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SEPTEMBER 17 - SEPTEMBER 24, 1990 • VOL. 1 NO. 5

# Citizen

Politics • Economics • Culture



## DESERT SCOURGE

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Politics. Economics. Culture

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The implications of this desertification are frightening not only for the millions who eke out a living from this harsh environment or in the alternative, are forced to migrate literary to greener pastures. The implications are also frightening for the entire country. For one thing, half the livestock that provides a considerable amount of the protein requirement of the population is raised here. For another, the migrations that have often resulted from the desertification have been constant sources of violent community clashes.

What is the nature of the desertification threat? What has been done to check these threats and how effectively? Mahmud Jega and Tawey Zakka went out to find the answers to these and other questions, Jega to Sokoto, Kano, Katsina and Borno states, Zakka to Zaria where we thought much relevant research must have gone on at the agricultural and environmental departments. They found that there has been more lipservice paid to stopping the scourge than actually doing anything about it.



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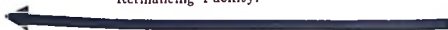


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## Babangida's last lap

Sir,

I'll be grateful if you kindly publish my opinion on Babangida's speech published in your magazine dated September 03-10 (Vol. 1 No. 3).

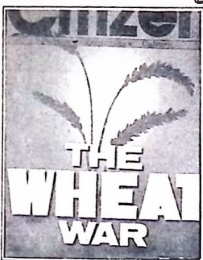
From the fact that the former Chief of General Staff (C.G.S.) remains the vice president of the country and no single civilian has been initiated into the AFRC, this seems to be an attempt to militarise the politics of the country towards 1992 rather than an attempt by the Federal Military Government to "systematically deregulate and demilitarise the process of politics and government in the period leading to 1992".

Mashood O. Omotosho,  
Dass Local Government Secretariat,  
Bauchi State.

get here until Thursday when one might have exhausted his/her money buying other magazines.

I wish you good luck and God's guidance.

Mrs. Laral Omofonma (Nee Ambi)  
Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria,  
Maiduguri.



## Investigate, investigate

Sir,

Going through your maiden and the two subsequent editions, I am forced to advise you to go into investigative journalism rather than the arm-chair journalism because your readers will not get their ten (N10.00) Naira value from events already told by other papers and analysed by your men.

Mohammed Mamman Saba  
P. M. B. 28,  
Minna, Niger State.

## Too pricey,

Sir,

The 10 Naira cover price of your magazine is too high. I know you must have considered the cost of printing materials and other expenses before you fixed this price.

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duce the price of the magazine to N 5.

I presume your magazine is for the masses. One therefore expects reliable and factual stories which will earn the magazine a lot of customers, but the higher the price the lower the demand.

Ibrahim A. A. Yahaya  
P. O. Box 250  
Kaduna

## Its all right

Sir,

I commend you for your timely venture into the magazine world. The very name "Citizen" makes one expectant of literature that would be relevant to the lives of each and everyone of us.

I find your magazine mentally and morally stimulating so far. I hope you will adhere to your initial efforts and sustain a magazine of quality as well as appeal to the generality of people.

Yes, magazines are becoming almost as abundant as newspapers. My choice is your magazine because of its unbiased and analytical approach about issues that are meaningful to us all.

Keep up the challenge you have taken and continue to be truly the magazine for all citizens.

Binta Dabup  
Uncle Bado Memorial School,  
15 Isa Kaita Road,  
P.O. Box 1703, Kaduna.

## CORRECTION

In our leader last week on the death of Dr. K. O. Mbadiwe, we said he died on September 29 and that *The Guardian* reported it the following day.

Obviously we goofed as today is September 17.

Dr. Mbadiwe died on August 29 and *The Guardian* reported it on August 30.

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

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Dr Mustapha Zubairu  
General Manager, Niger State  
Housing Corp., Minna.



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We have developed Housing Estates in Minna and Suleja. The Corporation has sold most houses on owner occupier basis to Corporate bodies and individuals. At present the Corporation under its Home Ownership Scheme, has serviced plots of land of various densities (at various locations in the State) to all participants in the scheme. 700 hectares of land in Minna, Suleja, Kontagora, Bida and all the local government Headquarters in the State has been acquired for the scheme.

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Under our consultancy services, a consultancy unit has been set up for the Purpose of providing comprehensive professional services to Nigerians in the field of Housing development, planning and engineering.

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We have embarked on a commercialisation drive that has led to the construction of 3 in number commercial complexes worth over 4.0 million in Minna capital of Niger State.

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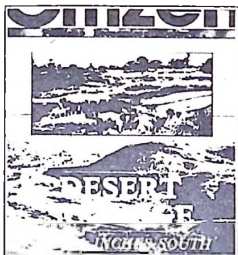
# The Desert Scourge

For decades now the Sahara desert, the world's largest, has been marching southwards without let, slowly but ever so surely. According to Alhaji M D Gusau, Sokoto State's Director of Forestry, the most conservative estimate of this march is three kilometres per year. At this speed and with the country extending 1050 kilometres from north to south, it would take about 350 years for the Sahara to meet the Atlantic.

Thirty-five decades is hardly a lifetime in the time-scale of nations. If this sounds rather alarmist, consider the fact that not only is the desert knocking on our doors, it actually has a foot in it already. According to the experts some 125,000 square kilometres comprising extensive areas of Borno, Kano, Katsina and Sokoto States are already desert-prone. One does not need to be an expert to see that such cities as Maiduguri, Kano, Katsina and Sokoto have become increasingly sandy in the last decade or so.

It would of course be wrong to assume a straight-line movement of the desert. Like the sea which is 1,050 kilometres away, desert sand too ebbs and flows. This means it could take more than 350 years for the twin to meet. In this, however, lies the danger of what seems to us to be official complicity.

This is not to say that there is lack of awareness of the danger posed by the desert's march. Quite the contrary. Indeed a lot of money and time have been spent in an attempt to stem its



ominous march. The problem, as is all too often the case, is that we have been rather wasteful and unimaginative in our attempt.

According to Dr. Yahaya Abdullahi, the head of the department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, the current strategy for stemming the desert seem to emphasise the institutional and technological aspects of it to the neglect of the human and ecological aspects. Take the specific instance of tree-felling for fuel-wood. This is widely acknowledged as one major source of desertification. Government strategy for checking this activity seems to focus on a campaign to persuade people to switch from fuel-wood to kerosene or gas stoves. However, several years and thousands of stoves later, the people still persist in their age-old habits of using fuel-wood.

It will be easy to blame the conservative nature of the people for sticking to tree-felling in spite of its obvious danger to the environment. But that would be mistaken for the obvious reason that it begs the question why they would prefer what seems a backward source of energy to a modern one. The answer, probably lies in the fact that all told, fuel-wood is still more economical for them than kerosene or gas stoves.

It needs little imagination to see why. All too often the dead hand of bureaucracy coupled with corruption ensures that the stoves are delivered to consumers at costs they can hardly afford. Then of course there is the official presumptuousness that Big Brother knows what is good for you, with the result that such campaigns have little or no input from the grassroots. The predictable result is that tree-felling goes on regardless.

Obviously we cannot go on this way. Whether it is nature on the one hand, or deforestation over-cropping by human beings and over-grazing by livestock, on the other, we must evolve cost-effective and people-oriented strategies for meeting the challenge of the desert. There is abundant local expertise to be tapped for meeting this challenge. The problem is that we seem to prefer foreign sponsored projects with all their glamour, forgetting that invariably the bulk of the foreign funding they bring ends up in the pockets of so called foreign experts.

## Cutting the military to size

A fortnight into the hurricane of re-arrangements now sweeping through the armed forces, it is pretty obvious that, though not on the agenda of the transition to civil rule in 1992, the trimming of the armed forces is probably the most significant — after the felt need for entrenching a culture of public accountability along the emerging political class.

Though missing on the agenda, any-

one who cared to observe President Ibrahim Babangida closely, would have noticed that the exercise was a top priority of his administration's. As far back as January, if not earlier, he was already dropping strong hints that he intended to leave behind an armed forces small enough for the economy to sustain. For instance, on January 22, on the occasion of this year's Chief of Army Staff Annual

Conference, he told his audience that it was time to take stock of the size and logistics of the army. "In an environment of fierce competitive de-



mands", he said, "the Nigerian Army should carry out an exercise to audit its manpower as well as an inventory of its equipment." The army is by far the largest of the three arms of the military.

As if in anticipation of the pain the exercise would entail and the criticisms that could ensue, the president underscored what had since become obvious through the SAP regime, namely, that his administration was not out on a popularity contest. Said Babangida, "the battle for the peace of our beloved land is worth all the misunderstanding."

With the trimming exercise it would seem apprehension is the more appropriate word than misunderstanding. For there are now grave apprehensions that the exercise, where it does not degenerate into a witchhunt a la Murtala Muhammed's purge of the civil service in the 70s, could exact a social cost that may take a long time, if ever, to pay. Official figures of those already purged has not been released, but numbers in the region of 600 officers including scores of generals are being whispered. By the end of the exercise nearly half the guesstimated 150,000 troops would have been cut.

The apprehension is on the obvious ground that not only would the exercise add to the already existing mass unemployment, the new additions would be people trained in the use of fire-arms. One shudders to imagine what kind of work the devil will find for such idle hands.

Yet the trimming exercise is a task that President Babangida must carry out, if he wants his administration to be succeeded by a lasting Third Republic. We do not believe that the size of the army has much to do with its being coup-prone. If that were so the first coup would have waited till after the civil war when the armed forces grew into its present formidable size. So trimming the army cannot be sufficient guarantee against coups. It is, however, an absolutely necessary first step.

According to *Soja* (November/December 1989), the official organ of the Army, defence spending last year was 7.47% of the year's budget. This was at a time when health was getting less than 1% of the budget. Between 1967, the year of the Civil War, and last year, military spending averaged 15%, far and away the single biggest allocation and bigger than the allocation for health, housing and education combined. Obviously there is a trade-off between guns and butter. It is precisely for this reason that the armed forces must be trimmed, otherwise guns will continue to get priority over butter.

Faced with no choice but to trim the armed forces, the Babangida administration must make it as painless as possible. The first step is to ensure that the exercise is done not only fairly, but be seen to be transparently fair. For instance, the holding of political post should not be a criterion for retrenchment. There may have been wide-

spread abuse of public trust by those who held public office, but there were significant exceptions. In any case the authorities have always emphasised that such jobs were to be regarded as military postings.

Second, those who are retired for reasons of redundancy must receive their pensions promptly. The pensions themselves should reflect the value of the naira, otherwise they would be of little use. The financial implication of this second point is enormous. Exact figures may not be readily available but the costs must run into hundreds of millions of Naira.

The question is where to find the money. We think one way is for government to withdraw its funding of the political process beyond organising elections and marginal subsidy of party expenses. It did not have any business getting involved with this in the first place. Left to their own devices, but within a general framework that would ensure free and fair elections, the transition programme would have cost the politicians and ultimately the tax-payer, far less than it has done already.

The trimming of the armed forces should mean priority for those retired over the funding of political parties. Otherwise the Third Republic would inherit a manageable army alright, but would also inherit a more dangerous army of unemployed that would make it well-nigh impossible to maintain law and order.

## The Conference that never was

Few people would be surprised that the four-day National Conference on the so-called national question sponsored privately by the National Consultative Forum and which was to have started on September 6, was in the end aborted by the authorities. The conference was born in controversy and controversy dogged it all the way to its abortion.

What apparently started it all was a similar conference mooted by a group of former so-called "super permanent

secretaries" led by Chief Phillip Asiodu, in a paid advertisement in the Kaduna-based *Democrat* on February 11. The group wanted the debate on the country's political framework reopened in the wake of conclusion of the last Constituent Assembly. Essentially Asiodu and company wanted a French model of democracy where an elected president left much of the running of government to an elected prime minister. This was as opposed to the American executive presidential

system the country has adopted since the Second Republic.

Chief Asiodu wanted government to sponsor the conference. It was here that the National Consultative Forum came in.



Made up of well-known social critics like Dr. Beko Ransome Kuti and Mr. Alao Aka-Bashorun, the forum thought government had no business getting involved in such a conference. An attempt to bring the two groups together looked possible at first but in the event it floundered. Predictably recriminations ensued and the Asiodu group withdrew. The forum then proceeded regardless.

Few people would be surprised that the conference could not hold after all, but the signs that the conference might be aborted surfaced rather late in the day. The first sign came in President Babangida's August 27, speech celebrating his fifth year in power. "Indeed" said the president, "I have observed that a section of the political elite is using the national question as a platform to cause political mischief." It was obvious who the cap fit, but it still be left room to hope that the conference would still be allowed to hold; by then invited government functionaries had not turned down their invitations and more significantly the authorities at the National Theatre, the venue of the conference, had, according to Dr. Ramsome Kuti, given the go-ahead.

However as D-day approached the signs grew more ominous. In quick succession the Nigerian Bar Association,

the two political parties jointly, the NLC and leading invitees like former President Shehu Shagari and Chief Asiodu, either denounced the conference, declined their invitations or pleaded stalemate as reason for their inability to attend.

The most definitive signs came from Professor Jerry Gana, the Chairman of Mamser, and Prince Bola Ajibola, the Justice Minister. Gana, on his part, told "Abuja *Newsday*" a day before the conference that it would lead to a coup! The Justice Minister on the other hand told the organisers in a two-page letter, also the day before the conference, that he could not accept their invitation because he could not conceivably be part of a conference that risked violating Decree 19 on the transition to civil rule. The relevant section of the decree stated that any action prejudicial to the realisation of the transition programme could fetch one a maximum of five years in jail with no option of fine. Presumably the conference fell under such actions.

Still the forum and many participants apparently thought the authorities were merely bluffing for come the morning of September 6, they turned up at the National Theatre, venue of the conference. To their consternation, the place was sealed.

Which is a great pity. Here at the *Citizen*, we doubt that much use would have come out of the conference. Since the demise of the Second Republic, we doubt that much has happened to warrant the kind of radical review of the country's political framework that the conference organisers probably had in mind. The April 22 coup attempt may have shaken the country to the core but this was more due to its bloody and violent nature than to any fresh question it raised.

At stake here, however, was not the value of the conference or any lack of it. At stake was the right of Nigerians to speak freely about how the country should be organised. Some mischief may be committed in the process, but since mischief is, fortunately or unfortunately, in the eye of the beholder, we would have thought that the wiser thing to do was for the authorities to have given the organisers and participants the benefit of doubt.

It is a pity that government apparently listened to the undue alarm of the Jerry Ganas and went ahead to halt the national conference. By so doing the government has also given ammunition to cynics who say its human rights policy is little more than a sham, and has thus put those who sympathize with its predicament on the defensive.

©

## Doe: he lived by the sword ...

Events took a dramatic turn in war-torn Liberia last week, first with the capture of Samuel Kanyon Doe by rebel forces led by Prince Yormie Johnson and later his death in captivity from gun wounds. Few would shed tears for the pathetic, violent manner he died. The option of resignation remained open to him when it was clear he had lost the mandate of his people, but he stuck to his fatalistic instinct.

The emergence of Doe ten years ago signalled the end of the relative political stability that reigned in Africa's oldest republic. Although he was able to gather the support of Liberians at the initial stage of his regime, having displaced the arrogant clan of American-Liberians, these sentiments soon

fizzled out as Doe consolidated his repressive reign. Several attempts to unseat him only opened the flood gates of more executions and swelled the population of Liberian exiles.

It was from this group that the rebellion which claimed the life of Doe and several thousands before him was hatched last December. Led by Charles Taylor, the rebels of the National Patriotic Front, NPF advanced from hinterland Nimba county into Monrovia where they forced Doe to retreat into a heavily fortified Mansion.

Sadly, the emergence of Prince Johnson's faction of rebels fighting against Doe and Taylor only added another dimension to an already hopeless case of power struggle. It was on this rather slippery terrain of carnage

and instability and amidst threats of reprisals from Taylor the ECOWAS monitoring group landed its controversial peace keeping force - ECOMOG. Despite their presence peace has eluded Liberia as a ceasefire between the warring rebel factions has not been secured.

Clearly, the most urgent step is securing a ceasefire between the rebel factions and the establishment of an interim government until elections are held.

For this to succeed, Johnson and Taylor will have to subordinate personal glory for the wider interests of Liberia. They must surrender their arms and join an interim government in the onerous task of reconstruction and rehabilitation Liberia urgently requires.

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ADAMU ADAMU

## Ohmigawd!

America will always go for the maximisation of profits. Whoever therefore expects ARAMCO to produce a barrel less than the Kingdom's 10.5 million barrels a day must be joking. Expect a glut.

When I called George Bush King George ibn Bush, many people called to offer suggestions. One in particular deserves acknowledgement. He said the correct name should have been: *His Majesty King George ibn Bush al-Sa'udi*. I heartily agree with him and sincerely regret the serious oversight.

Come to think of it the name al-Sa'udi is very appropriate for King George. Just recall what the al-Sa'ud family has done to Islam over the years. No American king can hope to rival their destructive achievement. But in recent days it has started to become clear from where the Saudis get their orders.

They had told the world that it was their will — I don't know where or how or when they got one — that they requested the presence of American troops on their soil. The other day the commander of the America forces was reported to have shouted down a Saudi National Guard commander who, thinking that Saudi Arabia had any sovereignty, expected the American general to take orders from him. The American commander was right, the Saudi National Guard commander had no business issuing orders to him. His army is not that of defence or friendship: it is that of occupation. And is that clear? The Americans indirectly said as much when they dug in for a long, and perhaps permanent, stay.

They have good reason to be hopeful. The Muslim World appears to be deep in sleep of neglect. You can't fault American strategists on good timing: though of course you can't protect them from its ill effects when it finally turns sour. As it sure will. Before it does I can give a suggestion to the Americans. I assume of course that

Since business follows the gun, now that American guns have successfully occupied and defiled Muslim Holyland, the next step must be as logical as it is irresistible to capitalists. Disney World must have started to eye the goldmine that is Arafat. Every year close to three million Muslims gather there to perform rites of pilgrimage. The logic of the pilgrimage is that Islam, whatever else may happen to it, resilience, continues as a brotherhood without frontiers — an international ideological fraternity looking for challenges to crush. Sometimes active, sometimes latent but always prepared to descend on it and turn all of its holy ground into a picnic and pleasure garden. Picnickers can hardly be expected to confront a super-power and in any case the Saudis can go to any length to get modernisation. Let them do it.

Then if nothing happens, the West can bring back all the idols of materialism — all 300 of them — back into the Ka'aba from where they were swept out centuries ago. And hurrah there will be no revolutionary Islam to curtail imperialist arrogance.

For obvious reasons since 1979 the west believed that its interests were in great jeopardy in the Middle East. The West was perfectly right. And what should the west do? It decided to "sell" AWACS aircrafts to the Saudis for several billions of dollars. The Saudis paid for the planes, pay for its fuelling, repair, maintenance and operation so that American interests can be protected. The "sale" contract stipulated that only the Americans would be allowed to pilot the planes,

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## The desert:

# Sahara inches south

**A combination of nature and overcropping, overgrazing and deforestation by man, makes the battle to check the southwards march of Sahara a losing battle — so far.**

The poetic beauty of nature lies in the sharp contrast it throws up in between seasons. The pouring rains now have spread a thick carpet of greenery over the land. From Lagos to Maiduguri the land throbs with active life. But a few months from now the carpet would be rolled up in the northern-most part of the country, revealing all the dirt and ugliness the same nature had covered. The scorching dryness of the Harmattan will set in, soaking up all moisture from the soil. Plants which have



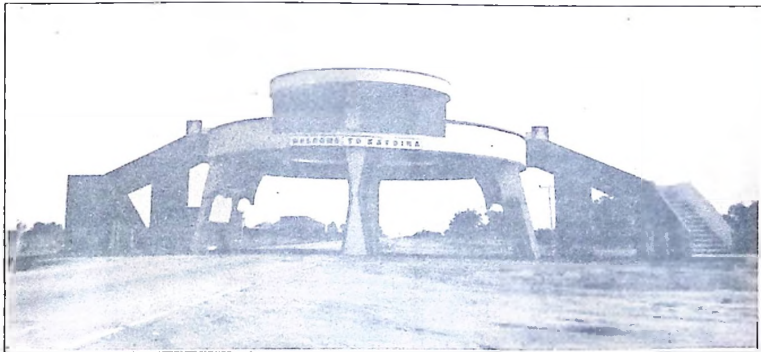
Refugee tents on the outskirts of Kano during the 1973/74 drought

bubbled with life in the previous season will die and human and animal life will become pale with weakness. A different kind of rug, brown and sandfilled will then cover much of this part of the country.

Season in, season out this rug has slowly but steadily marched southwards in the past several decades threatening the livelihood of the millions of men, women and children who eke out a living from the land. Its

influence has advanced even faster than the soil movement. In the words of Dr. S.P. Okoro, head of the Department of Afforestation of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, this influence has reached out "all the way to the coast."

Desert prone areas in Nigeria, at present is the region to the north of latitude 12 N. This covers extensive areas of Borno, Kano, Katsina and Sokoto States and the northern extremes of



Gateway to Katsina: on the fringes of Sahara

Bauchi State. This area of some 125,000 square kilometres, according to estimates by the National Committee on Arid Zone Afforestation, is 13% of Nigeria's total land area. One quarter of all Nigerians and half of all Nigeria's livestock resources are to be found in this region. This is clearly a matter that deserves serious concern.

Already, drought has become a familiar, if much feared, feature of the region's climatic conditions. No one can guarantee, with the approach of any rainy season, whether the rains will come, or if they do, how long they will last. Prayers for rains are now a permanent feature of life in the region, and no wonder. In the last 20 years alone, the Sahara's creeping annexation of the far northern states has led to frequent failures of crops due to delays in the onset of rains or their early termination. The year 1984 for example witnessed a very late arrival of the rains. Many farmers in the extreme northern areas of Kano, Borno, Katsina and Sokoto States never had the chance to plant any crop that year. The more daring farmers who had gone ahead to plant the seeds before the rains fell (the desperate, but not unfamiliar, practice of *bizne*) saw their crops germinate in August and literally burn under the hot sun. Similar disasters have not occurred since 1986, due to the relatively regular rainfall that has fallen in the last 4 years, including this year.

This is not to say that the Sahara has halted in its dusty tracks. Far from it, there is evidence to suggest that it is still marching southwards.

Although the desert itself has its goals and targets clearly defined, so to speak, authorities and experts concerned with combating it find it difficult even to agree on a definition of desertification. The National Committee on Arid Zone Afforestation has attempted to get things moving by defining it as "the spatial extension of desert-like conditions as a result of man's activities and impact on the ecosystems of semi-arid regions mainly in desert-boundary regions". Later Nigerian authorities also say it is the "diminution or destruction of the biological potential of the land, which leads ultimately to desert-like condi-



Emaciated cattle: victims of desertification

tions beyond the desert margin and is an aspect of the widespread deterioration of ecosystems under the combined pressure of adverse and fluctuating climate and excessive exploitation".

While still quarrelling over its definition, the experts also disagree over its rate. "It is very controversial", said Dr. S.P. Okon. "It is determined by many variables, including climate and human activities. Sometimes we refer to the rate of movement of soil particles, and sometimes to the advance of the influence of the desert. The influence advances faster and further than soil particles. In Nigeria, it reaches all the way to the coast".

The Director of Forestry in Sokoto State, Alhaji M.D. Gusau, also told *Citizen* that the matter is controversial. "I often see in the newspapers, that the desert is advancing at the rate of 5, 10 or 30 kilometres a year. I wonder what parameters they use. We have no measuring equipment per se, but our estimates of the rate of advance of desert-like conditions in Sokoto State is 3 kilometres per year".

There are established criteria, however, of deciding whether the desert has encroached upon an area. A plan prepared for the Kano State Government by the Bayero University identified indices of desertification to include disappearance or degradation of

vegetation, soil erosion by wind or water, mobilisation of sand dunes, waterlogging, salinisation and alkalinisation of once productive lands, and the lowering of ground water tables.

The first real attempt at systematic research into the human angle of desertification, said Dr Yahaya Abubakar Abdullahi, head of the department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, A.B.U. Zaria, was a proposal by a team of experts to the Borno State Government in 1987 for a three-year pilot study on the social effect of desertification. The focus was to have been a village in an area where desertification "is already active" and the result would have been a strategy to stop and rehabilitate the desert ravaged community by turning the area green, prevent further encroachment and through "proper" land management promote food and livestock production and sources of energy.

According to Dr. Abdullahi, the strategy was three-fold. The first being developing the forestry industry by creating shelterbelts and woodlocks. The team's reasoning was that "for the next 100 years Nigerians will depend on wood fuel". For this strategy to work, he said, there has to be a change in land use. "Nigeria allows profligate land use, which is not seen anywhere else in the world", he said.





Perched soil: a short step to desertification

foreign experts, which our sources described as "unbelievably high by Nigerian standard". Another fear which they have about the project is whether local banks will be prepared to put their money in a project with a long gestation. The Nigerian community development project is to be executed over a six-year period.

Another view on the desert's scourge is provided by Dr. Peter Okaiyeto, head of the department of livestock research extension unit of the National Animal Production Research Institute at Shika, near Zaria. His view on the social and economic impact of desertification is to say the least mildly shocking, but he seems honest in saying it. According to him, no community has been forced to move to a new settlement by the encroaching desert. He reasoned that the Nigerian economy is so "robust" that "where desertification has hit so hard, people have taken to trading". He agrees this trading may not altogether be legal; smuggling is involved.

Dr. Okaiyeto remarked that in Kukawa, about 90 kilometres from Maiduguri and 67 kilometres from

Gashua, all in Borno State, people are in the grip of the desert, but they have not considered moving away. "These people will go away for a while to trade but they always return to cultivate their small farms when the rains come", he told *Citizen*.

On the impact on livestock production, Dr. Okaiyeto said it was minimal. "Desertification does not make any difference", he said. "There is no year when livestock dies because of lack of water or pasture". According to him, herdsmen are always moving in search of new pastures. Available records indicate no deaths among the country's livestock population between 1961-1987 as a result of desertification. In 1961, there were, for instance, 6.5 million head of cattle, 2.7 million sheep and 13.3 million goats. In 1987, two decades later the figures

stood at 12 million cattle, 13.7 million sheep, and 23.7 million goats. The population of cattle has been the slowest in rising. Between 1981 and 1987 increased averaged about only a million. Dr. Okaiyeto said the low growth rate was due to the killing of calves for meat even before they mature into adults.

To illustrate the irrelevance of desertification to the production of livestock, Dr. Okaiyeto, himself an agro-economist, pointed to Ethiopia and Australia, which though have large chunks of desert lands, are big livestock producers. He said the problem with Nigeria was that its leaders lacked the political will to break out of what he called the "inertia of internal inconsistencies". He said that livestock could be raised successfully in Benue, Kwara, Bendel, and the northern parts of Oyo and Ondo states. A large cattle-rearing Fulani population already exists in those places, he says and the twin problem of the tsetse fly and cultural cleavage could easily be overcome.

The impact of desertification can be reduced, according to him, by resting the traditional livestock producing northern states during a crisis situation and moving the herdsmen to those states with the potential for breeding livestock.

Most experts say that the activities of humans, much more than any global changes of climate, are responsible for desertification. Land areas bordering deserts are ecologically fragile and are unable to withstand too much pressure, as can more



Drought-stricken crops

stable areas such as guinea savannah. (It must be added that no ecosystems is indestructible, including the sea). All over the world, unplanned human exploitation of lands bordering the Arabian, Gobi, Atacama, Great Australian and North American des-

erts has resulted in destruction of these lands and their subjugation by the deserts. The Sahara is by far the greatest of all the world's deserts and occupies nearly one-third of the total area of Africa. The region immediately to the south of the Sahara receives only little rainfall, some 71mm a year for Maiduguri, 762mm in Sokoto and 912mm for Kano. The dry season is long and severe, evapotranspiration is high and vegetation is sparse and low.

In Nigeria however, some 25 million people now inhabit this precarious environment. The majority of them are farmers and, in their attempt to extract a living out of the land, have now overcropped it. In Kano state, for instance, 90% of all available land is under cultivation. The arid region is also overgrazed. Although it has nothing remotely like the rich pastures to be found in the central and southern parts of Nigeria, it has the great advantage of being free from infestation by the tsetse fly *Glossina*. This fly is the carrier of trypanosomes, which cause sleeping sickness in cattle, but does not venture to the far north because it requires alot of moisture. Cattle rearers have for long decided that the tsetse fly is a worse adversary than aridity. As a result, half of Nigeria's cattle herds concentrate in this region, and have in time overgrazed the land.

Cattle are not the only culprits in the overgrazing of land, since millions of heads of goats and sheep also inhabit the region. The goat is a particularly rapacious feeder and is held by many authorities to be a major culprit in desertification. Mohammed Kuna, sociology lecturer at the Usmanu Danfodiyo University in Sokoto said, "Goats played an important role in the fall of the Roman civilisation. a goat is more destructive than a panther tank". At the UN-sponsored Conference on Desertification in Nairobi in 1977, some delegates said desertification will cease in many parts of the world if goats are removed.

Sheep are only slightly less destructive. There is evidence from other lands as to how sheep can destroy an environment. In the late 19th century, the American government persuaded the Navajo Indians in the state of New Mexico, to rear sheep in place of the



Stacked relief materials during the 1984 drought

buffalo herds they once hunted all over the North American prairies. The unsuspecting Navajos agreed and for many years they prospered as the sheep flocks increased greatly. In time however the prosperity ended, the sheep having turned the lush vegetation into shifting sand and eroded gullies.

The arid lands of northern Nigeria are not only overcropped and overgrazed, they are over-forested as well. The huge population of these lands depend largely on firewood for their energy needs. People have therefore invaded the forests, such as there are, and cut them until there are now only scattered stumps all around.

Rural areas in the far northern states depend on fuelwood for more than 90% of their energy requirements, according to research carried out by forestry specialists. Even in the big towns, fuelwood supplies up to 60% of all energy requirements in Sokoto and 40% in Kaduna. With the disappearance of trees, it is becoming increasingly difficult to meet requirements. Kano city, for example, consumes 75,000 tonnes of firewood every year. Attempts to meet this need for fuelwood is a major factor in the disappearance of trees, which in turn is the major cause of the increased cost of firewood. Some 18 to 20 percent of family incomes in Kaduna is now spent on firewood alone. Hunters of

game, for their part, set fire to large tracts of bush and forest in order to frighten out the animals, which they then hunt down. There is also the effect of "development" projects to contend with. Many large scale road and other construction projects proceed without regard to the consequences they will have on the environment. All of these factors together have combined to destroy the fragile ecosystems of the arid zone.

The earliest official alarm to be sounded on the dangers facing these regions, so far as the records show, was raised by Stabbings in the 1930's. His highly alarmist report to the colonial authorities had predicted the total annexation of the northern regions by the Sahara. By his time-table, the process should have been completed by now. It served a useful purpose all the same because the Anglo-French colonialists set up a joint Forestry Commission in 1938 to study the situation. It was discovered that the situation at the time was not very depressing. Still, the colonial authorities in northern Nigeria introduced the neem tree from India and instituted a campaign of tree planting all over the region. In Kaduna, Zaria, Kano, Maiduguri, Katsina and Sokoto, among many northern cities, those trees planted in the 1940's mostly the neem tree *Azadirachta*, the silk-cotton tree *Ceiba* and *Khaya* (known in Hausa as *Mad-*

acci), today provide most of the shade under which goods are hawked and people rest.

Since the 1940's, Nigerian governments at all levels have continued to plant trees. Sometimes concern for the land reaches feverish proportions, as it happened after the great Sahelian famine of 1973 to 1974. More than 100,000 people starved to death in the Sahel at the time, and millions of cattle, sheep and goats were wiped out. Hundreds of thousands of "ecological refugees" abandoned the land and fled, some streaming into Nigeria from neighbouring Niger and Chad republics.

In July 1988, some members of the de-

ally occur. The hysteria that accompanied these suggestions soon petered out, but that the matter came up at all shows the degree of the problem.

Alhaji Muhammadu Arzika, a former general manager of the Sokoto Rima River Basin Development Authority, who was a member of the constituent assembly, at the time noted that desertification and its effect had become so severe that Nigerians were either dying or migrating.

The members suggested, as a long term solution, that governments set up farming belts, develop fast yielding crops, create wind breakers and embark on a large scale afforestation.

Desertification also gave serious con-

with deserts. One of the important conclusions of the conference was that although desertification was a problem in many parts of the world, it remains essentially a local problem for each country to study and address its own situation. The Federal Government of Nigeria subsequently established a National Committee on Arid-Zone Afforestation, whose functions have since been inherited by a myriad of afforestation agencies.

The annual tree planting campaigns are now religiously observed by the government at all levels. The President of the Federal Republic traditionally launches the campaign in July, to be followed by state governors, local government chairmen and traditional rulers. This year, General Ibrahim Babangida launched the campaign on 31st July at Jibia, in Katsina State. In previous years, he has launched it in Kano, Borno and Sokoto States.

In-between the launchings, a host of agencies, communities and individuals take up the task of planting trees. The Federal Department of Forestry has ceased direct tree planting for some years now, and only engages in monitoring and extension work. State forestry departments are however very active in the threatened states. Their efforts are supplemented, sometimes surpassed, by those of the Drought and Desertification Control Programmes (DDCP's). The DDCP's were created by the Federal Government out of the Ecological problems Fund, which hitherto fought all environmental problems including pollution, erosion and desertification. Now financed by the Federal Government but controlled by the states, the DDCP provide large quantities of tree seedlings every year and distribute freely to the people. They have also tried to transcend the method of state forestry offices, which plant, water and care for their own trees. "We now try to arouse the interests of communities in tree planting", the Katsina State Commissioner for Agriculture, Alhaji Ahmed Maiwada told *Citizen*. "The previous method had faced alot of problems, and many seedlings wilted and died after planting. Now we try to involve the communities in looking after the



Former Head of State, General Gowon addressing victims of the 1973/74 drought

funct constituent assembly made an attempt to put the serious problem of desertification and related matters in perspective when they sought, unsuccessfully, to entrench in the 1989 constitution — two directorates to deal on permanent basis with the problems of desert encroachment, drought, pests, oil spillage, floods etc.

The members, some of whom were agricultural experts, said the issues, especially desertification and drought were a threat enough to warrant allocating 5% of the yearly budget to tackle the problems. Of course, like most issues in Nigeria, the seriousness of them are only realised when they actu-

cern to governors of the 11 northern states when two years, they initiated a committee to look into the problems of desertification and its effects. When the committee made its report available to the governors, they went into action to implement its report. Problem however was that the magnitude of desertification had grown beyond resources of their governments. Accordingly, the governors alerted the federal government. Not much has changed.

Hot on the heels of "ecological refugees" disaster, the UN organised an international conference at Nairobi in 1977 to harmonise ways of dealing

trees".

Alhaji Abdullahi Jantulu, co-ordinator of the DDCP in Sokoto, told *Citizen*, "People might not care very much for the trees unless they see visible short-term gains involved. We therefore produce and distribute economic tree seedlings free-of-charge".

The afforestation schemes have also attracted the massive assistance of multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank and the European Economic Community (EEC). In each of the affected states, there is a World Bank and Federal Government-assisted Forestry Project. Evidently well financed, they maintain huge tree seedling nurseries all over their states. They are also well endowed with the logistical means to move seedlings, water cans, baskets for protecting seedlings and other material. At the project sites in Katsina and Sokoto, in particular, *Citizen* correspondent saw large numbers of pick-up trucks of many brands, some marked "Grand-in-aid from the Government of Japan".

In addition, communities, schools, local government authorities and private individuals also plant trees of their own. If signboards are an accurate guide, then Katsina State does this more than the other states. All along the highway leading to Katsina are signboards indicating private woodlots planted with the help of the Forestry Project.

All told, Katsina State has so far estab-

lished 240 kilometres of shelterbelts, 1,806 hectares of woodlots, 3,362 windbreaks and 3,068 trees planted on farmlands. In Sokoto State, in the last year, about 8 million tree seedlings were produced and distributed by all the agencies concerned. The forestry II project alone established 120 kilometres of shelterbelt at the most desert-prone sites, including Zurmi, Gotomo, Degere, Dole Kaina, Amore, Kainuwa, Takatuku and Mil Goma. Eighty hectares of woodlots and 270 hectares of forest reserves were established, including 150 hectares for polewood and 10 hectares of gum arabic.

Which species of tree should be planted? Professor Tore Arnborg, a leading authority on global forest resources who spent many years researching in Nigeria, has emphasised the multiple use to which trees are subjected. Only when this is considered in the choice of species to be used in afforestation schemes will the projects stand much chance of succeeding. Trees are needed in the desert-prone regions not just to protect the soil but also to provide shade, animal fodder and fuelwood. If possible, they should also supply fruits for humans to eat.

The concern for fuelwood is particularly serious. More than 1,500 million people throughout the world derive more than 90% of their energy requirements from firewood, and another 1,000 million meet at least half of their energy requirements from the same

source. In Nigeria, an average user consumes 1.3 tonnes of firewood a year. Nigeria used up some 95 million cubic metres as fuelwood in 1985 and is projected to consume 136 million cubic metres by the year 2000. This excludes the wood consumed in Nigeria as polewood, sawnwood, wood-based panels, paper and paperboards.

Some of the species that produce fuelwood in northern Nigeria are also among the toughest growing in the region. They include *Guiera* (known in Hausa as Sabara), *Combretum* (tsiriri), *Combretum Micranthum* (geza), *Piliostigma* (kalgo), *Sclerocarya* (dunya) and *Detarium* (taura). Other multipurpose species include the datepalm *Hyphantia*, baobab *Adansonia*, Sheabutter tree *Butyraspermum*, kapok *Bombax*, *Acacia alba* (known in Hausa as gawo) and *Borrassus* (giginya).

The problem of energy sources, in particular must be solved if the afforestation schemes are to make any headway. Professor Tore Arnborg, noting the depletion of fuelwood trees, has rhetorically asked, "Even if we produce enough food to eat by the year 2000, how in the world are we going to cook it?"

Some of the desert-prone states have tried to find solutions by shifting energy sources as much as possible from firewood to kerosine and gas. In Sokoto State, the government has received a large consignment of single and double-burner kerosine stoves for distribution to civil servants. In Katsina, the commissioner for agriculture also told *Citizen* that his state was reviving its own plans to purchase kerosine stoves.

But will all these schemes be able to control the desert? There is no doubt that all the schemes, useful as they are, suffer from the same problems that accompany most public projects in Nigeria. In order to allow for the possibilities of their failure, Dr. Chidobelu. Offia has warned against the use of the geographical description "Africa South of the Sahara". "The day the Sahara meets the Atlantic", he wrote, "Africa will disappear as a reference area".

By Mahmud Jega, Tawey Zakka & Mohammed Bomi



Sparse vegetation: giving way to desertification

# NAF school snubs Abuja

The airforce secondary school in Jos says it has no place for the children of Abuja residents

The Nigerian Air Force has reopened the old can of controversies over the status of Abuja by its decision not to invite candidates of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja to the final selection interview for admission into the Airforce Military School in Jos.

The interview took place on August 16 - 22 but about 30 or so FCT candidates who, *Citizen* learnt, made good grades in the June entrance examination did not put in an appearance. Their scores averaged 87, a score said to be second only to Imo State candidates who came top.

Worried parents who had travelled to Jos to make inquiries returned to Abuja further disturbed, not so much about the admission into one of the military's elite schools which was denied their wards as by the fact of NAF's non-recognition of the special status of Abuja. The 1989 constitution makes Abuja a mayorality, not a state.

Malam Abubakar Umar, a retired army major whose child also sat for the examination, told *Citizen* that the commandant of the Air Force Military School, Wing Commander Nda Akpam said that there was a directive from the Nigerian Airforce headquarters in Lagos not to give a separate quota to Abuja. By this directive, NAF has set itself apart from the army and navy authorities which have always given Abuja a quota in their admission

policies.

During the last selection into the Nigerian Defence Academy's 42nd regular course, Abuja had a quota of four candidates, three on the main list and the other on reserve. The states each had 13. Major Umar said that the parents who travelled to Jos to see Wing Commander Akpam did not get a sympathetic hearing. He reportedly told them that candidates who had bought the admission form at N10 each, sat for the examination and passed should claim the states to which they belonged before the creation of Abuja. The states are Kwara, Niger and Plateau, which ceded territory under the 1976 FCT decree.

According to Major Umar, he and other parents whose children have been deprived of entry into the Air Force Military School, were contemplating a court action against the school authorities. Their reason was that the NAF had no cause to act differently from the army and the navy. They considered the air force's decision on Abuja "a negation" of the federal government's effort to bring all Nigerians with different backgrounds to Abuja.

Before the defunct Constituent Assembly resolved April last year to make Abuja a mayorality, a ferocious debate, just as acrimonious as the sharia debate, had raged on the floor of

the house over the status question. The Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) put a lid on the can of controversy by its stamp of approval of mayorality for Abuja.

Before then committee 17 of the Constituent Assembly, then headed by Malam Bashir Dalhatu, had recommended that the constitution review committee's proposal that Abuja be treated like a state be retained. According to Malam Bashir, inhabitants of Abuja should enjoy the same rights as those of the states.

Those who opposed retaining the phrase "...as if it were a state", made popular by the controversy, argued that to make the territory a state would be to make some Nigerians strangers in a territory that was meant to be "a symbol of unity". The controversy forced an adjournment of the work of the assembly once on February 2 last year. When it did resume three days later, the issue was put to the vote. The result was 235 against and 160 for making Abuja a state. Eight members abstained from voting.

The AFRC may have ended the controversy when the President announced its decision in May last year. But chance events such as the NAF policy on admission into its schools will always also seek to pull off the lid.

By Tawey Zakka

# Tanker drivers call off strike

The no-love-lost romance between the National Association of Transport Owners (NARTO) and the National Union of Petroleum and Gas Workers (NUPENG) which finally resulted in a strike has now been resolved. The latter had called tanker drivers out on a nation-wide strike last Monday and they stayed off the roads until Wednesday, but not before the "ugly consequences of a prolonged strike",

predicted at the start of the stay-away action had paralysed transport.

One of the sad effects of the strike was a fire which occurred at a filling station near the Kaduna Central Market resulting in the death of one person.

Many filling-stations across the nation had locked up because they have exhausted their stock of fuel oil and other petroleum products.

At the few ones that were still open,

long queues of motorists stretching quite a long distance were a daily sight. Cooking gas has disappeared altogether and kerosene is most likely to go the same way. Many homes, where gas is used, had waited patiently in the hope that the strike would last only a day or two, but were forced to turn to fuelwood. This return, though temporary, to the traditional source of energy, raises the

## NIGERIA

spectre of massive tree-felling, thereby increasing the danger of desertification.

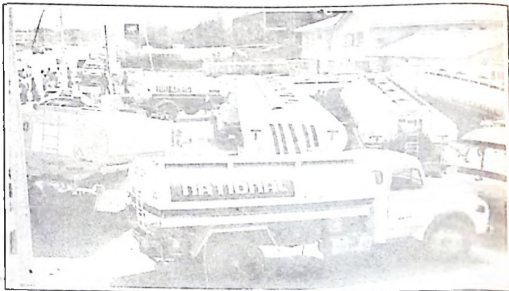
Mr. Martin Ikediashi, President of NARTO, announced to the relief of all that the strike had been called off following a meeting with NUPENG, the NLC and officials of NNPC. During the meeting, all the issues in contention on the tanker drivers' demands were said to have been resolved.

He said that normal fuel supply

Under the new condition of service, drivers of double-axle trucks would now receive N400, an increase of N300 while drivers on double trucks would earn N350 — an increase of 250%. Drivers on simple trucks are to earn N300, up from N100.

The tanker drivers' have complained for long on their demands, but two years of "peace talks" only produced a deadlock.

Beneath what ordinarily is a quarrel between worker and employer, runs a fast current of intrigue and blackmail.



Oil tankers: back on the road

It is alleged that NARTO itself engineered the strike to force the federal government to pay up a N40 million debt incurred through haulage of fertilizer by NARTO members. The association wants to use part of the money

to meet those demands of the striking drivers which it considers 'reasonable'. The allegation was denied by NUPENG's spokesman in Kano, Mallam Garba Ahmed.

By Mohammed Bomei

## NIGERIA IN BRIEF

\* A former minister of Petroleum Resources. Professor Tam David-West, 51, Wednesday appeared before the special Military Tribunal on the Recovery of public property charged with "corrupt self-enrichment". The alleged corrupt enrichment amounted to whopping \$57,117,443—that's about 4.6 billion Naira.

A government prosecutor, Mr Kolapo Adaabale, said before the tribunal that the Professor allowed a U.S. based company Stinnes Inter-oil Incorporated Limited, to unlawfully withhold the \$57 million being the balance of \$157,117,443, representing the local value with interest of crude oil lifted by Stinnes under an off-shore producing agreement.

Tight security was evident at the venue of the trial-Race Course, Lagos, as armed soldiers and policemen took positions at strategic points around the venue. When the tribunal adjourned, the Professor David-West, was driven away in a police Black Maria.

Dr. Mohammad Abdulrahman, Reg-

istrar of JAMB, said in the week that nine state owned universities would offer admission to only 7,000 candidates. The number would make up for the 40,000 candidates that JAMB would place in 30 universities. Seven of the nine state universities have given their favourable response.

Dr Lateef Adegbite, Secretary General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, has asked the Federal Government to release all muslims "convicted by a kangaroo type of justice" which was meted out to them by the Karibi-Whyte Tribunal after the Kafanchan riots in 1987.

The Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, NISER, says N3.5 billion was spent on the construction of phase I of Abuja. Work there started nine years ago.

Dr. Eddy Ndekwe of NISER, told participants of a four-day workshop on the "Past, Present and Future" of Abuja that "an aggregate of financial resources of not less than N3.4 million or an annual average of N385.8 million" was committed by government for the development of the new capital

between 1981 and 1989.

The Federal Government provided 80 per cent of the money and that in 1981, 1982, 1984 and 1986, the federal government provided the whole Federal Capital Territory financial resources. FCT itself generated N213.8 million in 1987, N177.1 million in 1988 and N83.2 million in 1989. Nobody is sure how much has been spent so far in building Abuja including Dr. Ndekwe himself.

### Business Briefly

Proceeds from Nigeria's exports of plastic products increased from N3.769 million in 1988 to N10.979 million last year. The petro-chemical sub-sector was responding to policies introduced by government, surpassing that of 1986 and 1987 when it rose from N150,000 to N317,000.

### Sports Briefly

Milo maraton champion, Yohanna Waziri, finished a distant third in the 5,000 metres race at the first international sports championship which kicked off in Lagos Thursday. Abba Mustapha representing zone 4 and Yusuf Yakubu, zone 6, returned 14.27.65 and 14.35.53 minutes to place first and second respectively.



# NIGERIA MERCHANT BANK LIMITED

## 30th Annual General Meeting - Chairman's Address



ALH. MAHMOOD IBRAHIM ATTA  
CHAIRMAN

### INTRODUCTION

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the honour to welcome you to the bank's 30th Annual General Meeting and to present to you the Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March, 1990.

As you are aware, this is the first time I am addressing this distinguished audience as Chairman of your bank. I am pleased to report that 1989/90 was a very successful business year for the bank as the gratifying results clearly demonstrate.

### THE ECONOMY

1989 can best be described as a year of mixed blessings for Nigerian general and the banking sector in particular.

The growth rate of 4% in Gross Domestic Product was stronger than expected due to two main reasons. First, the oil sector, under the influence of higher petroleum prices in the international market and high production volume, recorded strong performance. Secondly, favourable weather conditions which prevailed during most of the year contributed to an increase of 6.1% (1988 - 3.5%) in the index of agricultural production. However, the economy experienced high inflation rate which peaked at 51% during the first half of the year, unstable exchange rates and low capacity utilisation in the manufacturing sector. Monetary and Fiscal measures were however taken which moderated the rate of inflation and stabilised the exchange rate during the second half of the year. Government was also working during the year in its commitment to the policy of economic management through market oriented systems, promoting demand management and fiscal discipline, the introduction of associated programmes such as Privatisation, Commercialisation, Debt Concessions etc. was vigorously pursued to put the economy on a steady and sustained growth path.

### BANKING SECTOR

The banking sector witnessed intense activity during the year under review as a result of launching of new Commercial and Merchant Banks coupled with various policy measures taken to reduce excess liquidity, stem severe pressures on domestic prices, and stabilise exchange rates. Prominent among the measures are withdrawal of government, Ministries and Parastatal's funds from Banks and the CBN directive placing a ban on non-legal loans secured by foreign exchange guaranteed funds or foreign deposits. It is heartening to note that the integrity of the money market, which was undermined by the liquidity crisis created by above measures in the extent that some operators resorted to their contractual obligations is now fully restored. Trading activities have however continued at the short term end.

As the interest costs of short term borrowing have soared, an increasing number of companies have started to reduce the sourcing of their funds away from bank borrowings and towards the issuing of long term debt and raising of fresh equity all the while.

### OPERATING RESULTS

Despite growing competition and a mixed outlook environment, your bank for the second time achieved distinction in its position as Nigeria's leading Merchant Bank. The Bank achieved excellent results compared with the preceding year.

- 1) Profit After Tax reached an all time high of N43.2 million compared with N29,875 million in 1989, an increase of 44.9%.
- 2) Non interest Income went up by 76.1% from N73,262 million in 1989 to N129,025 million in 1990.
- 3) Total Earnings assets of N1,567 billion in 1990 represented a marginal increase of 1.7% over previous year's figure of N1,541 billion.
- 4) Shareholders funds increased from N17,502 million to N116,782 million.

### NEW BRANCHES

In furtherance of the bank's objective of establishing a visible presence in the key financial and industrial zones in the country and to bring the bank's services closer to its customers, two new Branches at Onitsha and Jos will be opened by the end of this year. This will enhance the bank's competitive strength and improve its market share especially in non-bank deposits.

### HEAD OFFICE PROJECT

Well steps were taken during the period under review to bring the Bank's Head Office project to fruition. Construction work on the ultra modern office building which contract was awarded during the year, has progressed satisfactorily. Bouygues Nigeria Limited, a reputable construction firm handling the project is striving to complete the project on schedule i.e. by end 1991.

### BONUS ISSUE AND DIVIDENDS

Your Directors have recommended that the issued share capital be increased to N35,000,000 from N30,000,000 through a bonus issue of one share for every six shares held as at 31st March, 1990 out of the general reserves standing as at 31st March, 1990. An increase in share capital will accelerate the bank's growth.

The payment of a total dividend of N5,000,000 representing 16.7% per ordinary share has also been recommended by the Board of Directors. This compared favourably with N4,000,000 or 13.3% per share paid last year.

### BOARD CHANGES

The Federal Government, recently dissolved the Boards of banks (including your Bank), where it has major shareholding. The new Board inaugurated on the 15th July 1990, comprises Alh. M.A. Akinjola as Chairman, Mr. L. O. Okunwo as the Managing Director and Mr. S. J. Akpan as an Executive Director. Three external Directors were appointed in persons of Mr. Joe Barib, Almy Abu Ibrahim, Abayima D. Mbeia, U.S.A., a minority shareholder will be represented by Mr. J. O. Saniusi who is the new Vice-Chairman, Messrs O. Saunm, F. N. Ayo and G. G. Hayami.

You will agree with me that the promotion of Mr. L. O. Okunwo from the post of General Manager of the same bank, to Managing Director is a welcome appointment which is healthy for continuity and growth of the bank. I am sure you will all join me in wishing him a successful tenure of office as the Chief Executive of the bank.

I wish to acknowledge the fine job's contributions and dedication of the former Chairman, Chief Executive and Directors in taking the bank to its present position of prominence. May God continue to grant them wisdom, knowledge and understanding to succeed and excel in their new endeavours.

I must wish the regret the death in June 1990 of Professor N. J. Gokola, a member of your bank's former Board. May God grant the lady the strength to bear this irreparable loss.

### STAFF

We are committed to further strengthen our human resources capabilities through development. During the year, training courses were attended by staff both locally and overseas.

In recognition of hardwork, dedication to duty and loyalty, a good number of staff were promoted during the year. In addition, some top level management staff were recruited.

### CONCLUSION

The year 1989 was most challenging for the banking industry in Nigeria. I am sure the Shareholders will wish to join the Board in thanking the management and staff for the considerable efforts in a difficult year. We also thank our foreign correspondents and customers for their support. Finally, I remain confident and optimistic that your Bank will post record for growth and prosperity in the future.

Thank you

ALH. MAHMOOD IBRAHIM ATTA  
(Chairman)

Note: Profit Before Tax from N59,051 million to N60,178 million represents an increase of 2.0% over 1989 figure.



RC. 2108

# NIGERIA MERCHANT BANK LIMITED

(NCR Building 4th - 8th floors) 6, Broad Street, P.O. Box 2413, LAGOS.

The Directors of Nigeria Merchant Bank Limited are pleased to announce the audited results for the year ended 31st March 1990.

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 1990

ASSETS	1990 N'000	1989 N'000
Cash and Short term funds	619,597	667,882
Bills Discounted	2,196	6,910
Loans and Advances	768,719	760,579
Other assets	86,330	56,088
Investments	3,656	7,965
Leasing Equipment	59,313	35,138
Fixed Assets	26,832	6,244
	1,566,843	1,540,806

## LIABILITIES

Deposits and other Customer Accounts	176,013	1,140,693
Bank Overdraft	-	78,651
Other Liabilities	227,848	210,912
Current Taxation	12,410	9,557
Dividend	4,250	3,400
	1,420,521	1,443,213

## NET ASSETS

### REPRESENTED BY:

Share Capital	30,000	15,000
Statutory Reserve	32,173	21,373
General Reserve	54,619	42,219
Shareholders' Funds	116,792	78,592
Deferred Taxation	29,530	19,001
	146,322	97,593

Liabilities under acceptance, confirmed credits and other obligations on behalf of customers and the corresponding customer liabilities thereon

127,297 99,172

## PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 1990

	1990 N 000	1989 N 000	1988 N 000
Profit Before Tax	60,178	50,051	50,051
Taxation	(16,978)	(20,243)	(20,243)
Profit After Taxation	43,200	29,808	29,808
<b>APPROPRIATIONS:</b>			
Transfer to Statutory Reserve	(10,800)	(7,452)	(7,452)
Dividend	( 5,000)	(4,000)	(4,000)
General Reserve Brought Forward	42,219	28,863	28,863
Scrap Issue	(15,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)
General Reserve Carried Forward	54,619	42,219	42,219

I. O. OKONKWO  
Managing Director/Chief ExecutiveS. INIE AKONO  
Executive Director

## AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF NIGERIA MERCHANT BANK LIMITED

We have examined the accounts set out above and have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purpose of our audit. Our examination of doubtful advances was carried out in accordance with the 5th Schedule of the Banking Act 1965.

In our opinion, proper books of accounts have been kept by the bank and proper returns adequate for the purpose of our audit have been received from the branches not visited by us. The assets have been properly valued and adequate provision made for losses and diminution in value of such assets.

The bank contravened Section 12(3) of the Banking Act of 1989 and penalties totaling N11,210 in respect of such contravention were imposed.

To the best of our knowledge and belief, and from our examination of the books and records there was no contravention of the Prizes and Incomes Policy guidelines in respect of the year ended 31st March, 1990.

In our opinion, the accounts, which are in agreement with the books of accounts, give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the bank as at 31st March, 1990 and of its profit and source and application of funds for the year ended on that date, and give in the prescribed manner the information required by the Banking Act 1969.

D. O. DAFINONE & CO.  
(Chartered Accountants)

5th July, 1990

DIRECTORS  
I. O. OKONKWO  
(Managing Director/Chief Executive)S. INIE AKONO  
(Executive Director)

DIRECTORS: ALI MAHMOUD IBRAHIM ATIA (Chairman), J. O. SANJOSE (Vice Chairman), I. O. OKONKWO (Managing Director/Chief Executive), S. INIE AKONO (Executive Director), F. N. ADEYI (Director), G. SARAJI, J. BAYE, A. H. A. IBRAHIM, M. E. U. J. A. H. H. H. H.

## His Majesty King George Ibn Al-Ameriki of Saudi Arabia



by Ali D. Alkali

Definitely Adamu Adamu's 'King George Ibn Bush' write up in the *Citizen* of September 3-10, Vol. 1 No. 3, would not have come with a better title. From whichever angle of the game one looks at Saudi Arabia now, George Bush emerges as the King. Having been once an employee of the 'United States Information Services' for almost four years, I have neither scruple nor compunction in raising my hat for Adamu - for he's got the point dead right.

The handing over was gradual. It started a long time ago. The recent hobnobbing is only a turbaning ceremony for the new king. Apart from the many thousands regular troops that have been dispatched to attend the ceremony, another 40,000 'reserve build up' is planned to join them. Already 10,000 civilians left their jobs and joined the 'voluntarily military assignment' for what they call "vacation in the Gulf". And the figure is expected to rise to 25,000 before the end of this month.

The more I think about the Gulf crisis issue with the political layer of my brain, the more something keep nagging inside me to look at the whole game the other way round. Was it not possible that Iraq was instructed to invade Kuwait so that United States can use that as an excuse to move into Saudi Arabia in the pretence of protecting it? If not, how much security could the Saudi kingdom, the financial and spiritual heartland of the Arab world, derive from protection by the United States, the principal backer of the Arabs' chief enemy - Israel? You know in politics, the shortest distance between two points is often not a straight line. If you wish to trick Mr. A, for instance you frequently are well advised to go to Mr. B, who knows him intimately, or even to Mr. C, who is an old enemy or pal to Mr. B, to start the wheels in motion. You never go straight. Everybody was astonished by what is revealed in the Iran-contra affair. Ayatollah Khomeini of all people getting his arms from Uncle Sam, his "warm enemy" and "great satan" was unbelievable. Yet it was politics as it's now. The

boundaries which divide politics from real life are at best shadowy and vague. From the books you learn principles, and from the politicians you learn tricks. So Saddam and Bush might not be on the tightrope we are imagining them to be.

The American domination process of Saudi Arabia started in the 1930's when its companies began oil production in the country and realized that Saudi's reserves were likely to be the greatest in the non-communist world. And so Uncle Sam honed his sense of timing, worked on it, polished it... laboured over it the way Rylander probably worked on his



King Fahd

golf strokes — because he, too, wanted to compete in the golf game. Uncle Sam knew, one day his sense of timing would really pay off. Now the dominance reached its height one cannot resist the temptation to warn the new malik that being able to manoeuvre, seize and dominate a golf course does not necessarily mean you are the most fine golfer. You can beat in your own Bush and be lost.

As U.S. history shows, they have for a very long time three objectives in Saudi Arabia in particular, and Persian Gulf region in general. They always wanted to: 1. Ensure free access to the oil; 2. Ensure freedom of navigation on the high seas for their Navy; and 3. Prevent the domination of the region and its critical resources by any hostile power. In satisfying these objectives they had always taken a two-track approach. They had first allies, usually under Saudi Arabia's umbrella. And in the presence of any real threat to their interests, they "had to take very real military

action." That "provided credibility to all our diplomatic efforts," said Casper Weinberger, a former U.S. secretary of defense.

Saudi Arabia and the United States had many similar interests beyond the gulf. Saudi Arabia helped in the U.S. efforts to support governments in Egypt, Jordan, Sudan and in the Iran-Iraq war. They have also played "behind the scenes" roles in U.S. sponsored and engineered coups such as that of the Iraq in 1953. They have worked quietly to support "the absolute determination of the United States to preserve Israel's qualitative military edge in the Arab-Israeli conflict" as Reagan put it. He also told congress that when the United States was engaged in a critical struggle against Libya "Saudi Arabia has consistently worked behind the scenes" to help the U.S. intelligence. When Pakistan became a plausible target for possible Soviet attack during Russian — Afghan War — and a candidate for large-scale U.S. military aid, a \$3.2 billion six-year U.S. programme to strengthen Pakistan's armed forces was agreed to, and Saudi Arabia received an instruction from the White House to put half of the money, which she obediently did.

While some larger objectives of deterrence may have served as a backdrop for U.S. concerns in Saudi Arabia, the more immediate reasons for the creation of U.S. force then were unimpeded access to the free oil supply, and the maintenance of a U.S. presence in the Middle East which was and still is vitally important region of the world. United States client-relationship with Saudi Arabia is always "designed to maintain the maritime superiority we must have to execute fully our national strategy," confirms Casper Weinberger.

In a White House statement to congress May 6, 1986, on arms sales to Saudi Arabia the President Reagan notified Congress that "the sale will protect and advance our interests in the following specific ways: countering radical force; preventing Soviet expansion; maintaining the free flow of oil; (and will) continue a bilateral relationship which has been supported by every president since Franklin Roosevelt and which remains our key to Gulf defence." The President warned Congress that if the United States failed to help the Saudis, they are certain to get the

# RUM dul-Bush

weapons they need from other sources "who are unlikely to share America's concern for Israel's security." When the Senate refused to approve the proposed sale of defensive missiles to Saudi Arabia, Reagan was furious "I cannot permit the congress to dismantle and damage our vital strategic, political and economic interests in the Middle East... American people and their representatives should understand that this sale is in our interests. It is not just a favour to Saudi Arabia. Moreover, it is not being done at anyone's expense."

One nagging issue that bothered the United



Saudi Arabia

States Senate was how to help build Saudi military power without running the risk that that power might one day be used against Israel or even, as in Iran, against pro-American rulers. So to get the weapons, Saudi Arabia signed an agreement that the weapons "will be operated solely within the boundaries of Saudi Arabia, except with a prior, explicit mutual consent of the two governments, and solely for defensive purposes as defined by the United States." The other nagging questions that bothered observers were what good was a weapon that you can only use solely within your boundaries - to kill your citizens? What good was a weapon that you can't use even for your self-defense without a prior consent of the suppliers to define it to be so? Yet Saudi Arabia did not care to listen let alone answer or at least to reason.

As if to help Reagan convince the American people and its senate, Casper Weinberger,

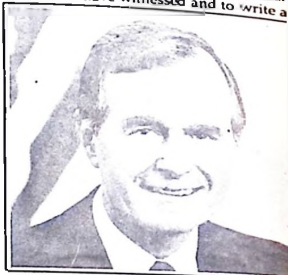
Reagan's secretary of defense, said in a speech he delivered to the Portland World Affairs Council "I can assure you that, were we to need even more help in the Gulf region, I know we would get it. I can also tell you that the weapons that we have sold, such as AWACS, F-15s, and Minesweepers, to Saudi Arabia are being used in direct support of our operations and the protection of our long-standing interest in the region." Did he stop there? Hell, no! "We must prepare for the continuation of our presence in the Persian Gulf so long as our interests are there." He fired on. "The Persian Gulf has been and will remain vitally important for many many decades and we intend to remain there." He summed it up. Weinberger knew they can only remain there if they directly or indirectly annex Saudi Arabia.

Weinberger was not the first person to remind the world of the U.S. self-assumed exclusive possession of the Persian gulf. President Carter dropped the bombshell more nakedly when he declared in January 1980 that "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America. Such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." This was seen as a specific warning to Moscow. And to put teeth in this pronouncement, U.S. air and Naval facilities were put in nearby countries namely Kenya, Somalia and Oman. Plans were also laid for creation of a highly mobile U.S. 'rapid deployment force' chiefly with the Gulf in mind. Saudi Arabia and its neighbouring Gulf-sheikdoms applauded, so loud you could hear them from Moscow - foolishly ignoring the fact that by "any outside force" Carter means "any (force) outside (United States') force" including all Arab nations' force that have the Gulf region.

Domestically, Saudi Arabia seems too good to last. Despite the event of November-December 1979, when an armed group invaded and occupied the grand mosque of Mecca, there is still no organized opposition to the House of Sa'ud. There are still no labour unions or political parties or dissatisfied student groups, and the military has still never interfered in the affairs of the State. The oil Sheikhs and the royal family members of the house of Sa'ud all live in magnificent homes, spend enormous wealth notoriously, export their gold to western banks and drive either Rolls-Royce or Mercedes Benz, which they often junk when it breaks down

"because it's easier to buy a new one." The only real danger that is expected by royal rule will come when radical factions of the royal family developed a following among dissidents who see traditional Islamic values being compromised by Western life-style: to the conservatives being American stooge world's largest oil producer, may sound like a desert Utopia but it's not. It might be heartland of the muslim world, but it will go on, for sometime to come, facing the Capite Hill with its prayers, instead of Ka'aba, for is neck-deep in its trap. There's trouble ahead

In a history book entitled a sense of history which was published by American Heritage Press in 1987, the author asked historian observers, scholars and authors to select the one event in American history they would most like to have witnessed and to write a



George Bush the new sovereign?

account of it entitled "I wish I had been there". Their selections and descriptions were fascinating. One chose November, 1805, and wrote "I wish I'd been there when Lewis and Clark first caught a glimpse of the Pacific Ocean. I wish I could have looked over his shoulder of William Clark as he scribbled in his log book, "Ocean in view! Oh, the joy! August 8, too, was a momentous day in the history of American life in particular, and Saudi Arabia and Middle East in general and I don't have to wish I'd been there because I was there. I was also so sad to look over the shoulders of George Bush as he celebrated his triumph and scribble in his book "Domination in view! Oh, the joy!"

In order not to be offensive or boring, I bow my head and remain silent... at His Majesty's service - His Royal Highness, King George ibn Abdul-Bush Al-Ameriki of Saudi Arabia

## AFRICA

### Liberia:

# Who's in charge?

At the last count, there were four interim government in unfortunate Liberia. None recognises the other and the prospect of an immediate ceasefire, not to talk of peace getting desperately confused. The rapidly changing situation makes it even more difficult to achieve a semblance of order.

Charles Taylor the original head of the National Patriotic Liberation Front, NPLF, had even before Samuel Doe's demise declared himself president. He does not recognise anyone and controls almost the whole of Liberia. He considers it therefore as his birthright to lead Liberia. Prince Yormie Johnson, leader of the breakaway independent National Patriotic Liberation Front, NPLF, after shooting and capturing Doe, wasted no time in also proclaiming himself an interim president even though he said he would cooperate with ECOMOG.

Brigadier Nimley, Doe's Commander of the Executive Mansion Guard, in the melee that followed Doe's shooting said he had assumed



Charles Taylor

leadership of Liberia on an interim basis. He too says he could cooperate with ECOMOG.

The ECOWAS peace-keeping efforts also produced an interim government unofficially headed by Professor Amos Sawyer of the Liberia Peoples' party. Representatives of the interim government left Banjul, the capital of Gambia Tuesday to set up the new



Yormie Johnson

interim government. Among those who left for Monrovia was Levy Zangai, General Secretary Liberia Action Party and James Fromoyan, a Liberian exile who returned to Africa Monday from America. The interim government is expected to work with General Quainoo, the ECOMOG commander, and will stay in Liberia until elections in October 1991.

### South Africa:

# Blacks paint townships red with own blood

The continuing black-on-black violence in a South Africa that has been launched on the path towards becoming a democratic multi-racial society is an example of antithesis. While the ANC and President Frederick De Klerk's National Party government are locked in peace talks that will create a right atmosphere for full integration of the majority black population into mainstream South African political and economic life, the blacks themselves are busy decimating their num-

ber through senseless factional killings. In the past one month the Inkatha versus ANC fighting in black townships around Johannesburg has claimed over 700 lives. Last Wednesday, a further 21 blacks and a white policeman were reported killed in overnight fighting.

All this is happening in the wake of a good start of peace talks between the ANC and the South African white-only government and President's De Klerk's dramatic announcement that

the doors of the 42-year old National Party would be thrown open to blacks, Indians and coloureds. And only last Tuesday ANC's deputy president, Nelson Mandela met with president De Klerk on the vicious fighting in the townships. Before then, the latter had announced that more policemen were being deployed in the township after the ANC accused the government of not doing anything to stem the violence.

Psychologists have been quick to

conclude that the violence is a natural instinct in people who have been oppressed and dispossessed, even of the very means of expressing their frustration to turn against themselves instead of against the common enemy. If it were so, there should be a let-up of the factional fighting following the recent thaw in the relationship between the black leadership and the white government. But it is not so. The violence rather than reduce is escalating by the day.

Observers believe that the escalation of the ferocious street fighting may have been the handiwork of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha movement to give the shine to his credential as a black leader with some weight, a recognition which, if it had been given, would probably have secured him a seat in the peace talks. In recent weeks the Chief has come out to demand that he be invited to take part in the talks but he has largely been ignored by both the ANC, which preferred the white leader of the communist party in its delegation and the South African government. Whatever claim he is staking to the leadership of the black population has been given the lie by a study by sociologist

Fatima Meyer, a South African, on the popularity rating of the ANC, Mandela and Buthelezi.

According to the study, 67% of blacks declared their support for the ANC and 79% said they would like to see the organisation's deputy president, Mandela become the first president of a post-apartheid South Africa. This was found to be the wish of the majority of both Xhosa who form the bulk of ANC membership and the Zulus of Inkatha. Black support of the candidacy of Buthelezi was a relatively insignificant 2.3%.

The apparent lack of concern on the

part of the South African government is at once understandable. It is blacks who are fighting one another; the whites who are the government's only constituency are untouched! But the government is mistaken if it thinks that the ANC will hurry off to a bogus peace negotiation while its house burns. Mandela said that much after he emerged from a meeting last Tuesday with President De Klerk. He warned that the raging township fighting threatened talks on ending apartheid. "We will do everything to ensure that the peace process remains on track but the government has to do its part", Mandela said. "If it is dragging its feet as it is doing now, then the peace process is threatened."



Gatsha Buthelezi: hidden hand behind violence?

President De Klerk is actually proving his insensitivity to the problem at home, an allegation made first by Mandela, by his planned September 24 visit to Washington to see the biggest of his Western mentors, President George Bush. He finds the prospect of the US joining Britain in calling for the lifting of sanctions against his country too bright to pass up. That silver lining in the dark cloud of sanctions was pointed out by Mr. Herman Cohen, the American Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, after a meeting with South Africa's foreign minister, Mr. Pik Botha. The meeting was to put

finishing touches to the agenda for the talks between Mr. De Klerk and Mr. Bush. The American official reportedly told journalists that the pending visit to the US could facilitate the lifting of sanctions. The purpose of the trip itself, according to press reports, is to place before the American public, "first hand", Mr. De Klerk's "survey of changes in South Africa and views of the future for South Africa and Southern Africa".

As for the rest of the world, particularly the US, whose economic and political influence on South Africa, helped push president De Klerk to the negotiation table, the current crisis in the Persian Gulf, has provided a convenient excuse to push South Africa further down the list of priorities. The Americans are finding themselves forsaken even by their western allies in the show of military strength against Iraq's Saddam Hussein, who daily is proving that he too is adept at playing the populist card. The US has its hands full with the role of the world's policeman it has taken on in the Gulf. Now it is resorting to blackmailing its allies, specially Japan, into helping to carry the burden.

Meanwhile, South Africa is forgotten. But the blacks are not forgetting to kill one another for whatever reasons they know best. Perhaps, the time has come, for the ANC leadership to consider accepting Buthelezi's call for a face-to-face, one-to-one meeting. Mandela is known to favour a meeting of the kind the Inkatha leader wants but the other ANC leaders, notably Mr. Walter Sisulu, are not. They should trust Mandela's intentions and allow him sufficient leeway to initiate talks with Buthelezi towards ending the cycle of factional black violence.

By Tawey Zakka

## Gulf Crisis:

## Carrots and Sticks

While the whole world watches and waits for the next turn of events in the Gulf, the two major actors in the drama of death are busy shuffling their diplomatic cards to complement their arms build-up. It is now apparent that neither the United States and its allies nor Iraq with its one million strong and war tested army can readily turn the scales.

The United States which sought for more legitimacy by diplomatically co-opting other nations into the Saudi cordon. The diplomatic carrot being dangled by the United States is debt cancellation and other forms of aid. Reports had it that President Abu Diouf of Senegal has already offered to send troops to Saudi Arabia though the strength and the time of the departure of the troops for the Gulf is not yet known. so far no other country has fallen for the U.S. bait.

Following this development, Iraq's Saddam Hussein who has lately discovered that the strength of his army notwithstanding, a TOUCH of diplomacy is useful in a conflict dangled his own carrots before the third world countries hit by rising oil prices.

According to the Iraqi News Agency, the Iraqi leader in a gesture of solidarity with countries that were suffering as a result of higher oil prices has offered to give free oil to such countries. He was quoted as saying "The supply of free oil will not be linked to any decision or position taken by a country on the current crisis because we respect the opinions of states and nations and do not assume any coincidence of views on all issues". He stated further that "We are only upset when one of the imperialist countries tries to impose a position on us by force, reflecting a lack of respect for the third world and a lack of equality".

It is now apparent that the noose has been tightened on Iraq. So far it has lost over \$2.1 billion oil revenue and production has fallen from 3.0 barrels



George Bush

per day in July to a miserable 400,000 barrels per day, just enough for domestic consumption. With the 1.5 pbd Turkey pipeline closed and the Saudi 900,000 pbd line also closed, while the French, British and the United States in a joint armada keep an eagle eye on the Gulf and the Red Sea, Iraq is gradually heading towards a total collapse of its economy. Already food rationing has been introduced for the 18 million Iraqi population while Saddam Hussein himself has agreed that the blockade threatens thousands of children with starvation.

But a new development that may further compound the Gulf crisis and may increase its duration is the re-establishment of diplomatic ties between Iran and Iraq. Already both have agreed to exchange envoys while Iraq has conceded to Iran its main demand for a peace settlement which is that Iraq accepts that it was the aggressor in the war that lasted for 8 years and which resulted in over a million death on both sides. Already a hardline Iranian Member of Parliament has called for an Iraq-Iran military alliance against Israel, and Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali, leader of the anti western majority in the parliament also called for suicide commandos to transform Saudi into a graveyard for United States soldiers.

While the recent reproachment be-



Saddam Hussein

tween Iran and Iraq cannot be described as a surprise to keen political observers, the overtures made by Iraq to third world countries and which Saddam described as "non-conditional" is surprising and it may take some time before a full implication of the "generous" offer can be deduced. Only Brazil has so far come out openly to reject the offer. If Iraq wins, that is, eventually succeeded in fully annexing Kuwait, there may be no fall outs against the beneficiaries of the "generous" offer. But if Iraq loses out, some of the affected countries especially those very close to Saddam may end up receiving the stick after chewing the carrots.

Whichever way the scale may tilt The two major parties in the crisis are only looking for opportunities that could tilt the probability of outcome on their sides. It is certain that the sheer size of the United States Aircraft carriers and the sophistication of its war machines cannot guarantee her victory.

In the same dimension, the one million strong army of Saddam, in the face of hunger and starvation may have to face the hardest test of esprit de corps with a near empty stomach.

In conclusion the promises made by both Iraq and the U.S. are like promises made to a woman in the heat of passion which fizzles out when the day breaks.

By Aluko Akinyele

KABIRU YUSUF

## The Radicals Conference

tion of the Political Programme as set out in the schedule to this decree shall be guilty of an offence".

Did the National Conference have such a subversive agenda? The leading elements in the National consultative forum, which planned the conference, are well-known radicals who have had countless brushes with the authorities. The example of what happened in neighbouring Benin Republic might have preyed on

flowing from that, reason itself. But to conclude that those who criticise aspects of government see nothing good in the whole, is to make ones wishes come true.

The National Conference, if it had been allowed to hold, would have been no more earth-shaking than a national delegates conference of ASUU. As usual in such gatherings there will be Solidarity messages from like-minded groups like NANS, the NLC and Women in Nigeria (WIN); a smattering of veteran labour leaders, "Peoples" lawyers and even one or two Politicians. The usefulness of such gatherings is that it gives some of our best brains the forum to rub minds — free from the usual shackles that keeps the ordinary Nigerian earth-bound. Many people are offended by the seeming arrogance of men who presume to know all our problems — and their solutions. But in this our intellectual elites are in the good company of the government, which by its recent action seems to be saying, what is there to discuss and debate, when everything has been taken care of by the transition programme? But has it?

If the transition is from military to civil Rule, then it can do with all the civilian in-puts it can get. The government should allow all interest groups to discuss and debate their ideas on building a better Nigeria. Even where it may have nothing new to learn from such discussions, the fact that they take place is good for the country and positive for its image.

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*If the transition is from military to civil Rule, then it can do with all the civilian in-puts it can get.*

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the mind of government functionaries. Should they allow the genie out of the bottle or should they keep him in? In the end they preferred to err on the side of caution and self-preservation.

This dilemma confirms once again that when it comes to Nigerian radicals the Babangida administration suddenly loses its magic touch. It simply does not know how to handle people who are opposed to it on the grounds of principles. Nigerian radicals have their beliefs and their ways and they have to be accepted the way they are. There is no way you can sell SAP to a Socialist! It goes against his every instinct, and



So the keepers of the keys to the National Theatre (who may not necessarily be the same people as its gatemen) have succeeded in locking out the Conveners of the National Conference. They claim their action was due to an "electrical fault" in the complex. But the government had been sending strong signals that this conference, though not others, was not welcome. First there were cryptic put-downs by Jerry Gana, Yusuf Mamma and Duro Onabule. Then one after the other — the Asiodu group, NRC and SDP and the biggest coup of all, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), which had earlier insisted on the role of Co-Convenor, chickened out of the arrangements. When finally it appeared that the meeting would still hold despite these defections, Justice Minister Bola Ajibola decided to extend the long arm of the law.

But the threat of a five-year jail term did not stop the Conveners and participants from showing up at the National Arts Theatre on September 6. If the gates were open, hundreds of people would have ended up in jail, because the Transition to Civil Rule decree of 1987, which Ajibola invoked, is directed at "Any person who organises, plans, encourages, aids, cooperates or conspires with any other person to undermine, prevent or in any way do anything to forestall or prejudice the realisa-

## The National Livestock Projects

The National Livestock Projects Division (NLPD) was established in 1976 as a unit of the Federal Livestock Department. It assumed the status of a department in 1984 following the reorganization exercise in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources & Rural Development. After the Civil Service reform of 1988, NLPD became a Project under the Federal Livestock Department and Pest Control Services (FLD & PCS). NLPD is currently implementing a

World Bank assisted Federal Government funded Livestock Production Projects in the country. In particular it:

- Provides technical support and coordinates credit services related to livestock production;
- promotes the development of technical packages for adoption by farmers;
- provides field supervision

of farmers" investments through the state livestock extension staff;

- implements and coordinates the development of grazing reserves and settlement of pastoralist on a na-



Herds trekking the long road to Maiduguri market

tional basis;

- is responsible for the introduction and distribution of trypanotolerant cattle to small holder farmers in the humid areas of the Country;
- provides water and other infrastructural developments for livestock production;
- promotes the development of livestock feeds through

the design of suitable 'least cost' rations for livestock;

- gives assistance to state ministries for their livestock extension services.

The department has its headquarters in Kaduna with states offices in all states of the Federation including Abuja and 39 district offices. It operates through and

works with the State Livestock Extension Services.

The country has been zoned into four for more effective supervision of the department's activities:

(a) North East: Com-

prising Bauchi, Borno, Gongola and Plateau States with the zonal headquarters in Bauchi.

(b) North West: Comprising Abuja, Kaduna, Katsina, Niger and Sokoto with its zonal headquarters in Zaria.

(c) South East: Comprising Akwa-Ibom, Anambra, Benue, Cross River and Rivers with zonal headquarters

## NLDP SUPPLEMENT

in Enugu.

(d) South West: Bendel, Kwara, Lagos, Ogun Ondo and Oyo with headquarters in Ibadan.

The Department has 698 staff throughout the country. It is headed by a Project Manager and comprises of three branches as follows:

1 Field Services headed by a Deputy Project Manager. This branch coordinates livestock field operations and is subdivided into the following sections:

1a, Field Operations, this section is responsible for day to day running of the field operations through the four zonal offices.

1b Technical Control and Research headed by a Senior Technical Controller.

1c Engineering Services headed by a Heavy Equipment Engineer. This division is responsible for farm infrastructural development and consists of heavy machinery for land clearing, dam construction, water development by borehole drilling and support workshops.

1d Pastoral Development Unit. This section is responsible for land use planning and assisting pastoralists to settle in and outside grazing reserves.

2. Development Planning, headed by a Deputy Project Manager. This branch com-

prises of four main sections.

2a Planning section: This section is responsible for project, planning and Sub-sectoral planning.

2b Monitory and Evaluation section, which is now fully computerised and with an up to date Management Information System (MIS).

2c Credit Section which coordinates the supervised

and Procurement branch headed by a Financial Controller.

There is also an Internal Audit unit responsible to the project Manager.

The Department pursues development programmes through the implementation of a number of projects.

There are:

1. GN IBRD Livestock De-



Small-holder fattening scheme

livestock credit programme.

2d Extension and Manpower Development branch responsible for extension services and manpower development.

2e Dairy Development and Farmers Organisation Units responsible for dairy development through organising small-scale cattle farmers into village milk producers cooperatives.

3. Finance Administration

2. Livestock Production and Technical Support Project.
3. Grazing Reserve Development and settlement of Pastoralists.
4. Livestock service centres and Trypanotolerant cattle Project.
5. Livestock Feed Project.
6. FGN/EEC N.W. Grazing Reserve Development.
7. FGN/EEC N.E. Grazing Reserve Development.

## NLDP SUPPLEMENT

8. Market and Stock Route Upgrading.
9. Model formation and testing facility

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION: 1. FGN/IRBD livestock De-

stock development programme which emphasises the small-scale private producer.

The project would include:  
(i) credit for purchase of farm inputs; (ii) dairy pilot

development and training programme; (vii) greater involvement of the private sector in supporting services; (viii) establishment of a livestock sectoral planning capacity for the nation and (ix) funds for special studies, including a review of the existing veterinary services.

### PHYSICAL SPECIFICATIONS AND TARGETS:

- 1) 2,370 loans to settle pastoralists and integrated livestock farmers.
- ii) 24,240 loans to cattle and sheep fatteners.
- iii) 235, loans to breeders of trypanotoperant cattle.
- iv) 643 poultry, 300 starter cattle breeder, 300 urban dairy producer, 225 grazing reserve dairy producer, 600 small ruminant, 700 small-holder pig fatterer and 170 medium-scale cattle fatterer and work bull loans.
- v) Technical assistance to 15,200 goat breeders.



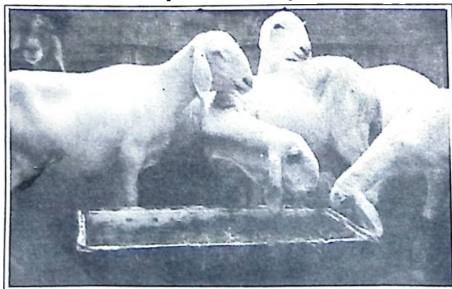
The traditional sector now being assisted by NLDP

### velopment Project:

This is a World Bank supported project and is a follow up to the First Livestock Development Project which was implemented between 1977 and 1984. The second project will cost N128 million over 5 years with a World Bank loan of 81 million dollars and the rest coming from the Federal Government.

The main objective of the project would be to increase livestock production through improved nutrition and animal health and thereby increase farmers incomes. The project would support the national live-

schemes; (iii) settling of pastoralists on grazing reserves on a selective and sustainable basis; (iv) equipment for participating institutions; (v) livestock systems research; (vi) a manpower



Sheep and goats also provide valuable nutrition

vi) Importation, quarantine and distribution of 1,000 N'dama cattle.

vii) Resource and socio-economic surveys of grazing reserves.

ix) Settlement of pastoralists within grazing reserves.

x) Assistance to pastoralists to acquire land outside the grazing reserves for settlement.

xi) Development of a practical training centre at Kachia.

xii) Assistance to state veterinary services.

xiii) Funding and assistance with the forma-

tion within NACB of a livestock credit unit.

xv) Funding of project related research.

xvi) Assistance to farmers in the organisation of commodity base cooperative groups.

xxvii) Implementation of a pilot dairy sub-project.

xxviii) Support to animal health and veterinary services.

xix) Implementation of unified extension services.

**2. Livestock Production and**

**Technical Support Project:**

A livestock production programme which includes an indigenous trypanotolerant cattle multiplication unit, a commercial bank funded cattle breeder credit model, milk process facilities for the increase of dairy production in remote areas, a sheep



High quality forage is essential for increased productivity

multiplication unit, small ruminant breeder models, a pilot commercial crossbred dairy unit, pig and poultry development and feed investigation, rabbitry development, additional cattle and sheep fattening and extension assistance to the state. This project provides in addition general assistance to livestock producers through advice, preparation of feasibility studies, liaising between producers both

smallholder medium and large scale with credit institutions etc.

**3. Grazing Reserves Development and Settlement of Traditional Pastoralists:**

Development of grazing reserves nationwide in liaison with states. Support to the states in infrastructural development,

planning and survey, development of forage resources, erosion control.

Traditional pastoralist own about 90% of Nigeria's cattle resource and because of seasonal variation in

feed availability they move in search of feed and water. This project aims at settling pastoralists with a view of getting them to develop all year feed resources and improved husbandry methods.

**4. Livestock Service Centres and Trypanotolerant Cattle Project:**

a) Livestock Service Centre - The renovation and/or construction of a LSCs in each of the states.

## NLDP SUPPLEMENT

These will be renovated or constructed at a rate of 8 per year. The objective is to provide a focus for livestock extension and provision of livestock inputs and possibly processing co-operatives.

b) Trypanotolerant Cattle Project - The importation quarantine and distribution of

additional heads of N'dama cattle to small holder farmers. And also investigation of Trypanotolerant cattle sources in the country and further their development.

### 5. Livestock Feed Project:

The purchase, storage and distribution of ruminant

feeds on the most cost effective basis, with allowance for full cost recovery. Such feed

will be distributed in the areas of greatest need. Production of pasture seed to



N'dama cattle — trypano tolerant breed enables production in the tsetse zone

effect long term fodder increases through forage reserves and a monogastric

mentary and monogastric feeds

### 6. Market and Stock Route Upgrading;

Object: Finished animals lose a lot of condition before reaching markets for consumers. Stock route for both trade cattle and breeders cattle which still move



A piggyery

feed component run in conjunction with the pig and poultry units in the livestock

around (even if there is, on the decrease need to be provided for improve animal

production programme. Nutrition remains a major constraint of livestock development in this country and any meaningful effort at boosting livestock production must address this constraint hence the projects:

- a) Pasture seeds and fodder banks
- b) Supple-

## NLDP SUPPLEMENT

condition. The improved markets and stock routes throughout the country more especially between states and nations are a federal government support to state livestock production

effects.

### 7. Model Formation and Testing Facility:

To test future models and systems before they become part of the credit system and to provide a demonstration centre to

enable commercial banks to gauge the viability of a particular component.

As can be seen, this department is fully committed and responsible for the Federal Government livestock production intervention throughout the country and poised to achieve additional gains for the livestock production sector.

### ACHIEVEMENT LIVESTOCK CREDIT COMPONENT

A total of 5,556 farmers from the 19 states of Nigeria were identified and a total loan of N28.76 million has been disbursed to the beneficiaries. A further 2,650 farmers and

traditional pastoralists have been selected and disbursement of loans to them is on going.

Total funds made available by NACB to date for disbursement to smallholder

Clearing  
for farms 445ha

Pasture demonstration plots have been initiated in all reserves and agropastoralist loans are just beginning to be taken up by the pastoralists to

establish fodder banks.

### Small Ruminant Programme

A total of 14,558 goats and 2,318 sheep have been vaccinated with TORY and dewormed in the 11 southern states.



Computer technology assists policy planning and evaluation

farmers for credits, totals N38.83 million while a further N7.06 million has been made available for the pre-financing of farm inputs for the credit models.

### Grazing Reserve Development

The grazing reserve component was expanded under the redesign to include 20 reserves rather than the original 8 which to date are fully planned. Settlement is taking place upon 5 of these and the remaining 12 reserves are provisionally identified.

Earth Dams	17
Roads	213 kilometres
Settlers	130 families
Reserves surveyed	10

Monitoring of the flock composition and treatments is an ongoing exercise and was carried out with 1,308 goats and 428 sheep belonging to 74 farmers.

### N'dama Cattle

1,000 head of N'dama cattle were imported into Nigeria from Senegal and are being held at quarantine ranches in the south of the country.

### Research Programme

A comprehensive research programme has been drawn up with NAPRI, IAR, ILCA, ACIAR and various universities to carry out project related research. Whilst the total programme is yet to be finalised, there are at present a total of 14 on-going packages with a further 9 under consideration.



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## AT A GLANCE

# Citizen

## SOCIETY

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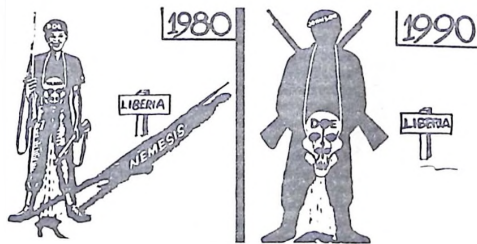
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Alhaji Isa Sarkin Gardi

## TAR TAR



... And so, the NEMESIS caught up!

# Citizenship

BY DOKUN ABIYI

## THIS IS THE LIMIT!



### ...THE LIMIT!...YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO US!



...HOLD IT!...HOLD IT!...BEFORE YOU GO IN AND HOLD YOUR CONFERENCE, I MUST TELL YOU THAT I KNOW YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BUILDING THIS NATION LIKE A GOOD HOUSE BUILDER WOULD WORK HARD WITH...



... FELLOW COUNTRYMEN...THE PRESIDENT HAS AGREED THAT WE BUILD THIS GREAT NATION TOGETHER! JUST ONE THING! IGNORE THE HEAT..... WE MAY NOW FILE IN!



...WE ARE TRYING TO HELP BUILD A GREAT NATION WITH OUR LOFTY IDEAS.... WE ARE PATRIOTS. OUR INTEREST IS OUR NIGERIA!



... HIS BRAINS, HIS DIGGER, HIS MIXER HIS SPADE, AND OTHER TOOLS, ALL FOR A STRONG PLACE OF ABODE!... BUT! MUST TELL YOU, YOU ARE TOO MANY AND THE AIRCONDITIONER IN THIS PLACE IS NOT WORKING. YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO SUFFOCATE, WOULD YOU?!



### ...NO YOU CAN'T GO IN! YOUR NATION-BUILDING TOOLS ARE DANGEROUS AND FANTASTIC MISSILES! JUST LIKE THE BRICKLAYERS' TOOLS! ???



## PRIVATE EYE

# Combat Unreadiness

Soldiers in peace, the saying goes, are like chimneys in summer - unwanted, unseen and not of much help. And as the saying goes, the soldiers went — back!

It all happened last week at Birnin Gwari. At night Birnin Gwari is a sleepy little town several kilometres and so many more potholes away from Kaduna. But that indeed was not the issue.

The issue was about a true-life (more like true-death) stranger than fiction drama that took place there. Around 10pm two Tuesdays ago passers-by began to notice an unusual build-up of trailers, buses, cars and taxis. It was as if Birnin Gwari was one big parking lot or the last town on that route. I began to wonder what was wrong but there was no one to tell. Whoever parked disappeared as if into thin air.

At last I saw a police Land Rover at top speed. On passing the outskirts of the town but before reaching its centre, the police driver noticed the unusual number of vehicles. After they have parked in front of one enclosure, I noticed a head appear over the edge, survey the scene slowly and quietly opened a creaky door. By this time the fully armed policemen had come out and were standing at the entrance.

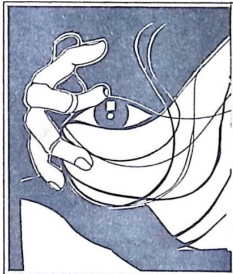
"What's the matter?" One of them asked the man. "What are all these

vehicles doing here?"

"They are waiting for armed robbers to pass," he answered.

"But why..." the policeman began as the meaning sank into him. "Waiting for who?"

"Robbers." The man in the enclosure said, gesturing in the direction towards Kaduna. "They are somewhere there". When he finished his gesturing



and turned round to explain, the policemen were nowhere to be seen. They had disappeared.

Later, as if by chance a military truck carrying some soldiers drove in. I really thought someone had wired for help. I was mistaken. The truck

stopped, and after some hesitation, some of the soldiers alighted. They went in different directions to make inquiries. All of them returned rather too quickly to the truck. They took off to a safer location off the road but within the town — and began to wait.

Then suddenly, in the early hours of the following morning, a car at top maddening speed sliced the town into two. It was pursued by another car also at very top speed. Another minute, they had disappeared. Whether the one caught the other, neither the soldiers, nor the police and certainly not the civilian long-distance drivers showed any undue interest in finding out.

As if the final whistle had gone off, all the trucks and lorries kicked off. I reckoned that close to a million litres of smoke and carbon-monoxide must have been let off in those minutes as they scrambled for the safety of Kaduna.

Soldiers in peace are like chimneys in summer. They may well be but who said this is "peace"? All around Kaduna and especially the route to Abuja I thought a civil war was being fought these days — between robbers and civil society. But with soldiers and police like these it makes me shudder to think who will win. Private Eye will be there to report the battle.

## The super Barons

Private Eye column in *Citizen* No. 2 Vol. 1 informed its teeming readers that the first class or Super Barons (SB) consist of a coterie of not more than ten extremely powerful individuals. Here are some of them.

Baron Maiyasin (reciter of the famous surat yasin) is a darkish spritely person with faint tribal marks. He is quiet, astute and religious. He normally leads the group in congregational prayers except when a senior Super Baron is around and takes over as Imam. Maiyasin then takes the position of ladan (muezzin) and is always called upon by the group to offer opening or closing prayers at their nuctural

meetings. He is a highly respected member of the group.

Baron Maitasbi or Maichasbi (the one with prayer beads) is the ostensible leader of the Super Barons. He is fond of counting the beads, perhaps to emphasise his holiness or capacity to cast a spell on any person that may challenge him. This charismatic Baron is an embodiment of authority, power, influence which he likes to wield. Some regard him as a mini-Sardauna (Sir Ahmadu Bello, first and last Premier of Northern Nigeria).

Baron Maisaje (the one with whiskers). This Baron is primus inter peres - actual as opposed to the ostensible,

leader of the Super Barons or the Chief Baron. Though he is not chairman of the group he usually acts as its spokesman. He is simple, approachable, amiable and is fond of laughing and clapping his hand with that of a colleague even during meeting when serious issues are being deliberated upon. He has other aliases such as Mailohe (the one with pipe) and the Ditcher - of foes and friends alike.

The next issue of Private Eye will complete the list of the Super Barons and some influential Barons and Barons. Subsequent issues will deal with their extraordinary exploits. So keep a date with us.

## THEATRE

## Night of fun at museum kitchen

Three plays. Three delectable plays. All in one night! If the collective Artists wanted to surprise, they did just that.

A typical African moonlit night was recaptured. With bamboo seats arranged around an open air stage and the auditorium roofed with thatch, guests relived a fast disappearing country life. It was hard to believe this is happening right in high-brow Ikoyi in Lagos. But what do you expect in Museum? And this is the Museum Kitchen, venue of the performance, on Saturday, 25th August 1990.

The guests stroll in as the call time gets nearer. A burst of laughter here. A guffaw there. Sure signs of long lost friends finding themselves in a fine setting. Bottles of beer float freely. The kitchen ensured a steady supply - for a fee!

To the left, stockily built banker and art patron, Rasheed Gbadamosi, whose play "Green Grass" incidentally is the first to be presented, sits, chatting heartily with his wife. Visible, too, is chief Newton Jibunoh, art collector and Chairman, Costain West Africa with wife. A handful of white faces dot the mainly black audience...

A soul stirring sound from a flute draws attention to the stage. A man is sprawled, shifting from side to side, obviously in agony. The flutist cum storyteller, blows on, then stops suddenly. "You murdered your wife," he shouts at the figure. "Deny it," he concludes. Back to his flute, he goes.

The figure darts out and in a moment comes back with a girl. The barking of a dog can be heard growing more and more menacing. The man with his companion crouch - in hiding. Fear is written all over them...

Tunde Obalana as Nekan could not have played the part of a trapped homicidal maniac any better. He looked every inch the wild animal he is supposed to be. On the contrary, Yinka Davies as Toju, an investigative journalist intent on unravelling the myth of Nekan, her reaction was not only weak but affected...

As light fade on them, four squatting



Tunde Obalana and Yinka Davies in *Greener Grass*

figures - all females - appear, signalling the opening of the second play, "God dey." This is an adaptation of Ben Caldwell's Prayer Meeting by Chuck Mike. The figures in view are actually tyres on a stationary car! Suddenly, a man saunters by, surveys the 'car' and then opens it. He is attempting to drive it away but cannot. Anxiety mounts.

Soon the owner, a pastor, comes along, gets in and is about to drive out when the thief beckons to him "in the name of the Lord" not to move or look back otherwise, he would "turn into a pillar of salt". The perplexed pastor obeys and is dispossessed of all his belongings, pushed out and car snatched. All the Pastor could say was "God dey!"

The pair of Cliff Igwe (Thief) and Shina Adebola (Pastor) gave a good account of themselves in realising their roles.

The last play for the night, "Rain", was as intriguing as they come. Written by an undergraduate of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile - Ife, Biyi Bamidele - Thomas, the play opened on a bizarre note.

In the middle of a circle formed by sea

- shells, two men can be seen facing each other in kneeling position. In-between lie logs of wood gathered supposedly to make a fire. Beside this lie four stones, two on either side. Almost simultaneously, they grab the stones and begin to scratch them together, slowly at first, and gradually building up into a frenzy. They fall exhausted. Then, they launch into sto-

ries of rain falling and flooding everything except a beer parlour, themselves and a prostitute, of farting in a classroom into class teacher's nostrils, of a mother dying in a bicycle accident, of a man living with the wife for twenty years without making love to her until the last year and then walking out on her thereafter even with her heavy with child.

The audience could not hold their breath. It was laughter galore. Actors Tunde Enba (Banza) and Dele Adagunodo (Lagbaja) lived up to their billings. Their re-enactments were a delight to watch. Director Niyi Akanni, did not disappoint. He handled the play dexterously.

The night could not have ended on a better note. Producer, Chuck Mike was all smiles as he came to make his vote of thanks. He was full of praises for Rasheed Gbadamosi, for making the night's performances, a reality. He also hinted on his next pet project, SAND (Season of American, African and Nigerian Dramas) taking off at the close of the year which will hopefully be receiving the backing of the United States Information Service as well as individuals.

By Oji Onoko.

## EATING OUT

## Restaurant crawling at its best

Being a stranger has many advantages; but being a guest has no disadvantages known to man. I only discovered this after many months of "gregarious nomadism" - with my family in Azare, a home in Kano and a hide-out in Kaduna. Shuttling between these places, I remain a perpetual guest who as they say is someone always treated like royalty until he overstays his welcome. I never do. Working in the media has taught one to expect only two rectangular meals a day. Lunch doesn't exist and if it does it is never eaten by journalists - at least most of them. Once in a while, however, one is reminded about three square meals. When that happens and I am in Kaduna there can only be one reason - Kabiru Yusuf is in town. He likes feeding me lunch; he likes Lesbora Restaurant; and so to Lesbora we went.

I hate to read a menu, or to have to choose from what it offers. I have my reasons. One, I like French though I can't stand it. My year at Alliance Francaise has neither been regular nor endeared me to a spelling that you are not supposed to pronounce. Even if your restaurant is not sophisticated to Gaullic proportions that folded paper smells decidedly French. Two, I don't eat out often - if at all - so I am used to being served by the missus without choice. It sounds draconian but it is faster - and no hotel can match home cooking.

At Lesbora we were met on arrival by profuse greetings, nods and grateful stares. Kabiru is a generous tipper and clearly at home here. We sat down; and the inevitable happened - we were given the menu. I turned away "Can I trust your choice?" I asked Kabiru. Not sure, he called out to one of the waiters. "What and what do you have?" The waiter rattled away: practice has made the role perfect. "What types of meat?"

"We have beef, mutton, fish and..." The last thing the waiter mentioned was indistinct but I was sure I wanted to vomit. So I asked, "Did you say you serve lizard here?"

"Ah He! he! no sir", the waiter answered as he burst into a big laugh. Kabiru also laughed. I thought it was no laughing matter, I was sure I heard the man say "lizard."

Finally the waiter regained his composure. "I am sorry sir if my pronunciation was not good," he begun. "What I said was that we serve gizzard, ji-ai-double zed-e-ar-di, gizzard."

I swallowed hard. "That's better," I said. "What's the gizzard thing about? Is it chicken gizzard?" "Yes. Okay I don't want it."

Kabiru ordered it with his special

cat I was wondering whether he had secretly sent word home that the gang was coming.

When we went out Bukar led the way to Safaha Plaza on Sultan Road. First time for me. The architecture of the entrance has been inviting enough but it never bothered me what goes inside. We drove in.

The interior was exquisitely done with much taste. A bridge over a "moat" and you'd think you were going into a castle. That's how it seemed to me as I went over the network of canals in front of the restaurant. Inside, the restaurant itself was



A typical restaurant

dish.

Mohammed Bomo and I ordered for the special but with goat meat, my favourite.

Instead of the much-hated bland soup - cowtail, the best. It turned out to be excellent on palate, not looking so good on plate and very bad for our teeth. Yet when we were through, each vertebra was spotless and all of the gravy gone. That's nice.

After the launching of Citizen in Kaduna, Bukar Zarma said I must call on him when I leave the launch site. I did. By the time I arrived at Newsday I had a couple of people with me and some others called while we were together. The talk never ended, and soon it was lunch time. No kitchen could have accommodated so many raging appetites without notice, and so when Bukar suggested we go out to

cool and spotless.

The menu arrived - of course. I looked away. Bukar and Bomo began selecting, arguing, and laughing.

"Samosa!" Bomo shouted. "Why I used to buy it for a naira a piece. How how come it costs N20?" "You don't have time to find out many things," Bukar said. "You better order what you want".

"What I want is Samosa."

"So take it and pay their price".

For me rice is always good enough for lunch - especially if it comes with a liberal serving of daddawa-based stew - black stew as we call it. Hausa-Fulani culinary tradition has not invented anything tastier. When our order came, it was a mixed grill - a piece of many things. On the whole it was delicious but we had to pay for every bit of the taste. The bill read N200 for 4 plates.

By Adamu Adamu

## CULTURE

# "An Endangered Culture"

This is the phase President Babangida used to describe the Nigerian culture - if indeed it's possible to speak of a 'common' Nigerian culture - during last November's launch of the national chapter of the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988/89). The national committee on the WDCD rose from its fifth plenary meeting in Kaduna during the week having the same fear about the dilution of "our rich cultural traditions, values . . ." with the expansive materialism of western cultures.

This is much in evidence in the total value system of the Nigerian youth today: hairstyles, the clothes they go in, the loud, often meaningless music issuing out of loudspeakers in street shops and even homes. Boys cut their hair in a way that leaves it looking like the tuft on a cock's head. The dance steps they take are altogether false. This goes for boys. The girls wear tight short skirts that expose, to the lewd eyes of men, the underside of their thighs.

This is the more common-place evidence of what the President called "hastily injected and ill-digested foreign cultures." He spoke of a revitalisation of "our rich but endangered culture" through a national cultural policy, which seeks to "restore culture and human values to their central place in economic and technological development".

It also aims to make the arts accessible to all Nigerians, thereby preserving "our cultural heritage", and promote culture as an industry of crafts, sound and video products, books, films and drama.

Alhaji Mohammed Balarabe Umaru, Kaduna State's Director of Culture, in a recent interview, expressed a desire to have the policy elevated to "a national ideology through which our good traditional values and systems shall form the basis for effective realisation of national goals".

He saw the UN general assembly's declaration of the World Decade for Cultural Development as only reaffirming a pattern of cultural rejuvena-

tion that has begun to emerge in this country under the present military regime. He ticked off the creation of a separate ministry of culture and "formalisation" of the national festival of arts and culture. The national committee on WDCD, headed by Frank Aig-Imoukhuede, a federal director of culture, had planned the take-off of a number of projects this year. They included a national gallery of art, a



Alhaji Zakari Isa Chawai, Kaduna State Commissioner for Information, Home Affairs and Culture national institute of cultural orientation, a national language survey and the festival of indigenous children's toys, rhymes and games.

The fifth plenary meeting of the committee in Kaduna reviewed what progress had been made on the projects. Mr. Aig Imoukhuede reported that an interim board has been approved for the art gallery and it should "start operation this month". As for the children's festival, it has a national committee to work on the logistics for its staging "before the end of the year". It is meant to insulate the most vulnerable section of the population, the youth, which the committee described as "our greatest vehicles of cultural continuity", from "the tremendous pressure exerted from outside on our value system". The national language survey, also, he said, was making "considerable progress". Its implementation is in phases, under the aegis

of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC).

The report card reads very good. But, in truth, under this veneer of "considerable progress" lies a difficulty, that of misconception of culture, even by policy-makers. All too often it is simplified to mean just music and dance. Any wonder that dance troupes are mushrooming all over the country! Not that music, good music, per se is not necessary. Shakespeare described it as the "food of love" and love is the greatest of all human values. Culture is said to be the "totality of man's existence." This "totality", of course, includes music and dance - and many more things in life: education, theatre, food and industry.

Music and dance. The controversy over them will rage for as long as those officers put in charge of nursing our cultural growth continue to be cagey and emotional. It is true, as Alhaji Mohammed, Kaduna's arts and culture director said, man expresses himself more naturally in music and dance. But should he do it in a state of nudity? That is the question. It is arguable whether girls who allow their underpants to show and expose their breasts at these "cultural displays" send out any message other than to arouse the basest of all human instincts: the sex urge. The big shots in society who honour such occasions with their VIP presence applaud gleefully, not the meaningfulness of the girls' graceful dance steps but the suggestiveness of the wiggling "backyard". The appreciation often shown is a note sent through an orderly to "see me in my office or hotel room" the next day.

Alhaji Mohammed regards criticism of bare-breast dancing as uninformed and for him going naked is just as natural a way of life as being fully clad. It was with difficulty he was able to apply the wedge to his rising temper. At a point he muttered, "you can change your attitude to the whole thing. Kill all the girls if you like or turn them into something but human beings".

By Tawey Zakka.

## SNAKE CHARMING

### Alhaji Isa Sarkin Gardi: Snake charmer extraordinary

Even before 1986, when his appointment to the staff of the Department of Biological Sciences in the Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto made headline news and drew many newspaper articles and cartoons, Alhaji Isa was well known in Sokoto being the Sultan's official *Sarkin Gardi*, that is, the head of snake charmers. In mid-1985, a big black Egyptian cobra somehow sneaked into the posh sitting room of the Danfodiyo University's Vice-Chancellor and bit the VC, Professor Mahdi Adamu. The combined efforts of the University's Estate engineers and zoology professors having failed to prevent this near-disaster, the Sultan of Sokoto lent of the services of Alhaji Isa, who promptly caught the snake. This feat reinforced the already strong traditionalist views of Professor Adamu, a former director of the centre for Nigerian cultural studies at the ABU, Zaria. Alhaji Isa was then appointed into the University's staff.

His "academic" duties in the University include capturing any snake that molests the 8,000 members of the University community, as well as aiding research work in herpetology. Alhaji Isa's dangerous duties are exemplified by a recent brush he had with a spitting cobra. The huge snake had lodged inside the power generator at the University's junior staff houses at Rangon Kamfani, outside Sokoto. Alhaji Isa pursued the snake for three hours, and in the process received several spits on the neck. "The cobra aims for vulnerable places" Alhaji Isa told *Citizen*, "mainly the eyes, ears and nose, the effects of a spit can be disastrous for a person. To me, of course, it does not matter in the least." In the end he captured the snake.

Alhaji Isa has been catching snakes for 41 years now, having learnt his trade at the age of 7 from his father and uncle. His father, now deceased, was legendary for his snake hunting abilities. More than 50 years ago, those skills were surely tested when a huge snake invaded the residence of the colonial Resident of Sokoto province.

The white man and his family were scared out of their wits and the Sultan sent Alhaji Isa's father to the scene. He quickly captured the snake and was invested by the Resident himself as *Sarkin Gardi*. Alhaji Isa's grandfather also once held the title. After his father's death, Alhaji Isa's uncle also held the title before the late Sultan Abubakar III invested it on Isa.

As *Sarkin Gardi*, his main duties are to help remove snakes that lodge in people's houses, farms and water wells. "We receive at least 200 reports a week from Sokoto and surrounding

the house everyday for 3 months, but did not see the snake. However, the Sultan's attendants always saw it after I was gone. I was desperate to catch a glimpse of the snake. All I wanted was to see it, and the matter will be over. One day, I went to the house at 7 pm and waited all night for the snake to appear. Then, at around 7.30 the following morning, it suddenly raised its head, and I saw it. I retreated into the courtyard and danced for joy. I then returned to the snake, laid my cap on the floor, and it entered. It was an 8 feet, 2 inches - long Egyptian cobra".



Alhaji Isa: charming snakes for 41 years

villages", said Alhaji Isa. There are 70 other snake charmers in Sokoto who perform this duty, but the *Sarkin Gardi* normally handles the most difficult cases. Although no snake has ever escaped capture when he pursued it, Alhaji Isa recalls an occasion 13 years ago when a snake tested his skills to the limit. "It had lodged in the Sultan of Sokoto's old house", he told *Citizen*, obviously a serious matter. "I went to

times you meet with a bad day". (The Hausa phrase *bacin rana* is a regular excuse for failed charms and lotion. "One of my own fingers" Alhaji said, displaying the finger to our porter, "was destroyed by a snake" also regularly treat my colleagues who are bitten by snakes. Some of my snakes are bitten by other snakes, which I have to treat them".

By Mahmud Jega

The snake charmer confirmed to *Citizen* that cobras, vipers and adders are the snakes that most commonly bite people in northern Nigeria. Although the *Sarkin Gardi* and other snake charmers treat cases of snakebites, they prefer to administer lotions to protect persons from snakebites.

But why is that snake sometimes bit and kill the charmers themselves? "It does not happen often", Alhaji Isa said, "but some



## NIGERIAN AGRICULTURAL AND CO-OPERATIVE BANK LIMITED

### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 1989

	1989 <u>N'000</u>	1988 <u>N'000</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and short term Funds	294,981	78,999
Equity Investments	13,949	8,699
Loans	790,276	470,884
Other Assets	210,202	152,738
Fixed Assets	<u>92,410</u>	<u>54,888</u>
Fixed Assets	<u><u>N1,401,818</u></u>	<u><u>N766,208</u></u>

#### SHAREHOLDERS' FUNDS & LIABILITIES:

Share Capital	500,000	150,000
General Reserve	57,684	47,286
Shareholders' Funds	<u>557,684</u>	<u>197,286</u>
Loans	679,683	500,869
Current Liabilities	<u>164,451</u>	<u>68,053</u>
	<u><u>1,401,818</u></u>	<u><u>N766,208</u></u>

Group Capt.. Usman Jibrin . . . . . Chairman

Prof. M. B. Ajakaiye . . . . . Managing Director/Chief Executive

#### PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1989

	1989 <u>N'000</u>	1988 <u>N'000</u>
Gross Earnings	153,971	83,833
Interest paid	<u>37,472</u>	<u>34,455</u>
Net Earnings	116,499	49,378
Operating Expenses; Provisions & Depreciation	<u>88,977</u>	<u>50,548</u>
Net operating profit/ (Loss) for the year	27,522	(1,170)
Applied as follows:	<u>(27,522)</u>	<u>1,170</u>
Transfer to General Reserve	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Balance carried forward.	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>



## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER, 1989

We have audited the above Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 1989 and the related Profit and Loss Accounts and statement of source and Application of funds for the year ended on that date prepared under the Historical cost convention and on the basis of the accounting policies described in the Notes to the Accounts. The accounts were prepared from the Bank's books of accounts which, in our opinion, have been properly kept. We have obtained all the information and explanations which we considered necessary for the purpose of our audit including adequate returns from the Bank's Branches.

To the best of our knowledge and belief, the Bank adhered to the provisions of the productivity, prices and Incomes policy guidelines for the year ended 31st December, 1989.

In our opinion, the accompanying accounts give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Bank as at 31st December, 1989 and of the profit and source and Application of Funds for the year then ended and comply with the Companies Act, 1968.

Kano, Nigeria  
May, 1990.

Johnson, Abioye, Oladehinde & co.  
Chartered Accountants.

Directors: Group Capt.. Usman Jibrin (RTD) Chairman; Professor M. B. Ajakaiye (Managing Director/Chief Executive); Alhaji Umaru Imam (Executive) | Alhaji Isa Tahir, (Executive), Mr. F. C. O. Emenike (Executive); Alhaji Garba Bawa (Executive); Dr. E. N. Onunkwo, Mr. Chuk's Ezeugoh, Mr. E. E. Eyo, Mr. J. Dangwaran, Alhaji Abu Ibrahim, Mr. S. M. Tarka.

ADAMU ADAMU'S  
DEFINITIONS  
IN HUMOUR



I ONCE defined BON as Bank of the Nought and IBWA as the International Bank of wasted Assets. No mischief was meant; but now I can beat my chest. Someone told me that the discomfiture caused by the first definition was great enough to lead to the employment of someone close to stop the naughtiness. The other definition, I understand, wasted the valuable time of many assets as they decided on a new name. Oh what power and glory — me Tarzan, me tough.

Seriously now, I never knew I had powers of prophesy. When I penned those definitions I had nothing up the sleeve (or is it up *kwado da linzami*?) except innocent jest. Little then did I know that many were the assets that would be wasted and many the dreams that would come to nought in banking circles. But as it is often said, it was probably all in the name. So let's see.

**FBN** — Fast Bank of Nigeria where you can make the fast buck fastest, and that is ten times the rate at which you make Naira.

**UBN** — Bank of Unionism, and unionism as we saw last week is a situation where you have two cows and these are taken away from you by unionism. One is shot, the other is milked, and the milk is thrown away — along with your Naira.

**Ivory Merchant Bank** — The Moi Touch which, unfortunately, is opposite that of Midals. Moi put all ivory to flames and all its merchants to flight.

**Commercial Trust Bank** — Which is which? Do I trust commerce or do I trust bankers. Or neither? Which clearly is the safer option.

get any *eco* back? Hardly.

**North-South Bank** — North is north; south is south. And never the twain shall meet. Ditto you and your Naira.

**Lead Merchant Bank** — I thought banks always kept gold bullion in their vaults. Now if I am looking for lead I know where to search for it.

**Industrial Bank** — As industrialisation eluded us, so will the bank.

**Century Merchant Bank** — Are these people talking of 1880's? I thought we are now in the 1990's, or are we?

**Merchant Bank** — There's neither equity nor good conscience in a *meridian*. The question is: Is there Naira? The answer is: A meridian is an imaginary line. What of *meridien*?

**Republic Bank** — So what is a republic bank doing in a military dictatorship? Dictating the value of the Naira?

**Centre-point Merchant Bank** — At the centre, there's no point.

**Financial Merchant Bank** — So, all the others are not financial?

**New Africa Merchant Bank** — Africa is the oldest continent, so how can it be new?

**Savannah Bank** — Guinea, Sudan, Sahel or American?

Enough banks for the day especially since your neither have the money nor the inclination to take one to the other. My advice is that you have a large pillow. Under it there's enough room for your meagre take-home alms. Throw it there and wait until the 100-odd banks whittle down to 10.

**Code of Conduct**

A popular question nowadays is, "By how much have the Code of Conduct

bureau and tribunal increased corruption?" Curious.

Are they not supposed to reduce it, or better still, to stamp the damn thing out? Well, whatever it is supposed to be, there is little doubt that corruption has increased and become more sophisticated since the creation of the two bodies.

One may therefore safely conclude that soon the Nigerian police will become more corrupt. Why? IC Attah has just dusted some code of conduct which we will expect his men to live, work and die for. He will certainly not expect them to cheat with it. And that, precisely, is what they will do.

**A Little Story**

Today also bring you that anonymous humour that, some times annoyingly sometimes appropriately, adorns offices that you visit. This one not so much because of its humour but because of its Nigerianness.

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

In the past they used to say "Everybody's business was nobody's business". Both were Nigerians.

**Salty Business**

A governor of one of the states was reported to have had the ceiling of a new party secretariat collapse on him. He had innocently touched the structure to find out how strong it was and the whole thing came down. Too bad. Reminded me of Don Quixote. After crashing his helmet while trying to test his repairs, he never thereafter tested anything even once.

But did the contractor see wind mills?

## The Snake That Poisons Everybody

It  
Topples  
governments,  
wrecks  
marriages,  
ruins  
careers,  
busts  
reputations,  
causes  
heartaches,  
nightmares,  
indigestion,  
spawns suspicion,  
generates  
grief,  
dispatches  
innocent  
people  
to cry in their  
pillows.  
Even its name  
hisses.  
It's called  
gossip.  
Office gossip,  
Shop gossip.  
Party gossip.  
It makes  
headlines  
and headaches.  
Before  
you repeat  
a story,  
ask yourself:  
Is it true?  
Is it fair?  
Is it necessary?  
If not,  
shut up.

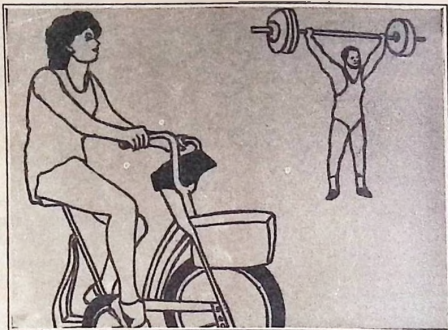
## The goodies of aerobics

Jogging is too often touted as the sure way of keeping fit. But health experts are now saying that widely held belief should be swallowed with a pinch of salt. There is no denying that jogging is good for the body if it is done in moderation but they warn against excessive jogging. It could put too much pressure on the heart of those over 35 years and it also over-stretches the hip muscles of women who indulge in it.

Jogging is good only for the lower torso but is an ineffective panacea for bulging pot bellies or flabby tummy muscles. The secret of making exercises work for your posture and body contours lies in knowing which type of exercises suits you and those that are known to rectify excess weight in certain areas.

Citizen took a trip to one of Kaduna's new health gardens, the Safaha Plaza on Sultan road, where the inspector incharge of gymnastics and aerobics Mr. Ben Edeh explained the techniques of keeping fit and weight reduction. Weight reduction and exercise programmes can be classified into three groups: gymnastics, which involves using gadgets such as stationary joggers and bicycles to exercise, aerobics, general workout exercises for all parts of the body and callisthenics, which is really an introduction to aerobics but one that focuses on acquiring flexibility of muscles. The latter which should precede aerobics is recommended for everybody irrespective of sex, age or peculiar weight problems.

Obesity, excessive weight or the fear of it has been identified as the major problem that pushes most people into seeking expert advice on keeping fit or weight reduction. At Safaha, Mr. Edeh disclosed that any client for weight reduction programme first undergoes a rehabilitative test involving weight recording, blood pressure, heart and stamina tests. Then a rehabilitative exercise is selected to suit the client. The slimming programme involves two aspects, one is reduction of body fat and the other is general weight loss. It is not unusual to notice that for the



first two weeks after commencement of exercises, the weight remains static, decreases or even increases. It is just part of the idle body's response to the active exercises. After the first two weeks of weight fluctuation the client begins to notice emaciation of the body and a gradual reduction in weight. There is an erroneous assumption that weight increases occurs due to extra storage of body fat. Experts say body weight is dictated by heavy bones and muscles. It is therefore important for clients on a slimming programme to understand that fats may melt but body weight may not decrease due to the constant weight of bones and muscles.

Apart from the exercises, diets are also introduced to the virtues of dieting. Here Mr. Edeh disagrees with many dietitians who force their clients to eliminate all fattening foods from their diet at one go. On the contrary, he believes in drastic reduction in intake of such foods, mainly carbohydrates and fats over a certain period. Most people, he explained go off their prescribed diet when they are forced to completely eliminate carbohydrates and fats from their meals.

With a combination of the exercises and the diet, the client can lose up to 5

kilogrammes or more in 30 days.

Charges at Safaha for weight reduction programmes vary depending on the type of membership the client selects. The special membership costs N300 naira monthly and offers the following: special weight loss or keep fit programme, exercises for six days maximum or 3 days minimum every week; G5 treatment to melt body fat, once a week, two sauna baths weekly and two free pedicure and manicure.

The ordinary membership programme which costs 150 naira monthly entitles members to two Sauna bath monthly, everyday exercises for maximum of six days or a minimum of three days weekly and two pedicure and manicure.

Aerobics for non-members is organised on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for 10 naira per session.

For a woman with a flabby tummy, abdominal exercises are recommended along with other conditioning exercises. Strength endurance exercises such as weight lifting should be avoided by women. It is strictly prescribed only for men who use it to develop muscles, big chest and narrow waist and hips.

By Bilkiu Yusuf



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