ensure that the club did not die. So I gave him the nod and the deal was sealed."

From 1987, when he bought over D.I.C. Bees which he renamed Ranchers Bees, this football club with about 45 paid staff including 30 players and 15 officials and staff, more or less a public

relations outfit for Allied Ranch, has been growing from strength to strength. Today, it is not only one of the most consistent club sides in the country, but also one whose remarkable impact has been felt across the continent culminating in the winning in 1989, of the WAFU cup besides other spirited attempts it had made at bringing home other continental trophies. Ranchers, many have argued, has given Aruwa an indelible name. True. But what most people do not seem to appreciate is that Aruwa single-handedly ensured the continued survival of the club. And not being solicitous about or obsessed with wanton publicity, has quietly kept in the background.

If Ranchers Bees has been a source of blessing and joy to Aruwa, the controversy surrounding the Commercial Trust Bank (CTB) which he (Aruwa) also founded has gone a reasonable length to mitigating that blessing and joy. The trouble had started when a few directors of the bank, principal among whom is Alhaji Musa Bello, had alleged that the sum of N5.9 million paid out by the bank at the instance of Ahmed Muktar Mohammed (Aruwa) was done without proper respect for bank rules and procedures governing such matters.

Alhaji Bello alleged that the manner in which the money was withdrawn (a loan meant for the procurement of a property, Trapco) was suspicious and therefore smacked of fraud.

Not even the collateral security provided by Allied Ranch in the form of

sure was not brought to bear on the managing director of the bank to release the fund. Consequent upon this, a battery of legal actions were instituted severally at the Kaduna High court and the Federal High Court, Lagos, in what most observers have come to see as the opening of a Pandora's box.

The core issue — allegations of financial impropriety or fraud against the person of the chairman/founder of the bank, Alhaji Muktar Ahmed Mohammed — which has in no way been established, also gave rise to a plethora of largely unsubstantiated reports and wild speculations. Some of these reports bordering on security implications and charges of insolvency have over the past few months generated intense concern from among friends and foes alike.

A *Newswatch* story had tended to portray the CTB issue in obvious bad light while one *Marcus Kazah* in his *Dig Out Aruwa* published in edition 63 of *Hotline (Military as Saints or Sinners?)* had, not quite obliquely, tended to suggest that all was not well with Aruwa; that Aruwa was in fact becoming increasingly restive. Be that as it may, *Hotline* found nothing about Aruwa's demeanour or conduct of his affairs generally to support these spurious reports. If anything, our reporter who was in Lagos to interview him, met and discussed with him under quite conducive and unbelievably free circumstances.

Perhaps the recent court ruling discarding the N5.9 million suit instituted against Aruwa and his co-defendants, by the Kaduna State High Court, presided over by the State Chief Judge himself, Mr. Justice S.U. Mohammed, will go a long way to put paid to unreasoning speculations surrounding the CTB and, of course, Aruwa. Not only will this help to restore the confidence of creditors and depositors to the bank, *Hotline* respondents believe, but has also shown the capacity of the judiciary to rise to the occasion meeting out justice without fear or favour.

Delivering his judgment on 23/3/90, Mr. Justice Mohammed had observed: "since Alhaji Musa Bello was recommended for removal as director of the bank in the report which is dated 16th August, 1989, he could not be a proper



Aruwa: No cause for alarm

director of the bank when he briefed Mr. Omotayo to go ahead with the case. "Indeed" he continued, "when he gave instructions to the law firm on 29/11/89, there was already an order of the Federal High Court restraining him to act in the capacity as director. The instruction he issued to Mr. Omotayo or the law firm on 29/11/89 were clearly invalid."

Summing up his judgment, Mr. Justice Mohammed declared: "and for the reasons enumerated above, it is hereby ordered that Mr. Omotayo and the law firm of Abegunde and Co. be restrained from appearing for, acting as or holding themselves out as counsel to the plaintiff bank in this matter KD111468/89 and the claim as per the writ of summons is hereby struck out."

Reacting to the court decision, Yahaya Mahmood, a private legal practitioner based in Kaduna, said that as a friend to the two aggrieved parties, he hopes that "they will now sit down and decide either to work together and forget what happened or at least in the interest of the bank, bury their differences." More importantly he further observed, "there are always lessons to be learnt from happenings of this nature. I believe the two of them must have learnt some lessons to help them in their future dealings with each other, as friends and as business partners."

Meanwhile, at the CTB office along Ahmadu Bello Way in Kaduna, the situation is calm and perfectly under control as the staff of the bank were seen going

about their duties. Normal banking operations said Peter A. Aroge, Branch Manager, has been going on uninterruptedly as the legal tussle is being handled at the bank's operational headquarters in Victoria Island, Lagos. The court decision, he said, has no influence, good or bad on the bank since business is going on normally as before.

As the CTB episode gradually winds up to an end, as Ahmed Muktar Mohammed aka. Aruwa continues to baffle his admirers and adversaries, few would deny that the contributions and achievements of this man towards our economic development has not only been inspiring but has also gone a long way to uplifting the lot of his fellow compatriots. Fewer still would deny that unlike most of his contemporaries, Aruwa has not amassed his wealth from stealing from our public till.

Whatever he may have been no matter how ignobly he may have conducted his personal affairs, irrespective of whether or not good fortune attended his efforts, one very obvious inference is: If Ahmed Muktar Mohammed did not have the brain and resourcefulness to make the money he controls, he has, over the years, shown a remarkable ability to vanish, cultivate and preside over his vast financial empire. This is, at least, one facet no one can challenge.

— By Jude Okey Ifeidi  
with Bashir Bello Akko,  
Amiru Kado and Ifeoma Echieze.

# Like a Goldfish

BY JUDE OKEY IFEDI

**F**OR Mallan Umar and Hajji Fatima Uwani of Kon-tagara Road, Kaduna, 2nd February, 1948 was another red-letter day. A child had been born, a baby boy, the fifth in a family of twelve surviving children. The child had been born in the wee hours of the morning, delivered all alone by its mother, without any assistance from anybody, not even the local midwife. By the time the infant's auntie made her usual rounds to verify the state of well being of her already "too-heavy sister", the new born baby was already in a basin of water basking in a warm bath.

Nothing like this had been witnessed before in this quiet neighbourhood where this child was born. In a spontaneous show of wonder and elation, the child's auntie had christened the baby boy *Aruwa* (which in Hausa means, 'Of the water') and soon after, before nightfall precisely, the whole neighbourhood had the news. From that day on, that infant's name became Aruwa. And the name simply stuck.

That child has since grown, into a fully fledged man. Aruwa at 42 looks rather boyish for his age. Standing 5' 9" and of athletic mould, with a becoming gait, he cuts the figure of a simple man who leads a simple life. Notwithstanding a retinue of lackeys who are ever ready to minister to his minutest needs, this man exudes the confidence of a man who can get things done or better still, do the meanest household chores all by himself. His love for posh cars is, perhaps, the only thing that can distinguish him in society as a man who has 'arrived' besides a horde of

factotums or visitors that are always hovering around him. His tastes are neither fastidious nor are they exactly quixotic. No one could speak of his manners as overbearing or of his dressing as foppish.

A happily married man with children, Aruwa has indeed been through the thick and thins of life. He has struggled through the ups and the downs. He has experienced the highs and the lows. He has witnessed the seamy side of life. He has walked through the floodlights. He has travelled widely, traversing nearly three quarters of the globe and has thus garnered in the process, a rich, rewarding experience which has placed him in good stead to appraise things objectively and dispassionately, enabling him to take things as they come, in his own stride.

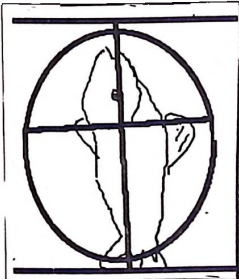
Yet in spite of his many accomplishments, in spite of the many lessons that life has taught him, Aruwa has remained faithful to himself and to his star. He may have surprised a few people when he turned out a successful businessman, but he certainly did not surprise himself. An *Aquarian* by birth, he has never proved his star wrong. Rather he has fashioned his life after the

dictates of his star, allowing his keen, intuitive perception to guide and direct his affairs. Is it surprising therefore that he is a success?

It is said that the *Aquarian* "lives above" his age. This may not be particularly true of Aruwa. But if Aruwa has not lived above his age, he certainly has not allowed his age to live above him. From the very beginning, Aruwa learnt to do the things that most of his school mates and boys his age did. He recalls with nostalgia, how along with his school mates he used to swim across the River Kaduna, from the Kabala end to the Barnawa side of the river, a feat not many of his colleagues could easily accomplish. Today, Aruwa, an accomplished swimmer, owns a yacht, a factor which confirms him a true 'water boy'.

**I**f the circumstances surrounding Aruwa's birth is not singularly enigmatic, the activities that have come to characterise his life certainly are. Enigma indeed appears to be his trademark. Like a gold fish, this big fish, Aruwa, has no hiding place in spite of his persistence in shielding all his activities from public scrutiny. A lot of questions have been asked about him; snoopers have tried to ferret out the man's darkest secrets; journalists have speculated on the source of the man's amazing wealth; gossips have had their own field day, insinuating things and casting innuendoes. But through all these, Aruwa has never wavered. He has remained the man he was created to be: calm, collected, unflinched.

But who is this man, Aruwa? What is the enigma about him? In short, what makes him tick? *Hotline* managed to track him down in his Ikoyi residence in Lagos. It was not easy getting him to talk but when he was finally persuaded, he let loose a torrent of feelings and emotions bottled up over the years, speaking freely on virtually every issue *Hotline* fielded, except those questions relating directly to the controversy in the Commercial Trust Bank, (CTB). Gesticulating and dramatising his point in such a way that no rhetorician worthy of his art could better, Aruwa responded to all our proddings, our problings and our leadings with alacrity and disarming charm, displaying a wealth of knowledge and far-reaching experience not reserved to a man who is not used to making public pronouncements. It is interesting to observe that throughout the duration of our party with him — two days — Aruwa did not only prove to be an engaging personality but also one whose candour and forthrightness, perhaps, beyond impeachment. What follows in the following interview is unravelling the enigma that is Aruwa. And who could be better qualified to speak about Aruwa than Aruwa himself.



# "I HAD A MIND OF MY OWN"

**ARUWA:** What did you say your mission was?

**HOTLINE:** To hear your own side of the story in respect of the controversy surrounding the Commercial Trust Bank of which you are the founder and Chairman.

**ARUWA:** If that is your mission, then



I'm afraid I have nothing to say to you on that.

**HOTLINE:** Then let's talk about other things. About yourself for instance.

**ARUWA:** What about myself?

**HOTLINE:** Because important people make news. Their activities, actions and utterances affect the lives of ordinary people. For instance people will like to know something of how you came about your wealth.

**ARUWA:** What do you mean. Why should people bother about me and how I made my money; should it concern them? Let me tell you something, my friend. There is nothing like how somebody made his money. Because

what would work for one person may not work for another. The way people make their money differs from one person to another. There is no stereotyped way of making money.

**HOTLINE:** Can we talk about you all the same?

**ARUWA:** O.K. Let's talk about me. Where do we start?

**HOTLINE:** From the beginning Sir, looking back at your childhood days in Hadejia, what would you

say gave you the greatest joy?

**ARUWA:** First, let me correct a mistake. I did not grow up in Hadejia. I grew up in Kaduna. In fact, I don't even remember ever visiting Hadejia until I was about 12 years or so. However, let me answer your question by saying that being with friends and playmates gave me the greatest joy.

**HOTLINE:** Between your parents and your teachers at school, who had the greatest influence on your life as a growing youth?

**ARUWA:** My parents, of course. Especially my father.

**HOTLINE:** Your father? Why your father, what recollections do you have of him?

**ARUWA:** Yes, my father. I remember



my father as a very disciplined man, a humble man and a good story teller who made one to understand ones proper place and to conduct oneself with decorum. For instance, if we had visitors

around the house, my father would ensure that we took our proper places and behaved ourselves by doing the right thing at the right time.

**HOTLINE:** What were your early days like? Would you say you were popular among your colleagues?

**ARUWA:** I wouldn't say I was all that popular. All I know is that had friends; I had foes. Also had a mind of my own; that is not easily submissiveness. Even my teachers, I was once suspended, because the way I related with them.

**HOTLINE:** Before you left the country in 1963 for further studies abroad, you had a stint with the Nigerian Air Force. Is



would you describe your working career in the Air Force?

**ARUWA:** You see... I enlisted in the Air Force because of my interest in flying. But once in the Air Force, I found myself doing a completely different thing. Instead of learning how to fly, I was being trained as an aircraft maintenance engineer, a job I did not so much enjoy. Again I was compelled to shed my civil life for a regimented life. It was a novel experience which I had to do my best to contain. Actually, those three years or so I spent in the Air Force were terrible years for me. But I can say now without reservations that the experiences I gathered in those years helped me to later in life. At least it made me withstand certain adverse circumstances which other people with my regimented background find difficult to cope with.

**HOTLINE:** We are aware that you have very large investments abroad, besides the ones here in Nigeria. How could you have accomplished such a feat?

**ARUWA:** It was not quite easy arriving at my present position in life so I had to deny myself a lot of things at the onset. I could have led all my life in America if I had wanted. I could have been a hopeless drug addict

could have been in dopes or I could have ended up a street mugger. But I didn't. I chose, instead, to invest the resources available at my disposal into some form of business. As a student-pilot, I made some money buying and selling watches and trying my hand generally in any business that presented itself. In this way, I made quite some money which I invested in some profitable ventures.

**HOTLINE:** Sir, are you saying that just buying and selling watches and probably doing other petty businesses made you the very successful man that you are?

**ARUWA:** Well, you have to understand that not only was I enjoying government scholarship, I was also lucky enough to be living in a house where I paid neither house rent nor any bill for that matter. So this made it possible for me to save my money. I was more or less a student business man.

**HOTLINE:** What about all these wild speculations linking your source of wealth to your American wife and/or some other shady deals?

**ARUWA:** I was never so amused in my life as on a particular occasion I had returned to the country from a trip overseas to read of such speculations in one of the magazines. I quickly bought a copy of that magazine and mailed it to my wife overseas. She had a good laugh.

**HOTLINE:** Are you then implying that its all false, unreasoning speculations and utterly without foundations?

**ARUWA:** All I am saying is that I do not owe my success in life to anybody. Not a particular individual. I do not owe any obligation to anybody. But don't forget that we live in an interdependent world. No man is an island. I couldn't have achieved whatever I achieved without leaning on some people, without help from others. God does not intervene in human affairs directly. God works through human agencies.

**HOTLINE:** What of Daniel George?

**ARUWA:** Daniel George was quite good to me. He had some restraining influence over me that made it difficult for me to go astray. He made it possible for me to pursue my programmes

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under favourable circumstances. But Daniel George never had any relationship with or involvement in my business activities. He never decided for me what business to do, when or where to invest. I handled these myself, personally.

**HOTLINE:** To what then do you attribute your success?

**ARUWA:** To God. To hardwork. To a sense of purpose. And to honesty. Only Allah made me whatever I am today and I am grateful to Him.

**HOTLINE:** What do you look upon as your greatest achievement in life so far?

**ARUWA:** I have yet to fulfil my ambitions in life.

**HOTLINE:** Sir, we mean, looking at the things you have done so far?

**ARUWA:** Well, being able to provide job opportunities to many Nigerians.

**HOTLINE:** Like how many Nigerians?

**ARUWA:** I cannot tell you precisely. But I know that Allied Ranch alone has well over 300 staff not to talk about other establishments. Whatever the case may be, there may be about 500 staff in all.

**HOTLINE:** Sir, lets talk a little bit about some of these establishments, for instance, the Commercial Trust Bank (C.T.B.)?

**ARUWA:** Like I told you before, I do not want to discuss the CTB. Never theless, as you are aware, the small problem we have in the CTB is already in the court. We are not the only bank with the same problem. In fact ours is not such a difficult case. However, since our case is in court already, it is unwise to start deciding the case on the pages of newspapers or magazines. Engaging ourselves in accusations and counter-accusations is unnecessary. This will not solve the problem. It will rather compound issues. I personally believe that it is unadvised to wash our dirty linens in the public. If we start doing this, how would our numerous customers see us? Wouldn't it be a betrayal of trust and confidence? I see my role in the whole affair as one of a father. It should be my place to ensure that the confidence reposed in us by our depositors and nu-

merous customers is not betrayed. And I'm doing just this. When the dust finally settles, we would then sit back to organise our house. And if need be, we shall call a press conference to explain things. Until then, let's keep our fingers crossed and watch events unfold. I am optimistic it won't be too long from now when the case would be finally decided.

**HOTLINE:** Sir, lets talk a little about sports. In 1988 in an interview with us, you told us that the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) was illegal. Have you had any reason to modify your views?

**ARUWA:** Not necessarily. You see .... for as long as the NFA remains under the umbrella of the National Sports Commission (NSC), for so long must it remain illegal. The NFA is not a legal entity. There is no statute or law establishing the NFA as a body *per se*. That is why the NSC is telerguiding the NFA and for as long as this happens, the NFA as far as I am concerned is illegal. I have always made this point clear when I was on the board of NSC.

**HOTLINE:** Are you saying that you no longer serve on the board of the NSC?

**ARUWA:** Yes.

**HOTLINE:** What happened?

**ARUWA:** I was removed.

**HOTLINE:** Why?

**ARUWA:** I wouldn't know.

**HOTLINE:** Now that professional football is around the corner, how would you assess its chances of success?

**"Since our case is in court already, it is unwise to start deciding the case on the pages of newspapers or magazines. Engaging ourselves in accusations and counter-accusations is unnecessary."**



**ARUWA:** I have always maintained that professional football has been in the country all along. What else do our footballers do if not play football. Do you not know that these players earn salaries and enjoy other facilities that other people in other professions enjoy. If this is not professionalism, what then do you call professionalism in football.

**HOTLINE:** *And your Ranchers Bees. How do you foresee its performance in the on-coming league season. Of what gain or interest has Ranchers Bees as a club been to you?*

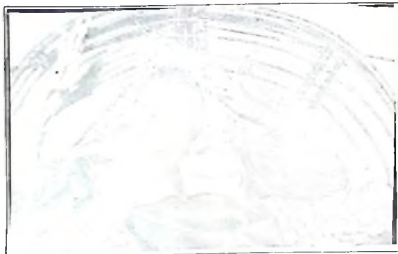
**ARUWA:** Hmm... I'm not a fortune teller. So I cannot predict what their performance will look like. I prefer a wait and see attitude to this. As for gain or no gain, I don't think it is of public interest to know. What I do know is that I am satisfied with the performance of the club so far and the club will remain for as long as I am satisfied with its performance. Right now, there is practically no reason to effect any changes.

**HOTLINE:** *Sir, lets talk about politics now. How do you look at Nigeria's political terrain? Can you see an enduring political culture as from the Third Republic?*

**ARUWA:** Nigeria's political terrain is a very curious one. Here people think of politics as a profession. But you see, politics is not really a profession. I believe it is only in Nigeria that you find people who parade themselves as professional politicians. Really, the point is that most of these so-called professional politicians do not possess some skill of some sort. The only thing they know how to do is playing partisan politics. The result is that as soon as they find themselves in government, they try to grab as much money as they can knowing that they have nothing to fall back upon in case there is a change of government. In America for instance, nobody talks of himself as a professional politician. Politicians do not profess to go into politics only to return to the same profession at the expiration of their time in

government. That is why you find out that former President Nixon went back to his legal practice, President Carter to his farm and now Reagan to his ranch. What do you find in Nigeria? You find corruption, too much corruption, red tapism, unnecessary bureaucracy.

Look at our civil service for instance. What you find is stinking bureaucracy. A Director-General for instance, has about four staff attached to his office. One of these is a confidential and/or private secretary, one a tea-maker, one a messenger, the other a driver. Why should this be? Not when all these people sit back in



the office doing little or nothing. Of course you know what happens when the *Oga* calls for a file. Usually it takes a week or more for the file to appear unless you "see" the messenger. A situation like this could be avoided if the *Oga* relates directly with his immediate subordinate. And talking about enduring political culture, I can only say that the grass-roots politics being initiated this time around would certainly help in ensuring a healthy political atmosphere in the Third Republic.

**HOTLINE:** *Do you harbour any political ambitions come the Third Republic or do you see yourself as apolitical?*

**ARUWA:** I am not interested in politics. But if and when my services are needed and I am invited or called upon to render a service as a Nigerian, then I shall consider doing so.

**HOTLINE:** *Looking at Nigeria, we mean the affluent Nigerian, the poor,*

**"Nigeria's political terrain is a very curious one... It is only in Nigeria that you find people who parade themselves as professional politicians."**

## COVER STORY/ ARUWA

*the hungry and starving masses, would you think that SAP as an economic measure is justified?*

**ARUWA:** First, let me correct an erroneous impression. I do not believe there are poor, hungry Nigerians. There can only be lazy Nigerians, that is, Nigerians who do not want to do some kind of job, no matter how menial, in order to survive. We have enormous opportunities in this



country and it is only the lazy man who would not try his hands at exploiting these opportunities. For instance, I know of a case overseas where a holder of Masters Degree in Mass Communication works as a taxi driver. Do you think some Nigerians would like to contemplate that?

**HOTLINE:** *What about SAP? Are you saying it is a justifiable measure?*

**ARUWA:** Well, you have to understand that SAP is a global thing. It is a creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help stabilise ailing economies. It is therefore not a creation of any government. SAP is designed in such a way as to suit the economy of any given country. The IMF loan issue couldn't work out because of its conditionalities. Somehow, we managed to impose these conditions on ourselves but in doing so, I'm afraid we went a little too far. The devaluation of the naira by as much as 60% for instance, is particularly unfortunate. The government should never have allowed this to

happen.

**HOTLINE:** *What would you have wished for or suggested to be the exchange rate between the Naira and the Dollar?*

**ARUWA:** N2.50 or N3.00 would have been about o.k.

**HOTLINE:** *How would you like to assess the Babangida administration generally bearing in mind its political, economic and social reforms?*

**ARUWA:** Everything considered, I think that the Babangida administration is doing its best socially, economically and politically. But this does not mean that there are no loose ends. For instance, I would like to see government pay more attention to agriculture and industry more than it is doing now. Not only will these help to increase our naira value but will also make for a stable economy.

I believe that the Babangida administration is doing its best in the areas of political awareness and political education. This is a healthy development indeed. But I am not particularly pleased with MAMSER. MAMSER ought to be doing a lot more than it is doing right now. It is rather unfortunate that its activities seem to be limited only to political education. This ought not to be so. To justify its existence and the huge government investment in it, MAMSER ought to be addressing a wide range of issues. I personally would have loved to see MAMSER involved in agriculture, road safety, getting Nigerians to identify with Nigeria as well as being involved in such other programmes as are capable of creating goodwill among Nigerians, educating the masses on how to meet the challenges of the times instead of limiting its operation to NRC and SDP.

Look at our roads for instance, the dangerous death traps, dead bodies littered here and there; there seem to be little respect for the value of human life. Can't something be done about these things? I expect MAMSER to be seriously involved. I will be very happy to see a positive change because I am especially concerned with the value of human life.

**"I do not believe there are poor, hungry Nigerians. There can only be lazy Nigerians, that is, Nigerians who do not want to do some kind of job, no matter how menial, in order to survive."**

## COVER STORY/ ARUWA

In fact, MAMSER shouldn't be a federal government concern ... I do not quite like Federal Government involvement with MAMSER. I would have loved to see a MAMSER working hand in hand with the traditional rulers, that is, involving the traditional rulers actively in the on-going process of political education and awareness. I believe that through the traditional rulers, MAMSER could be achieving a lot more than it is doing presently. After all, it is the villagers, these rural dwellers that need the political education more than us the elites or the urban dwellers. As it is now, you can see that the traditional rulers are completely alienated. It seems to me that the traditional rulers have no relevance in our today's society. What are they actually doing? Wouldn't it be better and more result oriented if these people (the traditional rulers) are made partners in progress in the on-going transition programme by assigning them specific roles? I mean roles that would place them in a vantage position to galvanise our rural population.

**HOTLINE:** *As a widely travelled man, how do you see Nigerians relative to other cultures, other personalities, other civilisations?*

**ARUWA:** Like every other people, Nigerians are good; Nigerians are bad. But Nigerians are particularly smart. I think that Nigeria is Africa's America.

**HOTLINE:** *You have, it appears, maintained a low-profile public image. Unlike other people in your position, you are not in the "news" quite as often. Is this deliberate on your part or would you say that you have not been adequately reported by the press?*

**ARUWA:** The point is, I'm a very private person. I have been a very private person all my life. I get misunderstood of course. Some people think I'm aloof, others think I'm arrogant. But I can't help being myself. Can I? But come to think of it, I do not owe the press any obligation

neither does the press owe me any obligation. I do know that I was a very private person until between 1987 and 1988 when I lost that privacy to the press.

**HOTLINE:** *And talking about the press, how do you see the Nigerian press?*

**ARUWA:** The Nigerian press that I see today seem to me to be a press in which yellow journalism and lack of investigative reports appear to be the vogue. The Nigerian press seem to be so much in a hurry to go to press that they hardly find time to investigate their reports. That is why a lot of untruths and half truths get pub-

*"It seems to me that the traditional rulers have no relevance in our today's society... What are they actually doing?"*



lished. You will also discover that a lot of the sensational reports that get published have little in them that could be called facts. I also happen to know that sometimes even when a reporter has done a good job putting together an investigative story, the stuff might be edited out of proportion if the reporter is lucky; usually such stories get even killed by the reporter's superiors.

**HOTLINE:** *Outside of your business life, what other engagements occupy your time? What, in fact, are your hobbies?*

**ARUWA:** I love fishing, playing tennis, swimming and watching football. I do these usually on weekends.

**HOTLINE:** *Finally Sir, what is the place of God and of religion in your life?*

**ARUWA:** I am a religious person and my belief in God is infinite. How else could I have waded through all difficult times I have been through in my life, if I did not have a firm belief in God?

# Islam: Gathering of the Flock

**R**ecent land-mark achievements and activities of the Nigerian Islamic community, point to a remarkable closing of ranks, occasioned by an increased perception of a necessity for such unity in the last decade. Almost as glaring is the growing muslim consciousness of their religion, and an increased knowledge and awareness of its true meaning, by all and sundry. Just before this trend began, before the 1986 OIC controversy, muslims tended to be ranked and classified into sects, organisations and even regions. Those were the days of the Sokoto muslim and the Yoruba or southern muslim, the Izala muslim and the Darika muslim, the Fulani and the non-Fulani muslims; the days when southern, especially Yoruba muslims even resorted to hiding their faith, changing their names and otherwise dissociating themselves from the fold of the Islamic brotherhood.

Today, the story is different. The image of Islam and muslims is on the rise, thanks to a decade in which the flag of the religion was brought to the threshold of world power by the defiant resolutions of muslim peoples and leaders—in Afghanistan, Iran, Sudan, Libya (which fought and survived a six-hour war with the USA), Palestine and elsewhere. Internally, Nigerian muslim leaders have, this last decade, been indefatigable—organising their people into functions, groups and institutions which articulate and execute programmes whose yield in terms of education, enlightenment and mobilisation is tremendous.

By far the greatest thing Nigerian muslim leaders achieved in the 1980s is the bringing together of themselves, and the ensuing rapport that enabled them increase and manifest their co-operation. One of the literally shining fruits of this

co-operation is the magnificent N40 million Lagos Central Mosque, commissioned by President Ibrahim Babangida in 1987. Never before had so much enthusiasm been shown by muslim leaders of the west, and people like Alhaji Iyanda Folawiyi, Baba Addini of Yorubaland, who headed the grand project, have wonderfully exhibited their concern and unflinching commitment to their religion.

It is also noteworthy that in the true spirit of Islam, Alhaji Folawiyi and the many Muslim businessmen involved in

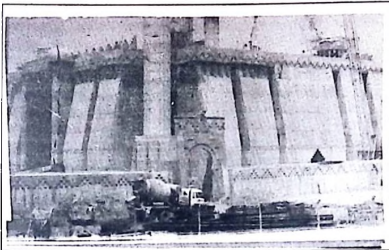
that would undertake the abandoned project that will be the "National Church". This fact in itself portrays the total disarray in which the Nigerian Christian community wallows, due to the selfishness, greed and materialism of their leaders. The CAN leadership of recent times thus distracts its faithfuls by whipping up their sentiments against Islam, and Muslims.

In Islam, the concept of 'sects' exists, but never outside of the basic believes of the religion. Various sects—Izala, Shi'a, etc. exist and they function in the same mosque unlike in the christian-fold where, forced inter-denominational services seldom end without feuds.

In Kaduna State, the nation's religious hot-bed and scene of the unprecedented Kafanchan riots of March 1987, there has been the grandest rally ever staged by Nigerian muslims in recent times.

**Africa Events**, the London-based magazine wrote of the rally that "if anything was achieved on

that occasion it was the demonstration of the people's loyalty to Islam and their readiness to answer its call anytime." Attendance at the Murtala Muhammed Square, venue of the meet was reported to run into millions—converging from every nook of this country, by lorry, by bus, by plane, by boat, by bike as indeed, on foot. That rally was also momentous in that it brought about public resolution of all animosities previously thought to exist among certain religious leaders like Sheik Abubakar Gumi and Malam Dahiru Bauchi, among others. Muslims from every tribe and of every persuasion were represented at the occasion. Perhaps, at no other time have Nigerian muslims come so close to a real Ummah. As for donations then sought for Islamic



*The National Mosque, Abuja.*

the making of the Lagos Central Mosque, kept their activities a secret that would never have been known but for press investigations. It is one of the strict canons of Islam to undertake an act of generosity or worship purely for the sake of Allah and not because that it may be talked about.

Up in Abuja, the nation's new Federal Capital, the decade witnessed the rise of the National Mosque, one of the grandest institutions of worship in the West African region. Built at a cost of over N30 million, the Abuja National Mosque has been the main object of the Christian Association of Nigeria's (C.A.N.) attack on Nigerian muslims in recent times.

Perhaps, this is because CAN leadership has failed to produce a united front



*A markedly increased thirst for Islamic learning.*

self-help programmes, money was actually reportedly piled in boundless and unselfish sacrifice, in drums.

The period 1980 - 89 also marked the foundation of many Islamic educational establishments all over muslim towns. The story from Lagos to Ibadan, Ilorin, Minna, Sokoto, Kaduna, Kano, Jos, Bauchi, Maiduguri, Yola and indeed all muslim communities is the same — a markedly increased thirst for Islamic knowledge and education. The first modern Islamic nursery schools were initiated in this country in the last decade, taking off first in Kaduna, Lagos and Ibadan.

Too, it cannot be gainsaid, the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), the coordinating body of Nigerian Muslim activities, founded since 1961, waxed stronger in the past decade. In the opinion of Alhaji Muhammad Kolo Biu, National Assistant Secretary of the JNI, the body has recorded tremendous achievements in the areas of Islamic education, mobilisation and winning of converts. For instance, the JNI has succeeded in establishing secretariats in all the northern states and Abuja, in addition to running offices in southern states such as Rivers, Imo, Bendel, Anambra etc. Alhaji Biu however noted that "JNI activities in the western states, however, have been on the decline since the death of Sir Ahmadu Bello, first premier of northern Nigeria, who was the biggest impetus in the JNI drive since its inception."

Alhaji Kolo also revealed to *Hotline*

that having taken stock of its achievements in the last decade, the JNI is beginning the decade of the 90s with a futuristic five-year Islamic Development Plan. The Plan which is to run from 1990 - 1994 is to feature among other things the establishment of a permanent secretariat in each state of the federation, the construction of Islamic schools, teacher training colleges and hospitals in locations across the country.

The Organisation of Islamic Conference, OIC, entry/no entry controversy of 1986 is regarded as the beginning of muslim unity in this country in the last decade. It also sparked off the spate of protests, commentaries and court actions that have been the major preoccupation of the Christian Association of Nigeria in recent times. *C.A.N.* is still adamant that it will not rest until Nigeria's presumed membership of the OIC is revoked, although logic and reason have taken the wind out of the association's argument of a covert Islamisation of the Nigerian nation.

The active decade of the '80s was brought to a beautiful finish by the five-day International Islam in Africa Conference organised by the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA), the OIC and eminent muslim individuals and institutions. It was Sultan Ibrahim Dasuki, then Secretary-General of SCIA and Dr. Lateef Adegbite, current Secretary-General, who worked closely since the February 1988 International Islamic Conference in Islamabad, to ensure the

success of the Abuja Conference — the first of its kind and dimension in the entire African continent. Other muslim leaders that participated keenly in convening the conference included Sheikh Abubakar Mahmood Gumi, His Highness, Alhaji Mustapha Umar El-Kanem, the Shehu of Borno, Prof. Nurudeen Alao, Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos, Justice Muri Okunola of the Miscellaneous Offences Tribunal and Chief M.K.O. Abiola, millionaire-philanthropist, who donated funds to the hosting.

According to Sheikh Sherif Ibrahim Saleh a prominent Maiduguri-based Islamic scholar and Chairman of the Borno State Pilgrims' Welfare Board, the significance of the Conference to the unity, growth and honour of Islam and Muslims is tremendous. Speaking to *Hotline* in Kaduna, Sheikh Ibrahim said the Conference added to the Islamic personality of Nigerian Muslims because "Nigerian Muslims were honoured to host all the world's divisions of Muslims under one umbrella. That is why you found Saudi Arabia and Iran both attending, and Pakistan and a host of other incomparable muslim countries. The size of attendance and the differences accommodated are a singular landmark movement for any conference of its kind."

Sheikh Ibrahim also said that the Conference served to bring Nigerian muslims themselves closer to one another because it showed that "the era of ins-



*Dr. Abdullateef Adegbite  
Secretary-General, SCIA.*

vidual efforts was over. There was no East, West or North in this endeavour. Muslims from all over the country identified fully with the Conference." Sheikh Ibrahim added however that the single most important achievement of the Conference is that it promises to continue achieving and is therefore a wide departure from similar gatherings that end with the recorded sessions. Among other things, the Conference has given birth to the Islam in Africa Organisation (IAO), with headquarters in Abuja. Said the Sheikh: "we have already started work in earnest (I myself am a member of the Da'awah [preaching] Committee) and many more things are coming up."

Sheikh Ibrahim disagreed though that the last decade has left much remarkable achievements. "There were lots of things done and activities and so on, but there was no organisation, no coordination. The main problem of Nigerian Muslims is lack of leadership" he said.

The issue of a top-sided attendance at the Conference alluded to by certain media is a non-issue in Islam. 'Heavy weights' is an alien designation in Islam because all are equal before God. The one who exceeds another in the eyes of Allah is the one whose love of Allah and piety is greater. No muslims of whatever consequences were specifically invited to the Conference outside of those who would contribute to it. The service of Islam is not done by invitation, but by willing, quiet, humble initiative.



Sheikh Abubakar Mahmoud Gumi

Contrary to all insinuations that there was ill-feeling over the conference some one had declared at the end. "The most important thing to come out of the Conference" said Nour Hange, Secretary of the Implementation Committee of the Islam in Africa Conference, "was that all those who participated thought it was one of the most memorable occasions of their lives. In addition, the idea had now been given permanence, with the founding of Islam in Africa Organisation".

Between November 4 - 11, 1988, Sokoto town was scene of civil disturbances coming in the wake of a succession dispute that followed the death of Sir Abubakar III, Sultan of Sokoto from 1938-1988. The disturbances were engendered by the denial of the Throne to the more popular candidate, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido and its conferment on Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki who had allegedly used influence and money to succeed.

The November 1988 popular uprising was the second of its kind in the history of the Sokoto Caliphate, the first being the mild crisis and succession dispute between the Late Sir Abubakar III and the Late Sir Ahmadu Bello in 1938. From the reign of Muhammadu Bello, first prince-king to the succession of Sultan Hassan Ibn Muazu in 1931, no such signs of unease had accompanied the change of batons. Commentators are mainly of the opinion that the two incidents in the recent history of the 185-year old Caliphate are manifestations of renewed political consciousness and the changing dynamics of contemporary muslim leadership occasioned by colonial intervention between the years - 1903-1960 - and the super-imposition of a 'modern' and over-powering system of government since independence in 1960.

Furthermore, the origin of the Sultan's immense power and influence is *not*, contrary to misguided notions, rooted in feudal hegemony. The power and influence of today's northern Emirs derive not from such unfounded and baseless notions, but from the Jihad waged by Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio to cleanse the decadence of his time. The unity of these Emirs is a result of their common ancestry from the puritanical revolution of



Chief Arthur Nzeribe ... saw reason in Islam.

Dan Fodio, which apart from colonial 'intervention', remains undefeated to this day. And the navel continues to be the Sokoto Sultanate, from which the present descendants of most northern muslim Emirates received their flags of command.

Detractors who make much "semantic noise" of the two incidents of succession disputes and who interpret them as signs of decay and waning authority do not do justice to their better sense of perception, because they mistake signs of life, vigour and vitality for the symptoms of disease. In the 1938 succession 'contest', the Late Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello (favoured by youthful elements) accepted his defeat with urbane, sportsman-like gallantry and proceeded to work together with Sultan Abubakar to the utmost benefits of their peoples. The consensus then reached after the 'conflict' turned out for the best: Sir Abubakar emerged a solid, wise and very able Sultan to whom much is owed of the peace and unity that muslims, nay, Nigeria itself has largely enjoyed in the last 50 years. On his part, Sir Ahmadu Bello lived and died, the single most effective leader the North and indeed, Nigeria ever had.

Similarly, in the orchestrated succession dispute between Ibrahim Dasuki and the other princes-in-waiting, spirit-greater than those of divisiveness and anarchy prevailed, when a mere two weeks into the so-called conflict, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido, arch-rival of Sultan Dasuki called on him to pa

homage and pledge his allegiance. Alhaji Maccido was driven by a vision wider than personal aggrandisement and saw in the prolonging of the incident, possible harm to muslim unity and Islamic progress. This is the true basis for the return of peace and the immediate restoration of sanity in the affairs of the Sultanate.

- It is noteworthy that non-muslim elements, especially in some sections of the Nigerian press, continually harp on the delineation and restriction of the functions and duties of the Sultanate. Undeniably, the Sultan of Sokoto, is the highest ranking Emir in the northern part of this country, and arguably, the Sultanate, is the single most venerated office by muslims in all parts of this land.

The fact that the office of the Sultan makes announcements on the sighting of the moon and on the days of Islamic festivities, is a thing of convenience and a requirement of millions of muslims in the north and south of this country. That these announcements are not binding on all, is a measure of the fact that there is no law, no rule and no compulsion that the Sultan's pronouncements must be adhered to. It is therefore a blatant display of ignorance to suggest that the Sultan must announce the commencement of Islamic festivities. Anyone, for instance, is free to start fasting in the month of Ramadan if he sees the moon, together with three male adult witnesses, willing to affirm the fact. This, however is not to write off an ideal: Muslims in all parts of this country must come together under one umbrella, with a central repository of power and a common mouthpiece.

Perhaps, the greatest affliction suffered by the Nigerian Islamic Community is the untenable juxtaposing of Islam with secular thought and ideology. This is being perpetrated by the hegemonic western media represented locally by unperceiving journalists-turned-propagandist, operating mainly from the Lagos/Ibadan press axis, with the encouragement of anti-Islamic crusaders like the Rev. Olubunmi Okogie, Catholic arch-Bishop of the Lagos diocese.

The situation is sometimes such as to suggest that anti-muslim elements are having a field day attacking the undefended. But to ward off such a negative



*Late Imam Khomeini : Defiant resolutions*

outlook, the National Secretary General of Jama'atul Nasril Islam and Grand Khadi of Abuja, Justice Bashir Sambo told the national Convention of the JNI in September last year that "the JNI does not speak for the sake of being heard to speak, where speech will only aggravate the evil that is decreed." According to Justice Bashir Sambo "most of the time JNI seeks solutions and redress in quiet and smooth operations. In truth, there is nothing done against Islam and Muslims but that the JNI overtly or covertly takes action to counter it."

Among other things, that Nigerian non-muslims still fail to understand the absolute necessity of Sharia for all muslims, is the making of an Islamically ignorant press and a mischievous crop of Christian leaders. Conceptually and practically, Sharia is not just the simplistic representation of it by courts. The Sharia is a system dissimilar to any man-made model and it encompasses the entirety of the individual muslim's life, from the cradle to the grave, WITHOUT ANY RESERVATIONS WHATSOEVER.

We asked Professor Ango Abdullahi former Vice Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and a member of the defunct Constituent Assembly whether he thinks Nigerian muslims will settle for the constitutional provision of Sharia as it is? Said he: "I cannot guarantee that because the demand, if there will be a demand for the full application of Shari'a, and it does not encroach on the rights of other people, it will certainly be a legitimate demand which is not in

conflict with the provisions of our Constitution."

Today, despite the stalemate recorded at the 1989 Constituent Assembly, over the Sharia Clauses, the full implementation of Sharia remains a priority of Nigerian muslims and a source of rancour only to ill-informed non-muslims.

On the abhorrence of secularism, all Islamic thought is unanimous. Any muslim who calls the combination of political and spiritual powers unIslamic, is ignorant, and if he persists becomes an apostate. The political philosophy of Islam, unequivocally makes no distinction between worldly and other-worldly domains; between 'traditional' and political leadership or between spiritual and earthly commands.

But perhaps these are just part of a greater whole. The major negative growth in Nigerian muslim affairs this past decade, is the swelling impunity with which some sections of the Nigerian press launch attacks on muslims and their institutions. Not that that in itself is new but under the guise of the freedom of expression, now at its zenith, these unwarranted attacks, have grown frequent and blatant. For instance, *Newbreed*, December 31, 1989, in a bid to make a case for secularism misrepresented the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) by saying that he fled from Mecca on the Hijra "in a bid to separate politics from religion". On the contrary, the Prophet (SAW) was fleeing away from persecution and looking forward to a time when and where muslims will establish communities under one leader. The Prophet Muhammad like all the prophets before him - Dawud, Musa, Isa (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon them) and the rest of them never preached a religion of separation of politics and religion. Secularism, therefore is as much an insult to the muslim as it is to the true christian.

This spells the task before Nigerian muslims in the 1990s. In addition to the unity which the Ummah has already begun to cherish, education and enlightenment must now be the issues for focal attention.

*By Muhammad Hassan-Tom.*

# DONGA: Rural Life Still in Despair

By Bashir Bello Akko

It is apparent the pains are excruciating. She lay flat on the ageing stretcher, her face looking up in the horizon, her eyes blinking ceaselessly as if imploring the Supreme Being of the firmament to offer her even a little relief from this agony of a childbirth. She had wailed; she had cried; she had writhed and rolled over and over in obvious suffering; but nature has not been kind to her. So she is now quiet, enduring the hell an overdue child that even then refused to be properly born bestows upon his labouring mother.

What this woman needed was proper medical attention, which could be a *caesarean* (clinical surgery) *section* to enable her get this child out — and with him joy of motherhood; relief from so much pains of labour. There was an ambulance; but a dead one. An ambulance broken down for over two years, and yet, no government's positive attention to repair it for the service of this underprivileged rural society. The clinic cannot handle her case.

For this pitiful patient are two roads that can take her to the safe hands of medication. There is the short route that takes her through Rafin-Kada Village to either Takum or Wukari. But between her and this salvation is the mighty River Donga, a tributary of Benue River that offers no means of crossing except a few oar operated canoes that meander between sand-dunes of the river. And one has to walk a sandy distance to reach where the canoes finally berth and pick passengers. The other road is a phenomenally long distance of a terrible untarred and partially tarred road to Takum through Mararaba village. But commercial vehicles on this road are in trickles, taking ages to come, and taking even longer time to load to capacity (actually sardine-parked) for the return journey. A patient in her state cannot be squeezed with other passengers even if the vehicle is found. And her background is so poor she cannot manage to charter a vehicle that can drive her to temporary salvation.

With eyes full of tears, with body still

trembling in agony and with her heart increasingly drifting into despair, this labouring woman, Mbala Ladi Pycermishena, turned her head a little to the left, and then a little to the right, taking a painfully drifting measure of those standing around, pleading for the last time in her native Chamba language for some help from her helpless helpers. Then her eyes popped out and stopped blinking, her mouth opened a little and the entire body went lifeless. But in her was her child, continuing its weak and helpless struggle in the womb to be born. It couldn't win. Unborn, it lost out to death, like its mother who died with his love. And Donga lost another mother; and a child that could have been anything in life were he born. And Gongola State government stood accused for failing in its duty to offer to this prosperous settlement a basis for survival.



Gongola's Gov. Salihu: waiting for your assistance.

By Nigeria's standards, you may call it a town, or at least an exalted village. In the beginning, it started off well, even ahead of its contemporaries — Takum and Wukari. Donga: an area full of people, with fertile land for grains and tubers; with streams of rice and hopes of large-scale wheat; with a landscape full of grasses and leaves, nourishing countless herds of livestock; with a river so large and endowed with abundant fish; and with hills and mountains bountiful of game. Donga: a cosmopolitan settlement standing out as an example of

people's complexities in unity; a chiefdom of historical pride and relevance.

To the south west of Gongola State, not exactly sandwiched by Takum and Wukari towns but lying in the interior off the prominent village, Rafin-Kada, is this significant human settlement called Donga. It is not a settlement so miserable in itself, although looking at its experiences, it borders more on that. Donga's plight typifies that of the average Nigerian rural settlement where men and women, those meek and hardworking citizens toil daily to offer to the nation, food for sustenance, and yet the land and its people are neglected with virtually no infrastructure to make their lives worthwhile.

It is not only effective health-care delivery services that Donga lacks. It is still yearning for many essentials of human existence. Donga, large as it may be, has no pipe-borne water. It has a water treatment plant that functioned for about six months, but for want of maintenance and spare parts, the plant packed-up. This plant and the few water taps that dot the town are still standing, more as relics of a demented hope. Taking a trip to the river on the western outskirts of the town, which is the only source of water, reveals an even a more pathetic tale:

Cows move about in the water — drinking, bathing, and letting out their droppings randomly as if easing off from the tedious grazing of this sunny day; Donkeys, relieving from the pathetically busy day, drink from the running water with so much thirst as if they were in mock competition: just to the side is an ewe fresh from the delivery of a lamb; the after-birth still oozing out snaking its way into the moving water. About four feet away from this weak and helpless lamb is a trapped dead little rodent, its abdomen ripped open and sacked of the innards perhaps by an aquatic predator, or by an ageing process of decomposition; its brown body reduced to a mass of floating putrid flesh, helping the air to a foul smell that makes stay in the surrounding a bit uncomfortable. Then the

## MISCELLANY



DDYC's Garba: Youth club for self development.

human beings; some busy doing their laundry, others washing plates, pots and such other utilities common with the Jukuns' cooking culture: The men, washing lorries or cars or motor cycles or bicycles or even their shoes and feet. And women or children filling pots and buckets and basins with the same flowing water to take home for drinking and other domestic needs. But even the river does not offer a permanent solution, because in this era of dams and irrigation and changing climatic conditions, one day, a day that may not be long in coming, River Donga will dry, and leave Donga without even its unhygienic water.

It is not that Donga people have not been enterprising in helping themselves, but a rural buoyancy of their type does not go far in providing for the needs of such a vast people. For instance, the indigenes formed themselves into a *Donga District Development Association* (DDDA), which later metamorphosed into *Donga District Youth Club* (DDYC), a non-tribal, non-religious association meant to complement government's development effort in their area. The club, under the leadership of Mr. Yakubu Taajuten Garba, got government's blessing on 4th April, 1989 and launched a Development Appeal Fund towards rehabilitating the district's roads including provision of bridges and culverts; improving the health centre and tackling water and electricity problems.

A total of N20,000 was realised — N10,000 donated specifically for provision of toilets, bathrooms and a kitchen all for this health centre, while the remaining N10,000 was to go for the other

projects. By rural standards, N20,000 was so much money, but in this era of skyrocketing prices, this amount is too meagre for any meaningful projects. For a rural health centre in as bad a shape as that of Donga to improve to a reasonable standard, the issue is not that of N10,000, perhaps not even that of a million Naira.

A telling example was DDYC's attempt to rehabilitate Donga's two access (rural) roads namely *Donga-Mararaba Road* (40km) and *Donga-Rafin Kada Road* (14km) with its donated N10,000. As at that time (mid 1989) the rates for daily hire of the following machines that work an average of 2 km a day were:

- i. Bulldozer - N4,000
- ii. Grader - N3,500
- iii. Roller machine - N3,000

In addition to all these, laterite heaps have to be hauled and deposited on site, which costs N20,000 to cover only one standard kilometre. Then water tankers are needed on hire to water the laterite during compacting. Added to all these is construction of vital bridges and culverts on the roads if they have to be motorable during rainy seasons. With the figure coming to about N30,000 for a kilometre of their road, Donga people knew it will be too tall a hope to achieve their desired goal.

But for how long will Donga remain locked-up from the world of its neighbours and its government for want of access roads? The town resolved to tax itself heavily, despite the excruciating pains of SAP, so that its roads will be motorable. A toll was enforced as follows:

- a. Lorries and the like - N100
- b. Taxis and buses - N50
- c. Motor cycles - N5
- d. Passengers - N1

This fetched DDYC an additional N30,000 which everything added to only cleared a total of 16km of one of their roads. The taxation still continues, while work moves at snail speed, waiting for government's kind assistance to move faster.

With Donga, like many of such rural settlements yearning for their government's presence, it is not that government, in fact successive governments, have not been promising: No! it is because promises are hardly fulfilled.

or projects started are hardly completed, that makes their plight more pronounced. Twice the federal government surveyed Donga roads for an apparent improvement. And it stopped there - no more words.

The same federal government, through the Upper Benue River Basin Development Authority, surveyed and confirmed Donga's landscape as *excellent* ground for massive wheat production. A few acres at Kwata, across the river, were cleared and structures were erected for the project to kick-off. But that was all the government could do. It neither took-off nor were the villagers allowed to take-over. For the past three years, it has turned from a programme of hope to a white elephant project of despair.

The federal government, through its Mines Ministry, surveyed Donga Hills and found *abundant* deposits of Uranium. Donga indigenes grew hopeful that mining will now come to their doorsteps. But instead of mining came only dashed hopes. Then government brought them a big, engine-powered ferry to cross human beings, their animals, their wares and their vehicles. Then the river partially dried up, and the ferry broke down for want of spare parts. Everyday are words for its eventual repairs — words only that are yet to translate to action.

To save the Donga health centre from total collapse, a new site was approved and contract for its building awarded. But funds became gold, and without this gold, the contract was abandoned at roofing level. Today, the site is an abode which even reptiles and rodents find uncondusive for habitation.

Electricity too was promised to this enterprising human settlement. Poles were erected and cables and wires were made to adorn the village. Perhaps the government is waiting for the year 2000 to give this settlement a well-deserved electricity. For now, it is the village that gives government and the people of this country its share of wealth. The people have proven to be hard-working, resourceful and loyal to their governments. That is what is needed. And what is needed too is, the government to do its part so that Donga will truly remain Gongola State's food basket.

### Prophetic Visions

They were in prison for 26 years, eating *amala* and drinking *kunu*. Nobody was shown a vision of what must be done to pit-gutter, sorry, Botha to get him out of that *nga-cell*. 27 years arrived, babban gofment leader changed, and tory about the intention to release him with small conditionalities hung in the air. Oya-o everybody started seeing vision. Everybody became prophet and prophetess. Everybody became local and international forecaster and seer. They begin to see vision that he may be released soon. Never mind that that was exactly what babban racist oga had already told us. As the gist about his possible freedom to go back to his Zulu people got hotter in January, more professional prophets rose to say sometin show them for dream he would be released between February and March this year. To! God helped them, oga freedomer got released in February. Congratulations prophets! No sooner did he see outside world proper-proper than many of them started to see vision about how, whether, why, what, when could his wife of invaluable esteem have true-true survived the 27 years with no macho rubi-rubi or what my friend calls "neckology". Abi someone kept secretly massaging her laps all along? they ask. Prophet are yet to give us the result of this vision. Now, new vision is being dreamt. They say freedom fighter may soon yamutu. Because-why? Holy vision tells them some *ewu-rago* are planning to depot him through gun or cutlass to the world of Bob Marley and the ghosts. Poor Mandela! Which evil come better? Kirikiri with some freedom, or full freedom to be won with bullet proof? Me, I don't understand why vision only visualizes what must to happen and not also how to prevent it from happening. All you prophets and prophetesses, fast and pray those nationalist monkeys and racist pigs who have their cages waiting for them in the zoo don't slice freedomer neck fa. Otherwise, if you are not fit to fast and pray, just let the man be,

dan Allah!!!

### Papa Watchman

Do you see what is happening to all those children, men and women of higher *makaranta* who say their papas no go sleep? Dem too cannot be sleeping sleep. That is the rule of the new game. So, even before you start causing papa sleepless night, once it is sensed you are a potential devil of a student, quick, you are swept out of school. If you haven't been chased out of *ile-iwe* you wish to join the new breed Aninis, *ba komai*, no wahala. Police boss says he is ready for you. If you decide to farm, to! People's Bank are availability. Are you saw with your two naked eyes what is being done to students who dare to join juju, sorry, secret cults in school that papa says should not exist? They are flushed out of school like *vermin* (rats). Somebody say that papa's watchman role started right from the



interview stage. When you attend interview as prospective beggar for admission, I hear you may lose your chance if your hair is like high court of justice (plenty and bushy). If your bear-bear and moustache are frightfully long and witch-like, you lose your chance. If your eyes are of *igbo* hemp or *kain-kain* whisky colour, you fail flat, even if you are a mechanical genius. Papa stared watching the devilish rioting children from this level. I hear say that with all these expulsion, there is still fear-o. I hear from one source that the mid-semester break of February 28 given to the largest University in the sub-sahara region of West Africa (abi how do they call it scf?) was to pour cold water over the fire they feel the stu-

dents may soon kindle in solids with their mates being expelled to other schools. Somebody else say that this first source is a liar; that truth is that the oga of the school thinks the students' brains are boiled like pepper soup with *bookuru* so, before them begin to craze and break walls, they should go home to cool off a while. Well, which ever true, one thing is for sure, pikins think their heads are hot, it is I papa's head is hotter-o. Can you picture papa with a stick doing m guard over his student pikins? No laughing matter-o.

### Boogie Galore

Em, I beg, hear this small tory-o. In this same school that celebrated 20th graduation in January, they say it boogie galore because, Oloduma the school get money *yanfu-yai* and knows not what to do with it. Therefore, N1,500 was dashed to establish a hostel in the school in January, or to throw party the way them like. Then, some administrators say it v not do for the *Owambe*. I hear student in some hostel is now being asked to donate N3 extra to add to the N1,500 for the boogie. What them want to celebrate, gaskiya, I am not know. Them say it is not Christmas party it is not convocation party, it is Sallah party. NUGA games don't last long time as to say it is boogie being over-all winner (or 2nd all winner) in the games. I beg don't ask if the N1,500 would be properly accounted for because I was not given the contract to organisation boogie. Meanwhile, I also hear school is rich enough to call party is too poor to fix security lights are dead, broken sinks that send water straight to the floor, loosly flush. Forger that them saw few books in many of their departmental libraries are 1920 and old publications. *Egu* boogie are important for now. Honourable University in Africa, south of Sahara of the desert, could you send us the L.Vs when the boogie are fixed? You'll sure need our ancient coverage. Or would you



Ibraheem Zakzaky: The message does not constitute a threat.

## Ibraheem Zakzaky: Three Regimes in Jail

By Muhammad Hassan-Tom

IN more than one respect, Mallam Ibraheem Zakzaky, the 'notorious Islamic fanatic' of Zaria City, comes forth in the image of Imam Ah, the orthodox Caliph of Islam. It is not that his spirits appear indomitable or his physique indefatigable with an eternal youth the attribute of his age-sake nicknamed the 'Sword of Allah'. But their very lucid understanding of the religion itself are identical. While Mallam Ibraheem himself will not seem to make apologies for being 'fanatical', the surpassing objectivity of his cause will in his opinions create him of every supposed trait of affliction. Ibraheem Zakzaky is an Islamic Fundamentalist in the known tradition of the religion as practiced by Ali who, it was, that declared: "I am thy fellow human beings for they are one of two groups. Either they are others in the faith or they are thy human beings of one flesh with me."

...use of the group known now as Nigerian Muslim 'Brothers' and Mallam Zakzaky is the "the total solution of the present *kurf* order and

the entrenchment of the Islamic system." This clarion call, Mallam Ibraheem told *Hotline* in Zaria, has nothing to do with hatred, animosity towards or killing of non-Muslims or the destruction of their property or places of worship. Said he: "We are calling for the re-establishment of Islam upon ourselves first and upon the community in which we live."

Post World War II developments and the decolonisation of usurped Muslim countries had started a wind of Islamic revivalism in 1945 with the first decolonised countries being Muslim (Egypt and Sudan for instance). This revolutionary upsurge climaxed in the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran which itself gave a new momentum to the world Muslim activists. Thus, it was as a result of happenings within Iran, that Nigerian Muslim youths embarked on their mass protest tagged 'Islam Only' in 1978.

It was in the wake of these that the concept of fundamentalist Islam was born in Nigeria under the philosophical and literary inspiration and guardianship of certain modern Islamic fundamentalists among them, Syed Qutb and Hassan Al-Panna of Egypt and Abul Ala Maududi of

Pakistan.

In his popular book *Milestones* (banned by the Nasser regime in Egypt), Syed Qutb, considered a towering figure in modern Islamic revivalism, provides the framework from which Islamic revolutionary activity mainly proceeds. Qutb wrote that "Islam cannot fulfil its role except by taking concrete form in a society, for man does not listen especially in this age, to an abstract theory which is not seen materialised in a living society." Elsewhere in the book, Qutb teaches that to start the task of revivalism, there has to be a vanguard which sets out with this determination of renouncing the unIslamic systems, customs, traditions, ideas and concepts. "Our aim" wrote Qutb "first is to change ourselves so that we may later change the society."

Armed with the conviction of this charge, Mallam Ibraheem graduated in Economics from the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1979 and proceeded to work, banding together Muslim youths for pro-Islamic activities. Today, at thirty-six, he still burns with the fiery determination that has earned him the anger of at least three successive governments in Nigeria. From Shehu Shagari to Muhammadu Buhari and now Ibrahim Babangida, Nigerian authorities have had occasions to believe that the Islamic religious fire smouldering at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria since 1978 as well as in the cities of Zaria, Kaduna and Kano are not unconnected with the handiwork of the youthful Mallam, whose personal abode in Kwarbai Quarters Zaria is within an effective range of 150 kms of these places. The main charges preferred against Mallam Ibraheem on each occasion were preaching, publishing and distribution of "subversive" literature to youths, university students and lecturers mainly at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, the Bayero University Kano and the Kaduna Polytechnic.

During the Shagari Administration, Mallam Ibraheem was in jail in Sokoto and Enugu prisons from 1981 till 1984 when he was released by the Muhammadu Buhari regime only to be returned to the Kinkiri Prisons, Lagos in December of the same year, under the infamous

Decree 2. He was discharged from the Kirikiri Prisons in August 1985 and enjoyed an intermission at home. In March 1987 he was tried along with other Muslims by the Karibi-Whyte Tribunal for offences of arson and breach of the peace in the Kafanchan Riots in Kaduna State. He was imprisoned for two and a half years at the Kaduna and Port-Harcourt Prisons from where he was released in November last year.

*Hotline* asked the reasons for the Mallam's persistence in the face of incarceration and its attendant discomforts and odds. His reply was unequivocal: "We call to the *deen* of Allah, they seek to prevent. We seek to establish Islam, they seek to preserve *kurf*. We seek to establish the Supremacy of Allah, they seek to preserve the supremacy of Taghut (*unbelief*). If they, who are on the wrong side persist, why should we change?" "Our method" he added "is in accord with the *Sunnah* of all the messengers of Allah and they (the messengers) encountered much harsher persecution than what we now encounter. We will Insha-Allah not change in the face of persecution or anything worse."

Does he classify himself as an extremist, then? "Go and ask Babangida because it is only him I heard defining extremist. Can this government tell us whether the Prophet Muhammad was extremist, or Shehu Usman Dan Fodio? We know the *deen* of Allah and we follow it. Extremism means anything out of Islam and is a transgression." He added "Our difference with other Islamic

scholars engaged in different types of calls and activities is a matter of emphasis and methods. All of us would wish to re-establish the *deen* of Islam. Some may lay emphasis on establishment of schools, building of mosques, clinics etc. Others may wish to eradicate one form of custom or the other, yet others may liaise with the government to procure some of the rights of Muslims. On our part we emphasise total destruction of the present system."

*Hotline* asked Mallam Ibraheem whether this could not be achieved by joining the system first and then reforming it. Muslim activists in Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Algeria etc., have adopted the formation of Islamic political parties in order to promote their world-view. Asked whether his group could not adopt the same tactics to achieve more, Mallam Ibraheem had this to say: "No, the system has its own mechanisms which preserve and protect it. It can never allow any other system to operate within it in order to finally annihilate it. One of the main weapons of this system is the so-called democratic process. They shout that democracy is the government of the majority but they deny the same majority the right to even express itself - so long as the wish of the majority goes against the interest of the status quo."

But are the authorities then justified in dealing summarily with Mallam Ibraheem and his colleagues and imprisoning them? He said simply: "We are calling on the Muslims to live up to the expectation of their religion. The mes-

### "No system allows its own annihilation"

sage does not constitute a threat to the authorities who have been attempting to prevent its spread by putting us in prison." He said that those who are harsh against callers like himself perfectly understand that "we are saying the right thing." He posited that "their fear is that the mass of the people will readily answer the call and since it is not they who are engaged in it they therefore seek to prevent it at all costs."

Surely, the most formidable of men will balk at such a pile of odds, but not Mallam Ibraheem long used to parrying the gravest of doubts. He is still optimistic that "gradually the mass of the people, whom they seek to prevent from hearing the truth will always understand more by seeing the action of the agents and the attitude of the Muslim brothers. Imprisonment has been helping in boosting our morale and spreading our message by making other Muslim brothers to be sympathetic and courageous to join or continue with our call."

The majority of Zakzaky's followers are youths - in and out of institutions of higher learning. Largely because of their spread across the northern states and because of their unflagging commitment to the cause, Islamic fundamentalism is now a valid stand in Nigerian political discussions. Older personalities some of whom are even top members of the administration are suspected to harbour similar fundamentalist views although most of them cannot be too secretive about it; for the perception that it is a radical stance is too widespread, and the whole movement is too a baby.

For Mallam Ibraheem Zakzaky and his family (Malama Zeenat, wife and Muhammad and Nusaibah, children,) too, the tortuous struggle has just begun, to bring "the theory of Islam into practice" by the help of Allah and the assistance of his lieutenants some, like Abdulhamid Abdullah, Muhammad Kudu, Hamza Muhammad Lawal, Ahmad Busari and Hassan Suleiman, of whom are still languishing in jail.



Mallam Zakzaky back from prison: "Imprisonment Is Boosting Our Morale"

# Ground Water Development: Ensuring Potable Water For The Masses

By Jude Okey Ifedi

**T**he provision of adequate water supply in some parts of the country especially the rural areas still remains an illusion.

This is mainly because a large number of the boreholes drilled consider population concentrations rather than the occurrences of specifically known water bearing units (aquifers). As a result of this anomaly, the yielding capacity of these boreholes is very low because the ground water is tapped from a considerable depth. Fortunately however, a technique known as *Hydrofact* is now available for the reactivation of such boreholes.

Although the tremendous effort of government (through its various agencies) towards the provision of potable water is commendable, there is still need for a ground-water enhancement programme so as to check the plague of underdevelopment. This programme would involve the search for specific water bearing units (aquifers) in a particular geologic environment as well as enhancing the chances of a successful ground water exploitation programme.

Ground water usually occurs in a subsurface reservoir, the boundaries of which are formed by adjacent less permeable or impermeable rocks. The reservoir may be confined or unconfined and the materials forming the reservoir may be composed largely of unconsolidated sediments or of bedrocks. These may be uniformly permeable or vary widely in permeability. However, the storage characteristics depends on the lithology and structure of the geological materials which contain the ground water.

Prior to drilling, therefore, a knowledge of the subsurface including hydrogeological conditions is necessary. The preliminary study would include existing geophysical survey maps, borehole logs and pumping tests to determine the probable aquifers and acquicludes at depth as well as the hydraulic conductivity, storativity and safe yield.

The preliminary study will also re-

quire as a complement, hydrological studies since information on rainfall, run-off, infiltration and evaporation would be required so that estimates could be made of water available for recharge and of natural discharge into effluent streams. These studies are necessary in order to guarantee effective and result-oriented ground water development.

A subsequent stage in exploration leading to the selection of a bore hole site is the use of geophysical techniques. This is necessary for obtaining accurate information in the area chosen. The cheapest method of doing this is by passing a known electric current through the ground under study and, the way in which the current travels is a function of the rock or rocks between the electrodes.

Voltage electrodes are also used to measure the potential differences along the current paths and also to assess the resistivity of the rocks. This resistivity is affected by rock density, fractures and fissures and by water content. When this application is combined with existing data, the method can be a reliable tool in the search for productive aquifers.

Eventually, when the site is established and drilling is in progress, decisions will have to be made as to which sections will have to be cased and screened. The purpose of casing is for bore hole stability and the exclusion of unwanted materials.

Explaining these processes to *Hotline* at his 7B Waziri Drive office in

**Application of  
this knowledge will  
help provide potable  
water for the  
masses and arrest  
incidences of  
water-borne diseases.**

Kaduna, Mr Magasan who is the Managing Director of Water Wells and Test Boring (Nig.) Ltd., said that a knowledge of these processes involved in ground water development would not only eliminate dissipation of efforts by most state governments but would also be of immense value to borehole contractors who lack proper knowledge of these things.

Mr Magasan who is very optimistic that the application of this knowledge will help most state governments in the country consolidate their struggles towards the provision of potable water for the masses also said that this would help to arrest the ugly incidences posed by water-borne diseases principal among which, he pointed out, are typhoid fever and guinea worm.

Tracing the sources of these water-borne diseases, Mr Magasan observed that it was quite regrettable that most boreholes sunk by private contractors do not have sanitary seals. He pointed out that the absence of these sanitary seals could lead to cases of contamination asserting that such contaminations could be easily avoided if well seals or borehole sanitary seals are fitted to the riser main pipes at well head.

To help check this menace, he further asserted, his company has designed and manufactured borehole sanitary seals entirely fabricated from a locally available raw material — aluminium and capable of carrying a weight of up to 5 tons (riser pipes).

Displaying a set of these borehole sanitary seals which he said are very easy to install and also available in commercial quantities, Mr Magasan said that this was done with a view not only to enhancing the hygienic quality of the water people drink but also to eschew the likelihood of accidents usually caused by children who fiddle with the pipes.

This new measure, he also explained, will in addition shield the pipes from ultraviolet exposure, making it possible to use them to irrigate and pump water into the pipes.

# Bush Burning: The Choice is O

By S.P. Bako

Once again, the harmattan winds are blowing! The forests are dying. So often do you perceive the odour of burning grass. Here and there, you see whole forests consumed by huge conflagrations, often started by hunting parties or farmers clearing land. So common is this practice that some state governments have adopted drastic measures against bush-burning, in a commendable attempt to protect our forests from going to blazes. Are they winning? Substantial part of the problem can be attributed to ignorance of the total effects of wild fire on our forests.

Fire has been intimately associated with mankind from the beginning of civilisation, especially since he realised his capacity for modifying the environment to meet his needs. Despite this long and basic association, fire is still a mystery to man.

A forest fire has been defined as any wild-land fire not prescribed for the area by an authorised plan. It is further described as an uncontrolled and freely spreading combustion which consumes the natural fuels of a forest including litter, grass, dead branch wood, snags, logs, stumps, weeds, brush, foliage and green trees. Such a fire is essentially confined and free to spread, in which case it is a "free-burning-fire" which is free to respond to its environment. A 'free-burning-fire' is least predictable as it increases its energy with time and determines its own rate of wood consumption.

### Types Of Forest Fire bigger:

**Ground Fire:** This consumes the organic material beneath the surface litter of the forest floor. It spreads within, rather than on top of the organic mantle. It is characterised by a slowly smouldering edge, with no flame and little smoke. Often hard to detect and slow moving, this is usually the most destructive of all fires (acre for acre) and the most difficult to control.

**Surface Fire:** This burns the surface

litter, other loose debris of the forest floor and small vegetation. It is the most common type of fire in timber stands of all species. A surface fire may and often does, burn up into the taller vegetation and tree crowns as it progresses.

**Crown Fire:** This advances from top to top of trees or shrubs. It is spectacular and more difficult to control until it again drops to the ground. Since it is usually fast moving, it poses grave danger to fire fighter and wild-life in its part. A crown fire may run ahead of a surface fire ("running" crown fire) or along with it ("dependent" crown fire).

In actual fire situations, these three kinds of fires may occur simultaneously and in all kinds of combinations.

A forest fire does several specific things. A major physical damage suffered from fire ravages is reduction in the usable volume of the tree through various wood defects resulting from burn scars.

Another serious aspect of fire injury to living trees is that it increases susceptibility to disease and insect attack by removing the protective bark and exposing the inner tissues.

Fire also exerts a profound total effect on wildlife. It can and does kill birds and other animals. It also destroys their natural habitat. Repeated fires reduce the number of beneficial micro-organisms near the soil surface.

Exposure of the soil surface through destruction of vegetative cover, permits severe erosion and accelerated surface water run-off.

Yet not all effects are destructive. Speeding the deterioration of accumulated dead material and the elimination of existing living cover, may at times and places fit the needs of management, especially when there is need to create a favourable environment for a new crop by speeding up the decay cycle, to release valuable nutrients like calcium, potash, phosphoric acid and nitrogen. However, this adds nothing new. Thus it

is seldom justification for lowering of pH (index of acidity) may also be decreasing.

Although the fertilising effect of lowering of pH (index of acidity) may be very valuable in a new stand of seedlings or in a plantation site, severe and often so destructive of living trees they produce long-term damage that are difficult to compensate.

A burn, whether by a wild carefully controlled fire produces certain sorts of damage. Fire effects are usually beneficial as long as the intensity of burning is not excessive. Damages offsetting these are regarded or unforeseen. A term effects on the current forest easier to recognise and appreciate terms like the continuation of the productivity of the forest are difficult to measure or ignored.

Shall we sacrifice the life of all its bountiful contribution and man (some of which are even centuries old) for a few years' harvest? The choice is up in a cloud of smoke or not kill nature's creations in the destroy nature's endowment multitude, simply because we hunt a bush-rat or a squirrel? Shall we, because of our laziness with our cigarette or our neglect ablate our forests, the effect could threaten our villages and lands? Shall we negate our efforts towards afforestation by killing remnant existing forests, simply because we want to be wicked to our neighbours? Somebody high-up needs to do something perhaps drastic, even introducing capital punishment for culprits, if we have to save ourselves.

Sunday Bako is with Sciences Department, A.B.U. Zaria.

# Facts About Epilepsy

By Dr. Dan Akut

**E**pilepsy is a disease that is well known to all. It is as old as man himself and has seen a lot of misinterpretation and confusion both on the possible cause and management. Presently known to be a brain disorder in which the victim is prone to fits (epileptic seizures) caused by a transient, excessive and abnormal discharge of nerve cells, the degree depending on the part and extent of brain cells involvement.

The ancient Greeks thought it was a holy sickness and there was also the infection theory and later, the moon was thought to induce epilepsy. In the present day Africa where juju (black magic) and the occult are still practised by both the educated and the uneducated, it is not surprising that epilepsy is still attributed to supernatural forces like witchcraft,

sign of visitation by evil spirits, demons and some even hold the belief that it is a venereal disease. Many people believe that a magic spell, a curse by an enemy, or an evil spirit can cause epilepsy. It is also widely believed that body secretions of an epileptic, such as urine, saliva and stools, are highly contagious, and consequently many intelligent citizens would not touch an epileptic in an attack; they would not drink from the same bowl or share with an epileptic what they

would with a person who is not suffering from the disease. Unfortunately, the epileptic who needs to be cared for especially during an attack is being avoided and discriminated against in terms of employment and education because of the general hostile attitude of the public. In some parts of Africa like Ethiopia, the epileptic is termed a social outcast. In the face of these problems the juju-man, medicine-man and witch-doctor

who profess with exuberant claims to be able to cure epilepsy, attract a good number of patients, while the orthodox physician can only hope to contain the condition with long-term drug therapy, a concept of treatment which many find totally alien to them. In view of this, many epileptic patients prefer to consult an unorthodox practitioner, who promises a quick cure, rather than a clinic manned by a qualified doctor. The irony of the situation is that the patient often takes both orthodox drugs and unorthodox concoctions concurrently and yet attributes his long remissions to the latter.

The fact is that people should know epilepsy for what it is and seek medical attention at the appropriate quarters. Epilepsy is a disease like any other, not caused by evil spirits or witchcraft, and

During an epileptic fit no attempt should be made to put anything in the mouth or force the teeth open (in the mistaken belief that this will protect the tongue). Convulsive movements should not be restrained as this may only result in injury, instead the seizure should be allowed to run its course but kept away from dangerous places (e.g. near fire, electrical apparatus, water, road way). Don't put irritants in the eyes or salt in the mouth as done in some parts of our country. It is also wrong to burn the feet in the fire in an effort to revive the patient as it is the practice in some places. After the attack, turn patient on the side in a semi prone position to aid breathing and general recovery and check the airways to make it patent. Patient may be confused immediately after an epileptic fit (automatism) and in this case needs reassurance and sympathy but with minimum disturbance for this may increase agitation and confusion. Transfer to hospital is only necessary if the fit was unusually prolonged or repeated or if injury had occurred.

Intensive health education by health personnel and government alike will help a lot in changing the



*Not mad, just sick.*

body secretions of an epileptic like urine, saliva and stools are not infectious and so one cannot catch epilepsy through that. It can be treated and controlled with modern drugs and the epileptic should be helped and removed from harmful objects during an attack to avoid injuring himself. That leads us to some of the practices in different traditions to stop an epileptic fit which cause more harm to the patient than the epilepsy.

hostile attitude of the public to the epileptic, improve the care of the epileptic during an attack and encourage them to seek proper medical attention in order to be useful members of the community. This will also help in minimising other preventable causes like trauma, for example road traffic accidents, excessive alcoholism and the like.

*Dr. Akut is of the New General Hospital, Kaduna.*

# Trad

## Expressions of I

**T**HE purposes of Trade Fairs in Nigeria are often sadly misunderstood by the majority of people, without pausing to see these fairs as the watershed of all that is wrong with Nigeria's technological and economic development. The seemingly positive contributions of the various Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, are all that is paramount in the minds of these Nigerians. Perhaps this is borne out of an overzealous patriotism.

These fairs as a matter of fact, are deceptive expressions of the state of our economy, because they carry no true indicators of the growth of the nation's economy.

But while this is so, it is also pertinent to identify why they have been so far an expression of our economic stagnation. The threat of foreign take-over of our domestic economy has not acted [up till now] as stimulants to Nigerian economic development. Even though considerable efforts have been made by Nigerian governments [past and present] to develop strategic industries such as the iron and steel and petroleum, it would be realised that they were superimposed on a backward and consumer-oriented economy, without a basis for growth in its socio-economic structure. But what the governments refused to understand is that what is needed in Nigeria is a rapid development of an integrated industrial economy capable of meeting the onslaught of foreign competition.

Though the participant volume strength of the trade fairs increases with every subsequent one organised, this however must not be seen as an expression of our economic conquests. For instance, the fact that the participants at the 12th Kaduna International Trade Fair increased from 205 in 1979 when the fair was first held to 800 in 1989 and 1000 in 1990, does not mean that the organisers of the trade fair should rest on their oars. It is not that they haven't been achieving,

but the fact still encourages more than their national participation to attract these making huge profits be desired.

This means that to draw favourable like Japan, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Greece, United States, Niger, Senegal, etc. are able to achieve their national industries, something that our country is dependent on especially for most of our needs. And this is to the detriment of these foreign countries and the Nigerian international market for our products.

What conditions are the historical and the developed and the underdeveloped. And as the terms of trade suggests, the labour under this category as their human resources have not been put to use. And far from being a centre of economic growth, and of social order here have been for economic stagnation, technology, and social order, being 'underdeveloped' this ridiculous situation to Mr Isaiah Bako, State Chamber of Commerce, age annual growth rate value added for the country. Indeed, it is lower than most countries with similar population problems. China. Our share of manufacturing as manufactures in the world. Our share of man income is equally

fair was a demonstration of a ridiculously under-utilised labour force which would never augur well for meaningful internal economic development. This is why the organisers of the fair must emphasise the fact that only companies or concerns, whether small or big, and who are actually producers instead of those who buy from somewhere to sell, may be allowed to participate in the fair. After all, the basic reason for organising a fair is to show or display what you have produced and not what someone else produced.

Therefore, let our economic growth or development be defined as increase over time in per capita output (of indigenous industries). Our brand of capitalism must not be that which is going through a peculiarly twisted career; a capitalism

that never experienced the vigour and exuberance of youth; a capitalism displaying at an early age, all the grievous features of senility and decadence.

It should also be remembered that the presence of foreign participants at our fairs must not be seen merely as an expression of confidence in our economy but the maintenance of a historical role to the benefit of foreign investors. This is because according to Mr. Balat "while stimulating industrial growth [through repatriation of profit] in their home countries, they extinguish the igniting spark without which there could be no industrial expansion". Whatever is allowed into our economy must be to our economic advantage.

Trade Fairs therefore must not be seen as avenues for expressing what is really

not there, but a design whose object is not only to display wares but to encourage exchange of ideas so as to obtain the greatest possible advantage. Because fairs arise from the same cause - specialisation and the exchange of ideas between those who specialise and those intending to diversify.

The objectives of the organisers of Trade Fairs are achieved only if people find time to realise the scope of assistance the fairs can give them for a clearer understanding of the many problems of our economy. And the hope that some of them, at least, will become sufficiently interested as to want to find solutions to them in any way they can.

*By Danjuma Bawa  
with Aminu A. Kado.*

## New Crafts in Banking

Four years into the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Nigerian commercial and merchant banks no longer rely to any real extent, on the substantial amount(s) deposited by parastatals and other agencies, for their survival.

It all began in June last year when the monetary authorities decided to mop-up the inflationary budget of 1988. At one blow about N3 billion was withdrawn from the vaults of commercial banks through the abolition of offshore collaterals. Also, the consequent recall of all deposits of government agencies in the banking system by the Accountant-General further exacerbated the cash squeeze. These two measures introduced by the government wiped out about 13% of the total liquidity ratio in the banks and almost paralysed the banking industry. Two months after, many banks had overdrawn their accounts with the Central Bank and consequently could not meet many of their financial obligations.

Realising the suffocating impact of the situation, banks embarked upon a fierce competition for the development and packaging of new consumer products to win the hearts of more customers, knowing fully well that the individual customers now form the basis of their survival if they have to survive. Therefore, in a bid

to attract more customers, and also retain their loyal ones, many brand new services have been introduced by the banks.

ICON Merchant Bank for instance, introduced an interest yielding current account, the current account plus (CAP) in December 1989. Reputed for their pioneering role in the Nigerian banking industry, ICON's CAP was introduced long before the Central Bank directed that all banks should pay interests on current accounts. ICON premium certificate (IPC) is another customer-winner. It is an instrument issued by the bank in exchange for deposits of varying amounts and for varying periods. The amount floats and also enables its participants to cash their discounts up-front.

Known for its efficiency in the commercial banking sector, United Bank for Africa, (UBA) was on call to add more products to its already enviable stock. In addition to UBA Card, UBA House Savings and Loans Scheme, the Small Holder Loan Scheme and many others, the Accident Safeguard Free Insurance Scheme (ASFIS) and Statements Savings were recently introduced. ASFIS for instance, allows participants to get about N50,000 as a result of death or permanent disability occasioned by accidents. The holder if hospitalised, will also benefit from the scheme.

Many other banks were not to be left out and had conceived one product or the other in a bid to lure more customers. The Cooperative and Commerce Bank (CCB), for instance introduced Saturday Banking and the CCB Diamond Card. The high net yielding investment certificate of First City Merchant Bank, (FCMB) venture financing scheme of ABC Merchant Bank.

The Abacus Merchant Bank, a new name associated with merchant banking in Nigeria is also not left behind in this competition. It's newly introduced Abacus Investment Scheme is a sure winner any time. With bulk interest payment guaranteed upfront, customers are in for a good deal with Abacus. To ensure the success of this scheme, Abacus Merchant bank contracted DHL, a reputable courier company to assist and make the scheme a success through a network of about 100 branches nationwide.

Other inventions include the Commerce Bank's Prime Account, an account that attracts interests and requires no notice of withdrawal. It also offers customers free cheque books. The Trade Bank Interest Bearing Current Account also offers a similar service to that of the Commerce Bank's Prime Account. It pays up to 5% interest annually on current account and also offers a free cheque book.

*- By Ado Lawal.*

# Reform of the Legal System

## Area Courts

**T**hey are said to be disposing of 80% of all court cases in Nigeria. The fact remains that the 1967 reform of the Native Courts is overdue for another overhaul. The judges are poorly paid. They are not well trained. There is no way a Diploma holder in Sharia or a holder of a Degree in Islamic Law can learn how to apply the Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, CPC, Evidence Act and the Constitution, all in a 3 months course at the Institute of Administration. These *Alkalis* can be effective and good civil case judges. In other words, criminal jurisdiction should be completely removed from Area Courts. We have enough lawyers now to man magistrate courts. These should be given criminal and limited jurisdictions.

I will not be tired of saying that Area Courts staff, including the judges are poorly paid. The manner in which they are appointed is equally faulty. The Inspectorate section of the Area Courts need to be reformed and overhauled. In a situation where an *Alkali* will give 'kola' in order to be shortlisted for interview, to pass the interview or even to get preferential posting, and have petitions against him suppressed etc, no justice can be guaranteed. Moreso, when they are very poorly paid, not given decent, if any, official accommodation, no job security, no personal guards etc., and yet are given the powers to determine 'the fate' and freedom of millions.

In 1960 it was reasonable to say that the courts should not be bound by the provisions of the C.P.C. and the Evidence Law. It is no longer reasonable now. Some have even argued that it is illegal to say they are only to be 'guided' when most of the procedural provisions of the two codes are elaborations on the fundamental right provisions of the constitution. There is therefore the need to review the manner of appointments and the jurisdiction and the supervision of these courts.

## Magistrates Courts

These cadre of judicial officers are the

## By Yahaya Mahmood

beast of burden of the judiciary. They are a little more comfortable than the *Alkalis* in that, in some cases priority is given to them in the provision of accommodation and security guards. But there are still a lot to be done to improve their conditions and consequently, their services. It is not unlikely to find a Chief Magistrate now who has not read more than 10 of the over 180 Gani Weekly Law Reports. The books are not purchased for them by the judiciary and they cannot personally afford to buy them. That is, if he has other necessary books such as laws of the federation and gazettes.

Provision of stationery for these courts is also given very little care. If you want record of proceedings, just like they do in the Area Courts, you have to buy paper and take to the courts. In some states, registrars beg lawyers for typing sheets to type the daily court list:

## Need for Reforms

An ordinary case of causing death by dangerous driving will last 2 years in the dock. It will take the police over a year to complete investigation, at least 3 months to get the medical report, and 6 months to get advice from the Ministry of Justice. All because the doctor is either so busy or has not been paid the necessary fees. And the Ministry is either understaffed or the police station has no typewriter and paper to type the case diary.

A case of Indian hemp possession will last one year, the case of forgery will last two years. The only recognised government chemist in Kaduna serves the 11 Northern States. Upon these, the only handwriting experts in Kaduna go round the various states and local governments to give evidence, and come back to Kaduna to analyse and examine documents. What is more, the only ballistic laboratory is in Lagos.

## Tribunals

Some people see the proliferation of Military Tribunals as lack of confidence in regular courts or in the Civil Legal

System. They are not faster than the regular courts. And their long terms of imprisonments (10-100 years) have not proved to be more effective deterrent than the short and normal sentences passed by regular courts.

## Police

It is either that the police should recruit enough lawyers to take over prosecution from lay policemen, or the Ministry of Justice should take over all criminal prosecutions. Most of the serious cases lost by the police are as a result of the incompetence of the prosecutors, or the ability of the defence counsel to argue convincingly. This gives the impression, especially to complainants and victims of crimes, that the law is only for the rich.

And, of course, the police also are poorly paid, poorly equipped and poorly accommodated. Hence the temptation always to resort to bribery and corruption. How do you blame a corporal on a salary of less than N300 a month with more than 12 years in service, a wife and ten children sharing a 2 bedroom apartment to reject a N500 bribe to destroy evidence? Or even a N20 bribe so that he can get transport for his kids to school?

## Prisons

Prisons are supposed to be reformatory institutions. But when they are overdue for reforms due to lack of money to provide adequate facilities, it is little wonder that they are now more of breeding grounds for criminals.

## Conclusion

It should be made part of the transition to Civil Rule programme to reform the legal system, court structure, police inefficiency, the prison and other reformatory institutions. This can substantially reduce the burden placed on MAMSER. And I for one, will not mind if \$1m (one million dollars) World Bank loan is secured to improve legal service and general administration of justice.

*Yahaya Mahmood is a Private Legal Practitioner in Kaduna.*

# MARRIAGE: A Paradise Lost?

By Grace Uadia

**M**ARRIAGE as an institution has always been regarded as a bond binding two people with deep feelings for each other. It also means the coming together of a man and a woman in order to make a family. This picture is vividly painted in the Bible when it says "for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and be joined unto his wife and the two shall be one flesh". Similarly, the Qur'an speaks of marriage as companionship in which each one has his or her own rights.

The journey into marriage usually begins when two people having affection for each other meet and believe they are soul mates. Those who have experienced this affinity claim it involves some kind of cohesion and understanding in the relationship of the two parties after which their minds and hearts work and beat as one. Then comes the grand finale at the altar or where-ever-else, after which the couples are expected to live happily ever after in marital bliss.

Today, this institution once held sacred by both public policy and public morality is fast losing its hallowed glow. Most spinsters today, for one reason or the other shun marriage, preferring to wallow in the deceptive euphoria of spinsterhood. The question usually asked is: could there have been some deviations from the real essence of marriage to warrant this change in attitude? Or should we believe that this change in attitude is consequent upon our changing times? This issue of women and marriage is already an over-flogged one. Most people who bother about it do so because it is generally regarded as the most coveted virtue of womanhood. Those who have experienced marriage claim that a woman, through it, gains access to a lot of entitlements such as food, shelter and clothing apart from other things like the security and respect it provides. To them, marriage for women is a step into a new life and a better future which is believed to be something every woman would cherish.

Despite the benefits involved, most

women still defer or totally abstain from marriage as if that aura that once surrounded it, no longer exists. Marital bliss is becoming more of a fairy tale to some. Again, it is imperative to ask: could it be that marriage is of little importance for the women folks as most of them seem capable of being independent of it? Most of these women claim that, the fact that they shun it does not mean they no longer cherish it. Besides, there is no woman who would not want to be married even for societal reasons except she is trying to find solace in self-deception. There is no doubt, we all know, that a marriage founded on love and understanding enhances conjugal bliss, that feeling of belonging and sharing which is much sought after by all.

What then could be the cause of this deferment or abstention? Marriage, some say, is now a contract predetermined by wealth and social status. The unfortunate thing about this kind of marital contract is that, invariably, it ends in divorce. Others simply cherish the freedom that characterise spinsterhood and fear losing it. To them marriage is a dull monotonous affair which might end up in regrets. This has caused many ladies to stay aloof till it gets to a stage suitors no longer come knocking on their doors for a long, long time. Some look forward to it though but find themselves hoping against all hopes. Having spent reasonable measure of their lives looking for Mr. Right, they still refuse to make do with Mr. Available while some even in search of the Mr. Available just don't find them.

Certain laws and customs in one way or the other have also contributed to this condition. Take for example, the custom which demands that a man propose to a woman and not vice versa. A woman therefore has to wait till he finds it convenient to do so, which he might end up not doing even after five years or more of courtship. Thus most women for no fault of their own, find themselves remaining single, especially now that having a live-in-lover has become the vogue for men in

our society. This situation has been aggravated since some men find bride price too high to pay.

How can we reconcile the meaning of marriages in the days of our forefathers with today's, when most men now believe that, by marrying a woman they are doing her a favour. They expect her to thank her stars she is lucky to be "hooked"; just like a slave bought out of slavery through bride price. The fact, however, still remains that the lifestyle of both ages or periods are different but does that mean that marriage should lose so much of its value and flavour?

In assessing contemporary marriages, we find that a lot more in meaning and style has been added to it, to the extent that people tend to put their happiness among other things at stake while going into it. Happiness and peace of mind, ingredients of a happy marriage seem to be eluding most marriages nowadays and it so happens that not every woman would wish to lose them after all. Hence most women say, though, it is every woman's wish to be married and happily at that, if you can't find the right man with whom you are sure you'll find happiness, then what is the point rushing into it. Rushing into it or not, marriage is by tradition compulsory but people claim that if we cannot find some subtle way to make it amenable to our purpose, then some far-reaching changes have to be made for our own benefits. At least the world is changing for the better, so is every thing else including concepts and institutions. Marriage should not be an exception. Who would blame any woman then if she decides to think of her happiness and peace of mind before any other thing. At least the woman's happiness matters a lot in a home since a happy woman makes a happy home which in turn breeds happy children - leaders of tomorrow.

To love and be loved, the real essence of marriage are the most important things on earth. Marriage is the seal which is supposed to bind a couple. This should be borne in mind if this essence is to be preserved.

# Nelson Mandela: The Resolute Iconoclast

By Danjuma Bawa

There is a level of mutual interaction between English-speaking whites and their Afrikaaner counterpart. Apartheid therefore is not only an ideology but essentially a strategy to entrench white dominance based upon other previous strategies, all of which had used the prism of race.

The Afrikaaners, according to Calvinism, are held as a chosen people with a manifest destiny to rule the black Africans. According to this belief, God has made the African inferior, thus it is against God's mission to make provision to improve the status of the Negroes. The Dutch reformed churches further provided the theological backing that "while White and Black shared a heritage of original sin, the black people inherited a greater propensity for sinning".

To apply the policies of apartheid effectively, the South African parliament enacted a number of laws aimed at making the various racial components of the population live mutually exclusive lives. These acts include the Group Area Act for residential apartheid, the Separate Amenities Act for separate social facilities like hotels, lavatories and post offices; the Immorality Act for the prevention of sexual or material relations between members of different races; and the Abolition of Passes and Consolidation of Documents Act.

Through the policies of apartheid, only about 13% of all South African territory is given to more than 20 million black inhabitants, while the rests (87%) which is the richest in agricultural and mineral potentials, is reserved for about 5 million whites.

It is against this backdrop that Nelson Mandela, in his famous slogan "the struggle is my life" reiterated the dedication of his life to the struggle for the emancipation of the black man in South Africa. He became a man known for his iconoclastic state of mind in what appeared as a most critical and sceptical in

The unconditional release of Nelson Mandela by the government of President De Klerk of South Africa in February, is a very significant gesture to the blacks, not only in South Africa but the entire continent. His release brings to reality a landmark in the history of the black race in its struggle for emancipation. While it is an expression of the very essence of living and perseverance, it is also a big blow to the plexus and ego of the unholy adherents of the all-pervasive monstrosity called apartheid.

Mandela has become a symbol of unification for blacks in South Africa in their struggle for freedom from the claws of white domination. By his uncompromising resistance against the policies of apartheid, Mandela becomes a prop to the weak resignation of the black people of South Africa while at the same time, a symbol of a human response to a need. He is a moral force for the regeneration and salvation of the South African society.

The history of his rise to martyrdom spans through the period of his unflappable leadership role against apartheid up to 1963 when he was arrested, tried and imprisoned for allegedly trying to topple the Pretoria regime.

Apartheid as a system exists in order to entrench the material and philosophical interest of the dominant white minority at the expense of the liberty and material well-being and historical essence of the black man. In fact, apartheid expresses the coming into prominence of the powerful urbanised Afrikaaner middle class which was rebelling against the alliance between the white bourgeois and mining capitalist. By 1948, the Afrikaaner Petti-bourgeois was able to assert its supremacy and was also able to take over control of the state. And by 1949, the creation of a legal structure for apartheid had got a firm foundation.

Since that time, the situation in South Africa revealed the fact that there has been a consistent attempt by the Afrikaaner ruling class to assert itself as the dominant fraction of the white ruling class. However, this dominance represented the superiority of the white in relations to other classes of people.



Mandela: *The struggle is my life.*

the apartheid system. In response to the tyranny of its existence and practice, he seemed to have used the dictum "man know thyself" to question the social and political structures which stress the supremacy of the whites. The genuineness of his cause found expression in and blossomed in the activities of the African National Congress (ANC).

Mandela re-awakened the blacks from their throes of despondency and disillusionment at the discriminations they were daily going through, and was admired for his resolute struggle for black emancipation. It is his iconoclasm and non-conformism that led to his trial and imprisonment in 1963 at the famous South African prison on Robben Island.

Mandela's release is a salute to courage, not only as a leader of a people, but also as a man who dared to remain sane in an insane society. A man who dared to touch the softest spot in the heart of a seemingly cold man (De Klerk) and made the world aware that he is also a human being with a human heart. It is also a salute to the courage of De Klerk to dare the venom of the Conservatives in granting an unconditional release to Nelson Mandela and unbanning the African National Congress (ANC).

Dr. Nelson Mandela, now the worthy Deputy-President of the African National Congress (ANC) walks the other side of midnight -- the dawn of a new democracy where black and white alike shall walk the streets of Johannesburg without fear of intimidation. Amandla!

# Traffic Crime: Improper Head Lamps

By Idris Umar

**I**T is the vogue, even a pleasure, in this country to use whatever means possible in order to check our population growth. Our activities are aimed at beyond self preservation and so on. Nigerians are either faking or adulterating baby foods, cooking oil, drugs. If we are not killing our fellows for money, we are selling expired medicines. Mention all the means of disposing of one another, direct or indirect and we are involved in it.

I am however concerned here with an issue touching on a provision in the traffic regulation. And this is about the vehicle head lamp and its use. According to the traffic regulation:-

(1) Such lamps shall be placed as follows:

(i) Motor vehicles, except motorcycles without side-cars, shall carry two lamps in front, one on each side of the vehicle, so constructed and placed as to exhibit a white light visible within a reasonable distance in the direction towards which the vehicle is facing and clearly to indicate the width of the vehicle.

(ii) In the case of commercial vehicles when either of the lamps referred to in sub-paragraph (i) hereof is placed in such a position that the distance of the

centre of the lamp from the extreme outside point of the vehicle on its appropriate side, exceeds twelve inches, two additional lamps shall be fitted at the front of the said vehicle, one on each side, so that its centre shall not exceed the aforesaid distance of twelve inches, and so as clearly to indicate the width of the vehicle to approaching traffic. **THE SAID LAMPS SHALL BE FOCUSED BELOW THE HORIZONTAL AND SHALL EXHIBIT A LIGHT OF SUFFICIENT POWER ONLY TO INDICATE THE WIDTH OF THE VEHICLE.** (Emphasis mine): Provided that the provisions of the foregoing subparagraph with regard to the fitting of side lights, shall not apply to commercial vehicles that were registered on or before the 31st day of December, 1938.

But what is the practice today? One finds that while a number of motorists ply our roads using one lamp, a majority of the motorists drive without heeding the injunctions of this particular traffic

**Mention all means  
of disposing of one  
another, and we are  
involved in it.**

regulation. In other words, motorists just move about at night 'feeling' their way because their visions are blurred. Consequently, we either hit or get hit by fellow vehicle drivers. Those put at great risk are cyclists and pedestrians. A substantial number of night accidents, especially the hit and run cases, are attributable to this practice.

Not satisfied with the extent of damage this kind of situation can cause, motorists have resorted to putting extra powerful head lamps. And these head lamps are so powerful that a person walking, riding or driving from the opposite direction is left with a poor vision, perhaps, as good as that of a bat in the day time.

Nigerians!, we have a queer way of obeying our laws when and the way it suits us even when we are definite about the consequences of our actions. Even though the police is overworked and understaffed, it is still its duty to check the misuse of head lamps as this contributes to high rate of accidents. Motorists on the other hand, can do well to remove their extra lamps or at least dip them for on coming vehicles.

*Umar Idris is with the Nigerian Police Force Public Relations Unit.*

## OBITUARY

The death has been announced of Mallam Inuwa Umar Marafa. Mallam Inuwa Marafa died in Kumo, Bauchi State, on Sunday, 18th March, 1990 after a brief illness.

Late Mallam Inuwa is survived by three wives, five children and sixteen grandchildren.

In his life time, the late Mallam Marafa held many positions, among them: Village Head of Tukulma and Tabra both in Gombe Emirate of Bauchi state. He was also the Senior Health Inspector, Akko LG, Bauchi State, a position he held until his death.

May his soul rest in perfect peace. Amin.

- Family



Late Mallam Inuwa Umar Marafa

## **APPRECIATION**

### **MAY ALLAH BLESS ALL**

The Military Governor of Niger State, Lt. Col. Lawan Gwadabe, His Royal Highness, The Emir of Minna, Alhaji Umaru Farouk Bahago, the families, and all the indigenes of Niger State, do hereby thank the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida; AFRC Members; Honourable Ministers; State Governors: Their Royal Highnesses; Government functionaries; Military colleagues and all others, who in their respective ways, have extended sympathy and paid condolence on the assassination of our illustrious son:

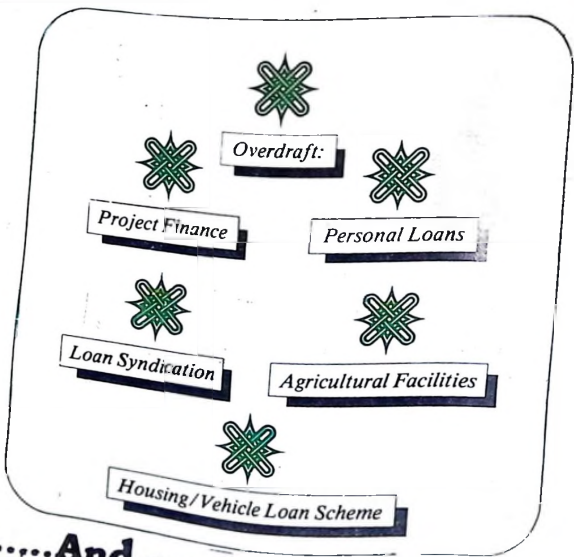


**Lt.-Col. Usman Kakanda Bello**

May Allah in His infinite mercy bless all and grant  
the deceased eternal mercy.

Ameen.

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