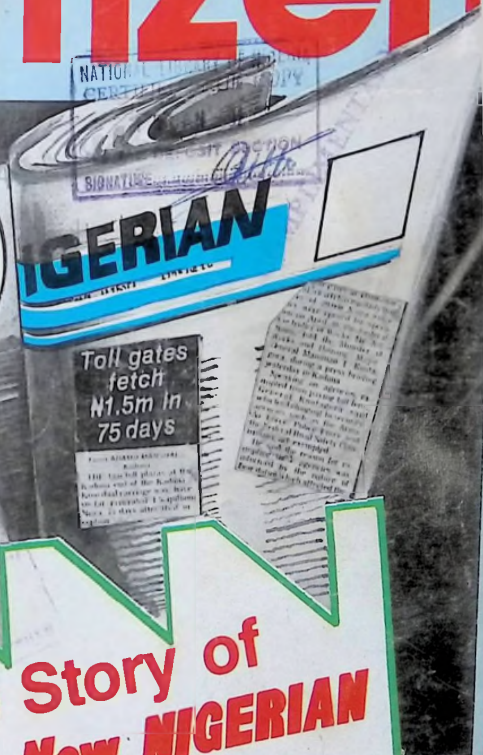


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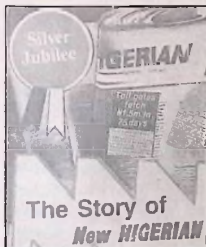
Citizen

All the News in Perspective

January 14, 1991--Vol. II No. 2

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA
CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

15 JAN 1991



The rise and decline of the *New Nigerian*

Easily the most respected and authoritative paper in the country for many years, the *New Nigerian* celebrates 25 years of excellent journalism this week.

Page 13.

Like an Elephant

Budget 1991 appears by common consent to be the best by Babangida's regime. The only worry is that government may not stick to it.

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Madaki forsakes civility

Col. John Yahaya Madaki does not see why he should allow civility to stand between him and his mission to get things moving in the fledgling Katsina State.

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Citizen

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PREFACE

"The *New Nigerian's* hubris is legendary. It believes it can get away with murder in this country. It bulldozes its way into places where lesser mortals do not touch with a barge pole"

That was the *Daily Sketch* on December 20, 1984, complaining about a chart the *New Nigerian* had carried on its front page of the Monday before, which showed the imbalance in the composition of the federal civil service. *Sketch* was not alone in condemning the paper for "rocking the boat", but in a way the criticisms were a compliment to *New Nigerian's* forthrightness and courage.

Our cover story written by Mohammed Haruna, Bilkiu Yusuf and Delia Nzekwu, with a companion piece by Kabiru Yusuf and Isaac Umunna is about the origin of what in the last 25 years has grown to become one of the best produced, and except for a while, the most literate and authoritative newspaper in the country. In those 25 years the paper has produced some of the best minds in the profession like Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed of *Newswatch*, Sully Abu of *The Guardian*, Rufai Ibrahim one-time editor of *The Guardian on Sunday* and Abba Dabo, publisher of *The Insider* newsletter. Of those who have since left the beat, the records of Malams Adamu Ciroma, Mamman Daura and Turi Muhammadu as fearless editors of the soundest intellect remain unbeaten.

The story of the paper they created and its impact on politics and economics of the country these 25 years is a story that is compulsory reading not only for students and teachers of journalism, but should interest Nigerians from all walks of life.

Our *Guide-Line* series was concluded last week. In its place, we are introducing a new series on *How to...* starting this week with "How to read a newspaper." Happy reading.

Mohammed Haruna

That minimum wage

It is rather unfortunate that the minimum wage is a far cry compared to the inflationary trend in Nigeria today. It is necessary the federal government realise that it is the workers who have to bear the burden of SAP more than any other class of people.

The continuous depreciation of the Naira has rendered the amount insignificant compared to the average workers' numerous problems of paying school fees, rents, hospital bills and other contingencies, they are ironically more prone to problems than the upper echelons of the society.

The visit by World Bank officials to Nigeria attests to the fact that the workers (constituting the poor) are the ones suffering from the pangs of SAP.

The living standard of the workers needs to be meaningful and improved upon, because they constitute the labour force of the nation.

Bukela Taibat,
Kaduna.

At this point in time, when the nation demands sacrifice from the whole citizenry, the increment on the minimum wage will only increase our problems the more, as most people, the traders, the landlords, the transporters shall jump at the opportunity to increase the prices of their goods and services. I pray the government to look at the inflationary trend in Nigeria which the increased minimum wage will encourage thereby (God forbid) bring about instability.

Though the damage has been done, I foresee a gloomy future, because the private sector is unlikely to implement the new minimum wage and if forced to, may resort to retrenchments.

Kayode Olomoda,
Lagos.

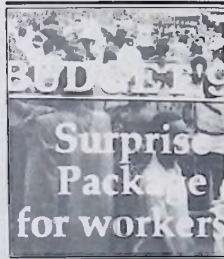
If the federal government actually wants the workers to benefit from the slight change in minimum wage announced in the 1991 budget, it should do everything possible to prevent unscrupulous traders, landlords and

transporters from sharply increasing their prices, house rents and fares respectively.

It may do this by revitalising the price control board and making rent tribunals more effective.

If these measures are not taken, the workers — especially those in the private sector — who may not even benefit from the "package" would pay for sins they did not commit.

Bridget Adeke,
Kaduna.



Platform ?

I read Ibrahim Sheme's response to the ever-growing popularity of your *Platform* with interest. He among other things accused *Citizen* of being obsessed with the idea of "Parley", and therefore being lazy in searching for investigative stories.

While "investigative" stories are useful, (he mentioned some himself) I

find *Platform* very exciting and *Citizen* will do well to encourage more Nigerians to participate in it. If I have any criticism, it is that the scope be widened to include people from ordinary life rather than the elites only.

If it is the Ibrahim Sheme of *The Reporter* newspaper, what moral credibility has he in saying that readers of *Citizen* are fed up with one person's ideas for a week when *The Reporter* feeds its readers with the junk that every SDP supporter says everyday? In any case, Ibrahim Sheme's ten Naira is not the only one that will sustain *Citizen*. Why didn't his Managing Editor at *The Reporter* introduce "Parley" when he was Editor of the *New Nigerian*?

I think Ibrahim Sheme is getting too obsessed with his own idea of how the *Citizen* should look like. He must remember that variety is the spice of life and given the short memory of Nigerians, I think it is time that someone tell us what happened or did not happen in their time. *Platform* is a very good avenue for doing that. What *Citizen* should do is to judge the contents of what every guest says and then place it accordingly.

I think the people at *Citizen* are the ones who introduced "Parley" at *New Nigerian*, so what is wrong with their continuing with it if it is so good? *Citizen*, give us what Sheme wants, but do not forget what we want. More grease to your elbows.

Abass Sulaiman,
Kaduna.

We are sorry

Last week we said our edition summarising the events of last year was a collector's item. You must, however, have noticed that something was technically the matter with it. In a way it was a collector's item — on how not to print a magazine. One page — page 11 — which should have been on the right was put on the left hand side and that error was carried right through to the end of the magazine. As a result pages that should have been lying side by side went on the opposite sides, causing split headlines and funny pictures.

We discovered the error too late to stop the edition from going out. We are terribly sorry about it all. — Editor.

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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Worthy silver jubilee

The *New Nigerian* was 25 on January 1. Starting from tomorrow it will be celebrating the occasion for two days. Any one who has followed developments in the paper will agree that it is more than justified to give itself a more elaborate bash than it has arranged for its silver anniversary.

Except for a brief dark interval between February 1989 and July 1990, the paper has been a study in the best in journalism. Not only has it reflected society accurately, it has also practised commitment journalism of the highest order.

The *New Nigerian* achieved success from the word go. Set up primarily to champion the northern cause, it soon established itself as the foremost newspaper in the fight for national unity. It championed the northern cause alright, but it did so in the context of national unity. Thus it was that when, for example, the paper realised that in the circumstances of the 1967 crisis, regionalism was no longer defensible, it became the greatest advocate of state creation. That was no mean contribution to the execution of the civil war.

Its success came first because it adhered strictly to its self-imposed articles of faith which it enunciated in its very first editorial. "There are many things" it said, "we shall strive to achieve but above all we shall try to be good newspaper, dispensing news and comments without fear or favour". Second, the paper was lucky to have as its pioneers, men like Charles Sharp, Adamu Ciroma, Mamman Daura and Turi Muhammadu, men who had the courage of their conviction. Men who were of sound intellect and sound integrity. Third, those who ran the paper, to put it simply, had a way with language and logic. Whether you shared the paper's position or not the fact was

that you could not but admire its style and its language.

Perhaps, the best testimony to all these qualities were Nigeria's first indigenous Chief Justice Sir Adetokunbo Ademola's impressions of the paper. They were words spoken many years ago but they have held true by and large in the paper's 25 years.

Said Sir Adetokunbo, of the paper, "First its high degree of accuracy. I cannot remember ever that I have been misquoted by the *New Nigerian*.

"Secondly, I have noticed that even in the rare cases when such happened, they will immediately, and in conformity with the ethics of the profession, publish a correction.

"The third reason, which incidentally, is also the most important, is that the *New Nigerian* is the only newspaper in this country that had made very constructive criticisms of the census arrangements and conduct... Other papers would only criticise without giving only helpful advice..." Sir Adetokunbo conducted the 1973 census.

Sadly these qualities were almost destroyed between February 1989 and July last year when a new management turned the paper into what *Tribune* called "a ragsheet". Fortunately the rot was stopped, even though the nightmare lasted for what looked like eternity.

The lesson of that nightmare is a simple one and hopefully those entrusted with the responsibility to redeem the paper's image have learnt it. The lesson is simply that sychophancy never gets anybody anywhere. In the end it helps neither the praise-singer nor those in authority. If this simple lesson has been learnt, the *New Nigerian* can look forward to its Golden Jubilee as a paper that is as much trusted as it is respected.

Budget 1991

The main thrust of this year's budget is the pre-occupation with and fight against inflation - the old enemy that has refused to go away. If it doesn't vanish after this budget, it will at least have been a step backward. The elimination of budget deficit clearly demonstrates government's desire to put restraints on its known propensity to unrestrained expenditure. This will go well with the governments' new non-expansionary monetary and credit policies. As usual, the goal is to achieve a moderate rate of inflation (envisaged at 16%), reduce pressure on balance of pay-

ments position and stabilise Naira's exchange rate.

Out of a total federally collectible revenue of 68.73 billion Naira, and going by the new revenue allocation formula, the federal government takes 38.766 billion Naira, states take 19.177 billion Naira, while 9.588 billion Naira goes to local governments. Of the official foreign exchange receipts of \$9.9 billion, \$2.97 billion equivalent to 30% is being committed to debt service. Much of the rest goes to satisfy the demands of the private sector for foreign exchange. The budget itself deplored the continued dependence of the private sector on official receipts, but did not declare export promotion

a failure - as perhaps it should, and shift emphasis to domestic consumption. It did neither and instead, it declared a new export drive along with duty-free import of components for manufacturing industries and promised incentives for local sourcing. Good. And if that was not enough the government gave tax exemption on excess profit. So much are the goodies for this sector that many call the president's broadcast a private sector budget. That may well be but the goodies are not restricted to the organised private sector alone.

Naira value continues to be too low at more than eight Naira to the dollar. The budget is silent on it. Does that indicate official satisfaction? At least any windfall from the Gulf or any unforeseen international catastrophe may not come directly to the Dutch Auction floor: it will most likely be used to build up reserves.

The promised fall in interest rate will be welcome as the cost of money has gone beyond reasonable bound. Ceiling on credit has been raised to 13.2% in 1990.

The decision to make local governments responsible for primary education but they should not be allowed to go without guidelines on how much of their allocation to commit. Otherwise the collapse will be complete.

The government, in its drive to diversify its

revenue base, has correctly decided that indirect taxation is a good source to tap it is. But we may be putting the cart before the horse. We are not record keepers and we cannot be so overnight. A value added tax (VAT) will work in Nigeria - by making businessmen richer. The consumer pays, the government doesn't get. While the decision to integrate the informal sector into the economic mainstream is a good one, the government is silent on how this will be done. The budget also gave an indistinct groan-as usual - about population growth. Are we about to cut it, or will the government or subsequent ones seek to enforce the four-child limit? The public is entitled to know.

The budget was not short on palliative - 300 million Naira to university staff to refurbish cars and 100 million Naira to labour for transport. Clearly these will not remedy the very real need to tackle the problems of transportation in the country.

For the first time in many years the government has out together a balanced budget - with 100 million Naira surplus. It is a bold move. Whether it is achievable remains to be seen; our past budgetary indiscipline doesn't give much cause for hope.

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Community Banks

When President Ibrahim Babangida approved the establishment of the Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBN) he also promised that Community Banks would be set up. Few could tell the difference between the two and fewer cared whether there was any. It was a time for skepticism.

Now, more than a year after the establishment of the PBN and what may be regarded as its modest success, the approval and guideline for the establishment of Community Banks have been given. And the difference is clear. Community Banks are a deregulated variety of Peoples Bank, so to speak, and they may yet prove to be more in tune with the trend in the economy. The PBN has been unable to shed its image as a largesse distribution outfit despite its contribution in releasing and boosting the productive energies of local entrepreneurs.

From the prospectus issued by the Community Bank Implementation Committees, the Community Banks will accept all variety of deposits from all groups and are empowered to raise funds from the public. They will provide all traditional and ancillary banking services for its customers; and have the power to operate various types of accounts with other banks or for them. And in addition to issuing loans to customer the Community Banks can invest its surplus funds. It is clear

therefore that they are in the full business of financial intermediation.

What makes them different — and unique — is their ownership by and focus on, the local community. Which explains why involvement in non-banking functions that promote grassroots development is central to their activities. For the same reasons, they are disallowed participation in "sophisticated banking services" like foreign exchange, corporate financing and international commercial paper transactions. While this may seem to have put them at a disadvantage since this is where the money is now, it is a price for specialisation that they have to pay to achieve the objectives of rural development and proper integration of the national financial system. In any case, even among the traditional commercial banks, some have been disallowed from participation in the interbank foreign exchange market. Nor are those allowed having such a wonderful time after all. The new guidelines on the foreign exchange market—the modified Dutch Auction—have once more made banks simple agents as they were in the beginning and as they should have been since. Barring the Community Banks from dealing in foreign exchange is not a big loss after all.

The Community Bank system, according to the president was introduced to relieve local folk of the rigidity of orthodox banking—N5 million statutory deposit at incorporation, heavy interest charges in its operation and the demand for heavy collateral when advancing loans. These are doubtless great impediments to the spread of the banking habit and consequent growth in capital formation. Besides succeeding in developing rural areas, the concept of Community Banks clearly makes a good case for another look at what promise other concepts of alternative banking hold for us.

Now if any community wishes to establish its own bank, the procedure is simple and clear. It must first incorporate a company which will float the bank. A minimum of N250,000 must be raised to qualify for the licence. Provision must also be made for personnel premises and other infrastructure necessary for take-off. Government involvement is limited to a loan of N250,000 to N500,000 which the Banks are free to take or refuse depending on their liquidity problems.

We expect the operations of the Community Banks to be within the frame work agreed and

adopted by each community at the formation of its company. Since each bank is the Bank-its head office, branch and all-it follows that its situation within the community and the intimate knowledge, the people will have of its bankers will make fraudulent dealings difficult or easy to detect.

The problems of funding and management that bedevilled the people's Bank may not be much of an issue with the Community Banks. The People's Bank Implementation Task Force was a problem for the bank because of its hands-off aloofness. The Community Bank implementation committee, on the other hand will do well not to interfere so long as each bank keeps to its guidelines.

By the time the 500th Community Bank opens for business each local government in the country will have its own bank owned by its community. If each takes the maximum of the Federal Government loan of N500,000, the banking habit will have spread to all nooks and corners of the country at the cost of N250 million. Since this is repayable and fully recoverable in the event of default after five years, it is certainly worth it.

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Apartheid must go now!

The African National Congress, ANC and the apartheid regime in south Africa are in cross-current over not what to do about the black-on-black violence in the townships around Johannesburg that has claimed well over 8,000 lives in recent months but who to take the blame. The ANC suspects, not without reason, that the minority white government is inciting the fighting between ANC and Inkatha cadres in order to prolong apartheid. Last week, its president Oliver Tambo bluntly told the government that blacks "are not prepared to spend another year under apartheid rule". Earlier the ANC had issued president F.W. de Klerk an ultimatum to remove all obstacles in the way of full negotiations for a new non-racial constitution by April this year or risk a resumption of the suspended armed struggle.

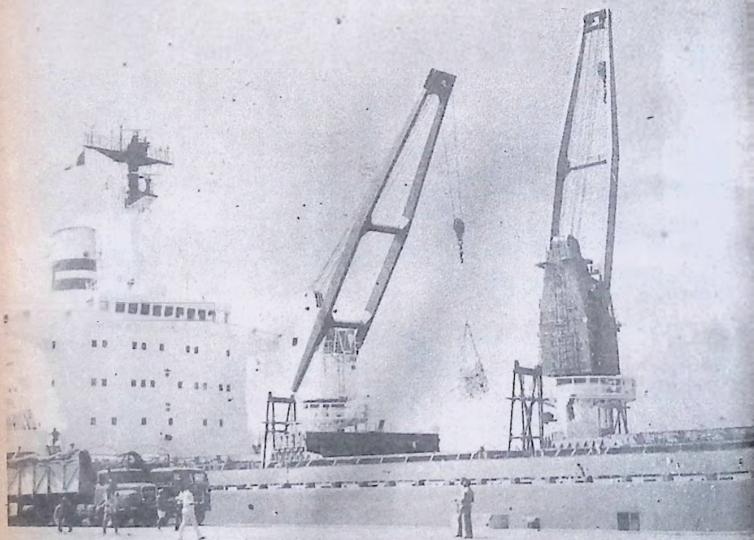
Reacting to the ultimatum almost immediately, president de Klerk accused the ANC of inciting "confrontation" and he warned that his government would not "allow anarchy to overtake the country". It would meet with force any campaign of strikes and boycotts, which the ANC had threatened to embark upon, beginning in the new year to prove its point. Mr. de Klerk and his law and order minister Adrian Uxox went on to put in place an

anti-crime policy, which involved deployment of 10,000 more policemen to near soundbocks in the townships, search and seize firearms which it accuses the ANC of spreading in the country.

The organisation has rejected the measures as being "authoritative", because they shifted blame for the violence to the ANC, apparently absolving Inkatha, which the government's security forces have been clandestinely arming. The significance of Mr. Tambo's blunt remark lasts week lies at two levels. First, it was meant to bring powerfully home the point that by agreeing to sit down with the government to talk peace, the ANC has not turned weak in the knee. Second, it was as much a message for the younger and more radical generation of its cadres that the leadership, though ageing, has not capitulated to white supremacy.

The right thing for Mr. de Klerk to do is to push on courageously by acknowledging that the ANC is speaking for his country's black majority population - and to take its words for what they mean which is that the country's blacks "are determined not to spend another year under Apartheid rule". The message is clear. To overlook it is to set the hands of the clock back many years and force the hands of the ANC to pick up the gun again. The time to end apartheid is now, not tomorrow.

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ADAMU ADAMU

the lead that was in the gun. The only exception to the "barrel of the gun" rule was Britain. Gorbachev himself is an exception of another sort. While he has unleashed the lead on his people he has survived so far. The wind he blew swept many away.

Isn't it surprising that as freedom swept the world, it has been unable to shake the trees of despotism in the Arab world? And isn't that just the opposite of what you'll expect? The Arab world doesn't have a single democracy. They only have sheikhdoms, kingdoms and military dictatorships some of which have shed their uniforms but not their despotism. Why is it all quiet on the Middle Eastern front? It is not. There have been agitations, demonstrations and even skirmishes but these have been in the struggle for Islam and the *Shariah*. That of course the world seemed to have decided, is not the type of popular struggle that it wishes to see. No news therefore, and amen.

Well, amen indeed. If they won't allow their own people to decide their fate, they may have nothing against deciding the fate of others. Saddam Hussein decided Kuwaitis are better off without their monarchy, and not yet good enough to have anything else except him. If they are free, they will have told him that they want some democracy — and not some Saddam. Never mind which type of democracy they will want or which type they will get. Thus, Sabah was demoted from King to a king's guest.

In Asia V.P. Singh and Chandra Shekar ironed it out, not in a struggle for democracy but in its subversion — by Gandhi.

The despots of Africa, on the other hand, surprised even their bitterest opponents. Without any apparent necessity — public discontent and agitation is nothing new in Africa — they budged; and grudgingly they allowed the "stupid public" to have its say if not its way.

But perhaps there was a necessity. There's always writing on the wall. It is read daily, only that it is always ig-

nored. Only when it is wiped out does it become legible enough for some. Samuel Doe. Like most African leaders, he was unfit to rule. Yet rule he did since power was always there for the taking by the most cunning or the most lucky. When he took over he had all the cunning and most of the luck.

Then it clearly became time to go but Doe had not finished yet — until he was finished. He made history by becoming its footnote.

Cote d'Ivoire, Zambia, and Kenya used to be the western favourites for the examples of what the African can do with democracy and free enterprise. Yes and what the African did was nothing to write home about. He killed the one and perfected the other — for somebody else's benefit. Democracy means rule by the people. Well, Houphet Boigny, Kenneth Kaunda and Daniel son of Moi are the people. So why shouldn't they rule forever? They face two enemies — human longevity which hasn't caught up with them yet, and the wind of democratic change, which has. Boigny and Kaunda have just woken up, Moi has just gone to sleep to be woken up by the second Mau Mau. In another breath, Mathieu Kerekou and Siad Barre — one time socialists, one time Soviet allies, now Western friends — are in trouble. The struggle for democracy has deprived one — Kerekou — of some of his powers, and may soon deprive the other (Barre) of all of his — and probably his life. The rest of Africans — the Libyans, the Egyptians, the Algerians, Nigerians and Zaireans — have had their choice made for them. The Green Book, Nasserism, Boumediennism. The Transition Programme, Sese-Seko's legacy — hm! lack of it — are infallible gospels. To debate their content is sabotage. Amen.

1990 has been a good year for the people of Africa, but it has been a bad one for some of their leaders. May 1991 be worse for the rest of the despots, which is all of them.

1990

They must have said, "Happy New Year" if not to each other at least to their friends and those near them. I am talking of 1990 — January 1 — and I am talking of the leaders who fell during the year.

A year that, as it rolled on and away, would have brought rich takings. Before January 1, 1991 two of them were dead, four of them were waiting to be toppled and killed; of the remaining eight, one had been toppled by democracy, five by revolutions, the other by anarchy. The one who caused it all — Gorbachev — is living in a spiders' web — precarious but still in charge. A tragic figure who doesn't seem to have a mind of his own. He turned to the west — he looked up for approval. He got a part on the birth mark. He ventured westward and cut the tether that bound Eastern Europe. East Europeans went wild, they jostled and they killed — themselves and a leader. The disease of freedom was irresistible and incurable. The germs turned southward and east infecting Gorbachev's own country, and Africa's sit-tight leaders.

1990 had many victims. In Eastern Europe all the leaders fell — one by one — victims to participatory anarchy — a struggle as much for democracy as it was pent up reaction to communism. In Western Europe, Margaret Thatcher fell — a reverse victim to the Gorbachev phenomenon. Yet as she fell, Britain rose.

Of all the momentous changes in government that took place during the 1990, the determinant had been

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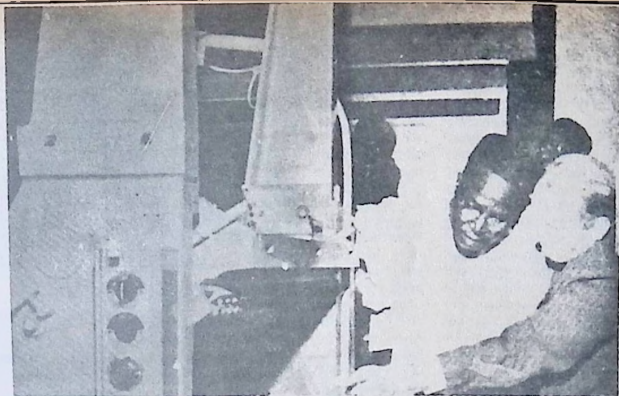
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Sir Kashim Ibrahim: the Governor of Northern Nigeria, launching the first copy. On his left is Charles Sharp.

COVER STORY

The rise and decline of the *New Nigerian*

In 25 years of telling truth to power the *New Nigerian*, often called Nigeria's *Al-Ahram*, for its authoritativeness, remains a paper of reckoning even in decline except for a period between February 1989 and August last year, when it was almost ran to the ground.

It was not your average scandal story that today litter the pages of so-called junk magazines—stories that hardly stand the simplest tests of accuracy and fairness. It was scandalous alright, but it was a story that typified the fledgling newspaper as accurate, fearless and a champion of the weak against the strong.

The story started in 1968 when one Bala Abashiya, a factory worker with NASCO group of companies in Jos went to the police station to report that he had caught a very senior official of the then Benue-Plateau State Government with his wife, Hannatu, a former

beauty queen, literally with his pants down in the back-seat of the senior official's car. For evidence he had taken away the gentleman's glasses and badly scratched his neck in an attempt to remove his necktie.

In spite of Abashiya's report, no arrests were made and no one was even questioned. Chief Gani Fawehinmi, then starting his legal career, filed a suit against the alleged adulterer on behalf of Abashiya. Even then no reporters in Jos would file the story.

Enter *New Nigerian* and the story soon became one of the most celebrated scandal stories during the civil

war. At the time of the incident, Steven Bamigbele, who had already made a name for himself and for the *New Nigerian* for his excellent and daring coverage of the civil war, had just been redeployed to Jos. Unlike his colleagues, Bamigbele decided that this was one story he must file to his editor. After all it looked like a clear case of the high and mighty treating the lowly as a nobody. In this case the high and mighty was Andrew Obeya, then the Secretary of the Benue-Plateau State Government.

"I had travelled to Pankshin after getting the facts of the story on the day

it happened," Bamigbele told *Citizen*. "On the second day, Obeya sent for me and asked me to kill the story. It was all rumours, calculated to damage his reputation, he said. I could see that from the new specs he was wearing—I was familiar with the old one—the scratches on his neck and the way his face looked that Abashiya, the factory worker, had a case. So I said, I am sorry sir, I can't kill this story. That is my editor's discretion. He said, look all your colleagues have cooperated with me. I said, I am sorry sir, but when I leave here, I am going to see Abashiya for his own side of the story. He said no, you don't have to do that and he opened his safe and he wanted to give me something. I said look, I am not obliged to take anything from you, for a story which you say is not a story. I just want to hear Abashiya's side and then I will file my story and leave my editor to judge."

"At this point Obeya became angry. He said, you know that Adamu Ciroma (then the editor) and myself are contemporaries? I said, well, I am sending the story to him. He said, yes I am going to Kaduna, I will stop that story, you can do your worst."

And Bamigbele did his worst. He went to NASCO to interview Abashiya. At first Abashiya refused to talk, angry that the reporters had apparently all sold out to Obeya. Fortunately for Bamigbele, NASCO's managing director at the time, Mr Nasrudin, was his friend. He got the managing director to persuade Abashiya to talk and after that, he filed his story.

"The story made front page, but it took second place to the landing of Apollo on the moon. Unfortunately we libelled Obeya in the headline of the story. My story merely implied sex in the car by focusing on the struggle between Obeya and Abashiya during which Abashiya snatched Obeya's glasses and scratched his neck. Unfortunately the sub-editor got carried away and cast a headline which read "Sex in Car, Top Government Official Accused."

Obeya filed a libel suit of £50,000 against the paper, its editor and Bamigbele. The case dragged on till December 1969, and became a cause celebre. The Benue-Plateau state gov-

ernment, feeling scandalised, tried to persuade Obeya to withdraw his case through the personal intervention of the governor late Mr. Joseph Gomwalk. Obeya refused.

"Unfortunately for Obeya said Bamigbele, there were evidences that he (Obeya) was given easily to having affairs. Gani, in the course of holding Abashiya's brief, had found out that Obeya had a child by a West Indian while he was studying in London and he wanted to run out on the girl. The most damning evidence however was that one of Adamu Ciroma's own relations had a child for Obeya."

According to Bamigbele these and other witnesses that Fawehinmi was able to get plus pictures of the car in questions, eventually persuaded Obeya, whose lawyer was Chief rotimi Williams, to withdraw the case. What finally persuaded Obeya, said Bamigbele, was that on the fateful day, he asked the editor's relation to stand at the court premises with Obeya's child.

"During the early stages of the case," said Bamigbele, "Obeya used to come with an outrider, with police escort—the man was pompous. So that day I gave him the shocker of his life. I just asked the woman to stand at the precinct of the court holding the child. I stood together with her. So this man came again grh! He came out, adjusted his necktie. When he was adjusting his tie, he saw the woman, he looked at her again, he made a detour. He reversed. That was the end of the case. That was the joker. He had to beg that we should withdraw."

In the beginning, Long before the Obeya story, the *New Nigerian*, had already established



The Sardauna: "the greatest weapon is truth."

itself as a paper which was fearless, accurate and technically the best produced paper in the country. The paper was a success story literary from the word go. What the Obeya story did was merely to strengthen its reputation. Its success, however, was partly due to Mother Luck and partly due to the quality of the pioneering staff, in particular Charles Sharp its founder and first managing director, the late Alhaji Rasak Aremu, its acting editor for ten months and Malam Adamu Ciroma its first substantive editor and later its first indigenous managing director.

The luck part was that barely two weeks after the paper was set up specifically to champion the "Northern cause," Nigeria experienced its first and perhaps bloodiest coup. Kaduna, its headquarters, turned out to be the main theatre of action. As the only paper literally on the scene, it gave the most graphic and accurate account of the events of those difficult days. After that it never looked back.

As for the quality of its pioneering staff, especially at the top, this was very much evident from the word go.

Speaking to *Citizen* on the silver anniversary of the paper, Ciroma said the four qualities most needed to produce and sustain a quality paper were "intellect, integrity, courage and a

mind and willingness to know the techniques of producing a paper. *New Nigerian* was lucky that Charles Sharp who pioneered it, possessed all the qualities."

By common consent these qualities became the hall-mark of the paper long after Sharp had left.

In the beginning, the paper was set up primarily to champion the "North-

where. The greatest weapon is truth."

Obviously the *New Nigerian* was set up to counter what the northern leadership clearly saw as an unfair vilification of their region and their beliefs by the organs of the other regions. Before then, two newspapers were already in existence to serve the same goal, namely *The Mail*, published by the Federated Press, Kano and owned

Citizen and the Hausa paper *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo*, to give it a cosmopolitan and national outlook. His recommendations were accepted and he was asked to implement them. He set about his brief with dispatch and an eye on the state of the art technology.

And so it was that when the *New Nigerian* hit the streets on January 1, 1966, it was the first in Nigeria to be printed on Webb-Off Set and also the first to print full colour on its machine. By common consent it was by a long stretch technically the best newspaper in the country and remained so for a long while.

"The most national paper"

In spite of its origin as a paper meant to serve the northern cause, the paper found itself being at the forefront of the fight for national unity almost from day one. Its image as a northern paper would dodge it throughout its existence, but even by its own reckoning it was to serve the northern cause only within the context of national unity as contained in its mission statement. As was to be expected, however, its adversaries continued to ignore this context and only highlighted its claim that it will serve the northern cause.

Even before the first coup two weeks after it made its debut, the paper was already showing its commitment to truth even where it was seen by

And so it was that when the *New Nigerian* hit the streets on January 1, 1966, it was the first in Nigeria to be printed on Webb-Off Set and also the first to print full colour on its machine.

ern cause." In its first editorial on January 1, 1966, it said, among other things "There are many things we shall strive to achieve but above all we shall try to be a good newspaper, dispensing news and comment without fear or favour.

"As a Northern newspaper we shall seek to identify ourselves with the North and its people, their interests and aspirations. For that we offer no apologies. But at the same time we shall Champion the vital need for national unity, for without unity and the trust and mutual respect that goes with it, this great country will never find its rightful place in the sun.

"... Thus the principles by which we stand are simple, but should truth and justice be assailed by ignorance and fear, or tolerance challenged by prejudice, then they will become the principles by which we shall fight and, if necessary, fall."

In his own message to the paper on its first day on the street, the late Premier of the North, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarduna of Sokoto, said the paper was "necessary to tell the world, in words and pictures, the exciting story of Northern Nigeria as it unfolds day by day.

"... This region has in the past been a frequent victim of prejudice, distortion and downright falsehood on the part of certain organs in the newspaper world. I hope this newspaper will not make the mistake of descending to such levels against anybody, any-

by the NPC and the *Nigerian Citizen*, published by the Gaskiya Corporation, owned by the Northern Government. In terms of professionalism and technical quality both papers were considered as inadequate.

As a result, Charles Sharp, who had worked at the *Nigerian Citizen* was commissioned in 1965 to do a feasibility study on setting up a first class newspaper for the North. Nearly one year later he submitted a report which advised that instead of a corporation, an independent newspaper company should be set up in Kaduna, a way from provincial Zaria, home of the *Nigerian*



The NN secretariat along Ahmadu Bello Way, Kaduna.

those in authority to be against northern interest. For instance four days before the coup, it said in an editorial on the Western Crisis titled *"The North cannot Sit Back,"* that "facts have to be faced, no matter how distasteful they may be. And the facts are that thousands of people in the West—ordinary people, not power-mad politicians—are convinced that the last elections were not properly conducted.

"They remain convinced that Chief Akintola has no right to be in power. Again, they may be wrong in this conviction. But this is what they believe.

"... Force cannot be the final solu-



Sharp: first MD 1964-69.

tion."

This editorial clearly went against the grain of northern thinking which at that time fully backed Akintola in his rift with his erstwhile boss and Sardana's political arch-rival, Chief Awolowo. The paper suggested dialogue as a way out. Its suggestion was ignored but not even the paper could guess that the consequence of doing so was close at hand.

Throughout Major-General Ironsi short six-month rule as head of State, the paper gave him solid support in his bid to keep Nigeria united in the face of latent hostility from the North. But it also consistently warned him against the dangers of contrived unity. On February 2, 1966, it said "There are those, for instance, who condemn out of hand, anyone who played a leading role in the last Government. This is as stupid, as it is unfair, for not all politicians are crooks.

"Equally irresponsible are those who seem to think that because we now have a strong central government, local loyalties should be forgotten. It goes without saying that no one wants to return to the deep-seated tribalism of the past, but it is wrong that men should not take pride in their heritage and family background."

This editorial was clearly a reference to moves by General Ironsi to impose a unification decree. Convinced that Ironsi was undeterred the paper said on February 15, 1966 that "That Motto of Nigeria—*Unity in Diversity*—is appropriate to the task now facing Mr. Nwokedi who has been appointed by



Ciroma: MD 1969-74.

the Supreme Commander to propose an administrative structure for a unitary system of government.

"Lagos is tucked away in one corner. Communications are poor. There will have to be a strong local government, and some form of intermediate level of government too, if the aspirations of the people are to be met without undue delay."

As Nwokedi set about his task, the *New Nigerian* warned on March 1, that we should "not be too hasty" in imposing a unitary system on the country "Government by a centralised bureaucracy," it said, "cannot persist for ever."

Ironsi pushed through his unity system regardless. He promulgated unitary Decree No. 34 in May. Two months later there was a second coup, in which he unfortunately lost his life along with Col. Adekunle Fajuyi, the Western State military governor, who

was hosting a meeting of the Head of State with traditional rulers.

Even as the paper criticised the unitary system of government, widely regarded as an attempt at Igbo hegemony, at home it was also fighting Hausa hegemony. For instance in an editorial on March 2, 1966 titled "That's better," it attacked an attempt to make literacy in Hausa a condition for confirmation and promotion in the Northern civil service. "At its worst," said the paper "the decision was a blatant attempt to limit the aspirations of a non-Hausa speaking minority. At its best it was a sincere but ill-judged



Daura: MD 74 - 76.

and badly timed attempt to improve the standard of administration of the Northern civil Service."

Unification crisis and civil war

"The year 1966-70" once wrote Adamu Ciroma, the papers first substantive editor and first indigenous managing director, "were the years of political crisis, turbulence and civil war. Our reporters were at the war front before the war began. We were quick to read the writing on the wall. Our reporters moved with the troops throughout the war and our coverage of the civil war was unequalled by any Nigerian paper."

Few will argue with this assessment, for a content analysis of the paper during this period will confirm that the paper was indeed at the frontline of the civil war not only in news but also



Muhammadu: MD 1976-80.

in commentary.

The very first story from the front brought the paper into confrontation with the military authorities. Mr. Bayo Joseph the first reporter to cover the war for the paper was able somehow to obtain the war map of the Nigerian troops on the Nsukka front under Brigadier Apollo. Joseph filed his story and the map. The paper duly published it and hell was let loose. The Biafrans bought copies and used the information it contained to clobber the federal troops. Joseph had to run for it before Apollo could find him.

Undeterred the paper then sent Steven Bamigbele to replace Joseph. Somehow Bamigbele weathered Apollo's anger. Soon Apollo was replaced by Brigadier Adekunle.

"Before I went to the Adekunle sector," said Bamigbele, "I got a letter from his late mother from Kaduna there to him and I told him I happened to be a friend of one of his junior brothers now in the US. With that I secured a friendship with him. But that notwithstanding he warned me that



Othman: 80-84 and current sole administrator.

look our friendship stops at the gate of my office."

Bamigbele was thus at a vantage position to file graphic and accurate stories of the war. From the battle for Igrita, a big junction town near Port Harcourt, through the battles for Owerri, Aba and Umuahia, the paper carried the most accurate and comprehensive stories.

Not only did the *New Nigerian* excel in its coverage of the civil war, it was second to none in its commentaries on the war. The successful prosecution of the war became the paper's single biggest preoccupation. Throughout the period, not a week passed without the paper writing at least one editorial on the subject. Characteristically, the editorials were brief, simple and incisive. With time, the one inch editorial column on its front page became the most authoritative column on the war.

In February for instance when the *London Guardian* reported that secret negotiations for a ceasefire to be monitored possibly by foreign troops, were going on the paper wrote vehemently



Kokwain: MD 84-85.

against it. "Ceasefire," it said, "does not always mean peace... Peace with unity for Nigeria and honourable place for the Ibos—YES. Ceasefire to enable rebellion rebuild its scattered forces — NO. Foreign troops? CERTAINLY NO!"

A month later when the Christian Council of Britain sought to intervene, the paper had cause to remind its readers about what the war was all about. "There is," it said, "a question of principle involved in our civil war. The point is whether the unity of this country with all its diverse people and its vast resources are to be preserved for the benefit of all its citizens, or whether it is allowed to be dismembered into a number of weak ineffective warring mini-states.

"In such an atmosphere, neither Christianity or any other religion nor commerce could prosper. The latter is what Ojukwu offers. This is what the majority of Nigerians have rightly rejected."

As the war dragged on, and Nigerians started becoming war-weary, the



Haruna: MD 85-89.



Strajo: MD 89-90.



Yusuf: first woman Editor 87-90.

paper took stock of and analysed what it called the "anatomy of rebel support." It took a critical look at what was creating foreign backing for the rebels and concluded that the FMG must be uneasy lest too many countries give Ojukwu recognition. It then warned that "the best way to prevent this — and the FMG must by now be tired of being so told — is to redouble its efforts in extinguishing the flame of rebellion. In this, they have the backing of all Nigerians."

Three months later, the war happily came to an end.

Post-war period

With the war behind it, the *New Nigerian* faced the issues of reconciliation of the warring sides and the reconstruction of the country with as much, if not more, vigour as it faced the war effort. The result was that for 10 years from January 1970 when the war ended, the paper grew in authority on the politics and economics of the country.

In those ten years, the paper won virtually every major cause it championed. These included its campaign for quota system, for the entrenchment of Sharia in the Constitution, for a revenue allocation which emphasised population vis-a-vis derivation and for the removal of the Federal Capital from Lagos. In between these campaigns, it fought against corruption and abuse of office in high places. Again the editors and managing directors survived the battle, though not always without bruises or close



Bamigbele: ace reporter.

shaves.

"Other newspapers in Nigeria," once wrote Ciroma, "always envied our freedom to say and do what we wished within the law. They thought we had special dispensation. Even the detention of Mamman Daura (Ciroma's successor as editor in 1969 and managing director in 1974) did nothing to dissuade their minds. The fact is that freedom is something that you take; if you wait for it to be given to you, you would never get it."

In the course of taking its freedom within the law, the paper's editors had several close encounters with those in authority, but on each occasion each party came away with more respect for the other. Of these encounters, Ciroma recalled two in an interview with *Citizen*.

The first, was when the *New Nigerian* reported the bombing of Kaduna by rebel aircraft. "General Hassan (then

governor of the North) was furious. They called me as editor to carpet me. But I told them that it happened and there were people in Kaduna who saw it happen or heard it happen and so if we did not publish it, they would have a perfect right not to believe whatever we published at any other time. I said I had no apologies for publishing the story."

"In any case, events soon proved us right, for when the Federal side started bombing the rebels, our newspaper was the only one available to prove to outside do-gooders that it was the rebels who started it."

The second brush followed the detention of Mamman Daura after a series of news and editorials which were critical of "upstarts corruption and generals who didn't leave Lagos during the war but instead took degrees off campus." Ciroma recalled that when he went to Lagos to find out what was happening to his editor, he drew a blank. Out of frustration he retired to his room at Mainland Hotel, Ebute-Metta. However, later as he was preparing to leave, General Obasanjo went to the hotel and asked him to accompany him (Obasanjo) to see Gowon. "I told him", said Ciroma, "I did not want to see Gowon, since the military establishment did not want to tell me the whereabouts of my editor. However, because Obasanjo was a close friend and because he was asked to persuade me to see General Gowon, I did go."

But he said he warned Obasanjo that whatever it was he told the head of



Late Abdullahi: Editor 1976-78.



Suleiman: Editor, 78-81.



Agbese: Editor 82-84.

state it was because he asked for it. Gown, he went on, was in his usual way nice but he told him that he was unhappy about the detention of his editor. He said he suspected the detention was because of stories and editorials and *Candido* comments the paper had published about some of Gown's lieutenants and policies. "I assured him", Ciroma said, "that he was welcome to replace us with those who would do his biddings if he felt unhappy with the way we were running the paper. We will abide by the laws of the land but we were unwilling to wait on the wishes of any official no matter how high before we can publish the truth."

This tradition of telling the truth to power continued well after Ciroma left the *New Nigerian* and after the Federal Government took over the paper in 1975.



Zarma: Editor 1984-85.

The Federal Government take-over itself was greeted with widespread skepticism among its readers. There were fears that this change of ownership will affect the paper's character, and its primary objective of serving the "Northern" interest within the context of national unity. Time and the editors and chief executives of the paper soon proved the skeptics wrong.

Indeed, quite contrary to the popular belief that the paper was sequestered to balance the Federal Government take-over of *Daily Times*, the *New Nigerian* was more or less given away by the then Interim Common Services Agency, then comprising six northern states. Alhaji Aliko Mohammed, Dan Iyan Misau, and one-time Chairman of

Daily Times, told *Citizen* that in the course of sharing the assets and liabilities of the North, the *New Nigerian* began to suffer delays in getting its subventions, especially as some of the states started planning for their own media. "ICSA" he said "was only too glad to be relieved of such common burdens as the *New Nigerian*, Ahmadu Bello Stadium and Ahmadu Bello University."

Mallam Adamu Ciroma, confirmed this. "The Federal take-over" he told *Citizen* "was good for the paper for it prevented it from falling between tools as the northern states concentrated in sharing the assets of the old North."

Two years before, the Federal Government take-over, the paper scored another big first by printing simultaneously in Lagos and Kaduna. The Lagos plant, commissioned by Chief



Oparadike: first non-northern Editor 85-87.

Awolowo on February 28, 1973, was established so that the paper will be on sale throughout the country on the day of publication. To date, it has remained the only paper published simultaneously in two places.

The first managing editor of the Lagos plant was Malam Turi Muhammad who had joined the company in 1969. On Ciroma's departure in 1974, Mamman Daura moved to the top and was succeeded by Turi as editor.

Speaking on his tenure as editor and managing director, Turi said brushes with the authorities were necessarily few even dating back to the newspaper's first days because its editors and chief executives and those in authority respected each other, spoke on equal

terms, and in some cases were on first name basis. "We on our part," he told *Citizen*, "knew our limits. No sensationalism, no action in bad faith. We made sure we were in contact with those in authority. We always told them it was in their interest to tell the truth so that when they need the paper to sell their programmes, our readers will listen. Fortunately, at least until I left in 1980, we were able to maintain our credibility."

In spite of the rapport, Turi said, there were occasional sharp disagreements. The sharpest in his time as managing director, he said was when General Obasanjo, as Head of State, decided to rotate the vice-chancellors of universities. "We said the decision was silly, was stupid, even though I believed and still believe Obasanjo was concerned about unifying the country. You could not achieve unity,



Abdulazez: current Editor.

for instance, by bringing to ABU Zaria a character like Professor Akinkugbe whose policies were clearly anti-north.

"Because when he came he tried to abolish School of Basic Studies and other programmes established to prepare northern candidates for a fair shot at university education. We said the rotation was senseless and Obasanjo did not like it. As a result he made himself the minister of education, held our file and we did not get our subvention for a year. He was waiting for me to come to his office. But I made sure we were three steps ahead of him. I was lucky the workers of the *New Nigerian* cooperated with me. I told them my problems and that if they liked we can change and start praising the govern-

ment and get our money. But they agreed we should carry on our independent editorial policy."

Another occasion, Turi recalled, was in 1978 in the wake of the crisis

caused by the Sharia controversy in the constituent Assembly. The government, he said, felt concerned about the drift of the debate and there was a student riot in which six people died.

Government then decided to censor the newspapers. The *New Nigerian*, he was told, like all papers, should submit advance copies daily to the Minister of Information in Lagos and the

The 'outside' insiders

Launched by the Sardauna a few days before he was killed, the *New Nigerian* has always been regarded by some people as a paper set up to defend "Northern interest", specifically that of Hausa-Fulani Muslims. If that was its objective, then the paper has been more liberal than most in its choice of its managers and editors, for among them have been people who could not have felt comfortable with such a narrow task. Not all the prime movers of *New Nigerian* were Muslim, Hausa-Fulani or even Northerners. The roll call includes Tanko Kokwain, managing director in the early eighties, (Kaduna), Mr. Rasaan Aremu, editor-in-chief until mid-seventies (Kwara), Chief Mike Pearce, managing editor, editor-in-chief and editorial adviser (Ogun), Mr. Yakubu Mohammed, managing editor (Benue), Mr. Dan Agbese, editor (Benue), Mr. Innocent Oparadike, editor (Anambra), Mr. Ade Fagbemi, pioneer Sunday Editor (Kwara), Mr. Babatunde Ahmed, Sunday editor (Kwara) and present editor, Mr. Yakubu Abdulazeez (Kwara).

We sought out some of them to find out how they fared at the *New Nigerian*.

Tanko Kokwain

Mr. Kokwain is an indigene of Kaduna State, but he comes from the southern part of it, where the population is largely Christian. He is a very well-educated man, with a first degree at Ahmadu Bello University and two masters degrees at London School of Economics and University of Pittsburgh (USA). He joined Kaduna State Civil Service where he rose to become permanent secretary, Ministry of Finance, before he took up a career in banking, with Bank of the North. Towards the end of the Second Republic, his state recalled him to be secretary to the government. When the soldiers struck again he was temporarily out of work. But it says something about his competence that he was soon enough asked to manage the *New Nigerian* in 1984.

"I was surprised. But at that level my task was managerial not Editorial, so I did not interfere with editorial policy, only ensured that the contents of the editorials are in line with the policy. It is the tradition of the *New Nigerian* that all editorials and *Cardinal* column must be vetted by the managing director. But if you are well-versed in public affairs and your communication is O.K. there is nothing wrong with it. But I left the casting of the headlines, etc. to the editors."

Tanko Kokwain said the way to stay out of trouble in the *New Nigerian* is not to identify with any particular religion or tribe. "I resisted all pressure and none of them interfered with what I was doing. No person ever imposed anything on me". He said the paper made its reputation for being authoritative and bold because "you get your facts straight, you do your research well and you are in touch with the highest hierarchy of government. Ministers of Information at that time did not interfere nor did the state governor. I was never called to Dodan Barracks. The only incidence I could recall was when the editor of *Sunday New Nigerian* (Babatunde Ahmed) wrote some funny articles and he was arrested and detained for three months."

Malam Tanko, was however well-aware that he was on a hot-seat. "Everyday I was praying to God to get me out of that place. It was a government paper and you are trying to balance views with your conscience. I felt one year is enough." As it was he stayed nearly two years (1984-86) before he got a plum and quiet job as Executive Director of Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry (NBCI), where he still is.

Chief Mike Pearce

Like all old men, Mike Pearce likes to reminisce about the past and it is a

great pleasure to sit back and let him do it.

"I joined the *New Nigerian* in December 1965 and was transferred to Lagos as Editor. I left in 1984 as Editorial Adviser, the topmost anybody can get in the *New Nigerian*. Throughout our stay there, the paper justified its establishment. If Sardauna had been alive, perhaps the paper would have done more than what it is doing now, by establishing magazines and Igbo and Yoruba newspapers, etc.

"People liked the paper because of its authoritative nature. They took it as Nigeria's version of *al-Ahram* of Egypt because anything that appeared there was taken as the gospel truth. I think this was because of the calibre of the paper's editorial people then. An editor like Adamu Ciroma was a very fearless man who wouldn't care as long as he knew that what he published was true.

"There was a time in the recent past when it went down to its lowest ebb and people did not lose interest. It was wishy-washy. On any given issue anybody could predict what the *New Nigerian* would say. I don't want to mention names. I don't know what might have been responsible for it, but the paper went off the track of its real self. The paper is now back on the track."

Dan Agbese

Dan Agbese did not want to be editor of *New Nigerian*. He said the job was first offered to him in 1980, when he was General Manager of Radio Benue. The approach was made by Tukur Othman then (and now) Managing Director, who asked him "to come home to the *New Nigerian*" where he had a stint as a staff writer between 1967 - 70. Two years later, when Agbese had become Director of Information for Benue, the Chairman of *New Nigerian*, Chief I. I. Murphy again

military governor, in Kaduna.

"I went to Dr. Leton, who was then the Minister of Information. But before then I saw other people in government and explained to them that we find it

raised the matter of his going back to the fold. He was reluctant, but finally agreed to take up the job when it became clear that Governor Aper Aku, his boss, favoured his going.

Agbese's reluctance was informed by an earlier experience at *The Standard* newspaper, Jos, which he edited for only three months. The civilian regime was just coming in and he played up the national story of Shagari taking over from Obasanjo, instead of Solomon Lar's swearing-in as Governor. NPP elements started grumbling about his "soft spot" for the NPN. A subsequent story about an honourable member of the Plateau House of Assembly, who ordered seven (7) full chickens for dinner at government expense brought matters to a head. "I was summoned with my General Manager to the office of Speaker, House of Assembly, where we were washed down. I put all these together and it was clear it may not be better at the *New Nigerian*."

As it turned out he spent "two years, one week and one day" at the *New Nigerian* (1982-1984) before he was "redeployed" via a broadcast on NTA Network news. Not that he had an easy tenure. He was accused of bias for NPP, Christianity and minorities. But his biggest battles were with the politicians of the NPN. "They believe we should fight the cause of the party, that every senior member has the right to tell the newspaper what to do and the newspaper should not publish anything positive about other parties."

Agbese said he once received a batch of documents purportedly by Chief Awolowo in which there was an alleged plan by the UPN to cause trouble in the country, with an armed force and funding by foreign governments. "I looked at the documents properly, they were frightening. I looked at the signature, saw that it was authentic, but it was pasted on the document and photocopied. I refused to publish them." He said the next thing was that a minister in Shagari's government called him to ask the reasons for his not

impossible to submit ourselves to censorship. I then went to Leton and told him he was no better citizen than I was. Either I ran the place or they find someone else. Fortunately I didn't

publishing. He pleaded 'libel', but the minister said "Go ahead and publish and we will pay." The editor stood his ground. But there were other occasions when he admitted he gave in to publishing editorials he did not quite approve of and "you could see we are struggling with our conscience."

On the whole, Agbese who is now a director at Lagos-based *Newswatch* magazine, said the *New Nigerian* deserves its reputation of being frank and authoritative. "New Nigerian has been consistently fair to all sides. It has never been rabidly in support or opposed to any government. It always commends when it ought and disagrees when it ought. Because it is not seen to curry favour, people believe whatever it says. At the time Ciroma edited the paper, people in his generation were in power, same with Mammam Daura. They look at issues with benefit of inside knowledge. When a course of action was suggested and government implemented it, it lent credence to the paper."

Yakubu Mohammed:

Mohammed, Agbese's fellow director at *Newswatch*, started his association with the *New Nigerian* while still a student at the University of Lagos. His column "Periscoping the Campus" did that for Unilag while Mohammed Haruna did the same for Ahmadu Bello University. From being an "extra" he joined the main-stream upon graduation. After his youth service with the newspaper (1975-76) he was taken on as a staff and sent to Lagos as Associate Editor. He was the second Associate Editor since the Lagos office was opened in 1973, and he remained there to become Managing Editor and later Assistant Editor.

The "promotion" to the last position showed Mohammed the hand-writing on the wall. The tradition at the paper was to promote the Managing Editor, Lagos, to the editorship whenever the position was vacant. But when it came to his turn, there was a frantic search for outsiders to block his path to the

have to resign."

There were other crises in his time as editor, such as those that followed in the wake of the lyabo Olorunkoya hemp scandal in which Brigadiers

editorial chair. "From the Shagari era they started looking for outside people to become editor. Those who remained did not belong to the Hausa thing. In 1980 when I was managing editor, they reduced me to assistant editor and they were looking for a Hausaman to become deputy editor. The exercise failed because they didn't find the Hausaman to become editor and all the people they brought have not imbibed that tradition (of *New Nigerian*). Things started wobbling from then on and I left. It was the failure of that exercise that led to the appointment of Dan Agbese as editor."

The "tradition" Yakubu Mohammed is talking about is one of "forthrightness and courage borne out of conviction." He said editorial writers made effort to emulate those before them — Adamu Eromata, Mammam Daura and "we were doing it under the tutelage of Turki Muhammadu." "I don't know why it changed, but I can say one thing. *New Nigerian* had a tradition of grooming people for leadership in the newspaper. By the time you got through to the position of editor you would have understood the culture of the newspaper. But, later, government intervention and politics destroyed all that."

According to the former managing editor, the *New Nigerian* is unlike any other government-owned newspaper because of this tradition. Though as a government newspaper it is able to assert its independence to a large extent. "In 1977 soldiers burnt Fela's house (Kalakuta Republic). There was a phone call from Dodan Barracks that we should not report that story at all. We defied them and published it front page news. Other newspapers in Lagos (except *The Punch* — which was not allowed to circulate) did not touch the story."

No wonder, said Yakubu Mohammed, that working in *New Nigerian* gave you a sense of achievement. "You can raise your head anywhere and say I worked with the *New Nigerian*!"

By Kabiru Yusuf with
Isaac Umunna.

Adekunle and Sotomi were implicated and which eventually led to their retirement from the army and another in the wake of the Scania scandal exposed by the paper in which the Lagos City Transport corporation in collusion with Chief Adisa Akinloye, bought and sold scrap scania buses for new. None of these, however, developed into as serious a crisis for the paper as the one that followed its story of accusations of corruption levied against Joseph Gomwalk, then military governor of Benue-Plateau State by late Aper Aku, later to become the first civilian governor of Benue State.

The present Sole Administrator, Alhaji Tukur Othman, who was then the substantive managing editor in Lagos, but was acting as editor, recalled how Col. Abba Kyari, then military governor of Kaduna, threatened fire and brimstone if the *New Nigerian* ran the story. If did and heaven almost fell. According to Othman, the Interim Common Services Agency comprising the then six military governments the North met and mandated Kyari to censor the paper on a routine basis.

"As a result those of us at the top" said Othman, "Mamman Daura as the managing director, Turi as the editor and myself as the managing editor decided to resign. Fortunately for every body, some northern elders including Ahmed Talib, Alhaji Commassie and Malam Liman Ciroma intervened and managed to persuade the governors to leave us alone."

The Decline

If any date can be set for the decline of *New Nigerian*, it was a little after the civilians took over from the military, specifically from 1980. This coincided with the appointment of Alhaji Tukur Othman, who had left the *New Nigerian* in 1974 in the wake of the Gomwalk crisis, as the managing director in succession to Turi Muhammadu who had resigned. Othman was the chief executive until early 1984. One of the first signs of the decline of the paper was that in those four years, the paper saw as much as many editors,—Ibrahim Sulaiman, Mohammed Haruna in acting capacity, Dan Agbese and Bukar Zarma—some-

NN, the greatest

Q: Since NN became a Government newspaper, there seems to have been lapses in its funding. Could you please throw some light on what taking over the NNN entailed and some of the 'debts' you are owed by the government?

A: When the Federal Government took over the NNN, I wasn't in the company, but I know that it is not the only regional institution or property taken over by the Federal Government. The FRCN, the NTA are also others. I am not sure if any compensation was paid by the Federal Government. I am not very sure if the payment was even desirable. We are not expecting any payment from the Federal Government. We have been living on some occasional subvention and we've taken loans to commence our operations. So, the answer still is that we are not expecting any payment of compensation. If there has been or will be any payment of compensation, it probably would have come in much earlier than now. I don't think they are going to pay any compensation. I don't think they contemplate doing anything along that line, for us, the FRCN or NTA or any other institution taken over by the Federal Government including the universities.

thing which was unprecedented in the paper's history. It seemed the main reason for this rapid turn-over was that management was unable to resist the interference of politicians.

In the case of Malam Ibrahim, for instance, board members like Alhaji Isa Ozi Salami and Alhaji Muazu Maiyaki, both proteges of Alhaji Umaru Dikko, often complained within the editors' earshot that he was giving too much publicity to Dr. Ibrahim Tahir, who incidentally was from the same place as the editor, but who was regarded by Umaru Dikko as an arch-rival. Eventually Othman succumbed to the pressure to remove Sulaiman by contriving a series of queries which included one accusing Sulaiman of insulting Alhaji Usman Farouk one time governor of the North-Western State. Farouk and

Q: Now that you're back here as the Sole Administrator of the NN, would you want to see your position now as one that has to clean up the NN, bring it back to what it used to be?

A: That's what I'm told I have to do and that's what I'm doing by the grace of Allah. When I came in July this year we did a few recruitments in the editorial department, marketing, circulation and commercial printing. In fact, just this morning, the deputy editor of the NN resumed duty. I'm very proud to say that as far as the editorial department of the NN is concerned, I can match, without any feeling of pride or ... that were really capable now of writing what we believe should be written, comment on what we feel should be commented on, providing for readers what we believe they are entitled to read. We are so well staffed now — quality-wise and quantity-wise for us to be able to meet the external challenges in the print industry.

Q: How would you, generally, judge the NN in its 25 years of existence?

A: In all honesty, I think we have done excellently well. Through the NN, Nigerians did learn how to tell the truth. I say this because we have

gone to Sulaiman's office and accused him of abusing public trust by suppressing the agitation for the creation of Combe State where Farouk comes from. In annoyance Sulaiman had told off the ex-governor and had reminded him that he was least qualified to lecture anyone on the abuse of public trust when he was found guilty of corruption by a tribunal. Farouk took offence and reported Sulaiman to his boss. The matter went to the board and Sulaiman was asked to apologise. He refused. He was removed shortly after that.

Mohammed Haruna who succeeded Sulaiman in acting capacity has similar brushes with the authorities and some members of the board. In one case he was asked to apologise to Alhaji Awwal Ibrahim, the governor of Niger State but he refused. The final straw in his case was when he wrote in

champion of unity

numerous newspapers in the country. There have not been occasions where you find that a particular newspaper becomes honest enough, truthful enough, to accept fault on the part of anybody. We mean that where you have, for example, a government minister who goes wrong — what I'm talking about honesty here is that you should be able to pick up your pen as a journalist and examine the conduct of that particular minister without feeling that that minister is an Oyo man, Yoruba, Hausa, or Fulani or Ibo man. If you are a Hausa man, writing that editorial, you should ignore the fact that he is your tribes man. The NN is the one paper I know, the moment we have cause to want to call you names, we ignore the fact that we come from this part of the country, even if it is our own man and he goes wrong, we will generally, have the courage to tell him, 'sorry Alhaji, you have been mistaken'. I believe too, when it comes to the issue of probity in public life, we have not only been courageous enough to show people the way to look after trust. We in the NN have done our best in the 25 years we have been here to show people the example of how you should not abuse your trust.

his column that the Shagari government was inviting a military coup by its insensitiveness to the sufferings of the people and by its attempt to create a police state. As a result he was not confirmed after acting for 10 months. Instead he was deployed to the commercial department and his sponsorship to read for a master's degree at Columbia University was cancelled.

Othman himself was removed in 1984, the first managing director of the paper to suffer such a fate. He was succeeded by Malam Tanko Kokwain, who was a stranger to journalism. Because of this and because his time was pre-occupied by serious internal feuds between Zarma on the one hand and Mohammed Haruna and A.B. Ahmed, then editor of *Sunday New Nigerian*, Kokwain could not do much to restore the paper's glory. Besides he

Very, very, rarely in the NN do you find cases of frauds for example or stealing because we criticise the conduct of other people, we do not want to allow or give room for other people to criticise us. So NN has instilled in the minds of very many Nigerians what truth, honesty, probity, good conduct in public office means so much so that the moment we make a comment, people read us, people trust the comment. They believe in us. They give us credit where we are supposed to have the credit. From the question of accuracy of stories we have made such a mark, that if for instance, people do ask you where you have read that 50 died in a fire out-break and you tell them in the NN, they are satisfied, he knows it is a reliable information.

On top of that, we have maintained a very consistent stand when it comes to issues of national unity, we have helped to unite this country, we have helped to bring about peace. The moment you encourage justice in government in anything, you find that you have peace. This is what I believe NN has succeeded in doing in this country. 25 years have not been wasted really.

managed the company in the shadow of such draconian decrees as Decree Number 4 that made the embarrassment of a government official a serious offence and Decree Number 2 under which one could be detained at the discretion of the Chief of Staff.

In December 1985, Kokwain was succeeded by Haruna as managing director, while Zarma was succeeded by Innocent Oparadike. Very soon relation between Oparadike and Haruna soured in the wake of OIC crisis and in the light of their conflicting views on what the editorial policy of the *New Nigerian* will be like. Soon enough A. B. Ahmed, who had been Haruna's closest confidant joined forces with Oparadike and petitioned the board on what they said was the way Haruna was using the paper for sectional and sectarian purposes.

It soon became obvious to the board that something had to give. As things turned out, Oparadike and Ahmed were retired in 1987.

Oparadike was succeeded by Bilikisu Yusuf as the first woman to edit the paper.

In February 1989, Haruna was himself retired and was succeeded by Sidi Ali Sirajo. No reason was given for Haruna's retirement but there were speculations that it was because he tried to return the paper to its old fearless ways. There was widespread belief that the last straw was the paper's editorial of November 15, 1988 which was critical of the appointment of Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki as Sultan in succession to Sultan Abubakar III.

By common consent, Sidi Ali Sirajo's managing directorship was the most disastrous in the paper's chequered history. He came to the job with a self-imposed mission to praise government right or wrong. He also indulged in self-promotion — there was hardly any edition in his 17-month stint that did not carry his picture on one page or the other — that offended every sense of decency. Not only did he run the paper to the ground editorially, he mismanaged its resources and ran the place as a personal fiefdom. The ultimate was when he purported to have sacked all his editors in June. One month later, he too was sacked. Not surprisingly, his removal was greeted with universal relief.

Said *The Guardian*, "There is widespread relief at the sacking of Malam Sidi Ali Sirajo from the *New Nigerian*. In his 15 months at the helm of the paper, the erstwhile sole administrator reduced to rubble, every canon of journalism, and decency and offended nearly every bloc of opinion in the country" *The African Concord* (July 30, 1990) crowed "Bye Bye, Hatchet man" while Yakubu Mohammed, Managing Editor of *Newswatch* and himself an old timer at the *New Nigerian*, said "Sidi's tenure was an unmitigated disaster." *Nigerian Tribune*, *New Nigerian's* arch-rival, described his sack as "Good Riddance."

Before Malam Sirajo took over," it said, "the *New Nigerian* was a respected paper." After him, "the paper became a ragsheet."

Perhaps the most telling remark was Malam Adamu Ciroma's who told *Citizen* that he knew Sirajo would not last. "He was flouting the tradition of the *New Nigerian*. Absolute sycophancy, the use of the paper for personal aggrandizement. Anyone who did that could not last!!"

The future

Following the removal of Sirajo, Alhaji Tukur Othman was appointed as the Sole Administrator. He has since set about trying to rectify the serious damage that Sirajo did to the paper and restore it to its old glory. The question, as it celebrates its silver anniversary is, will it succeed? Yakubu



Pearse: NN was authoritative.

Abdulazeez, the current editor think it is not correct to talk in terms of restoring the paper to its old glories.

"The question is not of returning the *New Nigerian* to its old glories. The old glories being talked about was when *New Nigerian* was competing with two or three national dailies. The *New Nigerian* is now in a new atmosphere when competition is very strict in the market. Of course the credibility of the book must be attained, but at the same time you must know that the *New Nigerian* is operating in a different commercial, political and marketing environment."

By Mohammed Haruna, Bilkius Yusuf and Delia Nzekwu.

New Nigerian Vs Nigerian Tribune

As organs of rival political camps, the *New Nigerian* and *Nigerian Tribune* were often at war with each other. Still as highly opinionated and authoritative papers, they held each other in mutual respect. On one occasion, however the *New Nigerian* thought its rival engaged in a sleigh of hand of the worst kind—and said so. At stake was the presidency of the country. Below was how the *New Nigerian* felt.

A gross act of provocation

In the last six and a half years the *New Nigerian* Newspapers and its present and past chief Executives have been subjected to a series of violent attacks by the *Nigerian Tribune*. Some of the write-ups by the *Tribune* have been so outrageous that our legal advisers have recommended libel action. The *New Nigerian* has always turned a blind eye to these provocations reasoning that it may be due to the excess of a jealous rival. In fact we continued to co-operate with the *Tribune* to the extent of supplying them with newsprint when they were in danger of ceasing publication. Some of their cheques bounced but we still regarded these as pardonable lapses. Management and senior editorial staff of the *Tribune* nonetheless allowed these attacks on the *New Nigerian* to continue. A new peak has now been reached.

The *Nigerian Tribune* in its edition of Thursday, 23rd August, 1979 has published a manuscript which had been proposed as a *New Nigerian* editorial. In the manuscript the leader

writer advised the NPN to drop the Akinjide interpretation of what constitutes two-thirds of 19 states for purposes of the presidential elections. He also advised FEDECO to convene the electoral college. We disown the publication and denounce the attempt to represent it as *New Nigerian* editorial. This is the grossest act of irresponsibility a newspaper can commit.

The correct position of the *New Nigerian* on the issue is reflected in the editorial of our edition of 20th August, 1979. We welcome the declaration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as president-elect because he has the widest electoral support in the country. We repeat: the country has been spared of the ugly prospect of shoddy political horse-trading and corruption likely to have attended the run-off electoral college vote.

The write-up published by the *Tribune* was a suggested editorial which was turned down. This practice is not un-usual. It goes on in all newspapers all over the world day in day out. It

was common knowledge that when Gowon announced his nine-point programme in 1970 the *Tribune* wrote a critical editorial but withdrew it. What is un-usual is to have such write-up published in another newspaper and attempt to show it as the opinion of the newspaper that has refused to publish it. What is more, by using Yoruba members of staff whose sympathies are for UPN, they are jeopardising their positions.

The publication by the *Tribune* is unethical and an act of provocation. It is a comment on the sad state of relationship between the *Tribune* and other Nigerian newspapers. We condemn in the strongest terms the action of the *Tribune*. If the *Tribune* continues with its attacks on people from other sections of the Nigerian community simply because its candidate has not won an election the end result of its action would be to invite destruction on itself and its mentors. Meantime appropriate action is being taken on the *New Nigerian* staff and the *Tribune*.

Budget '91

Like an elephant

Some are happy, some are not.

Professor Sam Aluko, the renowned economist, has every reason to be happy with President Ibrahim Babangida. Last week, the president unveiled the 1991 Budget and told an expectant nation that it would be balanced, with a surplus of N100 million into the bargain. Sam Aluko who for long has been a relentless critic of the present regime's economic policies, said "I am so impressed because this is the first time in 30 years of independence that we have a budget surplus of N100 million".

Easily the main highlight of the N38.7 billion budget, the new surplus budget is indicative of government's realisation that deficit financing, especially for an under-developed third world nation, may not necessarily be the best economic strategy. By December 1990, the Federal government budgetary deficit stood at a staggering N22.2 billion, a 1,100% leap over and above the initial estimate. And the nation, as President Babangida admitted in his budget speech last week, paid a steep price for this financial indiscipline. Not only did inflation prove a very difficult customer to control the banks, literally bursting with excess liquidity, conspired with the international currencies to further depreciate the Naira. The inevitable end-result was excessively high interest rates, low capacity utilisation due to the prohibition price of imported inputs and sluggish economic growth. The 1991 budget, according to President Babangida, will reverse this negative trend.

Dr. Rasheed Gbadamosi, Managing Director and Chief Executive of the Nigeria Industrial Development Bank told *Citizen* last week that the 1991 budget is realistic and its goals realisable. Gbadamosi is particularly de-

lighted with the abolishment of the much-criticised excess-profit tax on companies which according to him was an indirect way of penalising banks and big companies for their efficiency. Said Dr. Gbadamosi, "now that the restraining influence of excess profit tax has been removed, I can definitely assure you that the performance of the industrial and financial sectors will considerably improve during the year".

Indeed, not a few analysts have described the 1991 Budget as a "Private



President Babangida: Putting smile on the faces of Industrialists

sector budget". And the evidence is abundant. Observers see government's abolition of the excess profit tax as a concession to the Organised Private Sector (OPS) and a special victory for the big conglomerates who had actively lobbied for its death. The government's 'redefinition' of the minimum wage as comprising the total emoluments of the worker which it fixed at N250 is also seen as a major gain for the private sector. "Most big companies pay their workers far above the new minimum wage" ex-

plained Dr. James Iroha, Managing Director of J. K. Konsults, a Lagos-based financial consultancy firm. "Their fear was that the President would approve something in the neighbourhood of N300 minimum wage, excluding fringe benefits and thus jerk up their overhead costs. Now the private sector is relieved and happy. Their gain is the poor Nigerian worker's loss".

It was therefore not surprising that Chief Ernest Sonekan, Chairman and Managing Director of UAC Nigeria Ltd., and the unofficial leader of the Organised Private Sector hailed the 1991 budget as one of the most innovative and realistic in recent times, hours after President Babangida's marathon speech last week. And Sonekan has enough cause to smile. Excess profit tax and minimum wage aside, the government also bent over backwards to adopt such measures as would reduce bank lending rates, encourage

the use of local raw materials and provide an amenable infrastructural climate for industries to operate at optimum capacity. Chief E. Olisambu, Managing Director of First Bank is at one with Sonekan with regard to the budget as it applies to the private sector. "I believe that the budget is a good one", Olisambu told *Citizen* last week after the Press Briefing by Dr. Chu Okongwu on the 1991 Budget.

Analysts see government's cautious posture with regard to resource projection for the 1991 Budget as evidence

of the present regime's solid grasp of the international economic and political climate. The budget is based on an OPEC production quota of 1.611 million barrels per day, a selling price of 21 dollars per barrel and an exchange rate of N8 to one dollar. These estimates, analysts say, is realistic given the unpredictability of the Gulf scenario and the performance of the naira in the foreign exchange market. "I agree entirely with the president that we should let the lesson of the Arab-Israeli war inform our budget projections," Mr. Ibrahim Gusau, a financial analyst with the Lagos-based Prudential Merchant Bank told *Citizen*. "The President should also be commended for budgeting a smaller amount than the 1990 budget, even though the government expects to earn N21.08 billion more this year. This is commendable financial discipline".

Beyond the euphoria and the syrupy encomiums that greeted the president's Budget speech, keen watchers of the nation's volatile economic terrain have expressed concern over two key issues: the exchange rate of the Naira and the prevailing high interest rate regime. On the surface of things, it would appear that President Babangida's economic advisers have been geared up to do battle with the two monsters. Dr. Chu Okongwu, told journalists, bankers and industrialists during his press briefing on the budget monetary and credit policy in 1991 will be moderation of inflation rate, maintaining a stable exchange rate and generation of employment". It was also government's intention, Okongwu said, to reduce interest rates to between 20 and 21% during the year.

Analysts however point out that government was deliberately vague how and means of ensuring a stable and acceptable exchange rate on one hand and checking bank lending rates on the other. "It is a tough proposition", Victor Umuasi, a graduate stu-

dent of economics at the University of Lagos told *Citizen*, "Apart from felling on the people that government would now rely more on the application of indirect instruments to control credit, the 1991 budget did not specify the modalities for bringing down interest rates. It is simply not enough to

appreciate against the international currencies". Finance and economy watchers have however criticised the CBN's management of the Foreign Exchange Market. Said Umuasi, "the Dutch Auction System which was introduced last December has proved a dismal failure. Observers have ex-

Sam Aluko who for long has been a relentless critic of the present regime's economic policies, said "I am so impressed because this is the first time in 30 years of independence that we have a budget surplus of N100 million".

tell us that the CBN is doing something about it. The prevailing high interest rate regime is something that deserves urgent, specific action."

Similarly, neither the President nor

pressed strong fears that the exchange rate may well turn out to be the Achilles' heel of the 1991 budget. "An unreasonably low Naira will not benefit anyone, least of all the government. It will only put more money in to the vault of the banks" Umuasi told *Citizen*.

If the barons of big industry are celebrating and chanting victory songs, labour leaders and workers see nothing to smile about in the budget. In a statement signed by its general secretary, Dr. Lasisi Osunde last week, the NLC described the wage aspect of the 1991 budget as an unfortunate development". It was also Mr. Sylvester Ejiofor, secretary general of the Civil service Technical Workers Union's view that the budget, in so much as it affects the Nigerian worker, is a tragedy. Mr. Ejiofor told *Citizen* at the NLC Secretariat last week,



Alhaji: Finance Minister

his budget and planning minister, Dr. Chu Okongwu unveiled any specific strategy on achieving a stable and acceptable exchange rate for the Naira. Significantly, during the question and answer session after the Minister's press briefing last week, Okongwu put up a stout defence of the prevailing exchange rate. "All those who are clamouring for a lower exchange rate are not realistic", declared Okongwu. "It is only through hard work and increased productivity the Naira can

"until the full report of the Tripartite Committee on minimum wage, of which I was a member is published, I am afraid there is no guarantee for industrial peace".

Labour's grouse is that President Babangida abolished the unified salary structure without prior consultation and also reneged on his September 1990 promise to upwardly review workers salaries. "President Babangida has challenged labour".

Now we will show him what stuff

NIGERIA

the Nigerian worker is made of", threatened a high ranking official of the NLC who preferred anonymity. However, many observers believe that the NLC will only bark for a while and then go to sleep. "The new N250 minimum wage may well be a secret arrangement between government and the NLC", Kayode Nasiri, a mechanic with Peterson Foundries, Ikeja, told *Citizen* last week. "It is not for nothing that the government gave the NLC a N100 million mass transit grant. The only people I pity are poor workers like me". Victor Igboanugo, a clerk with the Federal Ministry of Health, Lagos agrees with Nasiri. "Who will tell landlords and market women that Babangida did not increase my salary?" Igboanugo's worry is real enough. In Lagos for example, house rents and transport fares have increased, sometimes by over 50%. Will inflation prove the undoing of Budget 1991?

ne other aspect of the budget that will not go down with proponents of people-oriented economics is the sectoral allocation to such key sectors as education, health and works and housing. Education for example got N429.2 million, down from N1.1 billion in 1990. In contradistinction, Defence saw its share rising from N1.4 billion in 1990 to a whopping N1.8 billion in the current budget. "It does not make sense to me at all", Dr. Nwagbo Eze, a senior lecturer at the University of Lagos told *Citizen*. "One would have thought that government would substantially increase the budgetary allocation to health and education, given the present decay of these two strategic sectors. It is most unfortunate that government has chosen to buy more guns and bullets while people die in the hospitals for lack of drugs". Indeed, watchers of the Babangida regime are surprised that the budgetary allocation to Defence did not substantially reduce this year.

Labour's grouse is that President Babangida abolished the unified salary structure without prior consultation and also reneged on his September 1990 promise to upwardly review workers salaries. "President Babangida has challenged labour".



Okongwu: advised on hard work

"Babangida said he wanted to trim down the military. Why is he still lavishing the tax payer's money on them?" asked Victor Igboanugo. University lecturers have also criticised the government's decision to turn over primary education to local government councils. Dr. Nwagbo Eze is of the view that the local councils are not financially strong to bear the burden. Eze told *Citizen*, "such a move will only bring about further crumbling of primary education in the country.

The general consensus is that the 1991 Budget looks good on paper. The nagging question though is how well President Babangida and his lieutenants will translate the wordings of the budget into a concrete economic programme of action. Dr. Rasheed Gbadamosi told *Citizen* last week, "proposing a N100 million budget surplus is a good thing. But the important question is how well it will be implemented". Analysts point to such presidential pet-programmes as DFRR,

MAMSER, Peoples Bank, Better Life Programme, the Transition Programme and the just promulgated National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), programmes which largely accounted for the N22 billion deficit in the 1990 budget as potential obstacles to the surplus budget envisioned for the current fiscal year. If 1991 turns out to be yet another ritual of deficit financing then the Babangida administration may well have to kiss its stated intention to "evolve strategies and measures to ensure sustainable, stable growth" goodbye.

Thus, stag inflation, high interest rates and low domestic output could well become the legacy of the 1991 Budget.

"Budget 1991 reminds me of the story of the six blind men who went to see the elephant", Miss Funlayo Atti Lagos based investment analyst told *Citizen*. "Some have hailed it as innovative and realistic while to others it is a tragedy. It is my view however that the litmus test of any economic programme is how well it solves the economic problems of the populace". Will the 1991 budget pass this test?

By Ike Okonta with Issa
Umunna, Clifford Amadi
Samson Ojo and
Robert Sowore

Incivility as virtue

Katsina's Governor Madaki regards civility to be in conflict with his mission especially when it comes to dealing with errant contractors and aides.

As I waited in Governor Madaki's office in the Government House, Katsina, I became aware that closed-circuit television cameras closely recorded the three other guests and myself, and reasoned that the governor may well have been watching us. I had not previously met the governor, but was well aware of his unorthodox methods and sometimes outrageous methods of rule. His personal staff wearily counselled me to "keep my cool" when I met the governor, a rather revealing advice.

In the event, the meeting came sooner than expected. As we waited, the governor strode briskly into the reception room, trailed by his lanky ADC, Lt Frank, and went directly to a light-skinned contractor who sat at the far end of the room. Without prelimi-



Madaki: barefooted wild adventurer

"I have the courage" — Madaki

Governor Yahaya John Madaki of Katsina state recently spoke to the Citizen on a number of issues. Excerpts:-

Q:- What are your experiences in one year as the governor of Katsina State?

A:-The experiences are in the method of work in that this is civil service set-up whereas before this present appointment I was in a purely military set-up. There is alot of red tapism in the civil service to the extent that one feels frustrated when you are not used to all this delaying. My main worry is the red tapism.

Q:- Early in 1990, when you assumed duty you were reported to have cancelled many contracts....

A:- No, it is not true. The quality of the jobs I met were such that you will be ashamed to say that..... Impresit Bakalori is here building the Jibia dam. They are not experts in road construction. Thank

God the roads are still there. Go and use a digger and see; there are no stonecrush basis. You take that and say, "This is a state capital road"? You just pour laterite and brought asphalt and put here. There was also no drainage. I called the contractors; in the first place they were not paid 1 kobo since they started work. Impresit was claiming N7 million; Roads, N2.5 million etc. I hadn't this money. I said, "If you go back to work, I will pay you", and they said, "Look my friend, even if you pay me today, I am not prepared to work again". Impresit told me that. So I terminated their contracts, because the quality of work was below expectation. Just laterite, pour ash on it! They can take me anywhere they like! Bring engineers to testify! So, I did not just sack them but I wanted a good quality job done.

Q:- How healthy are the finances of Katsina state? There are reports that some allow-

ances are not being paid.

A:- Give me one example. I work with facts. If there is any bastard who said he has not gotten his allowance, let him come and say it here. Tell me one, and we send for him. Before I came, this state took a loan of N50 million from Bank of the North and another N30 million from Habib Bank, to pay civil servants. Within 6 days of my coming, I sent back the loans. They were not paying civil servants here before I came! Who told you he has not got his allowances?

Q:- Before I came here, I interviewed people around town....

A:- Who? Who? Who?

Q:- My informants will not expect me to divulge.....

A:- Then you are not doing me justice! If I do not know, then they will suffer in silence I am not doing them a favour; mine is to offer service, but since you will not tell me then let them remain like that!

Q:- I will advise them to.....

A:- You tell me, who are

they? Let me know who it is!

You are not a good person at all! I say no bastard is there who has not gotten his money! Let them say so! What allowance is that? You did not do your homework well! How did you take their talk without finding out! Everyone's allowance is tied to his salary. Do your own employers say, "Come, this your allowance, and this is your salary"?

Q:- Has your state fully assessed the damage wrought by this year's drought?

A:- We have. Total loss is estimated at N1.6 billion. Some farmers did not harvest anything at all. They therefore have no food to eat or to meet their necessities like soap and medicine. And there are others who didn't reap any grain but got something (like stalks). So we categorise them like that.

Q:- Is the state offering relief to the victims?

A:- We will not be able to give relief as packages to

naires, Colonel Madaki exploded, "Why should you come here to worry me? Okay, you have supplied goods to the ministry of agriculture. Am I their accountant? Do I keep money for them? How can I pay you?" To prove it, the governor pulled out the pockets of his Khaki trousers; there was nothing in them. It seems Katsina's contractors were familiar with these methods, for the man stood his ground and argued. There is no use arguing with me!" Madaki continued. "Did I take a Kobo from you? Tell me! Or do you think I hide money in my Gwari village?" Next, Colonel Madaki turned to another contractor, to whom he spoke in the same language. The third person in the room was a middle-aged lady, who reminded the governor that he had asked her to come to his office to discuss her problem. "What is that problem? Tell me now!", Madaki ordered. Badly discomfited, the lady said, "Sir, it has to do with my court case..." Again the governor ex-

ploded, "A court case? Am I a court? Or do I look like a lawyer to you? Get out of here, and go and solve your problem!". The lady gathered her purse and ran out, sobbing. At last, Madaki came to me. "And you, what do you want here?" Before I could answer, the governor's new chief press secretary, Abubakar Sadiq Yar'Adua, intervened to say I was a reporter seeking an interview. Madaki glared at me for a full minute, then turned and strode back into his office.

There was more waiting to do as the press secretary tried to obtain the interview. The governor was unwilling to grant one, but relented when the one week-old press secretary insisted. When Madaki agreed to be interviewed, he wanted it done promptly. I was taken aback, and as I ran to the car for a recorder and a camera, security men came after me. At last we were in.

Inside his long office, we sat at the conference area. Madaki stood behind

his glass-topped desk, which was clean except for his leather briefcase and a few papers. To his right was a small television screen, which regularly showed activity in the reception room and the rest of the Government House. In one corner of the office stood a stand, on which stood Madaki's Guards cap and his (notorious) walloping stick. The governor came round the conference area and, ignoring the plush cushion chairs, sat on the glass-topped centre table, very close to me. He wanted to invite him to take a seat, but I decided against it. "Why do you want to interview me?", Madaki began heatedly. "Everything you want is already in the papers. You pressmen..."

Col. Madaki spoke on the record for 45 minutes. He was blunt and frazzled, his style completely pedestrian. Madaki's response to questions was a tiresome devoid of philosophical reflection expected of a Harvard alumnus or of the exquisite upper-class refinement expected of a powerful Nigeri-

individuals because the resources are not there. We have set up a Task force headed by the Commissioner for Agriculture. People know there is drought, so prices of food will increase, but we have set up roadblocks at the borders so that food is not smuggled out, and we hope thereby to stabilise prices. We have set aside N3 million to buy grains that we can put on the market once scarcity is evident. We have also arranged with the governments of Benue, Niger, Plateau and Gongola states to buy their surplus grain. But we cannot come and give a package, say N30 or two bags of guinea corn to this person because of what he lost.

Q> Some petitions were sent to your office alleging nepotism in the state civil service, but the petitioners got punished.

A> I am not aware of it. I am not here as a judicial inquiry. I am here to do my job, and you cannot distract me by writing petitions. So, you writing petition to me, I will not answer. There is a hierarchy, so follow it up!

Q> If the complaint is against people in the hierarchy, don't you see problem?

A> My foot! Is it only you that has a complain to make? So, treat it within your establishment and don't catapult it straight to me. I am not a judicial panel, right? People know I will not tolerate nonsense! No body will intimidate me with any petition. I have seen in the papers, things like "Kankiya is more than 250 years old, but it hasn't got a post office". Some people will say, "Kaduna has a trade fair every year, we should have our own". Is it the governor who should bring people from Niger (his home state) to do a fair? Is this the kind of petition I should listen to? Or what kind of petition are you referring to? You are not helping anybody if you keep everything... why did you come here? Me, I tell you even names, but you, you are just like them! you are even worsening the matter. If you think you came here with a secret... to hell with your secret! I don't like this nonsense! You pack and go!

Q> There are allegations that your leadership style is harsh....

A> Yes! If you want to hide things from me, you have wasted my time! Just to tell me the truth so I can go and find out, but you think you are having my life in your pocket. Okay, press it, so that I can fall and die! Instead of telling me the truth, you are hiding it. "Bari in bashi tsoro". Then, I will even beat you! I will deal with you seriously! I have nothing to hide from you. I am not owing you, you are not owing me, so?

Q> Are allegations true that you have manhandled a contractor and some of your aides?

A> If you are not corrupt, you should be able to treat your contractor for the contract he has signed for. If you pay me to do you a job.... why are you here? Because you get money from Citizen! Can you get money from Citizen and fail to go and capture stories for them? If you fail, what will they do to you? Tell me!

Q> At worst they will sack me.
A> Sack you! Since I cannot sack a contractor for failing to perform... He said he has

not been funded. I funded him. Now, let me see performance based on the funds I have given you. I did not share the money with him. So, I should have the guts to check him! I have the courage to do so! Most Nigerian executives have no courage to check contractors because they have shared the money with them!

Q> Katsina state has many powerful emirs, retired civil servants, policemen and generals. Have they given you any problems?

A> I don't doubt the might, but I have my own mission. My mission is to go and curry favour with an emir or a general. He has nothing to do with me. The provision of light water. So why do I go him? I don't doubt the might, but mine is to do my work, full stop. We are getting on very well.

Q> Has the military's image not been affected by the dismissal of former military governors from service for corruption?

A> Yes, but that is human. After all, the military man's mother is no different from your own, so it is human.

Instead, he paid prodigious attention to detail. For a man with so much to do, Madaki displayed remarkable knowledge of roads, clinics, schools, boreholes and other projects all over the state. He knew how big each was, how much it will cost, physical dimensions, the contractor handling it, how much is owed to the contractor, and the most up-to-date state of the project. Col. Madaki could also remember the details of letters to newspaper editors, where it concerns his state. He does not seem to like such letters, and speaks of them with scorn.

Col. Madaki's language was also shone of refinement. He did not smile during the interview, nor did he joke or launch into some broadsides that are now commonly found with military men in power. His language was vintage military barracks-type; words such as "nonsense" and "bastard" featured prominently, as did threats to "beat" and "deal with" officials and

His language was vintage military barracks-type; words such as "nonsense" and "bastard" featured prominently, as did threats to "beat" and "deal with" officials and contractors.

contractors.

Col. Madaki is not unaware, though, that Katsina has a powerful and well-entrenched traditional, military and bureaucratic elite, one that may easily undo him if he falls foul of it. "I do not doubt their might," he said soberly, "but I have my own mission."

Towards the end of the interview, a young contractor was shown into Madaki's office to "follow up" on a matter on which a retired general had earlier spoken to the governor. Madaki acknowledged the powerful intervention, then shouted at the contractor. "You did not supply the goods yourself! You sold the contract! So, what do you want now? Let the suppliers themselves come! I will come and see the goods!"

At one point, I asked Col. Madaki to comment on allegations that he ill-treated and manhandled contractors and personal aides. The governor has been reported to have publicly flogged Mr. Mathew Obinehi, an accountant with a civil construction firm, Atlantic Building, last October over the slow

pace of work at a government project site. Col. Madaki also reportedly slapped a Government House cook, Mr. John Okon for failing to serve *tuwo* and *miya kuka* to the visiting Prefect of Maradi in Niger Republic. The governor was also said to have flogged one of his orderlies, Sgt. Senagon Apale, for misdirecting the governor's motorcade. Although both Mr. Obinehi and Sgt. Apale later denied that they were assaulted, the press whipped up the stories despite heated denials by the Katsina state government. It was widely believed that the spate of press criticisms of the governor's actions led to the sudden removal on 30th November, last year, of both the commissioner for information, Alhaji Lawal Yusuf Saulawa, and the former chief press secretary, Rabiu Musa.

In his interview with *Citizen*, however, Governor Madaki readily acknowledged that he manhandled the

couple for which he, Bisalla and 37 other persons were executed, had tried to brief Madaki of the plans for the coup some ten days before it took place. The attempt failed because Madaki arrived at the briefing venue several hours late, ostensibly because he was arranging an army golf tournament. In reality, he was not eager to meet Dimka because he thought he was merely trying to reconcile him with Bissalla, whose ADC he ceased to be weeks earlier after a personal quarrel. (While Madaki was accompanying Bisalla to Kano early in 1976, his wife fell seriously ill and begged Mrs. Bissalla for a car to take her to the hospital, but the Defence Minister's wife had retorted, "I am not your MTO".)

After Dimka struck on February 13, 1976, Madaki was arrested and interrogated by military policemen for being seen in the company of Dimka in Kaduna. Exonerated by Dimka himself, he was released to resume his military career. He subsequently held several command appointments before becoming Commander of the Brigade of Guards in 1989, a position he held until he became governor of Katsina state in January 1990. Along the way, he wrote his book, "Guide to regimentation in a unit," which was recommended to all soldiers by General Sani Abacha, who wrote the foreword.

As governor of Katsina, Madaki's brashness and zeal have been limitless. He openly compared his rule with those of his predecessors; compared military rule with the civilian's tenure and gave the Army a pass mark; agreed to autograph a copy of his book although it was marked "restricted," and at one point fumbled in his bag for a copy of a government report on the drought, which he gave to me, to the consternation of his aides. Some questions nevertheless irked Governor Madaki. Asked why the meeting of northern governors usurps the powers of the boards of the NNDC, the Bank of the North and Kaduna Polytechnic, he reached out and turned off the tape recorder, before delivering his threatening, but off record, answer.

Colonel Madaki's hobby, not surprisingly, is "barefooted wild adventure".

By Mahmud Jega

Gusau was lenient to David-West

Normally, when a person like Tam David-West is adjudged guilty of an offence in Nigeria, the real issues get submerged in a torrent of sentiment. People have come to accept him as an excellent public servant, ready to make sacrifices for his country. But his trial and conviction has lifted the toga of holier than thou he has been wearing.

Alhaji Lawal Idris, a Kaduna-based businessman, insists that David-West is just another Nigerian and nobody should becloud the issue with sentiments. Alhaji Lawal feels that the judge was even lenient with David-West. The Citizen recently spoke with Alhaji Lawal. Today we bring you excerpts from the interview.

Q: Prof. David-West has been jailed but so many issues remain, in particular, how would the country go about getting back the money?

A: Firstly, the judge was good to David-West. He wasn't called an economic saboteur or something like that. It was like he took our money and gave it to Stinnes. We are talking of about \$57 million. At current exchange rate, it comes to not less than half a billion Naira. The money could have been very useful to Nigerians.

Q: Has the judgment brought out all that there is to the issue?

A: If I can give away \$57 million, I must have taken not less than 10% — I am not implying that he did. What I am saying is that, as a Nigerian and a businessman and knowing fully well what has been happening in this country, where people pretend to be what they are not — and which I feel David-West is one of them, there is no way that this money could just go like that. Oil is money. He should have told us the criteria. What was used? Has Stinnes now gone bankrupt? Are they still in business? If they are, then government should fight to get our money.

Q: The legal firm employed by NNPC to represent it said we had a very good case. You think government should pursue the matter to its end?

A: It starts like this; David-West is jailed, many of the southern papers believe that he was jailed because he was critical of government, or that he is from Buguma, Rivers State, where government derives revenue from oil found in that area or that he is a southerner. This is not the true position. The true position is, David-West belongs to these people; he was a commissioner in a military government. A military government gave him a ministerial appointment, the same military government sacked and later jailed him. They couldn't have done that without facts and figures. I know Mr Justice Bello Gusau, as a man of conscience and with what he has from the prosecutors, I am sure, he didn't jail David-West because government told him to do so. He must have checked. It would have been logical for him not to jail David-West and then demand, as most Nigerians in his position do, to be given a share of the cake from Stinnes. That has been happening in this country. We see today people leaving government, the next day they are building mansions. Where did they get the money from?

Q: Looking at the life of David-West, do you see a trend? He

was a journalist, a teacher. People see him as having set a certain goal which he has not disclosed. Can you discern a trend?

A: In this country, either you are with the military or with the politicians. Or you are alone. David-West was able to use the military for his selfish end and at the end of it, he has some friends he has as today the same friends who have jailed him. I think after commissioner, minister, may be he wants the presidential chair because he has his plans. At the plan is at least to be where the action is. And from there with his articles in the newspapers, which sold him so well to the military, you find out that, one day, thinking Nigerians are gullible people, he will one day say he wants to be president, or at least, a vice-president. Being from minority state, if he doesn't become a vice-president, he may become a president. It is not impossible.

Q: Why does he have to pretend that he is clean or try to insinuate that others are not?

A: A lot of people pretend to be what they are not. He is intelligent enough to use people so much. Besides the sentiments, was the offence never committed? Didn't he collect the document? Didn't he take a watch as a gift? Why didn't they give it to me? I needed it.

Q: Is he intelligent?

A: My own understanding of intelligence is using it for positive purpose. But, there are certain times, they say nemesis caught up with us. He was a victim of his own intelligence. He bought *TJUMA*, an old ship which immediately packed up and cost millions to repair. The NNPC can buy anything it wants to buy on their own. The \$57 million can buy new ones, at least three. Now, if David-West praise:



Idris: there is more to it.



David-West a victim of his own intelligence

himself and boldly says that he has done something good for the nation and still left to continue as a minister, then God save this country.

Q: Looking at how easy it was for David-West to do this, don't you think, probably, he did so many things like it before?

A: There is more to it. There are also some people who never wanted him out (of jail) — I am one of them, but if ever he committed an offence like this offence he should have gone for life and we could have gotten our money back. Late Sabo Bakin Zuwo and others were jailed 200 years. How much was involved in their cases I am not saying that he has been doing it, but I know the case of TUMA and Pan Ocean.

Q: Should government investigate further?

A: It should, fully. You see, you don't do things half way. May be they are doing it they should go further to disabuse peoples mind that he did not commit an offence. So many believe that he committed an offence by bringing an envelope from a foreign company, by having a watch and by taking tea. Many people believe all that. But the government knows better. And when they are ready to tell us, they will tell us.

There is more to it. With time, it may not be this government, it can be any other government; but the truth, within five to ten years, will come out before he is out.

Q: If government is investigating the issue should it not make this public so

that people will know what it is doing?

A: Nowadays we are not told what is happening. They do it at their own phase, when they want they let us know. It takes them a lot of time to investigate. You remember a lot of persons were arrested in early part of 1984 to 1985 — till the present regime came and left them off the hook and

nobody told them whether they were guilty or not, some were just let go. The investigators have been taking their own time and we are patiently waiting. God is on the side of the truth and this country, as President Ibrahim Babangida always says, is greater than all of us. They may be studying the case, because presently it is being misunderstood by the people who once understood it — who once understood it their own way. We shall patiently wait till the truth comes out. This is not the end of this matter. Were I to advise government, I will investigate TUMA, PAN Ocean. Mr Justice Bello Gusau said people living in glass houses should not throw stones. Tam, didn't throw stones, he dropped mountains on it.

Q—When he was removed from the cabinet, he wrote an article saying that there is Jihad going on. Do you think he's trying to use the southern press to turn his own case into a North/South issue?

A—Yes. At the petroleum ministry well, that's why I say he is an intelligent person. You see, he felt he was the best. There is a person who came in ready to learn, but did he learn from Marinho, Olisa, Ibekwe and the others? These people would have at least told him what to do and what not to do. When he was transferred to mines and power, he said it was a bigger ministry. Bigger ministry? You cannot compare the earnings of NNPC to that of mines and power. No way. Marinho and the others would never let him bring an oil application or contract

documentation from Britain to Lagos because it was a crime

Q—Should he have allowed the case do go on in the court till we get the whole N157 million?

A—Even if we lose the whole N157 million, we could still have gotten the 100 million that they were ready to pay through the court. If he had done that he wouldn't be in jail. We start checking ourselves. You don't open a bottle of soft drinks or something and then tell your child that it is not good. The child would want to taste it. There are many Tam David-Wests in this country. If you go through the documents, the judgments and so on, there was no way a decent judge would but jail him. The evidence is there. Come out of it, now they were begging for leniency. The judge was lenient, very lenient. That money could have come in handy for hospitals and schools without books.

Q—You were talking of some thing from the grapevine, concerning the David-West affair, what is it?

A—Not much, really. Nigerians are rumour mongers, but as they say, there is no smoke without fire and it sets you thinking, how could a Nigerian get involved this deep and come out without a nickel?

Q—During the sittings of the tribunal, at one stage, a mention was made of a woman in London who would have alot of information for the tribunal, what became of it?

A—Well, we're told that he has a contact woman, but these things, as I was saying, are rumours. Government knows almost everything about almost everybody in this country. I mean, they have everything in their hands to get to know what they want to know. The thing is not over. I learnt, Stinnes is returning to Nigeria through another company.

Q—Is it true that the six or so conditions or qualifications set out for companies to lift oil, Stinnes managed flout all of them?

A—Yes. It has backers. You see the president of Stinnes would have said it was a political situation to allow them to lift oil but it is not a political situation to try David-West. They lifted oil because they had political backing. The laws are there.

Adamu Adamu

AFRICA

Somalia

Sun set for Barre?

Last week was a terrible nightmare for said Barre, the ageing dictator of Somalia. For three days the forces of United Somali Congress (USC) determined to overthrow his 21 year-old government fought a fierce battle with the government forces in the country's capital, Mogadishu in which several hundreds of people were said to have been killed leading to speculations of the President's whereabouts. When he eventually emerged it was to call for a cease fire and expectedly the rebel forces perhaps smelling victory rejected. The rebels said they were prepared to keep on fighting until the president relinquished his hold. Reports said the situation in the country remained unclear as no one knew who was in control.

President Said Barre who came to power in a military coup in October 1969 has been facing mass discontent from his people who have become disenchanted with his authoritarian rule and sundry human rights abuses, the most atrocious in Africa. Swimming in the tide of popular support that greeted his coming to power, he introduced socialist ideology with a promise of a new social order. He even changed the name of the country to Somali Democratic Republic and his ruling party the Somalia Revolutionary Socialist party (SRSP) embarked on mass nationalisation policy. In the 1970's government nationalised schools, banks, transport and land. His dream of 'Greater Somali' pushed him to become openly involved in Ogaden war in which the people of the South Eastern Ethiopia (but mainly Somali speaking group) were fighting the Ethiopian government for autonomy. This was followed by a coup d'etat by some key officers of the Somalian National Army in April 1978.

Said Barre was accused of surrounding himself by one ethnic clique. The coup attempt was thought to have been fueled probably due to demoralization after the defeat. But this was the turning point in the relationship between the government and its people. The fall out arising from the war had been critical refugee situation. By end of 1980 1.5 million refugees were in Somalia. The majority of the refugees had fled across the border from the Ogaden region of south eastern Ethiopia, the region claimed by Somalia, but a very large number of them were Somalis from within the country itself severely affected by the famine and drought of 1979-80.

Although homogeneous in composition (Somalis have one religion, language and culture) and considered to be probably the most unified country in Africa, Siad Barre has systematically destroyed it crudely and decisively through his divide-and-rule tactics. He ignored development in many rural areas. Hundreds of people were tortured, chained naked and thrown in a cell.

He ignored development.
In many rural areas hundreds of people were tortured, chained naked and thrown in a cell. Some were beaten and even killed. Those who were lucky escaped to exile.

Some were beaten and even killed. Those who were lucky escaped to exile. It is this general state of discontent that developed into present rebellion.

Last August after several months of fighting with the rebel forces, the government proposed constitutional reforms and introduced multiparty system in the country. Opposition groups were told to form

political parties. The government also sought the support of opposition for a new constitution which will legalise political pluralisation and guarantee human rights and free expression. If the president thought this would pacify the rebels, he was mistaken. The rebels made it clear that they were not prepared for any half measure and vowed to chase the president out of the country.

Meanwhile Italy one of the colonial masters and staunch supporter of the government of Siad Barre in the last 21 years is urging neighbouring Ethiopia for a joint call for a cease fire and peaceful settlement of the conflict in the country. The success of this effort is very doubtful. Already the rebels have spurned his call. They argued that by calling for a ceasefire president Barre is trying to buy himself and his army time to regroup for another attack. A similar peace talks organised in Cairo Egypt collapsed mid-December with the two groups blaming each other.

With many embassies preparing to leave the country tells a great deal about the incredible lack of confidence in the situation in Somalia and as the situation remains unclear and with the rebels still in the mood to continue fighting until Barre capitulates or leaves the country, observers are quick to point out the difficulties that lie ahead. The rebel united groups — United Somali Congress (USC) and Somali Patriotic Front (SPF) have not agreed on broad base policy on what to do if they succeeded in defeating Siad Barre. This is an ominous sign that the differences between the opposition groups may prolong the civil war. If that happens we may not be far from having another Liberia on our hands.

By Abu Mommoh

Argentina

Menem on the fence

Argentina leader has now known that the wish of the people he governs supercedes that of the military leaders he fears.

President Carlos Menem's pardon to the military leaders of the dictatorship overthrown in 1983 has placed him in a difficult position as Argentines in their thousands and from all parts of the country strongly protested against his magnanimous gesture.

In March 1976 right and left wing extremists from the nation's political spectrum who claimed to be protecting democracy plunged the country into a seven-year war which later became the dirty war. Official figures suggested that 10,000 people died in the war. Human rights groups said the number was close to 30,000. President Isabel Peron was dethroned in the war in which its rightist military perpetrators fought to check alleged subversion of the country by leftist guerilla groups. Argentina has since 1983 been on the path of reconstruction. Among those gaoled for the dirty war were two former presidents and military contra leaders, a former General in the army extradicted from the US to face prosecution for 39 murders and the leader of the terrorist group *multineros* dispersed by the military.

President Menem had on Saturday pardoned those convicted for their part in the war. His argument for the state clemency was that it would assist national reconciliation. He said "he had the moral authority to free the war leaders because he himself was once detained under the military regime". The military men were immediately released from prison.

On Sunday, however, Mr. Menem had cause to rethink his action. Demonstrators thronged the presidential palace in vehement protest, calling the freed military leaders assassins and urging that they face a death penalty. They complained that the pardon was an indication of

'the weakness of the nation's democracy'. They described the decision as Menem's attempt to appease the military whose support could be crucial to (him) in times of

They were, he said, merely carrying out decrees issued by the Peronist government they overthrew in 1976.

Although he expressed respect for President Menem's pardon, he

Demonstrators thronged the presidential palace in vehement protest, calling the freed military leaders assassins and urging that they face a death penalty. They complained that the pardon was an indication of the weakness of the nation's democracy. They described the decision as Menem's attempt to appease the military whose support could be crucial to (him) in times of crisis.

crisis'. The people's response brought the president close to revoking the decree. On Monday morning, he was reported to have rescinded the order but later reports proved he is not decisive on the issue. However, he conceded that public opinion would be taken into consideration.

More problems are beginning to arise from the presidential clemency. Following the release of the officers, the leader of the military body which ruled Argentina in the 70s, General Hans Vidali, on Sunday sent a letter to the government demanding an apology for making them serve time in prison. In the text of the letter addressed to the current Army Chief of Staff, General Martin. Vidali described himself and the other officers jailed for directing repression and the abuse of human rights as "people who had defended the nation against subversion," and made the survival of democracy in Argentina possible through the institution of a totalitarian state. Stripped of his rank and sentenced to life imprisonment five years ago, Vidali believes he was unjustly condemned

pointed out that the demand for an apology arose from his desire to see government "make full amends and restore order to the armed forces." In response to the letter, the president described Vidali's attitude as one only capable of stirring anxiety. The comment, he said, 'was not in accordance with the wish of the Argentine people' to put the sad incident behind them forever.

Many argue that this is best seen as the army's firm position in retrospectively justifying the dirty war. For instance, General Martin had brought forward the fact that Vidali and his colleagues have issued orders carried out by many of the officers presently serving in government. Carrying out the Peronist decrees, therefore, does not vindicate the military leaders' destruction of Argentina.

What remains to be seen is what President Carlos Menem would do to heed the demands of the more than 60% Argentines itching for the condemnation of the military officers and at the same time 'appease' the armed forces.

By Delia Nzekwu

Gulf War...peace...war...peace..

The all pervading war psychosis in the Gulf is gradually being replaced by a frenzied pursuit of "peace" as the January 15 deadline given Iraq to leave Kuwait approaches. The diplomatic flurry aimed at averting an armed conflict in the Gulf directly relates to the American policy of might is right. America passed 15 resolutions including 678 authorising the use of force against Iraq, but not a single one to even mildly censure Israel over its illegal occupation of Arab land or its brutal suppression of Palestinians.

What has been responsible for the sudden change of heart is the increasing nervousness of Western nations to go to war with Iraq vis-a-vis their domestic economic situation and the decisive pronouncement by the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Tariq Azeez that Iraq would not leave Kuwait until certain principles regarding the Middle East are established and accepted.

Tariq Azeez was quoted as saying that even if Iraq pulled out of Kuwait, war, sooner or later is inevitable with the arrival of Soviet Jews in their thousands and the uninterrupted brutalisation of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet leader, in the mutually hypocritical messages the Russians and the Americans exchange every year, insisted that the Gulf crises presented the world with a new and serious obstacle to peace. He also said that the world was at a crucial turning point and that peace in the world would not be attained unless Saddam Hussein's "aggression is overcome."

US President George Bush, in turn, told the Soviet people that he liked "the joint approach to world problems" by the two super powers politically and in the arms control areas. Bush said, "I applaud and the world applauds the decisive action of the Soviet Union in strongly opposing Saddam Hussein's brutal oppression in the Gulf."

Bush's policy in the Gulf is facing a serious challenge at home with Congress asking whether it is necessary to go to war with Iraq. He had support for his initial action following the invasion of Kuwait, but the increased military commitment and the threat of economic recession at home is forcing a rethink. The US is at the start of an economic recession making ordinary folks worried about their jobs. Homelessness and poverty are on the increase, stretching public money available to help the old, the sick and the needy.

Criticism of his policy increased when he doubled the deployment of US troops to the Gulf. Leading congressmen are now saying that Americans are not committed to war and are openly advocating that the Bush administration pursue a diplomatic effort before the decision to go to war is

Though ready to endorse America's position, the EEC ministers are not convinced that the peace option had run out. The French also sent a senior official to Baghdad for broadly the same reason, eliciting a sell-out charge by the British.

made.

As the criticisms widened, cracks started appearing in the so-called alliance to force the hands of Saddam Hussein. The EEC foreign ministers met last week to consider proposals by Luxembourg, the new president, to send its foreign minister direct to Baghdad to pursue a separate initiative. Though ready to endorse America's position, the EEC ministers are not convinced that the peace option had run out. The French also sent a senior official to Baghdad for broadly the same reason, eliciting a sell-out charge by the British.

The Japanese, anxious to appease the West and equally desperate not to become physically involved, given its pacifist stance, has offered to rebuild the Iraqi economy on condition that it complies with the American position. Japan also offered Iraq \$4,000 million, the same figure it gave to those con-

fronting Saddam Hussein. The Western media charged that Japan is trying to buy its way out of the conflict.

Last week also, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, announced that he would ensure Saddam Hussein would dramatically leave Kuwait before the January 15 deadline. Ironically attention suddenly shifted him as the man to unravel the crises. In 1986 America bombed Libya charging it with sponsoring international terrorism. Libya itself, in a classic U-turn said it would endorse whatever position Egypt is pursuing and since it has the largest Arab contingent in the Gulf, it is not difficult to imagine what that position is.

As the week closed, President Bush suddenly offered that the American Secretary of State, James Baker and the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Tariq Azeez meet in Switzerland as going another extra mile to resolve the crises. It would have been regarded as a genuine attempt to resolve the crises without bloodshed except that Saddam Hussein is being offered "peace" at cut

throat price - America would not yield an inch of its position.

The meeting has now been set for next Wednesday in Geneva. The Iraqis are insisting that the resolution of the crises should include the Palestine question and Israeli inhumanity. A former American President, Jimmy Carter, was quoted as saying that the meeting ought to come to an understanding. Some suggestions have been offered such as the granting of a 99-year lease on the four islands the Iraqis are claiming from Kuwait in return an observer team be appointed to examine Iraq's stockpile of chemical weapons.

Whatever the outcome of the meeting, what is certain is that Saddam Hussein has succeeded for good or for bad in changing social and political relationships in the Gulf.

By Muhammad Bomi.

KABIRU YUSUF

Tai Solarin's conversion



Tai Solarin used to be a tough guy. I first came across him in "May Your Road be Rough", an essay in which he said the surest path to achievement is strewn with pebbles, rocks and thorns. I was fairly young and I took it rather too seriously (I have the blisters to show!). Later came "The Beginning of the End..." his one-page call on the Gowon regime to quit or else... I still have a copy of that 1974 document, because its prediction was not only accurate, but its language was brisk and beautiful. Since then I have had the chance to meet Solarin in flesh and blood, in addition to reading his *Sunday Tribune* column. He comes across to me as a serene and sprightly old man. I still find his writings readable, the reminiscences very delightful. But perhaps because he is an old man of 70 and I am half that age, our "Nigerian view" is fairly different. It is natural, perhaps a matter of instinct, for him to be an Awoist, a firm believer of free education at all cost, a die-hard opponent of all "Alhajis", with caps longer than their chain of degrees, who yet became President or Ministers of Nigeria.

As age creeps up on him, the old iconoclast seems to be getting soft in the head. Young hawks, eager to take his place of pride as our number one "social critic", have already consigned him to the

dustbin of history. Since he became Chairman of the People's Bank, Solarin, they said, has abandoned spartan Ikenne for the good life of Lagos, sometimes appears fully dressed instead of in shorts, has muted his criticism of the Babangida government and was seen the other day hugging the full figure of Alhaji Alhaji in public! Tai Solarin does not help matters, he continues to give his critics more ammunition to lampoon him. Unlike another "chairman — social

Recently, the ageing atheist told *Sunday Times* that he continues not to believe in God, though he has made his peace with capitalism. "Before, I thought that socialism was the saviour of humanity. But recent events in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have made me change my belief..."

critic" who takes great pains to protect his press image, Tai Solarin makes his u-turns in full public glare.

Recently, the ageing atheist told *Sunday Times* that he continues not to believe in God, though he has made his peace with capitalism. "Before, I thought that socialism

was the saviour of humanity. But recent events in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have made me change my belief... I now believe in the callousness of capitalism that he who does not work has no right to eat." If this sounds like total capitulation, it is not, for Solarin said he believes the state should still control the armed forces and education.

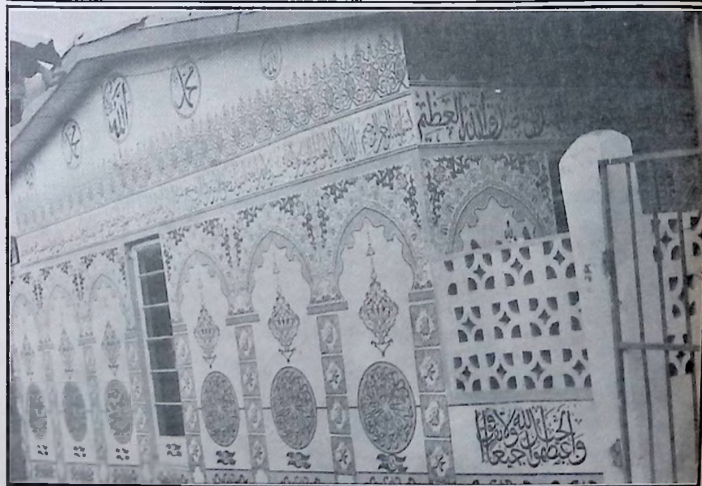
On God, he sounded less sure than before that he did not exist altogether. "I still don't believe in God. But if you ask me who made the earth or how it came about, I don't know. But the fact that I don't know does not mean that it was made by God". Those who might worry that he might also ditch his *khaki* short for some fancy garb got a firm assurance. Solarin said elsewhere, that he will live and die in his *khaki* shorts and shirts until all Nigerian children are educated. Since this is unlikely to happen by the magic year 2,000, there is a good chance that Tai might also be buried in his *khaki*!

Tai Solarin's "modified views on socialism" were published two days before Christmas. With the holidays over, the young turks may be expected to take him on. No matter the outcome of the exchange, I will still retain a soft spot for Solarin. He may not be consistent or a saint, but he is honest and human. May your road be rough, Sir.

Citizen

SOCIETY

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A clean job by young Yushau. Page 45



Labour blues

Once upon a time and a very sappy time it was, there was a school established for all the toiling and labouring people of Nigeria, the Nigeria Labourers College (NLC). The headmaster of the school was Sharif Bunny and the headboy was Paschal Bafyau. The school was the largest in Nigeria with about 40 million labourers.

And so it was, that the college's curriculum included lessons in sweating and toiling to create wealth for the owners of the means of production with minimum demands for wage increase. Other subjects were dignity of labour, suffering in silence, tolerating inflation, SAP absorption techniques and politics of trade unionism. At the end of the life long course, graduates are awarded the Bachelor of Arts degree in Labour (B.A. Labour) while the best student received the Imoudu prize for labour militancy. Every year the labourers of the college whose sweat created the wealth on which the community relied used to wait patiently for the Commander-In-Chief of all community's productive forces to announce an increase in their pocket money. For several years they were living from hand to mouth on a stipend of 15 United States dollars (about 7 pounds sterling). If such a labourer had travelled to Britain in those sappy times his two months salary

would not have paid for a taxi ride from London's Heathrow airport to central London which cost 20 pounds. Yet the labourers toiled on without complaint.

When the burden became too much to bear they pressurised headboy Bafyau and his prefects to negotiate with the comman-



dant of productive forces (COPF) for an increase in their pocket money. A tripartite committee was set up with Sharif presiding. They played around with jargon at meetings that seemed to last forever as "dogon turanci" was aptly used to disguise reality. In the end the headboy Bafyau and his team met COPF, an astute leader with a flair in the art of dribbling. COPF was at his best and promised the labourers that their pocket money will be increased at their prize-giving and budget day on January 1.

The ecstatic workers went home

contented while the owners of the means of production prayed for a moderate increase that will enable them to continue to milk maximum profit from consumers.

Then came the D-day and COPF in his budget and prize giving speech announced a pittance of pocket money for the desperate labourers which he even denied their seniors. He told headboy Bafyau that his prefects should continue the "dogon turanci" with representatives of COPF at the three levels for any further increase in pay. A depressed Bafyau I am told was on admission at the intensive care unit of the shock treatment hospital for two weeks. His prefects were grumbling about the classical act of treachery to which COPF subjected them. Apart from the divide and rule tactics COPF employed in granting the stipend increase to junior labourers while denying it to their more vocal seniors, COPF also withdrew subsidised housing for all labourers. Confused and disorganised by this stab in the back, a bleeding and anaemic Bafyau consulted the private eye oracle on the theory and practice of dribbling. The oracle revealed to headboy Bafyau the secret code behind COPF's success in dribbling and tight rope walking. The code is titled Boren's Guideline for Bureaucracy teaches as follows:-

When in charge, ponder

When in trouble, delegate

When in doubt, mumble.

Bafyau rose from that consultation a wiser man who lived happily ever after.

Re-governor's Madding Crowd

Dear Private Eye

While I do not believe that your eye is at a vintage position to see what we who possess only public eyes do not see, I must admit that I enjoyed read-

ing your comment titled governor's madding crowd. (Citizen Vol.1 No 19). I think some appreciation of the virtues of human rights must be instilled in uniformed men who

sometimes behave as if they have never heard about its existence. As for the madman he must be one of those who subscribed to the saying that it is far better "to suffer an injustice than commit one".

Musa Isa,
Gobarau,
Katsina.

African delight

POISSON SALE

Seychelles

Ingredients	Metric
Dry fish	1kg
Tomato puree	2 tbsps
Cooking oil	2 tbsps
Salt and pepper to taste	

Soak the dry fish for an hour, strip off the skin and crack it, breaking it into pieces. Flake into a dish, removing the bones. In a saucepan heat the oil and lightly fry the onion. Stir in the pepper and tomato, add the salt and simmer on a low fire for 20 minutes stirring constantly.

Add the fish and stir to work the fish into the sauce. Simmer for a further 15 minutes. Serve with rice or yam.

JOLLOF RICE

Sierra Leone

Ingredients	Metric
Rice, washed and parboiled	1kg
Ripe tomatoes sliced	1.35 kg
Cans tomato puree (125 g size)	4
Large onions, sliced	2
Cayenne pepper	3 tsp
Mixed spice and herbs	2 tsp
Butter	225 g
Chicken portions, beef or mutton	6
Black pepper	1 tsp
White pepper	1 tsp
Thyme	1/2 tsp
Salt to taste	
Cooking oil	200 ml

Divide all ingredients into half, except rice, meat and oil. In a heavy pan, place all the meat and enough water to just cover it. Add half of the seasonings, and cook until tender. Heat all the oil in a skillet or heavy saucepan. Drain the meat and fry until brown before putting on one side. Lightly fry the tomatoes and

onions in the same oil and add the reserved meat with the tomato puree. Collect the seasoning and continue to cook slowly for 25 minutes, stirring constantly.

Take a large saucepan and put the other half of the ingredients into it, with a pint of water and salt to taste. Gently bring to the boil and stir in the half cooked rice. Reduce heat and cover pot. Simmer on very low heat until rice is cooked and all water and sauce absorbed. Cover pot and continue to heat slowly for about 30 minutes or longer. Serve hot, garnished with steamed cabbage and the stewed meat.

Jollof was originally a national dish of the wolof speaking tribes of Djolof, Cayor and Baol in Senegal. It is a special party dish enjoyed across West Africa, with variations of it in other parts of Africa.

ANAN GEIL

Somalia

Ingredients	Metric
Camel milk (anan geil)	500 ml
Millet gruel	100 g
Honey	50ml

Pour the milk into a mixing bowl and mash into it the millet gruel. Stir in the honey. Cover the bowl and chill slightly. Serve in cereal bowls.

FREJON

Sierra Leone

Ingredients	Metric
Black-eyed beans	450 g
Coconut	1
Sugar	1 tbsps
Mixed spice	1tsp
Small bar plain (dark) chocolate or cocoa powder to colour	1

To skin beans: soak for 30 minutes and then drain off the water. Using both hands with a squeezing, washing action, peel the skins off the beans. Cover with water and the skins will float and can be collected in a sieve or strainer as the water is drained off into a second bowl.



Repeat the sequence to skin the remaining beans.

After skinning, soak the beans. Extract coconut milk and simmer beans in coconut milk. Add the sugar and cook beans until very soft. Allow to cool. Grind or liquidize the mixture and pour back into the saucepan. Melt the chocolate or cocoa powder in a cup of hot water. Stir into the bean puree with the spice and heat gently. Serve hot with fresh fish and garrri.

Frejon is traditionally a Good Friday dish and eaten right across West Africa. There is no reason why this excellent dish should not be eaten at other times of the year.

BREES AND HILLIB

STEW

Somalia

Ingredients	Metric
Brees (rice)	450g
Hillib (meat)	1kg
Ripe tomatoes, Sliced	450g
Large Onion, Sliced	1
Chilli powder	1/2 tsp
Butter or cooking oil	6 tbsps
Thyme	1/4 tsp
Peppercorn	1/2 tsp
Salt to taste	

Wash and boil rice separately with salt. Cut the hillib into small pieces, wash and cook with salt, thyme, peppercorn and a few slices of onion until soft and cooked. Lightly fry the meat in butter, add the onion and tomatoes and the meat stock and a little more water if need be. Simmer on a low fire for 40 minutes or until stew is done. Serve on the rice garnished with steamed cabbage.

POET'S NEST

Year of Hope

A new year is a time for making resolutions, renewing commitments and polishing hope for a better tomorrow. If it's the beginning of a decade weighty resolutions edge out indecision. As a new year begins and a decade unfolds, what do we expect? Hope and determination not to be a failure and with God the omnipotent as a guide, people have cause to succeed.

A NEW DECADE

It's a new year again
 O! it heralds a new decade
 Tick, tick, tick,.....
 Goes the clock
 Ticking away the yestersyears
 Into a freshly born decade
 With lasting brightly shining moon
 Competing with the day's sun rays
 favour
 Both enough to tell that
 Even a faulty clock will be correct
 Twice everyday
 The tail of the moon
 Disappears faintly with Memory
 '90
 That ends the year
 Soon and soon afterwards
 The sun rays warming up its beam
 Shying to expose its itching rays
 A deprivation it suffered
 By the ubiquitous harmattan breeze
 Some say "Fog is always the sailors
 worst enemy"
 But now others say, "the harmattan
 is
 Insufficient to shiver the Unhidden
 Creatines and discoloured their skin
 Into a wrinkled dried surface
 To compete with the whitish sky.
 Yet the body chemistry
 Adjusts you to yet another climatic
 condition
 Oh! How powerful is the Almighty
 Allah!!!

II

Children are warming up to merry
 year
 The old blanket rolled off covering
 the year done with.
 Many search on admiringly
 With curious gaze for the benevolent
 obligation.
 Pets fuss in and out in brouhaha.
 Many undisputed buildings shap-
 ing up to expectation

And engulfed in a radiant outlook
 Respectfully, for 1991 and beyond
 An accident of curious sights
 Caught many fresh chin
 "cupped in thoughts and thoughts"
 Unlike a forgone bushy chin
 Now resting wearily
 With its periodical year.

III

With the speed of Evaporation
 Into the hard surface of the Earth
 We began to dig,
 Into the drying river
 We began to make a reservoir,
 Into the drying leaves of the trees
 We began to water,
 Into the crevices of the wall
 We began to plaster and adjust,
 Into the dryness of the land
 We are careful of fire.
 Yet the wind blows
 With sand as born couple.

IV

Deep into the hearts of many,
 Thoughts are read
 Into a mask of the face
 Teleguided by two natural globes:
 Sensitive eyes dilated
 For the future's progress.
 Children and the needy too yelling
 excitedly
 Their twitching stomach of needs
 Squeezed conditionally for endur-
 ance
 While the-mouth will get moistened
 Drips of liquid brightening the lips
 Like Pet's Saliva
 Always remembering a palatable
 Meal to munch.

V

It's another galaxy atmosphere
 For the meritorious year cum decade
 in full swing
 Sweeping through harmoniously
 Everyone caught in euphoria
 First of the lots in an
 Advanced expectation
 Husband and wives/wife and lov-
 ers too
 Are sharing dovetailing plans
 "The lovely darls of the year,
 Fruition is not further than the
 Tip of the nose"
 Sensible imaginations shall become
 realistic
 Like the sows to be reaped justifiably
 For endurance, dedication, faith and
 luck
 This new decade is for
 The admiring, responsible and de-



voted one
 Gathering their spurs again
 Rekindling in a new dimension
 As they did start off
 The forgone decades
 Yet in their world today
 It's like a blink of an eye
 So shall it be with the year 2000
 In-sha-Allah.

Amin Sheid Anakobe

HOPE

Sometimes it is a drop
 of gutter rain
 Which besmudges the white
 wall
 Sometimes it is a single
 Just a single brown
 Pimple on the cheek
 Which besmirches some
 Beauty.
 Yet
 Oftentimes it is a single ray
 That lightens the way
 To freedom

WITHOUT GOD

Without God, we would be
 scooners floundering on irate seas
 Our masts shredded
 In the acidic glow of the red
 sun moon
 If not for Him, we would
 Be birdlings motherless in the wood
 Starving
 Our beaks dry as hay
 Ravished by the screaming harmat-
 tan Bonfire
 Without Him, we would
 Be like this cold
 Naked earth
 Bereft of some joy
 Without him, oh boy!
 We smile.
 Now with Him, oh boy!
 We smile

Ibrahim Sheme

How to read a newspaper

International paper asked Walter Cronkite, for years television's foremost news anchor-man and an ardent advocate of the need for a free people to remain free by keeping fully informed, to tell you how your newspaper can help you cope better with your world each day:

If you are like most Americans, you try to keep up with the news by watching it on television.

That's how 65% of us get 100% of our news—from the 24-odd-minute TV news broadcast each evening.

The problem—and I know the frustration of it firsthand—is that unless something really special happens, we in TV news have to put severe time limitations on every story, even the most complicated and important ones.



Get more than headlines

So what we bring you is primarily a front-page headline service. To get all you need to know, you have to flesh out those headlines with a complete account of the news from a well-edited and thorough newspaper.

Is it really necessary to get the whole story? Dorothy Greene Friendly put it this way: "What the American people don't know can kill them." Amen.

News people have a responsibility. And so do you. Ours is to report the news fairly, accurately, completely. Yours is to keep yourself informed every day.

I will never forget the quotation hanging in Edward R. Murrow's CBS office. It was from Thoreau: "It takes two to speak the truth—one to speak and one to hear."

Take a 3-minute overview

Here's how I tackle a paper. For starters, I take a three-minute overview of the news. No need to go to the sports section first, or the TV listing. With my overview you will get there quickly enough. First I scan the front-page headlines, look at the pictures and read the captions. I do the same thing page by page front to back. Only then do I go back for the whole feast.

The way the front page is "made up" tells you plenty. For one thing, headline type size will tell you how the paper's editor ranks the stories on relative importance. A major crop failure in Russia should get larger type than an overturned truckload of wheat on the Interstate, for example.

Which is the main story?

You will find the main or lead story in the farthest upper right-hand column. Why? Tradition. Newspapers used to appear on newsstands folded and displayed with their top right-hand quarter showing. They made up the front page with the lead story there to entice readers.

You will find the second most important story at the top far left, unless it's related to the lead story. Do you have to read all the stories in the paper? Gosh, no. But you should check them all. May be the one that appears at first to be the least appealing will be the one that will most

affect your life.

News is information, period.

A good newspaper provides four basic ingredients to help you wrap your mind around the news: information background, analysis and



interpretation.

Rule 1 of American journalism is: "News columns are reserved only for news." What is news? It is information only. You can tell a good newspaper story. It just reports the news. It doesn't try to slant it. And it gives you both sides of the story.

Look out for a lot of adjectives and adverbs. They don't belong in an objective news story. They tend to colour and slant it so you may come to a wrong conclusion.

Do look for by-lines, datelines and the news service sources of articles. These will also help you judge a story's importance and its facts.

As you read a story you can weigh its truthfulness by asking yourself, "Who said so?" Look out for "facts" that come from unnamed sources, such as "a highly placed government official." This could tip you off that the story is not quite true, or that someone—usually in Washington—is sending up a "trial balloon" to see if something that may happen or be proposed gets a good reception.

Allen Avenue's magic carnival

For one week, it was fun and fair bargain for participants at the Trade Fair Carnival on Allen Avenue.

Allen Avenue, a throbbing suburb of Ikeja, is any young person's dream street. On a typical evening, bright and iridescent neon signs blink away, splashing a kaleidoscope of bright and merry colours on the street. And the names which these neons bear are truly exotic, spirited straight out of New York and Las Vegas, America's trus-to-life answer to Disneyland. Take a sampler: Mama Cass, The Kitchen, Ozone, George's Fried Chicken....

True, Allen Avenue is synonymous with glittering cars and even more glittering ladies and gentlemen. But last week, it sought to wear a new look. It adorned the apparel of a happy-go-lucky but conscientious business man, courtesy of Prince Emeka Obasi, Chief Executive of Cameo Ad-Ventures Limited, an advertising and corporate promotion company. Obasi's scheme was simple. Organise a trade fair carnival showcasing the various business outfits and corporate bodies along Allen Avenue and invite the public to savour the delights of this exciting street for themselves — a magic carnival in a magical street. Explained Mrs. Nkechi Adibe, Obasi's business partner and co-organiser of the carnival, "the concept of the fair is to create a festive atmosphere for both shoppers and business owners. It is unique in that it is the first of its kind in Lagos."

Mr. Emeka Obasi informed *Citizen* that over twenty-one corporate bodies registered for the one-week carnival which was co-sponsored by Nigeria Bottling Company PLC, makers of Coca-Cola. Prominent among them were Chartered Bank, Commerce Bank and Headmasters, a high class barbing saloon. Chartered Bank is the only one along Allen Avenue that opens to customers on weekends. The Bank, according to Mr. Abdulrazaq Isha, one of its managers, participated in the fair so as to reach a greater number of people and to inform potential clients of the bank's new products and incentives.

One interesting aspect of Allen Avenue is the carnival sought to highlight its growing corporate outlook. Indeed, one would not be exaggerating to say that Allen Avenue is now the

central business district of Lagos State sporting banks, deluxe hotels, supermarkets and even publishing outfits. Two latest additions to this overgrowing district is the multi-million Naira Oshopey Plaza and the Penthouse from where the society magazine, *Classique* operates.

A few years ago, Allen Avenue and environs were referred to rather derisively as "Cocaine Avenue" after scores of young men who parade the length and breadth of the Avenue with expensive Mercedes Benz cars. The story then was that these young men who have no visible means of income were drug pushers and addicts —

firm of Femi Asiwaju and Co. informed *Citizen* that rents are likely to increase even further in the coming years. "It is only to be expected," explained the official. "Office and residential accommodation in thriving business districts all over the world are pretty expensive and Allen Avenue is no exception".

But it is not only business and trading all the way on this ever-busy avenue. Such nite-clubs and eat-ins as Ozone and Bread & Butter provide a congenial atmosphere for fun-seekers to unwind and enjoy themselves after a hard day's work. And this perhaps explains why Allen Avenue is awake



Adibe and Obasi — brought fun and fair to Allen Avenue

hence the name Cocaine Avenue. Exactly how and when the name came about is however a mystery. Cameo's Emeka Obasi told *Citizen*, "maybe the name came about because of the number of flashy cars, the beautiful buildings you see on the Avenue and the large number of businesses owned by young men and women".

Happily, all that is over. Allen Avenue has bade goodbye to its glitzy past and is now fast assuming the mien of solid business district. One clear indication of this healthy trend is the escalation of property rent on Allen Avenue and such adjoining streets as Toyin and Opebi. A two bedroom office accommodation costs between N10,000 and N12,000 per annum, while open space specifically for office use goes for about N70 per square feet. An official of the estate management

and ever bubbling twenty-four hours a day. When the banks, schools and hospitals shut their doors early in the evening, the night clubs and hotels take over, and it is dancing winning and laughing till day-break.

The organisers of the Trade Fair Carnival did not forget this delightful aspect of Allen Avenue and this is perhaps why they invited Sir Shina Peters, the youthful Afro-Juju musician who is presently ruling the Lagos air-waves to thrill the audience with tidbits from his ever-increasing repertoire of songs. Peters did turn up, and he gave a good account of himself. Enthused a resident of Allen Avenue who participated in the week-long carnival, "It was really wonderful. Allen Avenue has come of age and I am happy about it all."

By Nkechi Attah

Calligraphy at its best

From drawings on paper to designing logos and painting on buildings, a budding artist is giving credit to the saying "talent knows no barrier".

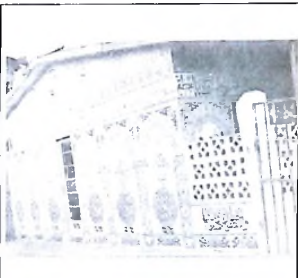
In arts as in so many other disciplines, talent knows no barrier. It manifests in the youth, the middle aged and the aged in several ways. When Yusha'u Abdullahi 21, a budding artist was introduced to me, I thought his artistic talents must have been perfected at an early age, as I looked with incredulity at calligraphy presented as a sample of his work. It could compete favourably with the work of famous Calligraphers of the muslim world. Even more difficult to believe was

the fact that in his secondary school days, Yusha'u studied physics, chemistry and biology. He was not at anytime trained as an artist. Shortly after his secondary education, intuition pushed him to try his hand at Islamic arts. "I was inspired by looking at Islamic calligraphy in Islamic magazines so I started drawing patterns on plain sheets of paper". From drawing on paper Yusha'u moved to making plaques with Islamic inscriptions which sold well. I was encouraged by the sales I made so I diversified into producing Corporate Logos for companies with selected logos or designing it to the specifications of those who commission me for the job", said Yusha'u confidently presenting some of the designs. As his warm and inventive mind developed, he moved into the complicated branch of painting on buildings. Because the rules gov-

erning Islamic arts strictly prohibit inscribing the name of God on unpure surfaces, all the Islamic paintings Yusha'u has done are for the exterior and interior decorations of walls. Two

circular waves are a common feature of the arts that decorate the pages of Qur'an and the interior of mosques.

Islam's aversion to idolatry is reflected in its sculpture designs. Statues



Some of Yushau's designs

of such a calligraphy are painted on the walls of a mosque in Bauchi and another in Kaduna, the A. D. Mohammed mosque at Tudun Wada.

Islamic paintings have a varied form of expression but they differ from others because of the moral tones that are woven into them. Geometrical patterns, intricate chain, floral and

of all living things are discouraged but plants, abstract shapes and sculpture depicting inanimate things feature prominently. Critics of Islamic arts argue that morality should not encroach on an artist's mind. However Muslims insist that artists reflect their imaginative appreciation of their surrounding and the conviction of their faith. The beauty of Islamic arts therefore lies in the intricacies of their patterns and not in obscenity that western arts define as beautiful.

Yusha'u has vowed to contribute to the development of Islamic arts by setting up as a full fledged business. At present, he is in the process of registering a company here in Kaduna which will be a branch of a Lagos based one. Islamic arts according to him "will be the long awaited sweetener to the refined arts so many people crave for". Indeed, the time has come for Islamic arts to develop a new assertiveness. It has found a competent champion in this innovative youth.



Yushau, the young genius

By Bilikieu Yusuf

Lament of a Troubadour

A poets vision of his native home where crisis and uncertainty loom larger than hope for the future

Exile does one of two things to the artist: It kills the poet in him so that he becomes hollow and conformist like other mortals or it reinvigorates the raging fire inside him—the raging fire which enables the poet to weave out of society's tears, an immortal cry. On one side of the divide, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O and on the other, V.S. Naipul.

Olu Oguibe's first collection of poems, "A Song From Exile" just published in Bayreuth, Germany by Boomerang Press is in truth a poet's soulful cry from exile. In a stunning combination of visual and verbal metaphors, Oguibe forcefully and eloquently declares that though he may be far away from home, he is still very much a native son "with the soil of my land in a leather amulet." His is the shrill cry of a new-born baby at first encounter with this monstrous world, the soulful lamentation of a farmer estranged from the land he loves so much.

But "A Song From Exile" is all of this and more. It is also a sensitive artist's attempt to come to terms with his new habitat, and seeing nothing but a landscape littered with stones and broken bottles, takes refuge in the fresh green foliage deep within him. The poet-protagonist is very much like the Negritudists of yore who, confronted with a wooden and mechanical Paris, rejected it all and winged back to a mythical Africa of throbbing drums and dancing maidens. Only that for Oguibe there is no escape because Africa too is afflicted by another kind of disease: rampaging tyrants who have reduced the once verdant farmlands to rubble. The poet is therefore an exile caught between two deserts and knowing not what else to do, bursts into a soothing song.

Oguibe prepares the ground for his exploratory journey into Europe's unfeeling bowel with a brief essay entitled "The Emperor And The Poet." He takes a hard unsympathetic look at events in his native country, Nigeria, faithfully chronicling the mountain of human rights abuses, the rampaging misery and poverty that has reduced a once cheerful and exuberant people to walking corpses and the heroic if puny efforts of a handful of artists and patriots to call the military thugs in power to account. But all is not lost,

brutal, improvident and spiritually bankrupt though the rulers may be, Oguibe reasserts his abiding faith in the people, in their ability to take their destiny into their hands one fine day and show the thief who really is the owner of the house. Says Oguibe, "the most significant thing in our struggle, however, is that it is not merely between the Emperor and the poet but between the Emperor and the people. Everyday, everywhere, in market places, factories, churches, on the streets, the people are speaking up against the agents of their misfortune. The poet is only one of the people, a single voice, if more shrill, in the din."

The poem proper is a long song in eight movements. Thematically however, the poem is divided into three parts—the first four movements chronicling the poet's sojourn in Europe, movements 5 and 6 a surrealistic account of an impending armageddon with the poet's mother as the ultimate sacrificial lamb and the last two movements a brief spiritual return to the familiar land and forests "thick and fresh like the breadth of God" which the poet-exile has left behind.

"A Song From Exile" bristles with freshly-minted metaphors. In few words, Oguibe captures the sounds, smells and sights of a sick Europe which has sold its soul to fleshly pleasures. Nothing escapes the poet's searching eye: the blasphemies of whores, decrepit old men shuffling with the pain of age, people hurrying past each other, without as much as exchanging a polite smile. All these he finds shocking, morose when the lifeless and wooden faces he encounters on the streets are his countrymen. Where has the laughter and sunshine gone? The poet-exile is however different from these lost men. He has the gift of memory—"conscience that lashes a man to his past "and so can not be" a blind, stomping masquerade lost in a strange land without an attendant" like his compatriots in exile. Oguibe remembers, and remembering, pays eloquent tribute to the land

from whence he sprang: "I love the land with its warts and scabs and groseflesh / I love the earth that covers my umbilical cord / I love the green in the wet season."

The beauty of a true love song is its unaffected simplicity. And this indeed is Olu Oguibe's greatest strength as a poet. His simple and direct declamatory style lashes the song to our memory with effortless ease. Oguibe does not strive for music or lyricism in his verse: they are there in the lines themselves, in the simple but graphic metaphors, the earthy, direct smiles and the celebrative tone with which he adorns his words.

"A Song From Exile" is therefore of historic importance in that it documents the advent of a new voice and a new sensibility in the African poetry landscape. Taking Chinweizu's admonition seriously, Olu Oguibe, far away in Britain, has finally picked up the thread from where Okigbo left off before he was felled in 1967 and weaved an authentic African fabric. It may be imperfect in places, but it contains within its many rich and resplendent folds, the germs of a future master-weaver. The songster may have crossed rivers but his tongue is as eloquent as ever.

By Ike Okonta



The book — A Song From Exile

Nation's Cup qualifier

Eagles can tame the Stallions

In spite of its gallant outings, the Burkinabe team will need more than a master plan to contend the fact that Nigeria is still one of the the giants of African football.



Westerhof: Where are his much cherished professionals?

What is the true strength of our national football team, the Super Eagles? If you are one of the irrepresible soccer lovers itching to know what brand of Eagles will finally emerge from the national camp in Otta after nearly four weeks of thorough drilling and football tutorial by the Dutch technical adviser, Clement Westerhof and his coaching crew, then you won't have to wait long.

On Saturday, the senior national team will be laid bare in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso capital, in a crucial Nations' Cup qualifying match against that country's national team, the Stallions. This weekend's matches mark the second stage of the battle of survival for African countries struggling to qualify for the 1992 African Nations' Cup final in Senegal. Nigeria and Burkina Faso are in group four alongside Ghana, Togo and Benin.

This match means much to Super Eagles and the Stallions. For now both teams are almost standing neck to neck

in the qualification race with four points each. Nigeria however has an edge with a better goal difference of plus three as against Burkina Faso's plus two. Ghana is standing tall on the driving seat with maximum six points from three matches while Togo and Benin with one point each are certainly out of contention.

While the legendary Black Stars of Ghana who have won the Nations cup for a record four times seem to have booked a place in next year 'finals, the same cannot be said of the Super Eagles with the Burkinabes breathing down their necks for the second qualifier of the group. For the Super Eagles to clear their path of any threat and leave no one in doubt of their readiness to book a place in the 12-nation final in Senegal, they need an outright victory this Saturday against the Stallions who have not made secret their desire to be in Senegal after their resounding home victories against Togo and Benin before bowing to Black Stars in Kumasi after a gallant performance that won them a lot of respect even in defeat.

The big question therefore is: how prepared are the Super Eagles for this weekend crucial show down in Ouagadougou? It was quite glaring after the scrappy victory against Republic of Benin in Cotonou that the senior national team was not in good shape. Against a stronger, technically sound team, the Eagles would have crumbled like rûne pins. The preparation for this weekend match has not been smooth

for the Super Eagles. It took a ban threat by the Nigerian Football Association to get the invited players to report to the Otta camp. Since the coercive order brought the players to camp after precious time had been wasted, the technical adviser Clement Westerhof and his crew have been trying their best to groom a winning team from the cream of home based players now in camp.

Our preparation is however like a pin drop in the ocean compared to that of our small but more serious minded opponent. Burkina Faso quite rightly regarded Nigeria as one of the giants of African Football and has come to realise that knocking us out of the nations' cup race requires more than just wishful thinking. That explains why at a time Eagles' technical adviser was holidaying in Holland, the Burkinabe football federation was busy in the drawing board putting together a master-plan on how to shoot down giant Super Eagles from their exalted position this weekend. Burkina Faso hired the services of a Brazilian coach Juan Carlos and put together a three-week training tour of Brazil for the team in a bid to beat the Super Eagles and make true their dream of making it to Senegal '92.

In spite of Super Eagle's late preparation, there is a very high optimism that the national team has got all the material it requires to render the Stallions impotent in Ouagadougou on Saturday. A veteran football coach, Idi Marshal who witnessed Eagles' training session in Otta told *Citizen* that beating Burkina Faso on Saturday should not be an uphill task. Idi Marshal who is the Kaduna State Sports Council football Chief coach based his optimism on the fact that the very best of Nigerian players are currently in the

Eagles camp. "This is the first time I have seen talented boys like that gathered for the best interest of the country", he said adding that with proper handling by the coaches the Super Eagles would win in Ougadougou on Saturday.

Coach Idi Marshal who once led a youth team to capture world youth football tournament for Kaduna State in Finland, dismissed Burkina Faso's Brazilian connection as nothing to cause any sleepless night. "Hiring a Brazilian coach", he said "does not mean they have eleven Brazilians to play for them." He maintained his firm belief that "if the boys listen to instruction we will have no problem beating Burkina Faso on their ground."

There is still however one sensitive matter that must be cleared if the Super Eagles' house is to present a common front against their opponents on Saturday. It is the issue of professional players. Super Eagles' trainer Clement Westerhof has always been in love with Nigerian foreign based players, especially those who pursue their career in his continent in Europe. Part of the reasons why some players have lost their zeal for the national camp may not be unconnected with the way they are dumped at the last moment in preference for the so-called professionals even when they join the team from their base some minutes to the kick off of a crucial match. Westerhof may be badly disappointed this time around because his Europe based professionals, especially his Belgium Idol Stephen Keshi, are yet to show their faces.

Critically examined, is there any



Aloy Agu, Eagle's skipper

need to get caught in the feverish panic of how to fly and ship home our foreign based players when we are to engage a tiny country like Burkina Faso in a football match? Amodu Shuaibu, coach of Mandela Cup Champions, BCC Lions of Gboko says no. After a visit to the Eagles camp in Otta, coach Amodu told a Lagos based national daily that we should forget about using any of the foreign based players in our match against the Burkina Stallions. He was quoted as saying that the boys he saw at the national camp were a collection of the best material any coach could wish to have. What was needed, he explained, was for the coaches to mould a winning squad out of them. Amadu concluded his argument against foreign players by saying that some of them cost a fortune to bring home. But that is not all. When they arrive in the camp, they don't usually have time to blend with the home based players, he concluded.

Speaking in the same vein, coach Idi

Marshal expressed disapproval of constant shopping around Europe for our foreign based players. He described the move as an adventure exercise embarked upon by coaches who wanted ready material to do their job for them. He also reasoned that bringing in foreign players at the last moment to replace home based players who have stayed in camp for weeks undergoing rigorous training could be very damaging to the morale of all the home based players in camp. With good coaching method and fairly long period of camping, coach Marshal believes that the boys currently in Eagles camp can take the country to the world cup in 1994. So if Westerhof and his crew Bonfero, his Dutch friend, Tunde D and Isaaka: one of the key players. Christian Chukwu could come along with the best of our home based players on Saturday, there should be no reason why Super Eagles will not route the Stallions in Ougadougou.



Isaaka: one of Stallions key players

Kaduna Sports Council Director axes associations

In a tone that expressed bitter disappointment, Kaduna State Director of Sports, Alhaji Amadu Maude last Monday brought his big stick down on all the sporting associations in the state. Alhaji Maude who came to office in July last year said his observation of the working of the associations within his six months tenure in office has

convinced him that they were not properly constituted to promote their respective sports as contained in the edict establishing the Kaduna State Sports Council.

Lack of proper consideration in selecting the members of the dissolved associations, explained the director of sports, "has resulted in lack of quorums at meetings and in

some cases lack of meetings at all. These lapses, have necessitated the running of most associations by only the chairmen, secretaries and their coaches." A badly disappointed director of sports said that the situation got so bad that at one point he had to send his secretaries after some associations' members to bid to get them to attend meetings.

SPORTS

This bitter experience made the director vow during his speech dissolving the associations that never again or at least during his tenure in office will the organisations of sports in the state be left in the hands of those who have no interest in sporting activities.

Alhaji Maude further said that the deteriorating standard of the state in sports is traceable to the tradition of hand picking people to run sporting associations when such people were known not to be keen sportsmen and women. In reconstituting the associations, which he



Alhaji Ahmadu Maude: a bold step

said will be done soonest, only people who are known to be keen

lovers of sports will be picked as members.

In order to make the state for talents at the grassroots more productive, the director announced the break of the state into five: Organising secretaries, coaches who formerly resided in Kaduna, Zaria, and Lere have been posted to attend to sporting needs. Alhaji Maude however, disapproved as impracticable at the level the current programme whereby national sporting associations are granted some sort of autonomy made to finance part of their own programmes by sponsors.

By Joe Olajide

Dr. Oti

Rebel without cause?

The widely publicised reports of Dr. Michael Oti's resignation from the executive committee of World University Games (FISU) can not but surprise all sports loving citizens of this country at a time when we are putting everything in place to make our presence felt in major world sporting associations. It came as a big blow because Dr. Oti who was elected to the executive committee of the fa-

mous international sporting association in 1987 was the first and only African to have been so elected.

Going through Dr. Oti's letter of resignation addressed to FISU president, Dr. Primo Nebiolo, one quickly gets a pitiable impression of a man recognised by the world but rejected by his own people. Oti captured that pathetic image of an unappreciated illustrious citizen when he stated in his letter that he was quitting FISU "owing to problems in obtaining the necessary financial support from my national authorities to attend meetings of the executive committee."

Investigations however carried out by *Citizen* showed that Oti might have been a rebel without a cause; a man who might have wittingly dug his own grave. Dr. Oti, according to investigations, got to FISU through the platform of Nigeria University Games Association (NUGA). But as soon as he got to FISU he became a law unto himself, biting the fingers that fed him. According to the Coordinator of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Zone Six Malam Ahmed Tijjani Yusuf, who

until his appointment, was an executive member of NUGA, Dr. Oti had for once briefed NUGA about the coming of any executive committee meeting of FISU he attended. The coordinator further explained that NUGA made several attempts to order Oti to order but he turned a deaf ear.

Another source from the defunct national sports commission told *Citizen* that Dr. Oti's problems over sportsmanship to attend FISU's meeting began when he started antagonising influential members of NSC. To call Dr. Oti was said to have been dictated by the investigation panel probed NUGA's scandalous performance at the 1989 World University Games in the then West Germany. Carefully and critically examined therefore Dr. Oti might have been the architect of his own downfall. A painful side of it however is that he have lost a very important chance of one of the world's most famous sporting associations, and to get it back according to Malam Tijjani Ahmed, he will have to start from scratch.

By Joe Olajide



Yusuf: says Oti has no case

ADAMU ADAMU'S

DEFINITIONS
IN
HUMOUR

New Yeah!

Every January there are celebrations over much of the world—that part of it that is the relic of colonialism—over the birth of a new year. As the poets say, there is no trumpet herald the arrival of the new year or the exit of the old. The sky doesn't turn green, although of course the pangs of SAP can make it go violet-green. The earth itself doesn't crack nor the heavens a new moon bear?

So what is new about the year?

Those for whom the day begins a minute after midnight imagine that that dark spectacle is morning.

And on December 31 at 12.00 midnight the pangs of labour catch the universe and at 12.01 am it issues forth a brand new year. Yet if we can rewind time 33.5 million seconds back, the year that is passing out will have passed out at the other end and become, not dead, but unborn. Yet even as the 365 plates swish back on our rewinder we fail to detect any sign of the boundary that has been put on time—seconds, minutes, days and years.

Man loves the passage of time in order to get or to qualify for what only Time will bring. Yet man fears old age. Why does man celebrate when it is clear that a new year means a year folded up in the bosom of Time—lost and never to be regained? The riddle may be solved when we all understand what time is. Is it a dimension, or is it only the future coming at top speed? And what happens when Future arrives at the present? Do

and cry or scowl with the other. You may be right if you name January as the month of hypocrisy; especially since in your case you can immediately see it—during the budget. Promise and reality are distant cousins who will never meet—ever and ever.

ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION—The economy must be the most extensively damaged entity in Nigeria. They have been reconstructing it since the time of General Gowon. If you consider the wordings you will realise how little (or how nothing) has been done all these years.

INFLATION—The budget says it has been projected at 16 per cent. That is, it will increase by 16 per cent during the year. Good. Congratulations. Someone tell us how to solve the 1000% of 1990. Or is the 8% on top of it?

POLITICAL PARTIES—Government stops funding of its babies. There is always a time to wean—and a time to win. Government *wears*, money bag *wins*—in more ways than one.

REVENUE ALLOCATION—At the rate we are going, the share for local governments will approach 100%. While others oppose the abolition of states, this prospect may abolish even the Federal Government.

DEBT—What you have to get into if

they marry and become the past?

Let's ask the months.

JANUARY—January is the month of *Janus*, the Greek god with two faces, one looking to the year that is past and the other to the one that is coming. Janus therefore may laugh with one face

you want to get out of.

MINIMUM WAGE—Minimum wage.

PRICE STABILITY—Stability on a higher plane.

COMMUNITY BANK—A Community established its Bank. Each member brings deposit, bank grows, does business, becomes prosperous—community becomes rich. Everyone in it remains poor.

PEOPLE'S BANK—If you are looking for proof that the Community bank is *against* people, here it is. If it is for people why duplicate?

NALDA—National Agricultural Land Development Authority to execute a land development programme, funded by all tiers of government. G-o-o-d! How long will it last?

AUTONOMY FOR LGS—Local Government officials will now have full autonomy to pocket local government allocations. This honour used to be the preserve of state bureaucrats.

OIL BOOM—Created by Saddam, enjoyed by others, especially the *others* who helped him create the boom. The real winners are the western oil companies.

IMPORT PROHIBITION—A sure way to punish Nigerians—and enrich smugglers. Local sourcing is a very good theory. Perhaps the only thing a Nigeria can successfully source locally is chaos.

FRSC—Federal Road Safety Corp—the road is certainly safe for mass employment, or is it?

NPEC—National Primary Education Commission—a commission that is getting its first (primary) lesson in life. Thanks for the good work? Now, die!

COUNCILLORS & CHAIRMEN—Councillors sit in council, chairmen sit on chairs—others do the work.

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