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EVEN as an annual ritual, the budget still manages to retain considerable mystique. Its preparation is placed invariably at the heart of the best in discreet handling and public service secrecy. And it must be delivered ultimately by the political chief executive with the greatest of representative carriage, courtesy and persuasion.

The expectancy with which the people regard the announcement is also largely ritualistic. Yet, there is almost always the hope for a surprise; for a dramatic turn of fortunes; for a better life generally.

1988 was probably not the best year in recent times: By some accounts, realisation was so far off the mark, that it has been possible to speak of projections that seemed plucked for a world of fantasy. For example, the best of wills appeared sufficient to

save the naira. The Foreign Exchange Market (FEM) went berserk with an inter-bank aggravation that placed manufacturing at an epileptic keel, with government officials only barely able to

hold out the Structural Adjustment Programme, SAP, as any panacea.

What does 1989 hold out? We have in this issue invited contributions from experts on a number of problem areas.

- What has the autonomy of the Central Bank (CBN) meant to the economy?

- Do industries expect interest rates to come down?

- What level of funding will be desirable for the Foreign Exchange Market?

The gamut of questions appear infinite but, for God's sake, why does anybody need budget, if there will be no answers for minimum comfort?

Andy Akporugo
88

Editor-in-Chief



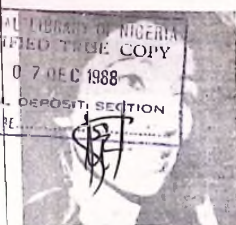
Nigeria

Once more Nigeria's problems have been put under searchlight. Cultural disorientation, political inexperience, immorality and indiscipline, Yusuf Maitama Sule, Nigeria's ex-representative at the UN says, are the issues that cry for attention in the nation, and in fact the entire African continent.

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International



Benazir Bhutto emerged on the Pakistan's political stage after Mohammed Zia's death to continue the political legacy of her father, Ali Bhutto. She hit the ultimate target when she was named first woman premier of the named Islamic nation last week.

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Society

When in 1980 white minority rule in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) was terminated, it was widely believed that all racial practices were swept under the carpet. But, eight years after, the culture of segregation still thrives in the capital, Harare.



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Editor-in-Chief
ANDY AKORUGBO
Editor
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Associate Editors
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LETTERS

The Duke Vs Mr. Bush

If the media had treated Nigeria's electoral issues the way and manner your magazine handled the US elections (November 14) a lot of misrepresentations bordering on ethnic frivolities would have been avoided in our political history.

Let the trend continue now and beyond 1992.

*Miyea Johnson,
Port-Harcourt, Rivers State.*

Agreed, the US is a country only few countries can ignore; but must we focus on their elections the way you did. Do the US media pay attention to our own political activities the way we beam our lights on theirs?

*Kenneth Igwe,
Oshodi, Lagos.*

There is nothing "ugly" about the "face of the race" in the US electoral campaigns. Elections are never do-or-die affairs. It's all a matter of who sends across a more appealing message via the print or electronic media, not the type sentiments we in Nigeria invoke.

*Ifesoma Dike,
Lagos.*

When doctors kill

"Who cures the doctor" (November 7) made an interesting reading; but there are many points I disagree with. The story appeared to be pre-meditated as a bash against doctors. That is not to say that one is holding brief for the unwholesome practices of some doctors.

In the first case of Mr. Gimah Isenalumbe, the scenario at the UBTH is what obtains at teaching and specialist hospitals all over the world. There is a hierarchical system in which junior doctors first attend to a patient and the consultant is called in, in case of difficulties. This apparently was what happened at Benin. Every other incident that happened must not be blamed on the doctor but on the system. That is why I fully endorse the statement of Professor Ayo Binitie, never one to mince words.

In a society that glorifies quackery and charlatans and seeks to destroy the hard working and single-minded doctor who labours hard to discharge his duties, such a society unconsciously propagates mediocrity. Until this country starts to recognise merit and adulates it, rather than chant the praises of miscreants who "practise the system", a warped one from all perception, there will be no salvation



to our problems. Unless adequate drugs and infrastructure are provided, and medical care is dispensed at an affordable price to all, then we shall continue to grope in the dark.

*Soga Sofola,
Ibi-Araba, Lagos*

It is true that the ethical default of Nigerian doctors leaves a sour taste in the mouth, but then, these doctors are part and parcel of a decadent and corrupt society. And until the entire gamut of the society is reformed for good, it appears we have neither heard nor seen the last of these professional malpractices.

*Rogers Edo Ocheia,
Kamba, Sokoto State*

Manning the midfield

The write-up on Association of Artists Managers and Promoters (AMMP) (November 14th) reveals that some people now feel concerned to want to place music in its rightful place in this part of the world.

The present practice of one man piloting music from demo stage to the doors of consumers has done more harm than good to our music industry. This system does not allow specialisation to play its good role. It is in light of the above that I see AMMP as a new dawn in the music industry. However, the association's success, to a large extent, depends on what faith AMMP has in its midfield role.

*Esezobor I. Josiah
Lagos*

Foot in the mouth

Aiozie Ogbuabua should be advised to remember the story of our

elders about the proverbial NZA bird which after eating to his satisfaction decided to challenge his personal god to a wrestling contest.

He should do well also to remember that he is the egg and they (police) are the stone; if he rolls against them he will break; if they roll against him, he will still break. He should bear this in mind when they meet in Phillipi.

*Muzamus M.G. Anakwe,
Jos, Plateau State.*

Alozie Ogugbuaja may be a victim of traps already set for him by detractors. But it is equally his fault, a grievous one, that he wasn't able to detect in advance such well-laid traps.

*Longnan Iles,
Jos, Plateau State.*

Why must we allow sentiment to rule us when the facts provide sufficient proof of misconduct by Alozie Ogugbuaja: The man spoke to the press which is an offence in the public service.

If he wanted freedom to blow his mind any time he wished he could have as well resigned.

*Audu Ochaizo,
Makurdi, Benue State.*

A Biafran bank?

If we go all the length in preserving in a war museum, the destructive weapons that destroyed our youths, our homes and made many desolate, I don't see anything wrong in using the "Biafran" coat-of-arms by any person or company for any purpose (November 14). Or does it mean that the logo will cause the resurrection of the dead nation?

If we don't want anything linked with "Biafra" we can as well destroy the museum at Umuahia. Unless, of course, it is there as a sad reminder to some people of their sad past.

*Jamas Ida,
Aba, Imo State.*

We dine and wine with the war veterans, but just the word 'Biafra' still frightens us like the "Ogbunigwe."

Disgusting, isn't it!
*Odeh Ogiado,
Auchi, Borden State.*

Address Letters to the Editor, typewritten double-space, with writer's name, address and, if available telephone number, to: The African Guardian, Ratan House, P.M.B. 1217, Oshodi, Lagos Nigeria. Letters subject to editing.



The eagle's elephantine problems

IN what could be viewed as being traditional of the Nigeria Airways, the new logo of the national carrier, which was launched last Thursday, is generating quite some controversy.

At first, the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) of the ministry of aviation had doubted the possibility of the airline launching the new emblem — a flying eagle superimposed on the bold letter "N". The CAD's doubt stemmed from the observation that the Nigeria Airways did not wait for an approval from the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) before going ahead with a new logo which President Ibrahim Babangida had approved on November 21.

But Airways officials were of the opinion that an approval from ICAO was not necessary. To them, the ICAO only needs to be informed about the new logo and the Nigeria Airways does not need to seek the permission of the Montreal-based international aviation body to use the logo. The airline's position was confirmed by a telex from ICAO a day before the launching which stated that no approval was needed to use the new symbol. According to the Convention on International Aviation of 1980, article 21 states that a country should undertake to supply ICAO, on demand, with information concerning the registration and ownership of any particular aircraft registered in that country. Countries, in addition should furnish ICAO with reports containing pertinent data such as ownership and control of their aircraft habitually engaged in international air navigation. ICAO makes these available on request to national airlines of other countries. Nothing was said about approval. For a complete change from the old to the new symbol, it is being speculated that the Nigeria Airways is expected to spend an estimated N10 million.

Well, having crossed the first hurdle, drama over the emblem was to continue. On Thursday, protest against the airlines' new logo arose

from a rather unusual quarter — The Nigerian Football Association (NFA). The NFA's argument was that the national carrier was using the name of the junior national football team, the Flying Eagles, always a winning side without permission. But the NFA battle was lost even before it started. By the time the complaint reached the authorities, the Airways Symbol was being launched and it would have taken no less than the President to stop the ceremony. The airline is not only experiencing turbulence over its new emblem. Last week the Nigeria Airways started recalling, from national dairies, its advertisements announcing its return to the Nairobi and Kinshasa routes, two of the six routes it had withdrawn from last month. The recalling of the advertisements was understood to have resulted from the refusal of the ministry of aviation to approve the return of the airline to these routes. The ministry's argument is that the Nigeria Airways abandoned the routes. The Nigeria Airways on the other hand says it only suspended flights. Technically, however, the Nigeria Airways still operates the east and central routes. This is because the Ethiopian Airlines which flies the routes has a joint agreement with Nigeria Airways and operates flight call sign WT/ET. The Nigeria Airways has Bilateral Air Services Agreement (BASA) with 56 countries in which only 22 are operated, with earnings of between N42 million to N45 million annually. With the suspension of

flights to six routes last month and the refusal of the aviation ministry to allow the airline on the suspended Central and East African routes, a clearly visible short-fall in revenue is what Airways authorities are afraid might happen.



■ *Engineer.*

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Andy Akporugo

We saw it coming

THE chap who asked, some six months ago, about whose constitution Nigerians were expecting, might have been simply cynical. But it was quite pertinent to recognise in his agonising rhetoric the critical reality that stared everybody in the face, namely, the decisive influence which the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) was destined to wield.

Did I say destined? Yes, destined, because a new constitution was an integral part of the orchestrated rationalisation for the coup in the first place. Additionally, there are some who say that it was fairly obvious that the AFRC could not afford to allow a social contract that would be truly anti-fascist and, therefore, intrinsically spiteful of the very essence of military rule!

But talking seriously, as long as a transition programme was largely predicated on the drawing up of a new constitution, it was reasonably difficult to assume very much autonomy for the process. The military, it would appear, had to be managers of "how it all happens" no less than they were expected to be 'minders' in other aspects of the programme, which was, in any case, entirely their own creation.

The Political Bureau which laid the foundation was a hand-picked body, from whose ranks were subsequently recruited vital personnel for the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the Constitution Review Committee (CRC). Arguably, the CRC draft represented the best of the "masters' wishes". And many have been inclined to believe that the Constituent Assembly was accordingly intended to do no more than popularise this *fait accompli*.

However, if an unusually large nominated membership underscored the prospect of manipulation, there were, nevertheless, the doubting Thomases: or shall we say, incurable optimists who preferred to have faith in the "unbounded scope" of an ideal Constituent Assembly. I remember quite clearly the enthusiasm with which a few members approached their job and the great uproar that attended President Babangida's inaugural admonition on the so-called 'No-Go' areas.

Well, the view was fervently canvassed that a Constituent Assembly was supposed to be imbued with unfettered origination and a creative impetus limited only by the need to have a workable, as opposed to a utopian, docu-

ment. At a purely discretionary level, it was quite possible for government to desire a particular direction without appearing obtrusive about it. In other words, it was felt that the President had open to him, a number of less manifestly authoritarian ways of indicating his guidelines. The way he was seen to hand down his exceptions bore a certain degree of magisterial pretension, which, in the circumstance, was easily capable of inducing an unnecessarily high level of filibustering temper.

The debate on whether or not there should have been 'No-go' areas hasn't quite subsided even as it cannot but be a futile exercise in the end.

So, how does one characterise last Monday's intervention of the Federal Government on the Shana question? Of course, it was roundly consistent with the master's role—except that this time

"It would not be entirely correct to insist, as the Chief of General Staff did, that 'there already exists a wide measure of national consensus on all the matters raised' "

around there was also the very useful security injunction conveyed with appropriate fire brigade dampness. "Government steps in to put out shana flames" was the very apt way *The Guardian* recorded Vice Admiral Aikhomu's stern five-minute address at Abuja. The Chief of General Staff's mood was angry but not rude, the message was precise and untypically laud.

But inescapably, there were patronizing nuances and too much willingness to confuse the criticism of specific excesses of the debate with an ostentatious argument that the issues involved were really never so contentious.

Perhaps it was discourteous for so many honourable members not to have heeded the President's advice to move quickly away from areas where the temptation to rancour seemed most pressing. Perhaps a few of the members tended to deliberately exaggerate the

dimensions of the controversy as a "short cut to political stardom." And perhaps many more of the distinguished ladies and gentlemen should have realised the need for greater security precautions in a general sort of way. Yet it would not be entirely correct to insist as the Chief of General Staff did, that there already exists a wide measure of national consensus" on all the matters raised.

The troublesome clauses which have been removed from the jurisdiction of the Assembly "in the best interest of national unity and the assembly itself" are 6(2) to 6(6)(d) and 248 to 263 of the CRC's report. The stretch covers the provinces hitherto allotted the committees on General Provisions and State Judicature and which deal with the judicial powers of the federation as well as the establishment and jurisdiction of state courts.

The 1979 Constitution did have similar clauses with "minor new encroachments". For example, in regard to the categories of courts, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) now has provided for it, "as if it were a state", a Shana Court of Appeal and also a Customary Court of Appeal. Part of the quarrel was that the FCT being technically "no-man's land," ought to be placed in no position to have its cultural neutrality or adaptive heterogeneity compromised by aspects of our fundamental law.

But the greatest heat seemed to have come from Section 258 of the reviewed constitution which purportedly widens the powers of the Shana Court of Appeal, by removing the limits imposed as to questions of Islamic Personal Law only, at Section 242 of the 1979 document.

I tend to imagine that if some matters were provocative enough to be subject to expedient treatment by the Constituent Assembly, it would be contradictory to suggest that the same matters formed any part of "agreed ingredients of Nigeria's political order."

And when the Chief of General Staff told his audience that their responsibility did not involve "alternating without just and reasonable cause, fundamental principles and structures of the 1979 Constitution", he permitted himself, I am afraid, to be the sole judge of the reasonableness of all the causes.

That's probably only fair, but has the basic problem been resolved, can it be resolved so presumptuously "with immediate effect and automatic alacrity?"

UNITED STATES

Show of might

Americans defy UN, refuse Arafat entry to New York

THERE would, perhaps, have been none of the ongoing international political and legal wranglings if what Yasser Arafat, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chief, had applied for was indeed permission to be guest to the people and government of the United States. To back up their rejection of the request, Americans would have rightly argued that they, like all independent peoples in the world, reserve the right to decide which visitor to let in, and which one to declare *persona non grata*.

What the PLO chairman wanted, however, was not to visit the United States *per se* but to attend the United Nations General Assembly special session on the Palestinian question (which holds at the UN headquarters in New York, United States). Arafat was billed to address the General Assembly last Thursday (December 1) on PLO's newly unveiled policies, especially the declaration of an independent state of Palestine.

Expectations, therefore, were that the State Department will have little difficulty making up its mind to issue Arafat with a visa. It did so 14 years ago, in 1974, even though Arafat had gone to the United Nations carrying "a gun and an olive branch." This year, he says he has put away the gun. There were also editorials in some of America's influential newspapers, including the *International Herald Tribune*, urging the authorities not to block Arafat's trip. Above all else, the US is obliged under its 1947 headquarters agreement with the United Nations to let in all members and observer groups of the international body (the PLO falls under the latter groups).

It largely came as a shock, therefore, when, early last week, the US authorities still went ahead to deny Arafat the travel document. Except, perhaps, for Israel (which expectedly hailed the decision), the condemnation of the State Department's action has been total. It came not just from such personalities and institutions as UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), but from some of the US staunch European allies, notably France, Italy and Sweden. In fact, towards the weekend, the General

Assembly had unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a change of heart by the US. There was also a powerful clamour initiated by the Arab nations for a change of the venue of the General Assembly session from New York to Geneva, to enable Arafat to attend. The Arab nations further put forward a motion calling for postponement of the special session on the Palestinian question which was scheduled to begin December 1.

Still, US authorities did not relent. Instead, they promised to attend the General Assembly session in Geneva

if it is eventually shifted from New York. It was an indication that a softening of position should not be expected. America's quarrel with Arafat is that PLO's recent renunciation of terrorism, and implied recognition of Israel, are shrouded in ambiguous lan-



• Reagan: America's interest first

guage, and, therefore, unacceptable. They still see Arafat clad in his combat fatigues, pistol in his holster and *Keffiyah* over his head, as a symbol of world terrorism.

THE point, international legal authorities say, however, is that whatever opinion Americans hold of the PLO and its leader, Arafat, cannot be tendered as sufficient reason for breaching their agreement with the UN. They are convinced, therefore, that if the world body, in the end, drags Washington before the International Court at the Hague, the Netherlands, the Americans will be indicated, just as they were chastised, earlier this year, in their unilateral attempt to close PLO's UN office in New York.

Apart from going against the headquarters agreement, the action of the US government is also believed to have contravened a number of standing international conventions and articles of the UN Charter. Articles 104 and 105 of the Charter, for instance, demand special legal privileges and immunities for representatives of UN members to enhance the performance of their functions. The denial of visa to Arafat (representing Palestinians) seems to have run contrary to the spirit of these provisions.

By Emenike Okoré



• Arafat: Left out in the cold

Boost for perestroika

Supreme Soviet grants more powers to Gorbachev

EVEN as the Soviet Chief, Mikhail Gorbachev, stood before the national parliament, the Supreme Soviet, mid last week, reports were that the ethnic dispute between the mainly muslim Azeris and Christian Armenians was deepening. Tens of thousands of Azeris were said to be fleeing the Republic of Armenia into Azerbaijan, while the estimated 200,000 Armenians in Azerbaijan were, in turn, crossing into the Armenian Republic. Thus bringing to a head the recent deterioration in relations between the two ethnic groups which, for generations, have lived side by side.

What Gorbachev had sought and got from the Supreme Soviet, last Thursday, was a major shift of power from the Communist Party to an elected two-tier parliament to be called the Congress of Deputies. The Congress, in turn, is expected to elect a new head of state (president) who will be endowed with sweeping political powers.

As the Deputies (members of the Supreme Soviet) handed words over

the reform plan, however, the question was not so much if Gorbachev's request should in the end be granted, but what he intended to do with the extensive political powers he demanded. The fear, as highlighted by the speech of Arnold Ruutel, President of the Baltic Republic of Estonia, was that in whittling down the powers of



■ Gorbachev: More powers

the party, and heaping them on an executive president, also entailed the erosion of the powers of the republics in favour of Moscow. And this, according to him, could breed misuse of power in the hand of future Soviet leaders.

It is not that Gorbachov has not attempted to allay some of these apprehensions which, in essence, border on the fear of domination by some of the Soviet minorities. (The country has over 100 ethnic groups). He has, on occasions, tried to reach out to leaders of the autonomous republics to erase some of the doubts and cynicism over the real intention of his crusade for democratisation of the Soviet system. But, no matter how hard he has tried, pockets of mistrust and suspicion still linger here and there. This, to a large extent, accounts for the present political tension in the Republic of Estonia, and the ethnic riots and blood-shed in Armenia, and Azerbaijan. In both cases, there is a common underlining fear by the minority of domination by the majority. Thus, Estonians now demand far-reaching political independence, including the right to veto any law passed in Moscow which affects them. And Armenians are willing to die for a separate, autonomous republic of their own.

By Emenike Okorie

Time to talk

At last Moscow agrees to discuss with Afghan rebels

SOVIET authorities used to argue that the war in Afghanistan is not between the Soviet Union and the Mujahideen rebels and that as a result dialogue between both sides was unthinkable. Last week, they took a fresh look at the situation and agreed to discuss prisoners' exchange with the rebels. A meeting was scheduled between a Soviet group headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Yali Vorontsov and the rebels three-man delegation led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, current leader of the seven-party Mujahideen alliance.

The Kremlin would probably not have given in that easily, but for the fact that the eight-year war has been rather costly in terms of men and material. It was confirmed in Moscow that between 12,000 and 15,000 Soviet troops lost their lives, with 35,478 wounded. The decision to talk also

comes at a time the Soviet Union is seeing reduction of tensions and normalisation of relations across the globe as the basis for Soviet economic reconstruction.

The negotiation itself being sponsored by Saudi authorities was a compromise between the Soviet position and the rebels' contention all along, that the proper party to deal with is the Kremlin, not President Najibullah's regime, which they claim is a puppet or a surrogate government. In short, the rebels have always seen the Kremlin as being the *de jure* power in Afghanistan.

Bola Mustafa, a teacher of International Relations at the Lagos State University (LASU) told *The African Guardian* that the dialogue shows that lasting peace is possible in Afghanistan, adding that the direct talk could lead towards a concrete agreement between the two parties.

The prisoners whose release Soviet authorities are seeking are among the 311 soldiers reported missing by General Alexei Lizichev, head of Soviet Army and Navy political de-

partment. The rebels themselves are guarantees for the establishment of a representative government in Kabul, and the return of an estimated 3 million Afghan refugees who not only fled the country in protest, but also sworn never to return until the Kabul government is unseated.

The problem is whether the Soviet Union can meet the rebels' demands without compromising its ideological and strategic interests. Observers agree that the prospects of a general reconciliation leading to the ending of socialist rule there and the enthronement of a pro-western regime are part of what has remained Kremlin's worries all along. It also explains some of the reasons why the May 15 Geneva accord (touted as a peace agreement) contained no concrete provisions aimed at reducing interference in the Afghan affairs or at resolving many of the fundamental problems. Observers are not very optimistic, in fact, that the Mecca talks (for release of prisoners) will provide the break-through needed to stem the deepening stalemate.

By Fami Ogunyemi

PAKISTAN

At last, a premier

Bhutto becomes first woman leader of Islamic Pakistan

THE stalemate was eventually resolved, and a winner declared in the breath-taking political game. Interim president, Ghulam Ishaq Khan in a nation wide radio and television broadcast on December 1, gave 35 year old Benazir Bhutto the green light to form a cabinet some two weeks after the results of the general election were announced. Thus making her the first ever woman prime minister of an Islamic nation.

Intellectually fortified with two degrees (law and government) from Oxford and Harvard, Bhutto by this achievement has restored her late father's, (Ali Bhutto's) political legacy which was eclipsed for 11 years (1977 — 1988) with the advent of former president Zia ul-Haq's repressive regime. Ali Bhutto, founder of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) ascended the premiership in 1971 and had stayed till

he was toppled in a military coup led by General Zia in July 1977. He was executed two years later on the order of Zia despite international plea for clemency. Benazir Bhutto had remained in exile till the death of Zia last August in a mid air blast. Last week's announcement of Bhutto as the premier only deflated a mounting tension experts feared would have culminated in a bloody civil protest. She all but openly implied such eventuality in her statements protesting the delay of the announcement. "The people have chosen me and their choice should be respected", she had said on one occasion.

Before the declaration however, few had any indication as to whether Benazir Bhutto or Nawaz Sharif, leader of the Islamic Democratic Alliance, would win the tussle. Both leaders failed to win a clear majority in the



• Ms Bhutto: Dawn of a new era

November 16 parliamentary elections. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) clinched 93 seats, — 12 seats short of absolute majority — in the 237-seat house (45 per cent of the total seats), while the Conservative Alliance led by Sharif captured 54 seats (27 per cent). The trouble thus began when both leaders laid claims to the premiership.

By early last week, however — even before the historic announcement — the various issues appeared to have resolved themselves. In an unexpected move, Sharif withdrew from the race to settle for his job as chief minister in the Islamic province of Punjab.

By Abraham Ogbodo

POSTCARD
WEST AFRICA

IBB's multi-purpose trip

THE question was: what did President Babangida go to do in Sierra Leone and Liberia? Sources at Dodan Barracks said they couldn't tell. They might have been stalling. But External Affairs officials said they too had little idea. Newspapers and news-magazines were not informed of the trip. It was of course typical. Babangida's foreign tours have always been shrouded in secrecy. "I can't imagine that the President's handlers do not know that it pays to generate publicity for his accomplishments in foreign policy," lamented one observer. It was recalled that External Affairs Minister, Ike Nwachukwu was himself once a journalist. But greatest embarrassment of the national media was that the little they heard about what the President was doing in the two countries

came from Voice of America (VOA) and British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reports. On the whole, most of the papers gave the tour no more than a passing attention. VOA and BBC reports said he had bilateral talks spanning economic, scientific, cultural, educational and technical. Several agreements were said to have been reached.



• Babangida

SOUTHERN AFRICA
Peace process still on course

If you loose count of the venues of the peace talks

between Angola, Cuba and South Africa, you will probably not be alone. The talks have been extremely mobile. Barely a fortnight ago, they were in Geneva where agreement on the phased withdrawal of an estimated 50,000 Cuban troops from Angola was agreed upon under Washington mediation. And last week, they convened once again in Brazza-



• Dos Santos

vile, the Congolese capital to iron out fresh last minute hitches over the verification of the Cuban pullout, and to formalise understanding about the Namibian independence issue

South Africa has been particularly disturbed over the issue of effective monitoring and verification of the withdrawal.

CHINA

The dove perches on Sino-Soviet relations

It is either a milestone, or the Chinese are up to something. Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen, last Thursday became the first top ranking Beijing official to visit the Soviet Union in 31 years. Reciprocal visit by Qian's Soviet counterpart, Eduard Shevardnadze is expected to pave way for a full blown Soviet-Sino summit sometime next year.

The Chinese minister's visit itself is seen as a significant step towards the eventual settlement of the over 20-year-old rift between Beijing and Moscow. The conflict have principally been over ideological and strategic differences, leading to cross-border clashes in the 1960s and 1970s.

He reigns!

King of the caliphate rides the storm

YES, Sultan Ibrahim Dasuki reigns. And the mandate is Allah's, say his subjects, assorted friends, men and women of insatiable curiosity, benefactors of his fabled generosity, Sokoto Princes who, while the race was on, hedged and fenced with understandable enthusiasm for the crown they all had a legitimate right to but who now stoop before him to proclaim, in words and signs: "The crown fits you. May Allah keep it steady and bring forth multifold blessings and peace."

All the fuses blown shortly after and as a result of the transition of the aged and well loved Sultan Sadiq Abubakar III, have been refitted. Peace has returned to the ancient town of Sokoto. Harmony too is on its way back; Sultan Dasuki says he is committed to letting both of them reign with him without discrimination.

"My people are my people... they are my brothers.... I am their father now." He promises a warm embrace for all saying that all those who sought to lead the Sultanate had a right to. The pride and pomp characteristic of such ascendancy is not absent in Miyetti Allah (his private home where he still dwells) and the stadium-size palace, that is a working place of soits for now. But there is strangely no victory dance or dinner by the victor who is trying very hard to forget the pain of the violence and the uninformed and loud whispers that greeted his emergence as Sultan.

Who did Allah ask the King makers to crown? The pious, the popular or the destined? We have found no proof that the King makers spoke twice on this issue. Recommended wisdom is to put your signature on substance and not apparitions.

The history of political or religious succession, even in modern democracies, is a history of treachery, intrigues, betrayals, plots, conspiracies and more often than not, blood-shedding. The more exalted and revered the throne, the more fierce the struggle to pluck it. And there appears to be no written rules for succession in any political arrangement even when on the surface the polity is embellished with a constitution. In this instance, what comes to play is the wise use of the discretionary powers of the Kingmakers. The man who may be Sultan must be a male descendant (without exception) of Usman Dan Fodio. Ibrahim Dasuki is; being of the Buhari (one of five) lineage, although he is the first to ascend the throne from that line.

It could have been any of the other aspiring princes but the Kingmakers chose Dasuki. They are the authority and they have made an official statement to that effect. *Chikena*. With all the princes having paid homage, it is safe to declare that the Sultan Dasuki era has begun.

He has brought into the job, a vast knowledge of the Nigerian Republic, its complexities, its power setting, its peculiar role in Africa and the world. As a former diplomat, Sultan Dasuki is aware (as he told us) that negotiation based on the principle of fairness, justice and truth are the bedrock of resolving the most intricate of problems. His knowledge of grassroots administration, his immense

SUHAN SHARIF/COLE



• Sultan Dasuki: Will give peace and harmony a front seat



• Dasuki

achievements in business and the management of resources and his religious piety, are obviously his strongest points. Of equal importance is his suave, but imperial disposition. These virtues are the hallmark of kings, and Dasuki who grew up in the shadow of kings cannot but be at home in the exercise of his influence and power.

Men with power, especially when their positions have divine import tend to forget that they are mere mortals.

But there is reason to hope this will not be so with Dasuki for even in the face of blatant lies, abundance of ugly portraits painted by people who know little of him, as his old friends say, he has remained calm and has refuted such rumours with candour.

Sultan Dasuki administered the nation's oldest public corporation — the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) for 12 years. For over 25 years, he has served as the Secretary-General of the Jamaatu Nasril Islam (Society for the Advancement of Islam). And since 1974, he has been the



• Sultan Dasuki

"What has been done to me, I have forgiven the people. But where the damaged property is not mine ... for me to take a decision, I think I will be going too far."

Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. Before he became Sultan, Dasuki was a *defacto* king as he had frequently attended the meetings of the Northern Emirs as well as the Northern Elders. He is without question at home with the politics of the northern aristocracy and he would not have problems steering the Islamic associations he has headed on the course of peace, understanding and religious tolerance.

He combines the virtues of two great men that have gone beyond: Sir Ahmadu Bello, his mentor, whom he describes as great "and always willing to argue with you, listen and sometimes admit that you are right even though politically it is not good for him"; and of his predecessor, Sultan Abubakar III. "Even though you may not be an official adviser, if you advised him and you were sincere, he was very willing to take your advice... he was a very simple man."

Dasuki doesn't forget his friends. For different reasons, he has been held up to ridicule for being a friend to, and business associate of, a man of a different faith. In spite of the pressure, that relationship has not been severed.

Before 1981 when Dasuki became Chairman of the Nigerian Grains Board, he was a member of the Board of Directors of Afro Continental, an outfit set up by a few of Sudanese descent, Mr. Goan. Although Dasuki was already getting five times more than he pay the grains board job offered, he quit Afro Continental because of a 45-year-old commitment to serve the country. Ironically, it was this zeal to serve the public that brought Dasuki and Goan together. His friends rationalise this relationship: "You don't abandon a friend who comes to the rescue of your people when they were in dire need."

Nigeria and Nigerians will have to live with the reality of Dasuki's reign as Sultan. How well he rides the storm and streak of cynicism will be a matter for posterity.



• Dasuki

When the Sultan spoke ...

TO reach Sultan Dasuki, we got in touch with his daughter, Fatima, wife of a Lagos insurance broker, Mr. Yomi Edu. Fatima was at first hesitant. The press, she claimed, had spread so many untruths about the succession struggle in Sokoto. The press had been "negatively partial" and in any case, her father needed time to carry on with the immediate task of bringing back army among "his brothers". "He would be fine all by his own without you people", Mrs Edu told us.

Politely, we pressed on. At some point, she got on the telephone and called her father who said we could come over to Sokoto and that he would speak with us if we could reach him before time for Friday prayers (Jum'at, November 25). We thought we could but we were not to leave Lagos until 1.45 p.m. (well after prayers) that day.

Trouble number one: We were late. Dasuki is fussy about punctuality. He picked it up from the late Sardauna. We met at Miyetti Allah at dusk. "I thought you were coming earlier." Sorry your Highness, Blah, Blah, Blah... Nigeria Airways changed it's flight schedule on that

very day so, a 9 a.m. slot had been moved to 1.30 p.m. And, you may want to know, the number of flights from Lagos to Sokoto has been cut from four to three a week.

A new wrinkle formed a pattern on his forehead but it disappeared as fast as Andrews Liver Salt embraces water. Reason: Sokoto already had very few flights and, well, the Sultan would look into that later.

On his bidding we were to retire and come for the interview at 8 a.m. the next day but a sea of visitors ensured the Sultan did not speak to us until 8.35 p.m. that day. It was to be his "last press interview for now." Read on:

By Ndaka Irabor with
Sunmi Smart-Cole



• Junaidu Mohammed, one of the king-makers

'I have forgiven'

Excerpts of the Sultan's interview with **The African Guardian**:

On allegations that the family of the late Sultan had been sacked from the palace.

Well eh ... not only in Sokoto but everywhere that I know, at least in the North, when you are an Emir or you are a Sultan, you live in an official house and when you cease to hold that position, you have to vacate the house. That is the pattern, even in government service and private organisations.

In this respect, I am working to get the family of the late Sultan resettled. And not only that, if I cannot raise their standard of living from what it has been, while I am alive, in *sha Allah*, I will see that it does not fall lower than it has been.

On whether he would intervene in the quest for enduring peace, on behalf of those detained as a result of the furor generated by his emergence as Sultan:

I have pleaded with the government to help them and make things as easy as possible. So, it is not only Shehu Malami (released on his intervention) but also others because they are all my people. It is my responsibility to see that their hard suffering is reduced to the minimum and I pleaded with the government to be lenient to all including your colleagues — the journalists. What the government would do, I am not in a position to say it, but I am pleading.

On reconciliation with Malami:

He is my nephew. If after death, people look for their relations, you may as well look for them before you die and that's the way I look at it. So, I try to communicate with my relations when I am alive rather than wait until I die.

On general amnesty for those implicated in the riots:

Well, what you are saying is a different matter which is outside our own jurisdiction. What was done to me, I have forgiven the people. But where the damaged property is not mine, but other people's; for me to take a decision, I think I will be going too far. I have gone as far as I could go — that is to plead with the authorities to be lenient with these people and to ensure that justice is done. Otherwise, no personal grudge is brought into the matter.

On the riot:

This is normal in life. I don't expect everybody to accept me. Hardly, you can find a person who will be acceptable to everybody. Even our great prophet Mohammed was belittled by his own people in Mecca. He had to flee to Medina. So, how much more of my poor self. I think it is absolutely wrong for one to think that he will be acceptable to everybody.

What led to the disturbances?

It is very difficult for me to tell you what had happened. Of course, I heard it as you did. We were sitting in that very hall that you see there, receiving sympathisers and we were supposed to be there for at least three days, that is Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. But in the case of an important personality like the Sultan, we have to spend more days because many more people will be coming.

It was when the kingmakers started preparing — making their recommendations and whilst we were sitting there in the morning on Friday — one of my daughters called all the way from Lagos to ask if a new Sultan had been appointed; and I said how? She said it had appeared in the *Daily Times* in Lagos. And I said not to my knowledge. It

was in the morning before I left for the palace. There in the palace, while we were still receiving sympathisers, we heard from the other hall people shouting, saying that a new Sultan had been appointed. Well, we all looked at one another because some of the kingmakers were just sitting opposite us. By our own tradition, we sit down, everybody will come and pay homage. It is not the question of you just announcing that a new Sultan has been turbanned. No. We don't do it like that.

So that's what I know. And when I saw the palace was so crowded, and was told a Sultan had been turbanned and had gone to the tomb of Usman Dan Fodio, I said, no. We couldn't say how that could have happened because it is not part of the way it is done. Soon after, it was 10 o'clock on Friday and we all had to disperse and go to the mosque.



• Dasuki: "I am working to get the family of the late Sultan resettled"

Immediately after, we heard the news item that one of the kingmakers had denied it. That is all that I know.

How do the kingmakers name a new Sultan?

The kingmakers, they don't give one name. They give at least three. In fact, they will make a list and prepare the criteria. Normally, they are given the criteria. Even in the colonial days when somebody dies, even the Emir, they will write to the selectors and say we want a person of this, this ... quality. The kingmakers will then submit a list to the Council of Chiefs who will pick three and say "any of the three, we are prepared to work with," and they pass it on to the government.

They have to take into consideration the type of person they want to work with. And in the case of the Sultan, this is what happened. Also, I heard three names were submitted and the names were passed on to the Council of Chiefs made up of Emirs of Gwandu, Yauri and Zuru ... They had to consider because whoever emerges is going to be their leader. He is going to preside over their own meetings and guide them also. He will then be the Chairman of the council. They deliberated and then my name emerged.

On national unity:

Well, I am only grateful to Allah that he has given me this opportunity because the question of national unity to

me is not something that I am just starting. It's been part of my life, part of things I may do and all the things that you see there (his official curriculum vitae). I just found myself moving from one area to another. As you said, the political side, foreign affairs side, the business, the economic side, the religious side, the local government side almost every side. I think this is what I can call "the plans by Allah;" not me because I never knew that I will live to be what I am today.

Somehow, I found myself in various activities of life. For example the 1963 census, I found myself a member representing the North and up till now, it is the only census that has been accepted. I have an open mind in the Islamic way because I am always guided by Islamic injunctions and as we always say, Islam is a way of life, it is not just you go and pray or you go and fast and celebrate. So whatever you see me do I am not just doing it. I am just following the pattern which has been set up by Islam.

His involvement in business; records at Gusau Oil Mill and the Nigeria Railway Corporation:

Now, if you go and invest in an organisation, you mean to say if anything goes wrong because of your own investment there, apart from your capital, your character is also tarnished on account of whatever the management of the organisation might do? That's one.

Secondly, until now, I don't know who has ever proved that the Gusau Oil Mill was not run in the correct manner, none to my knowledge till now.

Regarding the railways, I was there for 14 years — I was a director for six years before I was made the chairman for eight years. I was given the chairmanship during the civil war and that was when I can say a considerable number of coaches and wagons and spares were not available, and the railway had to manage. You just think of those times. Still, after the war, my first responsibility in that direction was to try to re-absorb those that had to flee because as at that time, ... the Eastern line was not functioning and I had to travel at my own risk in the course of my trying to rehabilitate the lines.

I don't know whether it was the fault of either the management or the board of the railways because Nigeria is Nigeria: there was no foreign exchange at that time with which to buy spare parts. As chairman, what did anybody expect me to do? Not just the railways, even the government of Nigeria at that time, was having problems of foreign exchange.

Of banking and Islam's teaching on lending:

Yes, the Islamic way of banking is different from the Western. Again, this is what the government of Nigeria has approved. I either follow what the government approved or I rise against the government of Nigeria. Which one should I do? Which one would you advise me to do? Because this is a pattern which is established and it is only by persuasion it would be corrected; and it is not advisable for anyone to rise against what government approves?

You are supposed to correct things physically where you have the power and authority to do so. If you haven't, you try

to get to those people who might be able to help. You will pray for whatever line you are supposed to take. So there are different stages. Now, in this respect, I found myself in the last stage because I was not in authority. The only thing I did was to pray. And as a matter of fact, if people understand the Islamic way of banking, I am sure they will all deposit because in Islam you don't go to someone and give him money to take and say bring me so much. No. At first you will agree. They will give you the money. You go and work then you will agree on how to share the profit when you make it.

Is that how BCCI operates? (He is chairman of its board)
No. It is not. BCCI is operating along the Western system.



• Dasuki's house destroyed during the riot.

"Islam does not encourage anybody to go and beg. Islam encourages everybody to go and work hard to sustain his living"



• Dasuki: "What was done me, I've forgiven"

But the question is, nowadays, how many people would get the money and they will tell you they have made the profit. That is another thing. But as I said earlier, the laws of Nigeria are there — laid down, even before I came into Nigeria ... laughter ... So these laws are made by people in government and it is the ruler of heaven who made these people become the rulers of Nigeria.

On the Zionist connections:

Now, you talked about somebody, Mr. Goan of NICON/NOGA. Mr. Goan, I believe is Jewish origin, a Sudanese of Jewish origin. This is the history of events I learnt later. He was in the Sudan, in the army and later, he moved to Switzerland and obtained Swiss nationality. Now my first connection with him was in 1967 because in Geneva, he established himself as the biggest buyer of African produce. So he was operating in Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal; right across West Africa, and I believe he has been operating in Nigeria, wayback the early '60s as a

produce buyer.

And in 1967, we (Nigeria) had this problem: We had 100,000 tonnes of groundnut (old crop) and we had not marketed anything whatsoever and the new season was coming. We were all very worried. I was heading the Marketing Board. My officials mentioned one Mr. Goan. I was told he was the biggest buyer of African groundnuts and I said I wanted to see him. I sent him an invitation, he came, he met me in Kano. I told him that I got these groundnuts; the oil millers in Kano, the world market, no one wanted them. That is how I came to know him. We had to sell the stock to enable us to buy new crops for our farmers.

He saw with me. He did two things for which I will ever remain grateful to him. And of course, all Nigerians who know will ever remain grateful. Firstly, the ruling price on that day's world market was 56 pounds, 10 shillings per tonne but he agreed to buy another 100,000 tonnes of new crops to relieve us of the pressure. That was how I came to know him. And when the civil war came in, he disappeared. But after the war he came back. He looked for me. At that time I had already left the marketing board. I was with the railways.

Now, as a human being, would you ever forget somebody who has helped you under this circumstance? Secondly, I think all the important Americans, I can say, are of Jewish origin, almost all of them. So if because somebody is of Jewish origin and because of what I expect he would do, will you run away from him; after all they are also people of the book.

So whether this is a Zionist or not, it is left to you, as a true Nigerian, to decide whether I have done the right thing to welcome him when he came in as a produce buyer. Not only that, this is the man who has been investing in Nigeria, up till now.

On Sharia:

Many people do not understand what the argument is. Sharia is there in the Constitution. The question is the Appeal Court. In the past, provision was made for anybody tried under the Sharia system to go up to Kaduna for appeal. At that time, each region had its own constitution. That is why the 1979 Constitution allows states to establish Sharia Courts if they wanted it.

But that's not enough. First, you must have it at the state level for those states that want it. What's happening now is that those against it are saying those who want it should not have it. It is not realistic for you in Akwa-Ibom to say to me in Sokoto that I should not have Sharia even though I want it. It is more of politics in nature. The attitude now is to use it for bargaining strength. You cannot deny anybody the right to appeal under any judicial system. It is not proper to bargain with a question of faith.

What qualifies the Sultan to lead Nigerian muslims?

The Sultan didn't say he's the leader. I want you to under-



• Dasuki. "You cannot deny anybody the right to appeal under any judicial system"

"Now, as a human being, would you ever forget somebody who has helped you?"

stand this. In 1962, the late Sultan when he was alive, together with other people, first met the muslim organisations, in fact all the time you find different Islamic organisations. And the fact is that that should't be. There should be a sort of organisation which will bring everybody to one fold for better understanding and in fact they say "United we stand, divided we fall" and therefore established the Jamaatu Nasril Islam.

Now historically the Sultan has been the leader in the north because he succeeded Usman Dan Fodio who defined the Islamic way of life in the past and established the caliphate. So it is not surprising if the Sultan becomes the leader of Jamaatu Nasril Islam. And then later, in 1974, we worked and established the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. I worked hard to establish it under the platform of Jamaatu Nasril Islam and invited leaders from various organisations that came all the way from down south.

Eventually when the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs emerged, the representatives decided there that the Sultan should be the President General. This is how the Sultan became the President General. It is established in the constitution of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs that the Sultan shall be the President General.

On religious crises in the country:

Well, religious crises are not peculiar to Nigeria. They do happen from time to time, and from place to place. But one can say maybe what is lacking is proper knowledge of the religions. Either that, or some people might be working for certain purposes. Some can use their religious sentiments to achieve their desired goals because to the best of my knowledge, the two religions that are predominant in Nigeria — Islamic and Christian religions — none of them preaches violence. Therefore, if you see any violence then it is the making of certain individuals for religious disturbances.

Our aims:

Islam does not encourage anybody to go and beg. Islam encourages everybody to go and work hard to sustain his living. People are not supposed to start begging but you might find people who are handicapped for one reason or another. In other countries, they are being looked after by the nation. But in Nigeria, up till now they are being left to their own families and where their families are also poor, then they take to begging.

In fact, if the proper Islamic way is established, (Sakkat) whereby after a certain level of income, not only monetary income, but also produce — cattle, sheep and others — there are certain things which you have to give to the treasury for this purpose. One of them is maintaining the poor. But it is not being done now. I hope I will try to take the initiative to persuade muslims to go back to the mandatory practice because if we do it we should be able to raise millions with which we could use to look after the poor. But I can assure you, if you find everybody begging, this is not Islam.

Ostentation among Nigerians:

There is one aspect of our life that I have been criticising ever since I was a young officer. I believe we have misplaced our priorities. Now, a young man just finishing from a university (until recently when it has become very difficult to obtain cars), you find his first priority is to obtain a car. And so he has something to move around but he has nowhere to sleep (laughter); and to me that is displacing the priority. Somehow, we grew up with that and we have been working, spending all our fortunes to maintain old cars rather than saving and building a house in which to live. I am glad now circumstances are forcing us to re-adjust and take the right course. I don't think many people when they finish the university will think of cars. I think their priority now is motor-bike (laughter).

About hajj:

Em... many people think that the government is subsidising hajj operations. In fact, it is the other way round. It is the hajj operations that are, subsidising the Nigeria Airways and believe me, I will be quite ready to say that if the government would say today "you the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs



• The water fountain in Alhaji's house. It was destroyed during the riot

you arrange for your pilgrims to go on pilgrimage, you arrange charters, you go and charter wherever you can find the charter, without the Nigeria Airways, I believe the Nigerian pilgrim will pay less. Of course, there is the consular aspect. You cannot expect Nigerian government to see 20,000 to 30,000 thousand Nigerians going to a foreign land without caring for them. That aspect the government is going to look into no matter where you are going to.

On the Advisory Council on Religious Affairs:

The body was established on the recommendation of a panel that looked into the question of the OIC. One of the recommendations made was to establish such a body — a forum, so that moslems and christians can sit down and discuss issues of the OIC. Since then, the decree establishing that body has been promulgated. When we found that there were certain improvements that could be made to the decree, we made some suggestions to the Federal Government. Those suggestions have been accepted and the decree amended accordingly. And it was only a week or so that the council met. Although I was not there, it was reported to me that the members were satisfied with the provisions of the decree and have agreed to meet in January.

The furore in some sections of the country over our membership of the OIC:

Which are the sections? (Largely, the christian sections).

Well, the ones who have not been informed by their representatives because I served in the panel that looked into the implications of Nigeria joining the OIC and we made our views and submitted our recommendations. In the final analysis, we didn't find it necessary to recommend to Nigeria to withdraw from OIC. Our report was signed by both moslems and christians.

There is one thing which many people do not see even today. Nigeria has been a member of OIC as an observer for 15 years before joining. But one thing again, of the 16 members of the ECOWAS, 11 are OIC members. There are 22 members of OAU who are also members of the OIC. Because it is more of an economic arrangement than a religious arrangement. There are countries whose presidents are christians and they attend the meeting of OIC. And for Nigeria, being the largest country in West Africa, to rely on small countries like Gabon, Cameroun, Chad, Niger who are also members of OIC to pass on whatever ideas they have, I think it is embarrassing — Nigeria, the giant in the sun.

So, many people do not even seem to understand. They are only being sentimental because this is what they have been told. Our panel never recommended the withdrawal because we found no justification whatsoever. All the christian members signed this recommendation. They all signed. Okogie ... all the christian members. They all signed.

On severed diplomatic relations between Israel and Nigerian:

That is more of a political thing because the question of the relationship with Israel, I believe, is a result of a decision by OAU. I wouldn't like to be involved in international politics.

On traditional rulers and government:

Anybody with tradition will not call for the scrapping of traditional institution. No matter how advanced you are, you still like to retain your identity. If today I call you a Japanese, how would you look at me? Would you accept it? Certainly not because you want to retain your identity as a Nigerian.

Now we had our own traditional institutions long before the coming of the British colonisers and we have been working and we have been improving on those institutions and for anybody to say they exploit the masses — how are they exploiting the masses? Because now I am sure if you go round this country you will find some traditional rulers who have been there 20 years, 30 years, forty years. Apart from official house and the official car, they have nothing. But who's exploiting whom? And are the masses saying that they are being exploited? The answer is NO. I have never heard it because if you go to every palace, you will see how people troop to seek the assistance of the traditional rulers to obtain their legitimate rights.

Unity among moslem sects:

I hope to strengthen the work of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs which is working very hard, to bring the various organisations under one umbrella. If we are able to bring them under one umbrella it will be better. At any rate, as I have said, there are five pillars of Islam; everywhere you go in the world, there are only five. And the Quoran is only one, so this question of interpretation does not arise. I think by people coming closer, we ought to be able to improve greatly.

Budget '89:

Promises of more pains

Dwindling oil fortunes, naira value, paint a gloomier year

THE darkest part of the night, President Ibrahim Babangida told the nation in his 1988 budget speech, is just before dawn. Perhaps what the President forgot to add was that it is also the period when humanity finds comfort in snoozeland, throwing away the worries of the dying day and fantasizing the fortunes and failures that come in the dawn.

The President apparently in a bid to assuage the growing army of restive Nigerians which sprouted after 18 months of what he admitted was a process of 'painful' structural adjustment, held out high hopes that the nation in 1988, stood regally on the threshold of a "new era of healthier, sustained development process based on the land and labour of our own people."

Although General Babangida's subtle recourse to the people's sense of patriotism was seen as timely, judging from events of the recent past in which a mere complaint of hardship was misconstrued to mean an open challenge to government, he however went on to urge Nigerians to bear resolutely, any further hardships and sacrifices, "knowing that we are now getting closer to the great country of our aspirations where the economy is self-reliant, strong and dynamic."

The 1988 budget, perhaps the most widely discussed economic document in the nation's budgetary history, elicited varying comments and interpretations from the nation's formidable tribe of 100 million economists, some taunting the budget as the greatest thing that has happened to the nation since oil, and others denouncing it as a well crafted master plan by the fabled economists at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to sell Nigeria to the highest



• CBN Governor Ahmed and (right) Finance and Economic Minister Chu Okongwu: Harder times

bidder.

The nationwide interest generated by the budget was a natural reaction to the harsh times during which government actions were treated with suspicion and seen to be laced with ill motives. The budget, according to General Babangida, was expected to consolidate the "gains" of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which was designed to restructure and diversify the productive base of the economy in order to reduce dependence on oil exports.

The budget was expected to reflate the economy with a view to generating more employment, check inflation which was skybound, promote economic growth through generous incentives to manufacturers to source their inputs locally and stimulate inflow of capital from foreign investors and Nigerians with hard currency stashed away in the bank vaults of Europe and America. It was not only an economic document, it also gave the President an opportunity to announce the political programmes lined up to usher in the Third Republic. "The year 1988", General Babangida said, "also embracing the last lap of our Structural Adjustment Programme, may best be seen as one of contingent planning for full consolidation of the transitional policies and programmes."

After 11 months of operation the performance of the budget, according to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)

half-year report was a mixbag of modest success and unfulfilled dreams. According to CBN, although agriculture and industry recorded 3.7 per cent and 8.3 per cent growth respectively, a large chunk of this growth was eroded by substantial increases in the general price level. This widened the deficit gap, swept thousands of jobs away while closing avenues for new ones and fuelling industrial unrest which had to be repressed with the big stick since there were hardly any carrots left to keep labour in the line.

The report says that prices went up steeply in the first five months by 15.7 per cent and 23.9 per cent over and above the averages of the first months of 1987 respectively. Unemployment figures, the CBN reports, showed an increase of 22.5 per cent over the figure recorded during the same period in 1987. During the first five months, disagreement between workers and managements over wages and salary adjustments and the workers revolt over the increase in the prices of petroleum products resulted in "marked deterioration in industrial relations." The period witnessed 66 trade disputes involving 49 work stoppages as against only seven in the comparable period of 1987.

The CBN report reveals that the nation's balance of payments position recorded a deficit of N6,599.9 million in the first half of this year compared to N2,842.8 million in the corresponding

period of 1987 while debt servicing payments gulped N5,963.7 million or 45.7 per cent of Federal government expenditure with a total debt service obligation shrinking to N100,883.0 million compared to N2,571.5 million in the same period of the previous year.

Although the deficit margin con-



• Difficult mass movement: No solution

tinued to widen, the Federal Government, did not sit on its oars. Rather, it intervened to reduce the margin with one of the reflationary measures of the budget — the Mass Transit Programme — coming under the axe. Out of the N700 million voted for the programme to ease urban and rural transport difficulties caused by high cost of petroleum products, shortage of vehicles and spare parts, the Federal Government sliced off 60 per cent of the amount voted for the programme. Even then, the deficit gap got wider, with federally retained revenue increasing by 32.2 per cent (N7,597 million) in the first six months of this year while expenditure rose to 87 per cent (N13,043.0 million) when compared with the same period of 1987. The overall deficit according to the CBN, was N5,445.8 million as against N1,250.4 million in the same period of 1987.

Apart from the unpalatable figures released by CBN, Nigerians will easily remember that within the period, people queued up for the first time since the civil war ended, to buy common staples like garri, a situation blamed on smuggling and exportation. Dr. Asjikko Essien-Ibok, executive director of Korporate Image Planners in Ikeja, Lagos says the outcome of the 1988 budget, was "A complete reversal of what it was set out to ac-

omplish."

Essien-Ibok, points to the growing unemployment even with the much vaunted promises of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) said to have created 500,000 jobs. "The situation of unemployment," according to him, has been worsened because both the private and public

sectors have been trapped," adding that they "can't expand because of the constraints of foreign exchange shortages. What we are saying now," Essien-Ibok says, "is a high cost of living reflected by high prices of everything including food. This does not reflect on the accurate vision of the economy, it is an indictment of the 1988 budget."

Although the budget, was projected to stimulate growth through monetary and fiscal policies, especially the use of deficits including the N2.5 billion special reflation package, there is no evidence that such growth was realised. Finance and Economic Development Minister Dr. Chu S.P. Okongwu had said that the budget was designed to "promote output, enhance capacity utilisation, mitigate the unemployment situation and bring about an improvement in the general living standard."

In retrospect, however, it was not all gloom. The CBN report says that there has been modest growth in output especially in the manufacturing sector, agriculture and oil drilling. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), the resive body clamouring for government protection against foreign subsidized imports, dumping and unbridled free market forces admitted that there has been "slow growth of the economy." The manu-

facturing sector, MAN however says, failed to respond adequately to the measures to enhance industrial capacity utilisation, increased production, creation of more jobs due to a barrage of old and new constraints.

Dr. Shamsudeen Usman, general manager of Corporate Banking Division, NAL Merehat Bank in a review of the 1988 budget, says that any small gains in real growth however, were achieved at the cost of increased strain in government finances and balance of payments. "There were also serious inflationary pressures occasioned by excessive growth in the money supply, largely from uncontrolled credit expansion". Dr. Usman notes that President Babangida's hope that the 1988 budget would reflate the economy in a non-inflationary way has not been realised. This he says gives credence to views expressed that the reflationary package like the Mass Transit Programme and increased tariffs to prop up local manufacturers were just a "populist ploy" employed by the government to disguise the social tension in the nation in 1987.

The Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) in a pre-1989 budget memorandum to the Federal Government, laments the woes of the 1988 budget. In the monetary sector, NACCIMA says that the plight of the naira has oscillated from one extreme to the other. This it explains, was from "perceived gross over-valuation of the naira before SAP to apparent gross under-valuation under FEM."

This situation according to NACCIMA, has been accentuated by the emergence of three different markets and rates — that is the Auctions, Autonomous and Parallel markets and this has caused confusion and anxiety in business circles. The Autonomous market according to NACCIMA records a margin of an average of over 55 per cent the auctioning rate while the parallel market rate is about 20 per cent above the autonomous market.

The overall effect of these undisclosed and unpoliced financial system was "a huge reflation package of N2.5 billion" which has been used to fuel the importation of those goods curtailed by the budget, accentuate inflation and send the naira reeling on the ground. NACCIMA says although the 1988 budget was meant to reflate the economy without inflating it further, "all the major policies are inflationary." It adds that not only are fiscal and income policies expansionary,

monetary and credit policies did not provide any restraint

NACCIMA's complaints appear supported from statistics released by the Federal Office of Statistics FOS on retail price indices. According to FOS, major food items recorded price increases of between 50 and 199 per cent. According to the report, between April 1987 and April 1988, the prices of staple food rose by 79.1 per cent while composite consumer index increased by 35.3 per cent over the same period. The report says that apart from the upsurge in the prices of food and other goods and services in the first half of the year, the fall of the naira has continued to fuel inflation through the importation of all sorts of goods.

Nigeria's international credit rating the report adds, was still floating between the lower rung and the middle although some Western creditors have agreed to reschedule a fraction of the debt estimated at N130 billion. Abioye Oyeleke, managing partner with Akintola Williams and Company told *The African Guardian* that "some areas of the 1988 budget do not appear to have yielded the desired results. High on the list, Oyeleke says are the measures intended to bring down inflation and the cost of living. He says that despite the import duty exemption on fish caught in both Nigeria's territorial waters and distant waters by Nigerian-owned vessels and the encouragement given to the agricultural sector through tax reliefs, the resultant increase in output has not been significant enough to force prices down.

The fall of the naira according to government economists was in 1988, expected to boost export of locally made goods but according to Mr. Henry Ogwah, secretary of the Association of Nigerians Exporters, the miserable plight of the international commodity market, has thrown a clog in the wheel of export promotion. Ogwa says although quite a handful of exporters were able to manoeuvre through strict export regulations, "the level of achievement is not satisfactory". He blames this on societal ills and lack of adequate government incentives.

For Professor Eno J. Usoro, the short comings of the 1988 budget, which he described as a product of "strange and alien external phenomenon", can be traced to the structure of the political economy.

Usoro who reflected on the budget

last week at a seminar organised by the *Nigerian Economist* in Lagos, says that the nation's economy being steered along "neo-classical Keynesian theories", has in built constraints that render unguided free market operative mechanism invalid. Usoro cited the "import-oriented and dependent nature of the economy for the non-realisation of policy plans and programmes. He says because the nation's economy is weak and dependent on raw materials for domestic production, it is virtually impossible for it to be regulated. The modest gains of the 1988 budget in terms of increased production, Usoro says, can be traced to the use of the local inputs by some



• Alhaji Alhaji

manufacturers.

Usoro's view, derives some credence from the Central Bank report on sectoral allocation of foreign exchange under SFEM and FEM from January 1987 to June 1988. According to the report released on November 15, by Victor Odozie, a deputy governor of the bank, the industrial sector, was allocated \$2,573.60 million representing 61.52 per cent. A breakdown of the allocation shows that \$1,401.40 million (33.50 per cent) went to raw materials \$1,172.20 (28.02 per cent) went to machinery; \$20.80 million (0.50 per cent) went to agriculture, \$1,152.10 million (27.54 per cent) was allocated to unspecified finished goods while services gulped N436.60 million (10.44 per cent).

Usoro says because of the misapplication of values, government policies meant to deregulate trade, exchange rates, domestic prices, interest rates, privatisation and commercialisation, have not so far yielded the desired results. Mr. Emeka Osuji, head, Corporate Affairs, International Merchant Bank, believes the problem was "the apparent inability of real output to respond to the deflationary intentions of the budget".

Osuji adds that there was also the problem of "rigidity" in the productive sector and cites the shortage of foreign exchange, which in turn led to high production cost and the high cost of the final product. This he says was a disincentive in production hence the inability of the real output to respond.

Although the objectives outlined in the 1988 budget may not have been fully realised, it cannot be said to be a complete failure. Ade Oluwole, a road-side mechanic, at least believes the budget was good. Oluwole looked at it from the context of the number of vehicles brought to his garage for repairs and this he says has been substantial in 1988 because of the maintenance culture prompted by SAP. Oluwole blames "smugglers, importers of inferior goods and other economic saboteurs" for the shortcomings of the budget. He wants stiff penalty against smugglers and other economic saboteurs.

But Mrs. Ngozi Okenwa, managing director of Vicky Saloon and Boutique at Palmgrove Lagos, says the economic politics of SAP as articulated in the 1988 budget have made business very difficult for her. Okenwa says her customers have been unable to buy her clothes which are imported from the United States because of the naira's plunge against the United States dollar. "Whereas sales were down in 1987", she says "it has been worse in 1988".

Although the 1988 budget has meant more pains to more people, indications are that 1989 will be more painful. The Minister of Budget Affairs in the Presidency, Alhaji Abubakar Alhaji, gave indications last week of the direction of the 1989 budget. In a message to the seminar organised by the *Nigerian Economist*, Alhaji notes the continuous fall in the oil market which analysts fear could reach an all time low of \$10 per barrel during the first quarter of 1989. In view of government's commitment to the political programme, observers believe the recurrent expenditure would

not be enough to tone up social services or prop up the manufacturing sector.

Ahaji told the seminar that in the face of dwindling resources "government is not only determined to reduce its pervasiveness in the economy, but also to optimise the use of available resources through effective planning and budgetary control". Prospect for gaining employment by Nigeria's army of the unemployed might be bleak in the coming year. According to Ahaji, the Federal Government would not commit money to capital projects, a major source of employment that are not of "continued relevance to specific objectives of government".

The market economy, Ahaji says would be strengthened to make private enterprise, the prime mover of the



• Ogiwach: Unsatisfactory performance

economy with government playing a regulatory role, providing for law and order and as well as participating in areas in which it can serve as a catalyst.

As the value of the naira continues to plummet as fast as oil prices dwindle, the government may come up with a hat-trick on how to save the naira from imminent drift to precipice.

According to government thinking, a Bureau de change, would likely replace the foreign exchange market but it is not clear yet if it will improve the value of the naira. As one government insider puts it, the 1989 budget will determine not only the value of the naira, but the overall direction of the economy. The official added gloomily: "the future is bleak, it will take a miracle to clear the economic malaise". As it is, miracles do happen, or don't they?

By Abdul Orah with Paul Nwabulima, Felix Obanyis, Lucky Flitoku, Debo Adesina and Juliet Nwokoro

Still in the red

Huge deficit expected in the 1989 budget

THAT the 1989 budget will contain a deficit is not in doubt; rather, the question is how big will the deficit be. Finding the answer has been a perplexing problem for government, as creditors, Keynesian type economists, monetarists and advocates of simple political survival each have widely varying views on the right size for the next budget deficit, and indeed, whether there should be a deficit at all.

It is clear however, that the massive budget deficit of N8.585 billion imputed into the 1988 budget will not be repeated. That particular deficit was 35.34 per cent of the entire budget, and a whole 11.64 per cent of estimated 1987 Gross Domestic Product at 1984 factor cost. This time around, the deficit is not likely to exceed N4 billion, a figure still adjudged too high in some official circles. The reasons for this caution are manifold.

Most importantly, the 1988 budget deficit turned out to be more of a politically instigated blunder, than an economic expansion necessitated feat. First of all, the decision to spend more than what was exported as revenue led to over-ambitious, and often, undisciplined spending. By mid-year, the deficit has risen to N5.45 billion; at year's end the deficit is estimated at about N10 billion.

Government's active role on the domestic credit market crowded out the private sector and sent interest rates up. Rapid money supply expansion put heavy demand pressure on both the FEM and Autonomous Forex Markets. Sending the naira plummeting. Furthermore, April's petroleum products price hike, aimed at providing government with the resources to repay the N2.5 billion self-liquidating, reflationary loan from the CBN, led to an across-the-board increase in the price level of the economy.

All this meant faster inflation than hitherto seen since the inception of SAP; a development widely predicted by critics of the 1988 deficit's enormity.

Ironically, despite the huge deficit, Nigeria's Balance of Payments position experienced a N6.4 billion deficit during the first half of 1988: the misguided reflation

attempt failed to take adequate account of debt servicing requirements.

Local critics are not alone in their adversity to continuous huge budget deficits. Nigeria's creditors believe that the deficit should not exceed three percent of GDP. Using 1987 figures at 1984 factor cost, this would put a ceiling of N2.21 billion on 1989's deficit. Even using current cost figures, which may be politically more acceptable to government, the deficit, in adhering to this criterion would stand at about N3.5 billion. In 1989, government will have good reason to heed the creditors. Besides, the need to successfully negotiate the rescheduling of about \$4 billion in medium term debts owed to the Paris Club, the Debt Conversion Programme has got off to a good start; government will not want to upset the apple cart now by sending out signals of over borrowing.

How to finance the deficit? Government is looking up to receiving the \$500 million trade policy loan expected from the World Bank as well as a \$200 million credit from Japan. The IMF standby facility will most likely be ruled out because its short (15 month) maturity period would do more harm than good. Any shortfalls will be met by domestic borrowing, probably through the floatation of a new development stock on the nation's capital market.

Government's fears on reproducing the type of 1988 deficit have been articulately expounded by Transport Minister, Dr. Kalu E. Kalu, "a clear decision is required on the appropriate level of the deficit taking account of inflationary price changes, the need to stimulate growth and employment and generate investible resources."

Ironically, SAP was designed to accommodate balanced budgets, a situation not yet achieved since the programme started. There is a genuine need to reflate the economy and it is not expected that deficit budgeting will be done away with yet. But the 1988 budget clearly shows that even a huge deficit does not guarantee Keynesian type inflation on its own. In an economy where government's expenditure contributes an estimated 60 to 74 per cent to the inflation rate, an overly large budget deficit can easily create more inflation than reflation. And remember, deficits are financed by official borrowing; one day those loans will have to be repaid through budget surpluses. That will be difficult indeed.

1989 Budget: What should be in it

WITH barely three weeks to the 1989 budget, many Nigerians and various corporate bodies, have been using every available forum to offer suggestions on how the 1989 budget can correct the distortions in the economy, improve on the modest gains of the 1988 budget, create new employment opportunities and open up economic vistas in the context of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Although the Minister of State for Budget Affairs, Alhaji Abubakar Alhaji, has

already predicted a tighter budget anchored on the free market system, many informed captains of industry, economists, bankers and, of course, interest groups are not short of ideas on the directions the budget which is expected to usher the nation into the 1990s would take. With the whiff of politics in the air and unpalatable rumbles in the oil market, the nation could use any sound idea that will foster a viable economic direction.

Excerpts of some of the contributions:

Chief Ike Onunaku, member Constituent Assembly and chairman Lakeside International Limited, Lagos:

The 1989 budget should be more frugal as there are no indications that crude oil price will rise in the near future. The budget should reduce hardship and waste. The government should look at the customs and excise tariff and, perhaps, place more items on the prohibition list to discourage the expenditure of foreign exchange on luxury and non-essential goods.

Mr. Abioye Oyeleke, Managing Director, Akintola Williams and Co: The 1989 budget should reflect a beginning of the federal government's positive move to get the nation out of deficit budgeting system. Such change of policy should lead to better management of public sector financing more prudent resource allocation, and some measure of control on the prevailing escalation in the rate of inflation. The budget should address the need for increasing the purchasing power of the common man, through fiscal and economic measures aimed at

bringing down the cost of living, starting from staple foods.

Mr. Henry Ogwah, Secretary, Association of Nigerian Exporters:

The 1989 budget should usher in ways of promoting inter-border trade. To achieve this, the government should establish "bureau du change" along the borders. This will help to minimise smuggling and allow increased commercial activities between Nigeria and her neighbours.

Chief Chris Ogunbanjo, Chairman, Union Securities Limited, Lagos:

The government should prioritize the allocation of foreign exchange by banks to sectors it considers important to the economy. This is informed by the exigencies of the foreign exchange constraints and the picture of world oil price which the nation has witnessed of recent. The trade liberalisation policy should be modified to the extent that the country can negotiate this with her foreign creditors.

Otunba Michael Balogun, Chairman, First City Merchant Bank: The budget



• Balogun: A more restrictive budget.

should be much more restrictive and estimated deficit should not be more than N3.5 billion. It should emphasize private sector investment, improve local sourcing of raw materials and higher capacity utilisation by industries, while government involvement in the economy should be minimal.

Dr. Kalu I. Kalu, Transport Minister, believes the major issues that need to be addressed in the 1989 budget include a thorough review of the policies enunciated under the SAP. A clear assessment of these policies, would facilitate the pace and rate of recovery of the economy.

Chief Ernest Shonekan, Chairman, UAC of Nigeria Limited:

The overall policy thrust of 1989 budget should be the vigorous pursuance of recovery and growth in the economy. Thus it should be aimed at reflation of the economy but unlike in 1988.

The Nigeria Merchant Bank Limited advocates the creation of Export Free Zones which should receive greater attention from government while interested private outfits should be given adequate incentives to establish such zones. The bank would also want the budget to be based on an exchange rate of N4.3 to \$1 and funding of FEM should not be lower than \$120 million per bidding session.

The Nigerian Association of

Chambers of Commerce, Industry Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA): Suggests that government should plug all loopholes enabling some exporters to continue to evade repatriation of export proceeds, look into the possibility of merging FEM and the autonomous market in order to achieve a realistic exchange rate for the naira in the long run and explore ways of reviewing the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Act to give greater scope for participation in the scheme of debt-equity swap.

By Lucky Fialape



• Shonekan: Economy should be reflation

MAN in pains

Manufacturers seek more protection to stay afloat

THEIR cry has been persistent and distressing: protect us against dumping and unfair competition. For Nigeria's manufacturing sector groping under the pain of the SAP, it has been a losing battle against imported products. Manufacturers of lamps, batteries, plastics cable wires and automobiles are all experiencing tough marketing condition against imported substitutes.

Many of the competing products come in cheaper and sometimes are of better quality. Market analysts attribute their price advantage to the dumping of many of Nigeria's trading partners. Government, earlier in the year acknowledged that such practices were going on. Corrugated iron/steel roofing sheets; tomato paste and puree; aluminium coils, dry cell batteries especially the R.20 type and alky resins were some of the products government agreed are dumped in Nigeria. It set up a panel to look into the issue, and promised to offer protection. Finance and Economic Development Minister, Dr. S.P. Okongwu stressed that imported commodities having local substitutes will now attract extra landing charges equivalent to the excise duty on such local substitute.

Industrialists say the dosage is not enough to ward off obvious comparative advantage of competing products from more industrialized economies. A source close to the panel on tariff review says the thinking of the panel is that some case of dumping have been established. Its hope is that its recommendation that "government should do something about them" is heeded. The source further disclosed that virtually all companies in Nigeria were complaining of unfair trade practices. "But none of them", according to our source, "wants to pass the gains of tariff to consumers."

It appears that the new tariff concession will be based on manufacturers' willingness to pass customers the reduced prices that will accrue from such protectionist measure. Augustine Nkwocha, Business and Economy Editor of *Vanguard* says that protection should be limited to industries that can within five years build the facility to process or extract locally, those inputs they need to be cost effective. Says he: "the tariff then would be to give them

a margin of profitability to encourage investments in such facilities." Industry watchers fear that such protections if stressed so far, breed ineptitude on the part of manufacturers. According to the managing partner of Akintola Williams and Company (a firm of chartered accountants) Abioye Oyeleke, such measures "unwittingly encourage inefficiency or exploitation of consumers through high prices pro-



• Abioye: Protection encourages inefficiency

ducts which are not matched with quality."

The Budgeting and Planning Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Alhaji holds similar views. He says that previous protections of industry were abused. His prediction is that "the days of protection are coming to an end, if not already over." His summation: "The game today is enhancing ability to produce and compete both in local and international markets as a basis for survival and growth."

Industry analysts say that previous protections were abused, but prevailing economic conditions do not make many of the infant industries competitive. The thinking is that where cases of dumping are clear, government should be obliged to protect such industries. Many manufacturers argued that the new tariff measures announced in the 1988 budget were more in favour of traders than producers. The United African Company of Nigeria's (UACN) Chairman and Managing Director, Chief Ernest Shonekan agrees and labels it "traders tariff." Industrial analysts say that the present structure makes trading more profitable. This, they say probably

account, for investors' increasing preference for trading. If this situation continues, they fear a stifling of the recovery effort of industry.

What is then required? According to Dr. Pat Utomi, Assistant General Manager of Volkswagen of Nigena, what is needed "is a structure that shields our industry from dumping and unfair competition from other economies." Local automobile assemblers have already asked for increased tariff for imported vehicles to enable local ones compete favourably. Cable wire manufacturers are buying up newspapers pages to drum home their desire for protection against cheaper imports. The National Association of



• Jase: Manufacturers not happy with 1988 tariff measures.

Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mining and Agriculture wants a review of existing tariff structures. It argues that because the duty on imported finished goods is lower than that of imported raw materials, there is no way local products can be competitive. For example, a finished radio set attracts an import duty of 10 per cent as against 20 per cent for its imported raw materials. The association is asking government to review the present structure, in order to make local goods competitive.

However, many industrialists say that their greatest headache is how to contain the large scale smuggling of competing products which fall outside official control. This, many of them say, constitutes the greatest threat to industrial growth. They have consequently, asked government to curb this vice, if the issue of protectionism is to make sense. Informed sources say that government is looking again at the tariff question and may come up with newer and stiffer measures in the 1989 budget to protect local manufacturers.

By Felix Obanya

Creditors show confidence

Foreign creditors are showing more confidence in Nigeria's economy, the evidence became clearer at the first auction bid of the debt conversion programme last week.

Despite fears expressed by financial analysts about its success and the "wait-and-see" posture of many debt redeemors, the initial slot of \$40 million debt was sold off. Only eight of the 40 bidders were successful in a bidding that saw all redeemors asking to convert \$187.85 million debt to equities in agricultural, manufacturing and tourism ventures. The successful bidders offered between 36 and 58 per cent discount on their redeemable debts. All, except the 8th successful bidder got all they asked for. Says Continental Merchant Bank Managing Director, Alhaji Sulaiman Umar "that is quite a good start."

It is curious, however, that some creditors are willing to offer as much as 58 per cent discount on the debt owned them, in addition to parting with 2.5 per cent of their discounted debt in form of transaction commission. Some financial analysts suspect that there should be more to such enthusiasm. A senior merchant banker sees it as "a clever way of playing safe



• IMB's Kollera

getting as much as possible from debts that appear irredeemable".

There are speculations that the real lure is the desire of such redeemors to have a slice of the Nigerian economy. However, the government is expected to rake in substantial amount from the discounts and transactions fees.

The Central Bank Governor, Alhaji Abdulkadir Ahmed described the response to the programme as "positive and encouraging," adding that the Debt Conversion Committee (DCC) received 76 applications for conversion of \$1,659.9 million debt.

Of this, only eight applications were axed, for non-compliance with the provisions of the programme. In spite of the government and redeemors enthusiasm, some bankers doubt Nigeria's ability to continue the monthly auction without higher inflationary rate.

IMB leads N45.2 million syndication

The dream of two Nigerian member companies of Churchgate Group-Ocean Fisheries and International Textile Industries ITI, to expand their production facilities comes

nearer to fruition this week. They will conclude a N45.2 million supportive loan syndication led by International Merchant Bank. Eight banks are involved in Ocean lines N25 million loan, while ITI N20.2 million is being offered by six banks.

Ocean Fisheries needs the facility to increase its trawler fleet, build a dry-dock and put up a shrimp processing plant. ITI plans to use the loan to build a Spinning Mill and strengthen its backward integration programme.

NBC offers N50 million stock

The Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC), it seems, is no longer contented being mere bottlers of Coca-Cola, Fanta and Sprite drinks. Should it succeed in this bid to raise N50 million through a floating rate redeemable debenture stock, it would not only expand and improve its existing bottling facilities but hopes to establish manufacturing lines that will produce pre-forms and final Poly Ethylene Terphthalate (PET) bottles.

Quite a big stride one may say, but that is not all. NBC would equally want to diversify into agro-allied activities. The decision to undertake these ventures

was taken at a recent board meeting of the company.

The stock which has an effective redemption date starting from December 31, 1993 to June 30, 1996 is being managed on behalf of NBC by the Nigerian-American Merchant Bank Limited.

Mediamen on the move

EMEKA Maduegbuna, Group Public Affairs Manager with Union Securities is on to greater things. Maduegbuna who was very visible on NTA's *Verdict '83* during the Second Republic will be on secondment to the Technical Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation as from January 1989. With the designation of Corporate Affairs Manager, Maduegbuna will be doing essentially the same information job for the Committee. The job will last for one year, at first instance. This arrangement, it is gathered, has the approval of Union Securities.

Also on the move is Mr. Tony Ede of NTA Newsweek fame. He recently quit the NTA job to pitch tent with the Central Bank of Nigeria as its first Public Affairs Manager. He assumed duty two weeks ago.



• Maduegbuna: Another step forward.



• CDN's Ahmad

Budget '89 and growth



"The lesson for Budget '89 is to substantially cut down the importation of frivolous goods into the Nigerian market. The trade liberation argument has failed".

BY LAWSON OMOKHODION

THE performance of Budget '88 has been as dismal as every critic expected. With a deficit of about 35 per cent and the envisaged spending spree by the Federal Government and its numerous agencies, Budget '88 was a free for all display of fiscal recklessness. It has proved to be. Whereas traders, importers, commission agents and government contractors have had a field day, the so-called common-man, the poor and the wage earners have been largely impoverished with another round of debilitating double-digit inflation.

In great measure, goods of all descriptions, both local and imported, could be found in the open market but their prices were quite unattractive. Although industrial capacity utilization has increased by about 10 per cent, the cost of input factors escalated with the continuing devaluation of the naira. Between January and October 1988, the naira depreciated by another 13.5 per cent in addition to the massive devaluation shocks it experienced since the beginning of the Second-Tier Foreign Market. In the parallel market, the currency devaluation for the year so far has been in the neighbourhood of 33.8 per cent.

The wild swings in the currency value are attributable to the scarcity of foreign exchange in the Nigerian economy. The high hopes that oil exports would bring in as much as \$5.456 billion and another \$500 million from Balance-of-Payment (BOP) support loan in 1988 were dashed early in the year. Oil prices have gyrated so mercilessly that low quotes of below \$10 per barrel have been received. Thus, the oil export dollar receipt target is unattainable.

Consequently, the foreign exchange market for which \$3.94 billion was budgeted during the year could not be supported as envisaged. In fact, the official foreign exchange market took off cautiously by allocating \$120 million instead of the budgeted \$150 million bi-weekly funding for the market. Even now, there are doubts whether the current funding level of \$120 million can be supported by the CBN.

Besides, the Balance of Payment support loan has stubbornly refused to come through. Whereas the debt rescheduling agreement under the aegis of the London Club is now concluded, the Paris Club has remained adamant. No new money has come into the economy as a result. The exaggerated expectation of new money on the heels of the Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Market has remained an illusion. Everyday, the Federal Government comes close to the BOP loan and everyday the loan disappears like a mirage.

It is now clear that this country is on its own and in the

words of the CGS, Rear Admiral Augustus Aikhomu: "We should stop behaving as if the world owes Nigeria a living." Budget '89 should be designed with this injunction in mind. The dynamic motto in the application of exchange rate policies as a tool for structurally adjusting the economy is now quite self evident. Ordinarily, the supply and availability of foreign exchange constitute the live wire of the developing economy, the hunger for foreign exchange for the importation of machinery, spare parts, raw materials, and finished goods; for the payment of contract fees and meeting infrastructural requirements shall continue to confront the economic system for several years to come. However, the quantity of foreign exchange available is severely limited. With the uncertainty in the oil market and with the reluctance with which Western multilateral institutions let go their loan capital, it is obvious therefore that the foreign exchange available to Nigeria shall remain curtailed.

The lesson for Budget '89 is to substantially cut down the importation of frivolous goods into the Nigerian market. The trade liberalisation argument has failed.

By now, it must bother the government why industries and factories keep closing down in spite of their enhanced access to foreign exchange, although at a much higher cost. Companies, big and small, now engage in job deletion, not job creation. These industries insist that it is a free market they are in and so they must operate at a level that guarantees comfortable profit margin. Industries also argue that the Foreign Exchange Market has made foreign exchange so expensive that they can only import a fraction of their foreign exchange requirements. Companies that follow this line of argument have not told the whole truth about their correct raw material stock levels. The truth is that companies have abandoned manufacturing. They are now all TRADERS. Companies are increasingly importing milk, stockfish, vehicles of all shades, dubious spare parts, biscuits, umbrellas, face caps, handsets, inferior calculators, keyholders, paper, apples, television sets and stereo systems and a myriad of frivolous items.

It is the customers' request for foreign exchange to cover these imports that consistently creates the abnormal demand pressure at the Foreign Exchange Market, whether it is in respect of the Central Bank auction funds or the autonomous funds. The sooner these imports are banned outright, the better for the economy, as the foreign exchange freed can be used to import productive raw materials and machinery to boost job creation.

Indications in the oil market are such that Nigeria must not expect much more than \$12 per barrel in 1989. Thus, not much higher than \$4.3 billion from oil exports will be available next year. Debt servicing, funding to meet external reserve targets, commitments to international obligations and funding the foreign exchange market have to be accommodated within this tight expectation. The avenue for survival is to drastically cut down the avenue for leakages.

It is hereby stated categorically that if the Federal Government achieves a minimum deficit and a balanced budget for 1989, substantially increases the list of banned imports to 96 as it was before SFEM, and allows the CBN auction fund exchange rate, the autonomous rate and the parallel market rate to freely interact, and then prudently monitors the inflow of export proceeds, the exchange rate would be about N5 - \$1 or better by June 1989, the third anniversary of SAP. All it takes is the will to act. This exchange rate level will create jobs and gradually ease the burden on the poor.

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PR: Corporate path to success

Nigerian Institute of Public Relations celebrates silver jubilee



It had all started as an innocuous report by a section of the press, that a popular bank in the country has South African interests.

The bank denied the allegation. But rather than the denial assuaging the feelings of those concerned, the bank, instead, attracted public odium to itself like fleas after human waste: for the government, it withdrew its savings with the bank while the public remained hostile.

It was, therefore, considered worthwhile to change the company's name. Yet the odium stuck. Not even a number of clarifications in the media helped matters. The damage had been done.

Then somebody found a trump card. By a combination of timing and human chemistry, skilful television technique and simple economics, the nation was made to coalesce into patriotic self-assertion with the bank, through a cultural linkage.

The bank, Barclays Bank, got *Roots*, the worldwide box-office movie, and sponsored it as a TV network programme.

the public as a truly Nigerian company and a corporate patriot. Today, Union is a household name in Nigeria's banking industry.

At an earlier period, the brewery industry had been confronted with how to effect change in policy by an introduction of the Bottle Deposit Scheme. When the scheme, though a savings device was to be introduced, there was resistance because people were not used to it.

The breweries, therefore, decided to invite people into the factory, to see things for themselves and to show that the nation would be saving lots of money instead of the loss which the buying of bottles would give rise to. The minister under whose portfolio was the brewery industry was invited. This was followed by the media which was invited to lend its support in convincing the populace which was still critical of the scheme. Today, the Bottle Deposit Scheme has become an accepted way of life in Nigeria. Of contemporary relevance, however, is the issue of big profits as a source of corporate crisis. It is normal in these hard years of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) to hear of massive profits which are (no puns for guessing right) reaped in by the banks.

Infact, it is a measure of the government's

through embarrassment of this "abnormality" that the Chief of General Staff, Vice-Admiral Augustus Aikhomu once summoned the bank's Chief



• Fassy Yusuf

Masters

Roots, it should be said, was an exposure of the type of racial wrong-doing in South Africa: the monumental saga of one-man's search for his family's origins, through six generations of slaves and freedmen in America, to his ancestry in Africa.

For Nigerians, it was a kind of emotional reflex, a reawakened warmth fetched from centuries back. The film was, therefore, an instant hit and enjoyed the patronage of both the government and the public. In between the TV shows, there was an intermittent side-attraction: an advertisement that the bank had changed its name from Barclays to Union Bank. The TV programme ran for six months during which the bank came to be accepted by



• Mike Okereke

of the

Executives of Dodan Barracks. The government standpoint was that they should not exploit the masses by excessive rates. The banks till date, are yet to counter this accusation with a credible defence of their stance. It might be they are still bidding their time.

With this backdrop, consider the case of a



• Adesola - Macaulay

game

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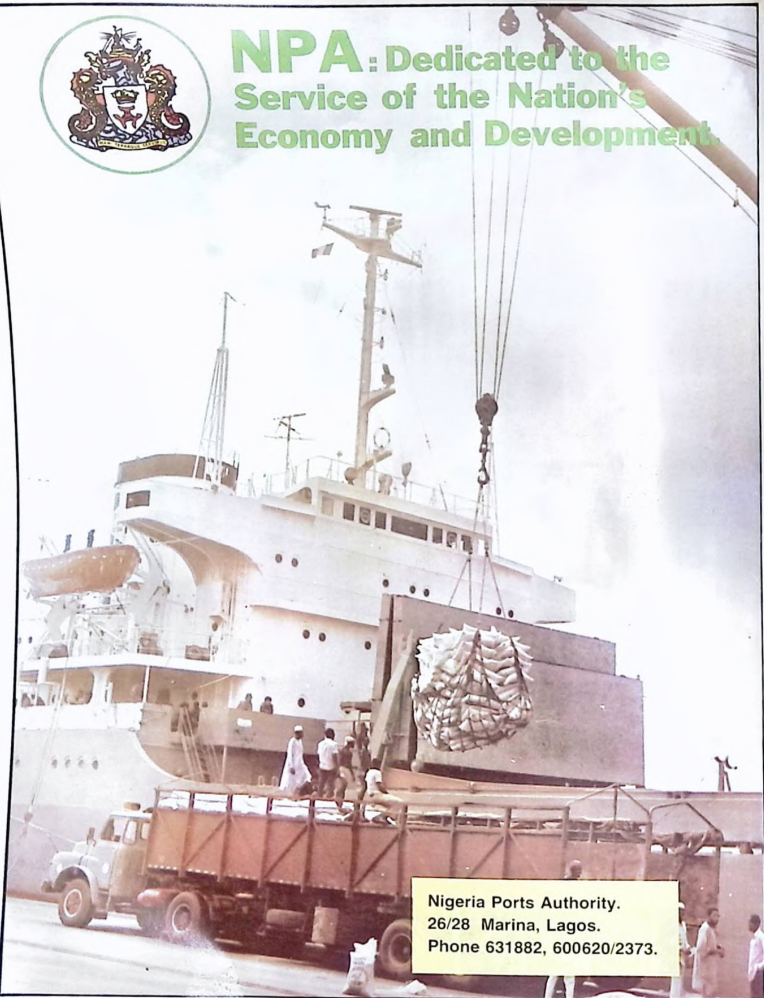


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At UACN, we have a special reason for rejoicing with the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, NIPR on its 25th Anniversary.

NIPR's Silver Jubilee celebration justifies our faith. Our faith in Public Relations as a key management tool. In fact, the very same faith that nearly 40 years ago, in 1949, saw UACN establishing the first ever Public Relations Department in Nigeria's private sector. Today most major companies in Nigeria have their Public Relations Departments or use the services of Public Relations Consultants.

Public Relations has come of age and we in UACN congratulate the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations on its 25th Anniversary.



UAC OF NIGERIA LIMITED
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leading company which found on its lap a mid-year result of about N100 million with the possibility of making another N100 million by the end of the year. The obvious implications were that:

- the government might frown at the profit levels.
- the workers' union will see this as a bonanza and demand increased salaries and enhanced welfare benefits.
- the public might see the company as exploiters and oppressors.

These issues were thoroughly analysed and the following pre-emptive measures were adopted:

- The managers were briefed on the development.
- The current costs of replacing assets were identified as being capable of swallowing the profits.
- The union's negotiations had to be concluded before the profits were announced.
- The relevant government agency was briefed on the implications of the profit margin.
- A press statement was initiated to explain the key issues involved.
- Workers were told that the company's success will generate greater expectation and they should be prepared to work harder. As expected, all the various interest groups were placated.

In all these case-studies, just like in all successful corporate campaigns, what mechanisms were at play that elicited positive response from the various captive audiences? How and why did the messages harmonize with the expectations and emotional needs of the various publics, letting off positive vibrations?

Union Bank sponsored *Roots* and the people forgot Barclays. The minister and the media visited the brewery and the Bottle Deposit scheme became a way of life. An organisation dissected the wherefore of big profits and an otherwise offensive phenomenon turned out to be a master stroke; a pageant in harmony with the public needs.

The magic wand in all the cases is what PR practitioners refer to as Public Relations; which is partly defined as "the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisation leaders and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve the public interest."

The UAC of Nigeria Limited which reputedly pioneered public relations practice in the private sector of this country further defines this as "a continuous effort on behalf of the company to promote the best possible understanding of its policies, activities and social attitudes among those who can influence its developments." Elaborating on this, Mr. Mike Okereke, UAC's Public Relations adviser and national President of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) explains that the aim

of public relations is to ensure that all concerned have a better understanding of government, company or organisational policies and methods of conducting their operations. He says: "Public Relations is concerned with educating our target audience to accept our organisations, our ideas, our products or services. Public Relations is the responsibility of the decision-maker, for it introduces human factor into management. Public Relations is a social science which teaches us how individuals and groups react and the science of communications which provide the means of resolving conflicts and establishing contracts and mutual understanding." However, it is one thing to appreciate the mechanics of public relations. It is quite another to understand its ground rules. It is the proper mix and an interplay of these two elements that activate and elicit the desired responses in captive audiences. To the practitioner, therefore, public relations practice should be built on a framework which revolves around the following: Counselling based on understanding of human behaviour, analysing future trends and predicting their consequences, researching into public opinion, attitudes and expectation and advising on appropriate action.

Even so, public relations goes beyond all these. It entails a host of other activities such as establishing and maintaining a two-way communication based on truth and detailed information; preventing conflict and misunderstanding; promoting mutual respect and social responsibility; harmonising the private and the public interest; promoting good will among staff, and with suppliers and customers, as well as improving industrial relations. Of central concern too is the attraction of good personnel and the reduction of labour turnover; promotion of products or services; profit maximisation; projection of a corporate identity; encouragement of interest in international affairs, and the promotion of an understanding of democracy.

In line with this framework, a typical public relations activity would be broken into four parts to make the desired impact. These are:

- Analysis; research and defining problem
- Drawing up a programme of action
- Communicating and implementing the programme
- Monitoring the results, evaluation and possible modification.

Mr. Peter Onono, public relations adviser of the Nigerian Breweries Limited puts these factors in proper perspective by stressing that first, there must be an internal effort to ascertain the truth. He says, "there must be a policy statement from the highest functionary in the company, adding that, "efforts must be made to identify the interest groups involved and their degree of commitment on the issue." Elaborating, he insists that an active strategy to cultivate



● Onono No comment worsens the situation



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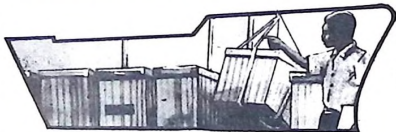
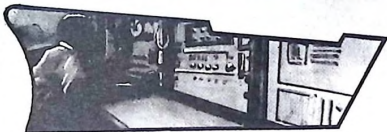


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the press and gain their goodwill must be developed. In this regard, he maintained that "a situation where senior management will merely say 'No comment' will definitely worsen the situation."

At the more specific level of the type of brief which a PR practitioner should make to top management to resolve a typical corporate problem, Mr. Onono articulates the following programme of action: Identification of the key issues; checking out those involved; assessing their degree of involvement; mapping out strategies to restore normalcy; enlisting press support, if necessary; establishing a feedback system to evaluate the effectiveness of the remedial action; briefing the relevant government agency to pre-empt reprisals; and in the final analysis, agreement on a central information statement so that all employees sing the same song when approached by third parties.

In view of its relevance to corporate success, professional public relations operates in every sphere of life: the gamut runs from government (national, regional, local, international) to business and industry, covering small firms to medium and transnational corporations.

It also sustains community and social affairs, educational institutions, universities, colleges, hospitals, charities, international affairs and consultancy.

Mr. Okereke amplifies this view with the stance that public relations on a professional scale covers everything from advising the Board on the best time of making a new issue, launching a new product, suggesting a corporate identity for the company, handing the press and the public during an industrial relations problem to interpreting company policies to the public.

It is also on this plank that Mr. Adesola-Macaulay, public relations manager NEPA and Chairman, Organising Committee of NIPR's 25th Anniversary celebrations emphasizes public relations has become the essential link in the mass communication system in these particularly critical times for corporate organisations and government.

Shedding light on this, Ade-Macaulay maintains that without the assistance of the PR professionals representing business, corporation, scientific, cultural and professional institution and government agencies, the mass media of communication often would not be able to understand or interpret for the layman, the development in these fields.

According to Ade-Macaulay, the PR professional serves as a reference source of the specialized terminologies in the various fields of human endeavour. Without the assistance of PR practitioners, he argues, many complex areas of our societies and economies would remain outside the realm of journalism and the layman. Says he: "We help people to achieve

understanding between groups in our society. We provide understanding that is essential if this society is to survive this Structural Adjustment Programme."

As the NIPR celebrates its 25 years of existence this week, it has to indulge in self-congratulations, for its achievements are perceived as a mutual sequence of development.

Explains Mr. Ade-Macaulay: "PR stands ready to make its place as an equal among other professional bodies contributing to socio-political and economic development of the country.

"PR has moved from the backroom to the boardroom. UAC of Nigeria and Shell Petroleum Company are pioneers in the direction followed by Nigerian Breweries Limited and other corporate bodies. PR has moved a long way towards losing its publicist identity to one being more broadly based on the notion that an organisation exists with the consent of its publics and that communication is a function to that process."

This notion of an initial publicist identity has to do with the formative years of public relations practice in Nigeria in the 1940s when the then colonial government operated the Public Relations Office. Then known as the Information Office in Lagos, the main objective was to disseminate war information. The office was also responsible for sorting out matters connected with the newly established Ministry of Information.

Over the years, with the increase in the number of Nigerians joining the profession, the need arose to have a regulatory body, as well as, a forum for practitioners to share views and to plan for the growth of the profession.

The founding of the Institute (first as the Public Relations Association of Nigeria) in 1963 has its root in the pioneering efforts of those Nigerians who served in the Information Departments of both the Central and Regional governments as well as private sectors, such as the UAC of Nigeria, Shell Petroleum Company and the Nigerian Railways.

Most distinguished among them was the late Dr Sam Epelle who became its first president from 1963 to 1968. He founded the Public Relations Association of Nigeria which later metamorphosed into the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations.

Within the period, the Public Relations Consultants Association of Nigeria (PRCAN) was also born. The Association complements the efforts of NIPR and aims at achieving professionalism and excellence in communicating messages to the society and the provision of specialist services.

Understandably, this theme of professionalism and excellence has served as the clarion call of NIPR at 25. To solve difficult corporate problems; to be taken as a promoter and energizer of corporate success-



■ Shanekan. JAC contributed to the formation of NIPR

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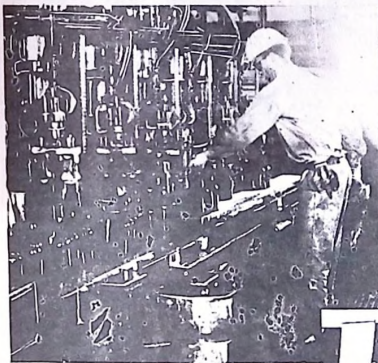




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Corporate Image: The maturing of the Nigerian Corporation

A MANAGEMENT revolution is silently underway in Nigerian corporate circles. The competitive business atmosphere of the decade of the 1980's, and more important, the strategic imperatives of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) have necessitated the injection of scientific management techniques and enhanced professionalism, in the running of Nigerian business enterprises. One of the more important variables of this new thrust is the increasing importance of corporate image in the affairs of the Nigerian corporation.

The establishment of a positive corporate image by the Nigerian corporation has always been a matter of concern to management; nevertheless, it is only in the last decade that it has been given the added importance that it really deserves in the host of crucial issues with which management has to contend. While there is still some ways to go in recognising the importance of corporate image to the overall well-being and operational solvency of the Nigerian Corporation, there is available evidence to suggest that the future appears promising.

According to Dr. Abel Ubeku, one of the most accomplished management practitioners Nigeria has produced, "a company's image is an amalgam of a variety of factors, the total sum of which make people perceive the company in a positive or negative form. Hence, the company objectives and its mode of operation, the recruitment and development of staff, the quality of its products, its marketing practices including pricing, its social responsibility etc, contribute to create an image." Dr Ubeku's observations capture the definition of the concept exactly; corporate image is concerned with the institutional integrity of any business enterprise.

The importance of corporate image arises because of the ever-growing social responsibilities of the business enterprise to justify its existence as a wholesome and legitimate corporate citizen which makes distinct and positive contributions to the environment within which it operates.

In Nigeria, this realisation of the corporate social responsibility of the business enterprise has been a little slow in taking hold, primarily as a result of the ambiguity which arises from the dominance of the state in the ownership of the factors of production. Does the State Corporation have a responsibility to the state or to the public? The dilemma has probably accounted for the ambivalence demonstrated by many Nigerian corporations in their attitude to the creation and sustenance of a positive

corporate image. There is, however, a new, and encouraging realisation by Nigerian management that regardless of the legal ownership of the corporation, the corporation must still justify its overall existence and its own distinct contribution in whatever micro-economic activity it is engaged.

Indeed, evidence abounds that despite the general ambivalence indicated above, the recognition of public accountability by the corporation has held some currency. The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), and the Nigeria Airways, despite their dissimilar activities, have generally demonstrated a recognition of the need for a credible corporate image. The reader may express some surprise at the mention of the Nigeria Airways, but if a



• Victor Ogunde



• Abel Ubeku: "A company's image is an amalgam of a variety of factors"

content analysis is done of the various policy positions and statements made by that organisation over the past six or seven years, it is clear that the institution was constrained by variables beyond its making.

As a result of the variety of factors which make up a company's image, it is clear that the creation of a positive corporate image must be a distinct functional line responsibility — call it a co-ordinating department. This department must then bear the responsibility of bringing together all the seemingly disparate activities of the corporation, and utilise communications skills to project these activities as a cohesive and coherent corporate identification programme. Such a programme will of necessity be complex and multi-dimensional; on a global level, it will ideally include the following variables:

- A basic business strategy for the corporation.
- A personal/staff development programme.
- The establishment of minimum operational



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12. Undertake Bill Distribution
13. Undertake Disconnections and Reconnections
14. Check on Disconnections
15. Undertake Meter Inspection
16. Analyse Sales and Forecast trends
17. Undertake Commercial Lead Survey
18. Produce Consumer Statistics
19. Maintain Consumer records
20. Maintain Account number records
21. Undertake Cash Collection
22. Undertake Cash Posting

23. Undertake regular Reading of all Collections and ensure safe custody
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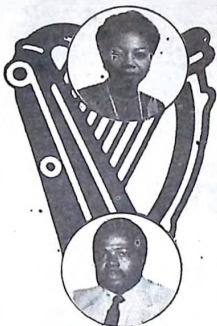
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Princess Edith Ike-Okongwu, Mrs

Public Affairs Manager

Mr Rufus Isaac

Public Relations Manager

3rd National Vice-President NIPR

standards; and

- A corporate publicity programme, which would include:

- (i) an advertising programme;
- (ii) corporate sponsorships of the arts, educational activities etc.
- (iii) some form of corporate/public dialogue, and corporate contributions to policy debates;
- (iv) public relations activities of a broad and diversified nature;
- (v) publications, journals and other information-dispersing aids;
- (vi) dialogue on a formal and informal basis with government officials;
- (vii) a vigorous media relations programme;
- (viii) the creation of management/employee forums for interaction, and
- (ix) a systematic shareholders relations programme.

The establishment of an effective corporate identification programme must, however, be predicated on a sound business strategy. There is simply no short-cut to the establishment of an articulate corporate image programme, business strategy must precede, unless the image programme will be incoherent and unfocused.

It is this need for scientific business strategies which seems most pressing in the Nigerian environment, if business enterprises are to evolve meaningful corporate image programmes. A broad-based mutual appreciation of the management generalists and the managements specialists, for the skills of one another, will no doubt augur well for the development of articulate corporate image-making in the Nigerian economy.

By Victor Ogundipe, AGM (Special Duties), First Bank of Nigeria Limited

Putting the house in order

CONFUSION as to who or what the Public Relations Practitioner is, persists in spite of the commendable stride made by the NIPR in its 25 years of existence. Part of the problem has to do with the infiltration of charlatany into the profession over the years. Even among practitioners there are those whose idea of a "seasoned" Public Relations expert is that of overressed male or female models.

The probability that some PR practitioners go into the calling by accident exists. It is therefore not unusual for these species of PR men to be regarded as never-dowells and dropouts. Worse still, the role the PR practitioner in a corporate organisation should play remains unclear.

Mr. Victor Ogundipe, First Bank's Assistant General Manager, Special Duties, in his book, "Corporate Image — the Strategic Imperative in the Nigerian Banking Sector" highlighted this confusion when he said: "To some, the practitioner is the one who is coming up to cover-up the short-comings of the corporation, to others the practition-



• NIPR President Michael Okereko meets naval chief Koshoni

er is the one who will keep the press at bay when they are prying; to others still this is the person who will shield the executives from revelations of corporate excesses."

Against this backdrop, an immediate task which the NIPR has set for itself is what its national Secretary-General, Mr. Fassy A. Yusuf refers to as "sifting the chaff from the grain in order to bring respectability to the profession."

To this end, the NIPR has initiated moves for an enabling decree, by the Federal Government, to regulate the practice of public relations for a chartered status. Not

only that, the institute is introducing professional examinations as a means of gaining entry into the profession. To see this through, the NIPR inaugurated an Advisory Board and produced a 41-page strategic document whose highlights are as follows:

- That NIPR should be restructured and that "Professionalism and Excellence" should be the watchword.
- That membership of the institute should as from December 1, 1988 be by approved examination and experience.
- That we train and re-train our members through

Public Relations Education and that a very good working relationship be established with providers of Public Relations education such as the universities, polytechnics and the Business Education Council (BEEC)

- That we improve communication with members and educate them through position papers and our official journals and newsletters.

- That we should create a greater awareness of the role of Public Relations in commerce, industry and government.

- That we build or purchase our own secretariat.
- That we launch a N6.5 million Public Relations Development Fund.

With this in view, the strategic objective of the Public Relations Advisory Board is therefore to produce, for the public and private sectors, a crop of public relations practitioners whose training is practical oriented and clearly relevant to work and intended to facilitate progress in employment and higher education.

By Sunny Blaghere

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Old songs, new tunes

Maitama Sule re-asserts the trouble with Nigeria

THE title of Yusuf Maitama Sule's lecture, delivered last Tuesday at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), "Which Way, Nigeria?", could not have received any trophy for originality. As someone remarked cynically, "What will he say that Sunny Okosuns has not said?" But through his wit, humour and brilliance, Sule gave life to the otherwise drab topic. For many, it was an aural feast, as Sule tried to unravel the tragedy that is the Nigerian condition — as well as point the way forward.

However, the high point came at the end of the 17-page, 55-minute lecture. A young woman stood up. "To what extent, sir," she asked, "would you say you have contributed to the failure of Nigeria's leadership in your 28 years of public life?"

There was a sharp intake of breath, then the 600-odd audience broke out in applause. But Sule, politician, administrator, diplomat and consummate orator, was too much of an old hand to be rattled. "I am a banned politician," he deadpanned. Then, he acknowledged that the question was in order. "I am one of those people. I cannot exonerate myself." He went ahead to justify his interest in public policy (an interest which Gabriel Oluasanya, director-general of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs described as "a hobby, although a passionate one.") As a father, he said, he wanted the younger generation to learn from the older generation's mistakes and improve on their track record.

He identified the "dual personality" engendered by colonialism as a principal cause of our woes. "Today, standing at the end of the twentieth century, we look over the road we have travelled as a nation and feel that in our effort to bridge the gap between our material progress and that of the western world, we have acquired too many contradictions from history."

Sule went back in time, to the late fifties and early sixties when it seemed opportunities were limitless and hope blossomed in the hearts of Africans. Independence, he declared, "throws into sharp relief basic economic and social problems hitherto eclipsed by the over-riding problems of foreign domination."

More than anything else, Sule sees

the "government and opposition" mentality in the emerging African states as the most destructive political ailment. Of this "we and them" attitude to politics, exemplified by the intolerance of governing parties and the paranoia of those in opposition, Sule says, "there is some element of truth in both arguments, but the remainder of the truth lies elsewhere." Other problems identified by Nigeria's ex-

goals and objectives, then embodied in the culture of any people is their ideology." Sule inquired rhetorically: "didn't we operate a system that was a government...before the advent of the white man, a system that was as democratic as Western democracy?"

But he was not done yet. Immorality and indiscipline, he said, his voice dropping dramatically low, constituted even a greater problem. In his view, any attempt to solve other problems that do not take these twin blights into consideration would end up a monumental waste of time. In a memorable passage that got the audience applauding ecstatically, Sule



• Sule: I cannot exonerate myself

representative to the United Nations include "the policy of rewarding friends and punishing enemies; nepotism; the danger of blurred vision, the tendency of freedom fighters to lose sight of the new and urgent realities of independence; megalomania; dictatorship." Sule was scathing in his verbal put-down of the dictators who "adorn" Africa's political landscape.

Sule has been a consistent advocate of the "back-to-the-roots" idea. However, his pitch is different from that of Leopold Sedar Senghor and other apostles of negritude whose stance is somewhat quaint and outdated.

The ex-diplomat takes his advocacy — a notch higher — right into the sacrosanct realm of ideology. The man who started his speech by washing his hands off intellectualism ("I am not an intellectual. I have never claimed to be one.") sees little merit in doctrine, left or right. In his words: "Personally, I believe that if by ideology we mean

asserted that "there is meaninglessness in philosophy, insecurity in politics, exploitation in economy, immorality in society, distortion in fact, frustration in literature, lack of creativity in art, chaos in politics and corruption in all our dealings."

Sule's panacea: spiritual rejuvenation and moral discipline. He holds that belief in God will do Nigeria and Africa a lot of good: "the real sanction for morality lies in the love for and fear of God."

The sustained applause at the end was proof that Sule made a success of the lecture. Beyond that, however, as some who attended noted, in spite of the noble sentiment it was all disconcertingly vague with the usual dose of platitudes. One of the few specific examples in the speech — how late Obafemi Awolowo and others suffered for being in opposition — was carefully crossed out.

By Paul Nwabukwu

Dousing the fire

Government barks at the CA

VICE-ADMIRAL Augustus Aikhomu, the Chief of General Staff was last Monday a study in indignation and anger. His voice, as he stood behind the podium at the conference centre in Abuja, venue of proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, was acerbic and stern, almost as a sergeant-major's, calling to order a straying parade.

In an eight-paragraph speech which lasted five minutes, Aikhomu told members of the assembly in no unmistakable terms of the social consequences of their divided, and sometimes riotous debates on the Sharia in the Constitution for the Third Republic. His final word: stop further debate on sections 6(2) to 6(6) (d) and sections 248 to 263 of the report of the Constitution Review Committee (CRC); clauses relevant to the Sharia and Customary Courts of Appeal.

The decision to remove the Sharia issue from the jurisdiction of the Constituent Assembly and place it solely in the hands of the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) was taken about 42 hours earlier on Saturday November 26, when members of the security council, which included President Ibrahim Babangida, Aikhomu, and Service Chiefs met in Dodan Barracks. Obviously, the concern, as later stated by the Chief of General Staff in his address to the assembly members was that government "will not allow the incipient acrimony already generated by the debate on this issue to degenerate further."

Also, sources say that intelligence reports reaching Dodan Barracks showed that the Sharia issue was being used clandestinely for political trade-off. For instance, some members of the assembly, it was gathered, made it known that they would support the Sharia if the presidency was conceded to their section of the country. Aikhomu tacitly made the Assembly members aware of this point when he stated that "I urge you not to allow extremists, outside groups, individuals or interests succeed in their efforts to co-opt you into unpatriotic or sectional designs."

The heat generated over the Sharia issue had led to the adjournment of the proceedings of the Constituent

Assembly on two occasions in the last two weeks. And on Monday November 21, Assembly Chairman, the justice Anthony Aniagolu stood the risk of being ostracised from the 567-member house when he was prevented, with loud shouts of "No! No! No!" from addressing the Assembly. The Chairman's "crime" was the non-inclusion of Section 6 of report of the

"Government will not allow the incipient acrimony arising from the Sharia debate to degenerate further"

review committee in the day's proceedings which he explained arose from his desire to have amendments on the Sharia courts harmonised with opposing views and the awaited report of the State Judicature Committee (16). His explanation made little or no impression on some of the members.

The rancour over the Sharia was not only within the assembly. On November 25, the Oyo State Muslim Community, in a letter to the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, expressed disappointment over the vituperations against the inclusion of the Sharia in the Constitution. In a statement signed by chief imams of all the local

governments of the state, the community registered its support for the jurisdiction of the Sharia in matters affecting Muslims. The imams believed that the "Freedom of religion including freedom of religious practice and observance" could only be guaranteed in this way. They expressed support for both nominated and elected members from Oyo State in the Assembly, whom they believed "must have spoken in favour of the Sharia."

However, such support for assembly members on the vexatious issue of the Sharia became redundant last week as members busied themselves with the implications of the Government's decision. Alhaji Abu Ibrahim, a nominated member of the assembly blamed the "manipulations" of the

chairman as the reason for government's intervention. His view somehow echoed that of Abba Dabo, one of the most vocal in the pro-Sharia group who had two weeks ago accused Aniagolu of insincerity over the Sharia issue.

Simoneon Idu, an elected member placed the blame on the entire nominated members of the Assembly. For him, the Sharia issue would have been resolved but for nominated members "who kept running around the Chairman and pressing him into a sort of panic action." Idu, like Dr. Sani Mohammed of Gungura, Ganjawa Constituency of Bauchi state also felt that government's action was premature.

For Philip Asiodu, however, a nominated member, government's action was inevitable, considering what he observed as the deterioration in decorum and seriousness in the Assembly over the Sharia issue.

But perhaps the most unexpected view was expressed by the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria,

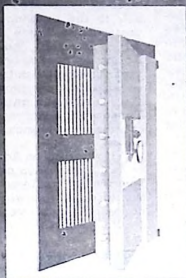


• Aikhomu: The Sharia issue is over

catholic Arch-Bishop Olubunmi Okogie who believes that government had no business in interfering with the proceedings of the Assembly. He observed that "Religion is no business of government, any reasonable government should in fact keep completely away from religion." His view was in consonance with those of Reverend Austin Samson, representing Etinan I, Akwa Ibom and Reverend Moses Antse from Gboko East, Benue State. They felt that the debate on the Sharia issue had not really started and, therefore, the intervention of government was unwarranted. Perhaps for the Christians, they would have preferred that the problem with the Sharia be settled through a straight debate once and for all.

By Wale Akin Aina

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Beauty gets brains

Working class-girls gradually ease out of beauty contests for degree hunters

HHEIGHT, it appears, is a new dimension to African beauty contests. For, last two Saturdays Miss Nigeria beauty contest saw 19-year-old Adewumi Adebowale 'capture' the highly-coveted crown with her 5 feet 10 inches, towering above the 11 other contestants.

The contest attracted a large crowd who, undeterred by the ₦50 gate-fee and an extra ₦20 for the programme, thronged the venue, L' Eko Meridian Hotel, Lagos. One gentleman was willing to dish out as much as ₦2,000 to secure front row seats for personal guests.

The generally lacklustre appearances were not helped by the poorly designed set; while Zainab Buki Ajayi, co-comper with Funsho Adeolu, didn't help either with the not-so-witty questions she fielded, which got equally prosaic

answers.

The last segment, a test of individual talent, put more life into the contest. Singing was one talent the last five finalists had in common; with each trying to out-perform the other. With her skill on the keyboard, Oby Okolie 22, with vital statistics of 36-26-38, endeared herself to the audience by proffering a theme song for co-sponsors, Jobitex. Chima Madauqor on her part appealed to patriotic sensibilities by playing the national anthem. These were, however, not sufficient to clinch the crown.

Wit was also on Adebowale's side. When asked "what's the first thing you would do if you win the contest?", she said "I would like to show the world that Nigerians especially the women or achievers." Oby Okolie, 5 feet 6 inches, emerged



• Adebowale, Nigerian women are achievers

first runner-up.

For Jobitex, it was an opportunity to promote its canned products.

Guests who witnessed the all-night long event included past queens, Morenike Coker (1969), Toyin Monney (1977) and Rosemary Okeke (1984). Commenting on the beauty contest, Toyin Monney, a bi-lingual secretary, noted that "though this year's has been on a lowkey, it has involved a greater field, when compared to 1977, which involved the average working class girl."

Arrangements by co-sponsors, Times Leisure Services, weren't hitch-free. A visibly worried Toyin Monney complained about "no accommodation arrangement for us." Up until 3 a.m. Sunday morning, she

was still seated in the Banquet Hall.

Happily, unlike previous contests, this year's queen received an early delivery of the first prize — a Santana GL Saloon Car valued at ₦95,000. Adebowale is also expected to participate in the Miss World pageant. Due to paucity of funds, Times Leisure Service had been unable to sponsor past beauty queens. Towards this end, Otunba Alice Jobi, owner of Jobitex, donated £2,000 (₦20,000) to help off-set expenses.

Tunde Savage, general manager of Times Leisure Services and who has become synonymous with Miss Nigeria Beauty contest, appeared to have taken a back seat this time.

By Omatayo Alabi

Frills and fancies

Afprint designerr of the year is...

WHERE have all the creative designers gone? A fashion show sponsored by Afprint, a textile manufacturing concern, to choose the "Afprint Designer 1988," left the question on some lips. Under the theme "The World of Cotton," five fashion houses showed off "designs" churned out from fabrics manufactured by the sponsors, to a cross section of Nigerians and expatriates at Eko L' Meridian Hotel Lagos on Sunday, November 27. They were in separate categories like "Mirage and

Oasis (swimwear and sports wear), Living Daylights (casual and formal daywear), Shivering Breeze (cool weather fashions) and Flights of Fancy (*Haute Couture*).

The strong points of many of the designers lay more in aesthetic combinations of fabrics such

• Williams: A deserved award



as Ankara and Satin, proving just how versatile the fabrics can be. Duplications of designs brought in a certain monotony or even boredom. It was a rash of plects, coat-tails, reversibles, and detachable outfits. Colours of turquoise, pink, yellow, black had a field day. Some models put on worn-out shoes which disgraced the attires.

Mrs. Ore Williams of

Say Fashions had some imaginative designs and made effective use of adornments. In her presentations under the flight of fancy category, dull-coloured Ankara was mixed with sequins, stones, frills and flounces.

The judges which included fashion designers, Princess Ahab Adesanya, and David Dale an artist declared Ore Williams, a legal practitioner, Afprint Designer of the Year. Prizes include a trophy, ₦5,000 and a weekend trip to Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

To Mrs. Opral Benson, the Iya-Oge (Mother of Fashion) of Lagos, "Mrs Williams deserved to win."

By Omatayo Alabi

Beauty of f m

CHI IROMUANYA, though "fascinated" by the anatomy, isn't in the medical line. A student of architecture at the University of Lagos, Chi paints nudes because "it's an aspect of art that has been largely neglected." Not minding that such paintings may offend the moral sensibilities of some, he says "societal norms apart, it's (nudity) a lot of beauty and I intend to project it."

Last Friday at the Federal Palace Hotel,

ing. Keen watchers of fashion shows may have seen him at one time or the other, moving down the cat-walk with precise macho steps. He did not receive any formal training in modelling but says it's all a matter of "good carriage and confidence."

A health trio

ABOUT six months ago, three Lagos-based medical practitioners came up with an idea that would take them beyond direct practice,

1ST HEALTH WEEKLY NEWSPAPER
THURSDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 1988.
PRESS CENTRE



• Okupe, Finnih Moving onto new frontiers of healthcare delivery

aimed at "bringing into focus various health misconceptions."

The publication which hits the newsstands this month will dabble into fashion and music. "These too contribute to the well-being of Nigerians," says Finnih. Quite aware of the sudden death of some new publications, Okupe chips in that "without being unduly prophetic, we have made something of our lives and are committed to health."

to bring the society face to face with its injustices. In his book, *The Secret of the Sheik*, whose green covers were unveiled for the first time at this year's ANA conference in Makurdi by Heinemann, the publishers, Oko highlights the stigma attached to a man who has served time in jail and which denies him job chances. It turns out that the man did not even commit the offence. Oko believes that we deny our humanity by refusing to rehabilitate the ex-convict. The work is based on a real life incident.

"I was particularly disturbed by the case of a man who was implicated in an armed robbery, was tried, convicted and executed but it was discovered too late that there had been an error and the government apologised."

Oko has two other works in the press. His literary journey began long ago. "I had a writing flair which started when I was small. I used to write stories and I later made some money from writing stories for newspapers. After some time it occurred to me that I should write novels."

Currently, Oko is a doctoral student at the Department of Theatre Arts of the University of Ibadan.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN

• Iromuanya Intends to promote nudes as an art-form

Lagos, Chi who says that his mother, Rose, a fashion designer and art collector, influenced his interest in art, mounted an exhibition of NUDES, in his first major outing.

Probably the love of the anatomy explains Chi's involvement in modell-

Drs. Doyin Okupe, Yemi Finnih and Ore Falomo, felt that the low level of health education itself was a problem. And so the three decided to put a few of their worries over health matters into print. The result is a publication, *Life Mirror* which is



• Oko Writing the wrongs of society

Overheard

▷ Mike, you have a way of knocking men down, but Jesus is a master of picking people up.

— Rev. Henry Payden to heavyweight boxing champion, Mike Tyson, who was baptised last week at an American Baptist Church.

I have been looking for Larry Koinyan's roads.

— Passenger aboard

Nigeria Airways flight, overflying Bida town at 27,000 feet altitude.

Awarded Festus Iyayi £10,000 (N84,000) Commonwealth prize for his novel *Heroes*

• Iyayi



Concern for justice

ATABO OKO is one of those young men who have tasked themselves

Vestiges of Rhodesia

In Zimbabwe racism is ventilated in biting ways

THE sun rises early these days. It is summer time. Gradually, downtown Harare stirs into life; it soon billows with the surge of people from the outlying high- and low-density suburbs. But the pace is unhurried: Harare is neither Tokyo nor New York. It is not Lagos either. Blacks, whites, coloureds and Asians walk on the same pavement; they ride in the same elevators; they beam a smile at each other, and occasionally they embrace and kiss. In some offices, they are colleagues or equals. In the afternoon they can walk into the same cafe for takeaways, or into the same restaurant for lunch. They all mingle and shop in the same hall.

One decade ago that scenario was unlikely; it was abominable, legislated against. Then, Prime Minister Ian Smith and his fellow white "Rhodesians" basked in institutionalised racism. That was supposed to have been swept away by the blood of the martyrs of the Liberation War on whose heels "an independent and multi-racial Zimbabwe emerged in April 1980, bound by the ribbon of national reconciliation.

Myths and habits have a phoenix-life existence; they die hard. Thus, beneath the patina of Zimbabwe's multi-racialism flows an undercurrent of racism. Though a dramatic climbdown from the heyday of "Rhodesia," the effect, to a stranger used to freer climates, is only slightly less painful. Racism, subtle and systematic, is almost everywhere; is felt in actions

and inactions. During the last independence celebrations, for example, fewer than 200 whites, most of them members of the diplomatic corps, were present at the National Stadium that accommodated over 50,000 spectators. Whites make up two per cent of the country's esti-

mate this (Zimbabwe) to be a free country any longer... I would say that my allegiance is with South Africa."

Each race patronises its own pubs and restaurants which are not necessarily off-limits to an "outsider". But the inconvenience, taunts and lace-curtain discrimination are such that for any one out to have a good time, venturing into a place where one would be greeted by stone-faced

ion of shock, if not resentment, when a couple of mixed races sweeps past. Even as lovers, it is easier to see a white man with a black girl than to behold a black girl with a white girl; often the white girl is a foreigner. Only a few months ago a coloured woman, apparently crimson with rage, was asking her de-tribalised coloured daughter how many Blacks she had slept with of late.

In large, white-controlled business organisations, blacks rise to top management positions at the speed of a dinosaur, thereby provoking an extant debate of Black advancement in the economic sector. Several months ago, a strike over alleged racial discrimination nearly paralysed the operations of one of the country's leading banks. Observed President Robert Mugabe last June: "We feel we have bent ourselves over backwards, and stretched our hand of friendship and reconciliation in their (whites) direction, and that their response has not been as complete as we would have wanted it to be." He reprised that sentiment early this month when as the guest of honour at the speech and prize-giving day of Falcon College in Matabeleland province he urged private schools to prune their exorbitant fees that usually discourage the underprivileged, particularly blacks from seeking admission into such schools. Of its 443 student-enrolment, Falcon College has 74 Africans; and of its 31 teachers only two are Blacks.

By Kingsley Oscedor In Harare



In Zimbabwe each race still patronises its own pubs and restaurants

mated population of 8.5 million. And perhaps most of the whites see the independence anniversary as a celebration of their defeat: the tumble from the peak to the valley.

In fact, it is racism that inspires the fifth column activities of some former Rhodesian military and intelligence officers some of whom are either on trial or already in jail for myriad sabotage and terrorist activities inside Zimbabwe. Says Michael Smith, a former member of the "Rhodesian" Special Air Services, who is currently standing trial in Harare for his alleged involvement in a fatal bomb attack in Bulawayo last January: "I do not

hosts and patrons is definitely not worth the bother. Even in housing, racism shows. Arcadia and Ardennie suburbs are still predominantly inhabited by coloureds, just like Blacks are the commonest sight in Mbare, Highfield and other high-density suburbs of Harare. In some blocks of flats in town, only whites are, and can be, the occupants, because prospective tenants are carefully screened to eliminate those who do not belong to the tribe. It thrives on a crafty circumvention of the law.

Endogamy reigns; couples of mixed races are perhaps a handful. There is often a subtle expres-

String'em together

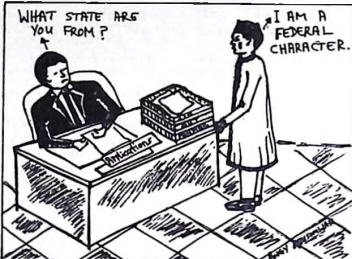
Drive for national integration continues but cultural diversity persists in Nigeria

WHOSE who still doubt Nigeria's supremacy in the field of cultural sophistication should try this little experiment. Pick 2,000 Kenyans or, perhaps, an equal number of white West Europeans, all dressed in one kind of native attire — the colour each individual prefers. Among the Kenyans, see if judging only by the outfit alone, you can identify a *Masai*. Among the Europeans, pick the German, the English or the Dutch. Impossible? You are right.

Welcome to Nigeria. Ah you say, all I have to do is bazzard a joke, and when the contestants smile, you can shout: That is a northerner, perhaps, even a Hausa man, from his kola teeth. The short ones are Igbo or Ibibio — and of course the tall-tale tribal marks would give away the others. If you are a keen observer you will even say confidently that the one expressing surprise by opening the mouth wide in what might very well be a two-minute yawn is a westerner. But what if they all are of the same height, all frowning and unexcited?

Here is the solution. First the colour separation. Look out for the red shirt, blouse, "wrapper".... and they will sleep: Igbo, Igbo, Igbo. And as for that fiery mobile rainbow with the lunatic red fighting the purple, the blue, the delinquent green and pink — all the colours waging war — you may bet your lost wife — sure you can pick up another in a tick, that it's a Fulani lady. But a frank pink or that restless yellow—that signals

the regal entry of the Yoruba lady, you say. But you may be proved wrong by Nigerian unity.



So you have to try the highly reliable walkie-talkie test. Bring, if you like, a million black people from all over the globe — all dressed in "wrapper". Let them take five steps. Then freeze their movements. Perhaps there are 200 "wrappers" on the ground, and a few hundred held like the wings of an eagle trying to land.

Then you can say with all confidence that you have spotted the Yorubas. But mind the style, though. The true Yoruba lady has one of the most emotive and stylish gaits the country can boast of and so never strips carelessly. The "wrapper" is tied in a post-classic loose knot and is expected to unfold gayly anytime the lady claps her palms in coy surprise, and this she does often. And the cloth slips down like a lady snake, to reveal the neatness and price tag of the undies.

It is an abomination for other Nigerian women to

do the wrapper back-drop, so to avoid trouble the Igboas take precaution. They secure the damned red thing with a thick twine. Okay, if you can't see the twine, how then can you pick an Igbo woman?

Have you seen the Mexican sombrero? You ha-

ven't seen anything yet. Then take a look at the engine of a Peugeot 305 car. With your mind's eye, turn this complicated machine into some shiny fabric and place it on the sombrero. Now offer this to as many women as you please. Whoever agrees to carry this yoke outside the boudoir must come from the land of the rising sun.

What about men? Well, the Nigerian man's fashion is quite dull, I must confess. These days even the southerners in flowing gown have learnt to do the butterfly swimming style, hitherto reserved for the dashing northerners. So you can't say that anyone seen hoisting his bejewelled arm, pinching a flank of his agbada before vengefully slamming it back, is from Kano or Mubi. Even your local Ijaw man gunning for the post of assistant treasurer at the Lagos Branch of the Ijaw Development Union can do that for you, with equal

gusto.

But the pride of Nigerian manhood — fashion-wise — is the South Easterner. This is a knotty case of glamour. Select some 100 black men from different ethnic groups and give each about 12 yards of "wrapper" to cover their natural blemish (an erudite Ibibio term for nakedness) with. You will find that at least two of the contestants will tie massive pillow-sized knots that sleep on the groins. The knot, you need no time to find out, is actually nearly the whole volume of the fabric. And two skinny African legs belonging to the bland Elik and Ibibio gens sprout out of the knots, sometimes exposing — should you be uncouth enough to look closely — their own natural blemish. However the ability to turn 12 yards into a mini (knotted) skirt is a feat, anyway. Look no further. The other 98 — hereinafter referred to as the less cultured — may cover even their ankles with the fabric if they like — but they are, you might agree, anything but fashionable.

A lot of Nigerians wonder why some queer passengers in cars or buses keep telling each other: "A-beg dress" or "dress down". What they do not know is that the term "A-beg dress" was first used by visitors to the old South Eastern State to remind the elegant gentlemen there that they were exposing their blemish. And shame on snooty visitors: not only is "a-beg dress" a nationally abused term, used these days on people sweating inside three-piece woolen suits, but — fire of fires! — our brothers in "Calabar" have now been forced to cover their blemish. Which, if you come to think of it, is a cultural shame.

By Nasaya Uko

Rough riding



of tradition becomes more distressing. Let us explain.

It happened at the launching organised to provide funds for the extension of the palace of that revered monarch, the Obong of Calabar. The emcee for the occasion set the tone of proceedings. Midway into his introductory speech, he

LET'S weave you some yarn, then try it on for size and see if it fits. The "Rough Rider" — a sizzling new movie which is claimed to be enjoying tremendous success abroad cannot be released in Nigeria because our Film Directors Association — F.D.A. (or is its Food and Drugs Administration? F.D.A. too) are still busy counting their toes. Now, how does that grab you? Well, if you don't have the balls to speak up, let's tell you the truth, the whole truth.

There is indeed something called the "Rough Rider" which is advertised as "the special condom that kills AIDS virus on contact." Now I bet that really grabs you somewhere. Anyway, it is a new condom alright and the story surrounding it could make a fairly good plot. But the claim of the condom's success or effectiveness can only be verified when you try it on for size (no puns intended).

The "Rough Rider" advertisement first clip-clopped onto the pages of some daily tabloids on December 1 — World AIDS Day (what brilliant coincidence). But the mischievous question is being raised whether the advert received the nod of approval from F.D.A. (guess which F.D.A.). The grapevine gist has it that the F.D.A. was approached by the manufacturers of "Rough Rider" condom, Bannacounti Exports Limited, England, for a marketing permit about five months ago. The F.D.A. which had no reagents to test the product samples, requested and received reagents from England.

But since then the F.D.A.'s feet appear stricken by bureaucratic elephantiasis. As at press time the F.D.A. was still being awaited to take a stand and refuse or confirm the claim of the "Rough Rider" advert. The delay is even more curious because the National Expert Advisory Committee on AIDS (NEACA) had held a meeting and decided to advise the F.D.A. to approve the condom for marketing. The condom has in fact received approval of sale in the US and Australia.

Interestingly, Health Minister, Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti believes the claim by "Rough Rider" is "just a clever advertising gimmick," and that he is "not aware of the existence of such a condom in Nigeria." Pray, are the F.D.A. and NEACA keeping the minister in the dark or something? Didn't health ministry officials observe the stampede on December 1 for the 720 samples of "Rough Rider" which were sent by Bannacounti to Nigeria as contribution to the World AIDS day?

Anshw, Nigerians who are anxious for more enlightenment might continue sitting in limbo (apologies to Jimmy Cliff) until F.D.A.'s elephantiasis is cured.

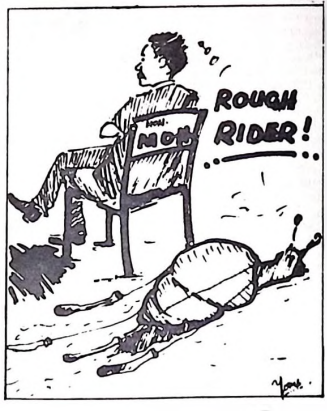
Phnetik Nansmiths II

It is an old story, of course. Colonial mentality. A Black from the hinterlands of Africa, places that would have scared a Mango Park, suddenly sprouts a dual personality and thinks he's a white man. He starts speaking in a very affected manner, sounding like someone who is being strangled slowly. Wole Soyinka would call it Phnetik Nansmiths.

Ordinarily, there's nothing particularly noteworthy about this. It has become so pervasive. We are daily assaulted by the affected mannerisms of been-tos and been-tos at heart on TV, radio, in airport announcements, almost everywhere. But colonial mentality when it invades the sanctuary

removed his glasses, looked in the direction of the Obong, before confessing to a grievous crime: the ancestors were left out of the agenda. He forgot to have libations poured. The error was frantically corrected, and the programme went on.

But the worst was yet to come. The co-emcee, a disc jockey with that great bastion of broadcasting, Radio Cross River ("this is the latest from Maikel Yackson...") was the problem. Her affected accent was so thick you could cut it with a knife. She tried to force laughs out of her helpless



victims (a.k.a guests) with desiccated jokes. And worst of all, in a place where proceedings should be conducted with the sober dignity that becomes royalty, our lady was rudely impatient "Clap for him," she would scream at the guests, "will you? Clap for him!"

The organisers of the event were understandably distressed at her antics. She was approached and told to go "yently, yently." For a few heavenly moments she complied. But you can't learn how to be left-handed in old age. She was soon back to her old tricks.

But the lady with the mike was not the only adverse portent to happen at the launching. Chief launcher of the occasion, Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu did not show up, and did not send any representative to explain his absence. But perhaps more surprising was the absence of Dr. Emmanuel Nsan, former health minister and a "shon of the shail". We only hope the Obong, in a show of royal goodwill will pardon him.



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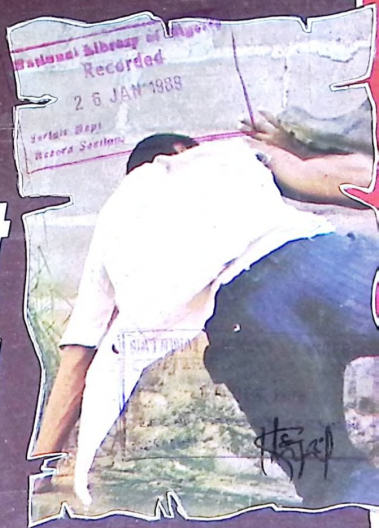
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DECEMBER 19, 1988

Human Rights In Nigeria

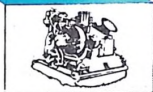
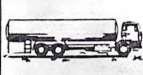
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HUMAN Rights are supposed to remain inalienable, inviolate as part of mankind's 'civilised' heritage. But exigencies do exist: natural or man-made in the case of wars or other emergencies when there may be a little tampering. The proviso is that such periods of aberration must be generally perceived as such, and should not merely be a function of the peculiar or whimsical definition of any small group of rulers. It would be a contradiction in terms then, for a government sustained on emergency regulations to profess a Human Rights policy of any viable kind.

Yet it has been fashionable for just about everybody, from President-for-life autocrats, through misguided revolutionaries to even military impostors, to vocally attribute to themselves supreme respect for the order. Side-by-side with draconian rules of detentions without trials, police harassments and man-

ipulation of the judicial system, despots everywhere proclaim Human Rights with dubious smiles.



Conditions in prisons are sub-human. The right of the people to decent livelihood is denied on the corruption-fed debauchery of their so-called leaders...the same

leaders... who, listen... are shouting HUMAN RIGHTS, at the roof top. It is a most cynical abuse, but the sadists insist we must celebrate!

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, *The African Guardian* makes an assessment of the Nigerian situation. Specifically, Acting Editor, Godwin Agbroko, the anchorman, observes that the standards anticipated for IBB's glorious pronouncements of 1985 have been systematically frustrated. Generally, there have been nearly as many rights violated as allowed. That, on the balance, seems to make the whole policy, untrustworthy, indeed... treacherous.

Andy Agbroko
Editor-in-Chief

Business & Economy

A loan package involving a consortium of 10 banks and two Nigerian subsidiaries of the Churchgate Group was put together in Lagos last week. And following the successful negotiation of the ₦45.2 million multi-credit syndication facility, there are indications that more corporate bodies will soon take a cue from the Churchgate example.

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International

The Soviet Union more than ever is ready to parley with the West on the issue of arms reduction. At the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, December 7, its leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, all but openly declared: "The Soviet Union has taken a decision to reduce its armed forces."

National Library of Nigeria
Recorded
Page 11

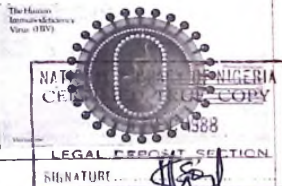
Society

Man, through early days to modern times, has come up against all forms of hazards: wars, diseases, natural disasters and other accidents.

But no danger has threatened and aroused the collective concern of mankind as the sexually transmitted disease — AIDS.

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The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)



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Publisher
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ANDY ANFORUGO

Editor
NDUKA IRABOR
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GODWIN AGBOGBO
Assistant Editor
OKEY ADEBI

Assistant Editors
CHURUMBEKA NANA, SUNNY BADOBRE, SI OMOFO

Senior Writers
WALT ARIKIN, ABRAHAM OPIE

Staff Writers
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Correspondent East and Southern Africa
KINGSLEY OSAGIOLOR

Correspondents
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BALAKEMISE WALLELUWA
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Reporter-Researching
JOSEPHINE ANAKA
DEBO ADESIKA, HARSHREY BEMURIN,
JOSHINWACE, LUCKY FARRA

Designers
TOBY OJALEN, TOSI MUGINA (MABATA)

Senior Production Sub-Editor
JEWELL BAINOYE

Production Sub-Editor
ADMIRE REGIS OLUOJA, EKPERI AFFIAH,
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Columnists
ADE SOYINKA, ABIE UZUFINI ANKA,
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Contributing Editors
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LETTERS

Bamu so!

The rulers of this country (traditional, religious or secular) should learn from the Sokoto uprising (November 21) that the masses of this country, whether from Ondo, Sokoto, Ilorin, Calabar or Degema, are no longer the idle poor that can be trampled upon with easy abandon.

What happened in the Philippines and Algeria can take place right here. Guns, bazookas and tanks do not rule alone. They have their limits when they meet their match — the peoples' resilience!

Wellington Eterebo,
Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Your cover on Sultan Dasuki's succession woes was done with depth and breadth. One enigma you did not advert your attention to, though, is the rise by stealth, in significance and power in this country of a throne that should have been the preoccupation of the descendants of Dan Fodio and the people he captured in the name of Islam.

Equally irksome is the naked interest displayed by the government in the succession struggle to this supposedly religious office. In one bit, the government exhorts religious tolerance and a down-play of religious issues in the country; and in another, it is completely immersed in the same religious intrigues.

Obviously, this attitude of the government makes a visioner of George Orwell who claimed in *Nineteen-Eight-Four* that governance is essentially a business of double-think, and, of course, double-talk.

Inemo Oruebimiekumo,
Victoria Island, Lagos.

Democracy (not *democracy*) is fast usurping dictatorial enthronement of leaders in this country. The earlier the ruling class realizes this, the better; or they will pay dearly for it, as is the case with the losses, both of government and elite property, in the Sokoto show of people's power.

Morenikeji Folurosun,
Abeokuta Ogun State.

Whoever still thinks that the Talakawas are still a bundle of illiterate people who know not their left from their right should learn from the Sokoto episode.

Linus Ochei,
Makurdi, Benue State.



The blood and fire that greeted the selection (or was it election) of Dasuki as the Sultan of Sokoto grips one with fear: If this culture of imposing unpopular men as leaders on a people continues into the 3rd Republic, it is as good as asking the young colonels to stand by for another dawn-broadcast of "1, Colonel or Brigadier..."

Mathias Sonyo,
Benin, Bendel State

There could not have been a better indictment of the country's traditional rulership institution than the protestation and agitations heralding the imposition of Dasuki as the new Sultan. It shows quite glaringly the undemocratic nature and corruption of the institution. The only consolation though is that now the mass of the people are aware: They know what they want. It is a very progressive development.

Dasuki could not have been more wrong than when he said: "We won together." No. He won, mean while. Nasiru Aji Magaju,
Kano.

I must protest against the unnecessary focus on Sharia and religion (October 24, and November 21). This is a nation where hunger ravages the populace ceaselessly; where natural disaster strikes the poor masses yearly and where governments indulge in deceit. It numbs one that you ignore these critical issues while highlighting religion.

Jude Etuk,
Aba, Imo State

Tangled tale of numbers

I have just read your story captioned "Tangled tale of numbers" with a nd-

er: "Population Commission complains of cash crunch, lack of personnel, red-tapism" (December 5, 1988).

Your reporter must have gone somewhere else to procure the inaccurate figures and sums in your story. How could the National Population Commission in which I am charged with Public Affairs be said to be complaining when just a day or two before your interview with us in our premises, the entire commission had just had a conference with the Chief of General Staff on all major areas of assistance to the Commission? Besides, the CGS was most generous with his grace on that occasion at which prominent and key figures in this administration (including the SFMG, two ministers and top aides) were present.

Tola Adeniyi,
Lagos.

Apology

In the cover page of our issue of 12 th June 1986 under the caption "ICAN indicts Peat, Marwick and Co.," we referred to an article published at pages 9 and 10 under the subtitle "Full disclosure, trouble over oil accounts — audit firms squabble over who takes a look at the NNPC's books.

Consequent upon the said publication, the firm of auditors, Messrs Peat, Marwick, Ani and Ogunde and Co., commenced an action for libel against us in Suit No. LD/1547/86 in the High Court of Lagos State.

The African Guardian has now re-examined the publication concerned and reassessed its position in the matter. It has, therefore, decided to, and hereby retracts in its entirety, the alleged offending statement contained in the said publication, particularly the allegations made on pages 9 and 10 of the publication along with the insinuations specifically complained about.

The African Guardian regrets that the publication was ever made and unreservedly retracts the publication and apologises to Messrs Peat, Marwick, Ani, Ogunde & Co. for any embarrassment which the said publication had caused them.

— Editor

Address Letters to the Editor, typewritten double-space, with writer's name, address and, if available telephone number, to: *The African Guardian*, Post Office Box, P.M.B. 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria. Letters subject to editing.



In NEC's neck

THE local government election scheduled for December 1989, may run into a hitch from an unexpected quarter. Apparently pressed for cash, almost all the chairmen of the 304 local government councils are unyieldingly asking the National Electoral Commission (NEC), to refund to them money their predecessors spent in constructing polling booths during the last local government election.

For instance, the Mushin and Ikeja councils in Lagos State, each spent little above a whopping ₦1 million; while the elections cost the Lagos Island Local Government Council the sum of ₦600,000.00. In Bendel State, the Warri Local Government Council spent ₦81,150, while the, Akko Local Government Council in Bauchi State spent ₦100,000.

An official of the Ikeja Local Government Council said the various council chairmen in the state have asked the Lagos State Electoral Commission to pick up the tab, but it would appear the commission is not ready to touch the bills even with a long pole because of a technical point raised by the state's Electoral Commissioner, Reverend Kayode Cadmus. Cadmus told *The African Guardian* that NEC will not honour the bills because there was no official letter from NEC authorising the expenditure. "If the councils can



• Tony Iredia and (right) Cadmus. NEC will pay it.

produce a written authority to spend money on behalf of NEC, then we will pay", he says.

This seems to be the stand of other electoral commissioners in the states. Nevertheless, all hopes seem not lost. Mr. Tonic Iredia, NEC's director of Public Affairs, unlike Cadmus, says NEC is not repudiating the debts. He promises that NEC will pay the affected local government councils when it gets money from the Federal Government. He however does not know when Iredia's position tallies with that of NEC's Chairman, Professor Eme Awa, who had told reporters in Lagos, March 27, that NEC will pay the bills, though Awa gave the impression that repayment was going to be immediate.

But it appears the councils have exhausted their patience, and are understood to be unwilling to co-operate with the commission during the next local government election. The consensus is that the chairmen will use the available funds to provide facilities for the citizens rather than commit them to the conduct of any election. Says one council official in Mushin: "If we have got this money it would have helped us in our road construction project."

According to NEC officials, the councils have already started flexing muscles. Last July, NEC understandably approached the government for a life line of ₦24 million for the purchase of vehicles and materials for a update, display and printing of voters' register, but the government was said to have dished out a negligible ₦2 million. To make up for the huge short-fall, state electoral commissioners were asked to approach their respective state governments and councils for financial assistance, but the overture was said to be rebuffed because many of the states and councils complained that NEC was still owing them the money spent during the last local government election. It seems to be a veritable case of tit for tat.

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Winds of change

HERE clings in my memory a picture that appeared in the *Nigerian Tribune* about six months ago (the precise date does not matter) of a scene that would have been considered obscene if not downright abominable just five years ago. In it, the protagonist of the "Better Life for Rural Women" in a state just north of the Niger, at the head of a delegation of her cohorts, is standing before a paramount traditional ruler in the state, a man of great eminence, lecturing him on the plans and programmes and achievement of her association, and on what traditional steps it proposes to take to mobilize the women of the area for a better life.

She is dressed in a fetching-style pair of traditional trousers with a matching blouse and she is talking with an animation and a confidence that must have made the heart of His Royal Highness miss a couple of beats, despite her being the state governor's wife.

What has the world come to? His Royal Highness and his courtiers must have wondered and wondered, even as they put up patiently with what must have seemed to them a gratuitous insult. This woman, if the court had its way, would be back in the back-rooms of the executive mansion tending her babies, anticipating her master's — beg your pardon, her husband's — every wish and gratifying it even before he has so much as cleared his throat to express it. So it has always been. So it should remain if the world is not to come to a cataclytic end.

Surely, it was vehemently to be deplored that her husband, who ought to know better, is conniving at this gross instance of apostasy and indiscipline, when all that was required was assertion of his fore-ordained dominance over her and may be, a good and proper spanking would have put her squarely in her place — deep in the bowels of the executive mansion.

May be I misjudge His Royal Highness and his courtiers horribly. Being at bottom warm-blooded men, perhaps they were agreeably titillated by the spectacle and were calculating how such women might be incorporated into the royal household to make it come alive. But I have my doubts. I am almost certain they could not have

been amused in the least. If that was what the "better life" was all about, perhaps they should be wary of it.

In Pakistan, it was different, of course. But I wonder whether similar thoughts are not agitating the minds of the fundamentalists, the self-appointed law-givers who hold it as the ultimate abomination that Benazir Bhutto should not only lead the nation's major political party to victory in Pakistan's recent general elections but should actually be called upon to head the government of an avowed Islamic state.

Not even the compromises she has had to make in her life-style are likely to mollify these sociological artificers. Her arranged marriage in the best Pakistani tradition, her new status as a mother; her distinctly Islamic mode of dressing; these are likely to be dismissed as mere cosmetics. Her

"Following Benazir Bhutto's stunning victory in Pakistan, those who, there and elsewhere, cling to religious dogma to resist change risk being engulfed in a permanent crisis, or worse, being swept into the dustbin of history."

education at Oxford and Harvard (thank Allah she did not study at the London School of Economics or at the Sorbonne, with digs at the Latin Quarter, they will forever remind fellow fundamentalists) cannot but have turned her away irretrievably from the path of Islam. After all, the Kennedys with whom she was quite friendly in Boston are not the best advertisements for Catholicism. So, how can she in good conscience claim to be a true follower of Allah?

Besides, will she not be blinded by the desire to avenge the death by execution of her father? Zia ul-Haq, the architect of this unspeakable political betrayal has, it is true, come to a gruesome and unlamented end. But what of his family and his confederates, those who enabled him clamp a grinding and sterile dictatorship on Pakistan? Will she spare them? In fact, would it not be better to stop her somehow?

The lady ain't for stopping. Given the size of her victory — just 10 fewer

than the 104 seats required for an absolute majority in Pakistan's 207-member parliament, stopping her would have raised grave questions whatever remained of the honour of the ruling military government which had promised to respect the outcome of the elections, and would have precipitated a greater crisis than they were trying to solve. And when the American and Soviet ambassadors reached out to Miss Bhutto in ways normally reserved for heads of government, it was clear that she was unstoppable.

And so, nine years after the judicial murder of her illustrious father, despite exile and detention and every conceivable form of harassment and humiliation Zia could exact on the Bhutto family, their teeming admirers have, in recognition of her courage and her commitment to the betterment of Pakistan, given Benazir the mantle of leadership. She stands splendidly vindicated, while her family's traducer had been reduced to an inglorious adjunct to the history of Pakistan. What more can she ask for?

THERE is a lesson in all this, I hope, for our local Ayatollahs. One of them, perhaps the most notorious among them, once declared that he would never subject himself to the political rule of a woman. Now, his constituency is represented in Kaduna Local Government by a woman who is not even a moslem! If he has any complaints about the way the council is being run, can he bring himself to complain to her, or will he just sulk in silence? Clearly, he has painted himself into a corner.

In a speech before the South African parliament in 1960, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan spoke of a "wind of change" blowing over Africa, transforming former colonies into independent states. He urged his hosts to sway with the wind. They chose to resist change and have never known any peace since then.

Following Benazir Bhutto's stunning victory in Pakistan, those who, there and elsewhere, cling to religious dogma to resist change risk being engulfed in a permanent crisis, or worse, being swept into the dustbin of history.

ARGENTINA

The looming shadow

Alfonsín survives another military face off, but the threat remains

AT a point, the four-day military insurrection almost degenerated into an open clash between the revolting, heavily-armed, soldiers and stone-wielding civilians. Even as loyalist troops and policemen had taken up positions around the rebel headquarters (the Villa Martilla base) late last week, hundreds of angry, slogan-chanting civilians still managed to break through the military cordon, rushing into the army base and hauling stones and a string of obscenities at the mutineering soldiers. It took several canisters of teargas and warning shots fired into the air by the rebels to dislodge the crowd. In the ensuing melee, three people, including a policeman were killed. Over 30 others sustained injuries.

Although, the civilians (mainly from the densely populated areas around the Villa Martilla military base, near Buenos Aires) were quickly evacuated, the significance of their bravery was not lost on many. It came as an indication that the now frequent wave of rebellion by a section of the Argentine army was no longer an entirely military affair (last week's mutiny

was the fourth within the past two years). Civilians, in an apparent attempt to resist a forced exit of their five-year-old democracy and a return of military dictatorship, have become part of the evolving Argentine political drama. In a rare show of solidarity with the government of President Raul Alfonsín (installed in 1983), a crowd of over 100,000 people was said to have rallied outside the presidential palace and the congress assemblies, and remained there for the greater part of the four days (December 2 — 5) the rebellion raged.

Leader of the uprising, Mohammed Ali Seineldin, an army colonel, had claimed that his intention was not to overthrow the government. Accord-

ing to him, his "exclusively military goals" were to restore the "army's honour". Among other things, Col. Seineldin, who was also said to have played a part in the three previous revolts, had demanded (just as the rebels did in the past) for the unconditional release of all military officers indicted for human rights abuses between 1976 and 1983. This was when the country reeled under harsh, military dictatorship and a fierce internal war against leftist guerrillas.

However, beneath this apparent motivation by *esprit de corps* lies what analysts say is a thirst for power by young military officers. In recent



Alfonsín in the situation of the military

times, a crop of the Argentine army officers — especially the younger generation — have been irked by what they see as a systematic plan by the civilian government to "destroy the military." They complain particularly of the severe cut in military spending by President Alfonsín (it was slashed by half when he took over). There is also the long-drawn battle over the army officers who were involved in human rights abuses and undue brutality during the eight years of military rule. The point raised by the young officers is that there was no justification in punishing a soldier for offences committed in the course of his national duty, particularly when the country was in a state of internal war (the sol-

diers were fighting leftist guerrillas and other alleged anti-government elements).

The snag, however, is that the civilian administration of President Alfonsín has largely remained unmoved. The nearest they have come to listening to the soldiers was early this year when they decided to exempt from trial only those officers who were not directly in command. This came following the military uprisings in April 1987, and January 1988. But the bulk of the demands by the revolting soldiers, including their request for salary increases and new equipment have been "categorically rejected" by the authorities who, perhaps, see all these as natural out-cry of a previously over-pampered military.

Even as negotiations were on early last week to end the Seineldin-led rebellion, the government had said it was sticking to its past no-deal stance.

"We have not made any concessions of any sort," Alfonsín had announced, insisting that his Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Jose Dante Cardi, who the rebels want replaced, would remain in his post. Alfonsín's assurance notwithstanding, speculations were rife that to eventually bring the rebels to put away their weapons last Monday, the government had actually entered into a secret deal with them. In fact, reports were that the government and the re-

bels had agreed, among other things, to a two-week truce during which no sanctions would be taken against the mutineers. Col. Seineldin, who had flown into the country from his military post in Panama to lead the revolt is, according to the reports, also to be put away in protective custody.

Going by government's version (that no deals were struck with Col. Seineldin), however, indications are that it is only a question of time before another bunch of rebels resurface. The conditions which hatched last week's insurrection (and the past three revolts) still remain largely unaltered.

By Emanike Okorie



• Angola's Dos Santos, Botha: A new round of confusion

ANGOLA/NAMIBIA

Spanner in the wheel

Pretoria walks out of talks, dashes hopes of earlier accord

HOPES were quite high. The peace protocol had been drafted. All that remained to be done was the insertion of a few details here and there, especially an operational time table for the implementation of Namibia's independence. And as the Cuban, Angolan and South African delegates arrived Brazzaville, the Congolese capital, Thursday, December 1, speculations were that the agreement could be signed Saturday.

The date (Saturday) however, came and passed but there was no accord. In fact, there was a discord. The upbeat tempo that had greeted the opening of negotiations Friday had, only a few hours later, acquired a slow, dull pace. This followed the arrival in Brazzaville of South Africa's foreign and defence ministers, Roelof "Pik" Botha and Magnus Malan. The ministers had come in with last minute objections over verification procedures for the withdrawal of the 50,000 Cuban troops from Angola. And soon, the officials were on their way back to the racist enclave, along with the rest of the South African delegation — thus, bringing to an eventful end the 10th negotiation session which, only a few hours earlier, had held so much promise.

Foreign Minister "Pik" Botha, who announced Pretoria's abrupt and surprising withdrawal from the meeting gave no detailed reason for the action. He had only spoken of "amber of outstanding issues", especially over the



• Cuba's Castro: Not ready to take chances

question of Cuban withdrawal from Angola. But the United States Assistant Secretary of State, Chester Crocker, the chief mediator of the talks, later explained that the South Africans had only temporarily withdrawn to enable them to assuage a wave of internal criticisms over the impending accord. He had assured that Pretoria would soon be back on the negotiation table.

Crocker may be right. The fact, observers say, is that the racist boss, P.W. Botha, seems to have been caught in a somewhat political fix. He is believed to be under pressure from the United States to continue to negotiate. (The Soviets, on the other hand, have also been spurring Angola and Cuba on). But Botha, at the same time, is said to be under even greater pressure from the conservatives and the military at home to discontinue, or at least, slow down the tempo of the talks. While the conservatives insist that the authorities were making so much concessions to Angola and Cuba, the South African military are disturbed by the dangers posed by granting independence to Namibia, with some Cuban troops still in neighbouring Angola.

This, perhaps, explains why Pretoria at the onset of the talks had pressed for complete withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola as a precondition for the implementation of Namibian independence. Everybody had, however, later settled for a 27 month evacuation period, with three-quarters of the troops leaving in the first 12 months of the withdrawal period. (The UN-supervised elections in Namibia is to be organised over a seven month period).

Now, the major obstacle which led to last week's disruption of the talks was over a fool-proof method of verifying Cuban pull-out. At earlier rounds of talks, South Africa had accepted that it could not participate in the verification (to be done by the United Nations) because this would seem an affront on Angolan sovereignty.

But, perhaps, out of internal political pressures, and the unsubstantiated allegation by the Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi, that over 20,000 Cuban troops have planned to stay back in Luanda as naturalised Angolan citizens, Pretoria has changed its mind. It presently says it must first endorse the UN verification arrangements if it is to continue with the peace process.

By Emenika Okorie

LIBYA

Getting back in the fold

Gaddafi mends fences with his neighbours

THERE was a time when Colonel Mouammar Gaddafi's isolation from the rest of the world was beginning to look like a hopeless case. He was not even having diplomatic links with his nearest neighbours. Of late, however, Gaddafi has been making efforts to ensure that he does not fall right over the brink. Rifts that have kept Libya away from her neighbours are beginning to heal.

Barely three months after the Ndjamena-Tripoli peace agreement, authorities in Cairo announced, December 4, the re-opening of the air space between it and Libya to commercial aircraft, after some nine years of closure. The announcement was made in reaction to Tripoli's earlier peace offer.

Gaddafi, just a month ago, reopened Libya's land, air and sea borders with Egypt. The Libya-Egypt rapprochement began over the issue of peace with Israel. Gaddafi has always believed

in the idea of a total war to wipe out Israel, and has shown this in his economic and military assistance (even when other Arab states have relatively softened their stands in the past few years), to Palestinian resistance fighters. In this wise, Egypt's dramatic withdrawal (almost at the very beginning) from the Palestinian struggle to make peace with Israel, seen then as Arabs' greatest foe, was not only condemned by Libya, but by the entire Arab world as a betrayal of Arab interest. And until late last year, a majority of Arab states strained relations with Egypt.

However, Gaddafi who wanted nothing short of the disappearance of the state of Israel was by far more enamoured in his condemnation of the Egyptian move. As far back as April 1974, Egypt was accusing Libya of being behind efforts by rebels to seize the Heliopolis military Academy at Cairo, and of funding a sabotage and

assassination plot against President Anwar al-Sadat, then Egyptian President.

The Libya-Egypt re-union is coming at a time when Libya has made extensive efforts to normalise relations with a number of African nations. Only last October, Gaddafi signed a truce with Chad, thus ending three years of guerrilla warfare in northern Chad. He even openly regretted Libya's role in the conflict. "Libya's intervention in the conflict harmed us," he had said in a broadcast immediately after the peace arrangement. Even now, negotiations are going on between Sudan and Libya on the issue of a political merger.

Observers point out that Libya's decision to resume ties with Egypt was largely informed by the latter's recognition of the state of Palestine, declared last month by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). With the latest Libyan move, Syria and Lebanon are the only Arab states that are yet to normalise relations with Egypt since the Camp David accord.

By Abraham Ogbodo

GHANA

New hope for democracy

Successful district elections renew Ghanaians' hope for civil rule

TO his admirers, at least, the exercise can be explained away as the first definite step towards the revolutionary political culture Jerry Rawlings vowed for long to bequeath. In fact, the largely successful December 5 district elections in four of the 10 provinces in the country were a major part of an evolving structure designed to extend the central government in Accra to the grassroots. Voters in four regions (Ashanti, Central, Eastern and Western Region,) trooped to the polling booths to exercise their civic rights after nine years of forceful denial under military dictatorship. The new organ — District Assembly — shall be charged with the responsibility for local development.

What is not clearly shown in the latest move, however, is any discernible time-table for the return to civil rule, unlike what now obtains in Nigeria, for instance. In fact, embassy sources in Lagos caution that the move should not be misconstrued as a return to civil rule. "It is aimed at decentralis-



• Rawlings: Commitment to revolutionary political culture

ing government ministries and parastatals and at taking some functions (executive, legislative and deliberative) to the grass-root people", one embassy official emphasised. The election also is aimed at making local political process readily accessible. Part of the conditions waived as criteria for eligibility to run for office included ability to speak English and ability to read

and write. Open canvassing for votes was prohibited and choice was entirely based on the laudability of candidates' pre-election proposal.

On the whole, government is to appoint one third of the Assemblymen (two thirds were elected). The 10 regions have been divided into three electoral zones. The Ashanti, Central, Eastern and Western Regions are the first on the electoral time-table expected to last from now till February next year. The remaining zones will go to the polls between January and February.

Initially, Rawlings had appeared to favour Nigeria's transition to civil rule programme. He even sent a high-powered delegation to Lagos in April to hold discussions with members of the Armed Forces Ruling Council and the Electoral Commission (NEC). The leader of the delegation, Justice Daniel Francis Annah, Chairman of the Defence of Ghana's Revolution told reporters in Lagos during the visit that PNDC (Provisional National Defence Council) under Rawlings was still studying the recommendations of Nigerian Political Bureau and was likely to adopt a democracy "based on national consensus with room for dissent and constructive criticism but without formal opposition".

Dramatic initiative

Gorbachev jolts the West with unilateral arms reduction

MIKHAIL Sergeyevich Gorbachev ordinarily has a knack for seizing the high political ground. But this one was something else. "I can report today," declared the Soviet leader mid-way into his hour-long speech at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, December 7, "that the Soviet Union has taken a decision to reduce its armed forces." Then, to banish all doubts his listeners might have had about the announcement, he quickly chipped in. "This will be done unilaterally."

By the sheer weight of the historic proclamation, the Soviet leader (the first to address the United Nations in 28 years) will, indeed, be altering not just the global military balance between the Warsaw Pact and the West, but also the character of Soviet defence planning itself. The overall package represents a major substantive reduction of Soviet conventional forces. Gorbachev proposed a two-year unilateral reduction by 500,000 in the Soviet armed forces, roughly 10 per cent of the total, according to Western sources. Fifty thousand are to be withdrawn from Hungary, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Ten thousand tanks (the highest percentage of Soviet tanks overseas) 28,500 artillery pieces and 800 combat aircraft stationed in the Soviet territory west of the Urals and in Hungary, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia are also to be withdrawn under the Gorbachev arrangement.

Back in Washington, London and other European capitals, the West, upstaged again by the Soviet leader, ginged up to square up to the dramatic initiative. President Reagan agreed that "if it is carried out with speed and in full," it will be "a significant step". Privately though, the Americans had hoped that Gorbachev would not come up with any new initiatives, considering that Reagan is now a lame duck president without clout to act and that the incoming president, Vice President George Bush is yet to put his government together. Thus Bush said at Governor's Island (New York harbour) where he and Reagan had talks with Gorbachev for two hours, after his (Gorbachev's) UN speech, that he made it clear to the Soviet leader that "we need time". Still, the president

elect added that the initiative, in his own words, "won't bring a balance of forces."

Secretary of State, George Shultz confirmed that nothing concrete was discussed at the Governor's Island talks and that Bush, at any rate, did not go there with any of his senior aides. Shultz himself called the initiative "a significant step in the right direction," while arguing that it would not amount to "a reduction in Soviet superiority in Europe." Former



• Gorbachev: Historic proclamation

Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, described the proposals as a basis for relations in the post-Reagan era. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said they are "a positive step forward".

The gloomiest assessment of the initiative came from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Secretary General, Manfred Woerner welcomed the cutbacks, but charged that they do not go far enough in ending the Warsaw Pact's offensive capacity. "They do not eliminate Soviet superiority and do not establish a stable balance," he said at the beginning of a two-day NATO foreign ministers' meeting, December 8. NATO wants large asymmetrical reductions by the Warsaw Pact because it says the Eastern bloc has a two-to-one or three-to-one superiority in tanks, long-range artillery, combat aircraft and assault brigades.

Although the proposals are going to remain contentious at the level of

NATO-Warsaw Pact diplomacy, experts believe that both sides are likely to find a common ground in respect of some of the other ideas. Gorbachev's proposals about peace in Afghanistan — including ceasefire by January 1, ending of arms supplies to the warring groups, and UN supervision of the election of a broad-based government — are seen as realistic options. His position that the UN should play a greater role in the settlement of regional disputes enjoys broad support. It is also being suggested that while Gorbachev needs less defence spending, money will be available for tackling pressing domestic problems. Bush also has large deficits to reduce and may thus be in need of less defence spending like the Soviet leader. He will certainly find it difficult to defend



• Reagan: Now lame duck president

new defence increases at a time the Soviets are cutting down on military spending.

Experts are convinced that for the Soviets reduction of tension and the subsequent scaling down of defence spending are part of the efforts that have to be made to liberate resources for on-going economic modernisation. In fact since the signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) treaty one year ago, the Soviet leadership has insisted that consumer needs must take priority over military requirements. Two months ago Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov instructed his ministers to "help us carry the conversion of industry away from "war footing".

The problem, of course, is that little consensus exists for now over the new policy direction. Resistance within the military to the cutbacks is said to be high, raising questions about the reported "honourable retirement" of armed forces chief of staff, Marshal

Sergei Akhromyev, 65, now Gorbachev's personal adviser on arms control. Defence Minister Dmitri Yazov also reportedly threatened to resign over the cut-backs.

A different problem is the high degree of uncertainty in the country about the consequence of the *perestroika* and *glasnost* programmes. Besides, ethnic unrests in the southern republics of Christian Armenia and Muslim Azerbaijan worsened last week, with the Kremlin charging publicly that party and government officials were the brain behind the racially-biased evictions and sacks there. In another development, the parliament in the

non-Russian republic of Estonia gave itself the power to reject laws made by Moscow, amidst growing secessionist agitation in the area.

Then, as these unexpected crises threatened to get out of hand, news reached Gorbachev in New York that an earth-quake (the most powerful in the Caucasus region in 80 years) had hit the troubled Armenia, killing an estimated 30,000 people, December 7. Immediately, the Soviet leader and his delegation (including wife Raisa and foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze) cancelled the trip that would have taken them to Cuba and Britain.

In the disaster-region itself, Spitak, a town of 50,000, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) north of Yerevan, the Armenian capital, was completely destroyed. In the second largest city in the republic Leninakan, more than 60 children were buried in debris.

Growing domestic problems are clearly beginning to test Gorbachev's political acumen to the limit. Experts say that the various political crises facing him can only hurt his credibility in his dealings with a West that is yet to make up its mind on whether or not to help him.

By Chukwuemeka Gahla

POSTCARD

ALGERIA:

Military shake up

A strong wind has blown Algeria's military high command. No section of the nation's armed forces was spared. But, perhaps, the Navy and the Airforce (which lost their chiefs) were the most affected. All but one of the commanders of the nation's military re-



• Benjedid

gions were also replaced.

These radical changes in the Algerian top military hierarchy — the first ever by President Chadli Benjedid — were unveiled early last week. The reshuffle was seen as part of the general reform of the Algerian political system embarked on by the President, following last October's street riots in Algiers, the capital city, against government's recently-introduced austerity measures. The highest

military post — the Inspector General of the Armed Forces — now goes to General Muhammed Alalia.

PLO/ISRAEL

Still a cat-and-mouse game

• THE problem is that the Israeli authorities (and Americans for that matter) do not just appear willing to give the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) a chance. Last week in Stockholm, Sweden, the PLO boss, Yasser Arafat, meeting with some US Jews, reiterated the recognition of the right of the Jewish state of Israel to exist alongside a Palestinian state. He also re-affirmed PLO's rejection and condemnation of terrorism in all its forms. This came as a clarification of the Palestine National Council's earlier declaration in Algeria.

But, just as the Israeli leaders did early last month (after the Algiers resolution), they once again rejected Arafat's statement in Sweden. "The PLO can declare what it wants," Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had announced in a television interview late Wednesday, "its philosophy remains the destruction of the state of Israel." Foreign minister Shimon Peres also dismissed Arafat's clarifications as mere "public relations exercise," which are not "a true policy choice." On his own part, Secretary of State, George Shultz, who late last month refused to grant Arafat a visa to enable him to travel to New York to address a UN General



• Arafat

Assembly on Palestine, said that for the PLO to be recognised by the U.S. as representative of the Palestinians, and be included in the Middle East talks, it must first renounce terrorism and make its recognition of Israel more explicit.

MOZAMBIQUE:

Puzzling gift from Pretoria

SOMEHOW, everybody who heard the news knew it was queer, if not laughable. Last week, it was announced that Pretoria had recently delivered some logistical support to Mozambique to assist the country in its fight against terrorism (especially against the Renamo bandits). The puzzle was: how could South Africa which, with one hand, destabilises Mozambique, at the same time, offer military support to Mozambicans?

In spite of the existing

non-aggression pact (the Nkomati accord) between the two countries, Pretoria has, in recent times, been accused of still carrying war into the Mozambican territory. And, although the authorities have denied the accusation, Pretoria has not been able to fully exonerate itself from allegations that it had a hand in the death of former Mozambican leader, Samora Machel.

In all, analysts believe that President Chissano may have been pushed to strike a deal with Pretoria out of the nation's present political and military exigencies. These factors, it is said, have also accounted for the existing (though politically untenable) economic dependence of Mozambique on racist South Africa.



• Chissano

Toast of the moment

Iyayi raises distinct voice in the "Culture of silence"

THE British Airways Flight BAO 75 due to arrive at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos at 7.30 p.m. local time on Thursday, December 8, had an honoured passenger on board. Dressed in grey suit and brown overcoat, the thought uppermost in the passenger's mind was to go quickly through customs facilities on arrival at the airport, check in into a friend's place in the city, and depart the following day to his family—a family he had missed for about 10 days—in Benin City.

The flight arrived the airport on schedule. The passenger, a writer with growing international stature, was returning from a ceremony at the Royal Overseas League, Park Place, London. The ceremony was actually the conferment of this year's Commonwealth Writers' Prize for prose on the writer, Festus Iyayi, which was worth £10,000 (about ₦100,000).

At the arrival lounge, he finds himself immediately at the centre of journalists and press photographers and a small welcome party. "I am overwhelmed", says Iyayi. "I thought I would just come in quietly" Grace.

his shy bespectacled wife, a hospital administrator at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) steps forward and the couple embrace, Iyayi goes on to receive congratulatory handshakes from Dr. Tunde Fatunde, comrade-in-arms, as well as play-wright and activist, Odia Ofeimun, former general secretary of the Association of Nigerian Authors, ANA Professor Ise Sagay who came with his wife Sheila and Mrs. Felicia Omene, wife of former provost of the College of Medicine, UBTH, the last two gentlemen referred to having, like Iyayi, been axed from the University of Benin at one time or the other. Representatives of Longman, Iyayi's publishers, were present as well as Adekunle Omowole and Kuteyi Semu, from Gani Fawehinmi Chambers, who read a mes-

sage from Gani acknowledging the significance of the award "at a time when genuine and committed radicals are being hunted, hounded and persecuted..."

One of the first questions of the former ASUU President was "What about the trade union leaders? Are they still in detention?" He was still his normal self with no extra slouch to his shoulders. While waiting for his luggage to arrive by conveyor belt, he replied to the barrage of questions from journalists. "I think the government will be embarrassed" he said, asked what he felt would be the authorities' reaction to the award. On the possibility of the government sending him a letter of congratulation, he said: "I didn't receive any. I don't expect any".

On the prize: "From the literary point of view, it is a recognition of the kind of literature that I write. It also imposes more responsibilities on me as a writer. One has to take his writing more seriously. Quite frankly, there is a lot of good writing coming out of Nigeria. The rest of the world is being forced to pay attention to what we are doing. What we are doing here is con-

tributing to the development of culture as a whole."

On whether he might join the brain drain: "I believe we should stay in this country. I have no intention of leaving. We should stay here and fight it out. One understands why people are leaving. The question of setting up a committee on brain drain is purely diversionary. The government knows the answer. They must fund research, create the conditions in which professionals, like medical doctors, can really work. Existing conditions do not encourage professionals to stay."

There is a culture of silence that has been imposed on this country. That is one of the reasons why people leave—to be in an atmosphere of free speech. We must abandon the IMF and rely on our internal resources. As I said on my return, there are over 100 million people in Nigeria. It is like having 100 megawatts of energy. But there are people in the government who do not want this society to grow."

While in Britain, Iyayi had a 30-minute audience with the Queen of England, Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace. The author whose award-winning work, *Heroes*, deals with the Nigerian civil war, expressed displeasure to the monarch about British policies on South Africa.

Commenting on the award, his friend, Tunde Fatunde, a lecturer in his

sociology of literature at the University of Benin said: "I feel very grateful because Festus has been able to demonstrate that he is a radical and a literary force to be reckoned with. This award is a cultural, literary and political rehabilitation of Festus, his friends and ongoing campaign of blackmail, slander of hatred being organised by both top government officials and top university administrators, especially at the University of Benin."

Longman held a reception for Iyayi at its offices in Ikeja, Lagos. The company had secured the licence from the parent company in London for the local release for *Heroes*, which is not available on the bookstands.

Byisi Omofia



• Iyayi (centre): arrives Lagos. It imposes more responsibility on me"

Hard road to new states

Constituent Assembly fail to make it easier for agitators

SEEN from the Press Gallery which overlooks it, the auditorium of the International Conference Centre, Abuja, was at 1.46pm last Monday, slightly less dishevelled than a wrestling ring. Two parallel queues of Constituent Assembly members, both starting from the back of the auditorium snake outside: one through the door to Justice Anthony Aniogolu's (rtd) right, the other to the left. Other members are variously engaged — arguing, mending, cajoling and even physically pulling others to one of the two queues.

A couple of others, like traffic policemen, are frantically waving their arms as they try to direct their undecided colleagues. Ben Bosah (Idemili, Anambra State) runs from one part of the auditorium to the other, as he tries to persuade his colleagues to join the queue to Aniogolu's right. Ango Abdullahi (Zaria North-West, Kaduna State) seemingly undecided, sat on his chair oblivious of the lobbyist.

Nda Okuwa (Abak, Akwa-Ibom State) endures the attention of lobbyists from the different camps, pulling him in different directions at once. Gameliel Eli (Noman, Gongola State) and Rose Obooforbo (nominated) are engaged in a friendly tug of war, the "bride" Iyanam U. Iyanam nominated. Traditional rulers with inscrutable faces sit unmoving amidst the commotion.

By 2.11 it was all over. The Constituent Assembly had decided on a provision likely to have far-reaching implications for the Third Republic. After an inconclusive "voice vote" the question of whether Section 9 subsection 1(C) of the Constitution Review Committee (CRC) report should be left out as proposed by committee three of the CA was put to the vote by "division". Those who walked out through the door to the chairman's left to signify opposition to the motion were overwhelmingly more — 188; while those in favour were 95. There was one abstention.

The bottom line: The CA has decided to make the conditions for state creation much more stringent. The clause retained will definitely give sleepless nights to state creation agitators. For example, the first part of the clause gives two conditions that must be satisfied before a new state is cre-



• A cross section of the C.A. members: Tough decisions to make

ated. Firstly, two-thirds of members representing the affected areas in the National Assembly must be in support of it.

Secondly, a referendum must be held to prove that the proposal has the support of two thirds of those who live in the area. But sub-clause 1(C) which the assembly voted on last Monday may be the last nail in the coffin of many a new state proposal. In addition to the first two conditions, it says that: "The result of the referendum is then approved by a simple majority of all the states in the federation supported by a simple majority of members of the House of Assembly".

Chuba Charles Nwokike (Ezeagu, Anambra State) tried to scuttle the results of the voting when it became apparent that the "Nos" would carry the day, on the ground that there was no quorum (the number of those who took part in the voting, including the one abstention was 284. According to the procedure of the assembly, a minimum of 300 members are needed to form a quorum) Aniogolu said no. After the result was announced, Nwokike said: "The people in the House of Representatives and the Senate repre-

sent their people. To go to their constitutions after they have spoken is like saying you don't believe they represent their people."

Achana Gaius Yaro (Tangale, Waja North, Bauchi State) stated his dis-

satisfaction in stronger language: "What happened today was a vote of no confidence in the incoming civilian administration. We have decided that only the military is wise enough to create state." Wilfred Oronsaye (Ova, Bendel State) who says that 50 states are not too many concurs: "If you make it impossible to create states you have made state creation a prerogative of the military."

But Adegboye Esan (Ilesa, Oyo State) who voted in favour of retaining the contentious clause explains his stand: "If the clause is left out," he says, "one single man with N50 million can go to the National Assembly and bribe his way through to get a state." Mohammed Kabo Idris (Kabo, Kano State) adds: "It is not that we don't want a state but we don't support frivolous demands. Apart from this, in Kano we are basically one tribe and one religion. We actually need more local government areas not necessarily new states".

However, other considerations were apparent in the voting. For one thing, as Moses Antse (Gboko East, Benue State) notes, the outcome of the voting was unexpected. During the

preliminary stage of the CA's deliberations. support for more states, and by inference less difficult conditions for state creation seemed unanimous. Then, member after member had stood up to say the same thing. The military has monopolised state creation, states are vehicles of grass-roots development etc.

But a lot of water has passed under the political bridge as alliances and loyalties have solidified, shifted or disintegrated. Last Monday's vote was the first major decision taken by the assembly since Chief of General Staff Vice-Admiral Aikhomu's "thou shalt not" order on the Sharia debate two weeks ago. But even though the formal debate on the Sharia issue has been stopped, the after-effect lingers on.

Firstly there is the issue of political retribution. Right from day one, the CA members from the eastern states have been among the most vocal state advocates. During the Sharia debate, according to one member from Imo State, the support for the entrenchment of Sharia in the constitution by assembly members from the east, was at best lukewarm. Of the 300 signatures said to have been collected by pro-Sharia advocates in the twilight of the debate, less than five according to

sources, came from Imo and Anambra. Therefore, to many, the great support by assemblymen from the north in favour of retaining the strict conditions for state creation was in retaliation for the political 'sin' of omission committed by the easterners.

But within the east, support for the deletion of the clause was not unanimous. Many members from the CAR states (Cross River, Akwa-Ibom and Rivers) voted the other way. This was a reflection of the lack of unity within the old Eastern Region in spite of recent attempts to build a cohesive front. Apart from this, says Austine Samson (Etinan 1, Akwa-Ibom) who voted against retaining the clause: "there are some who have spent their whole lives fighting for states. Understandably, they do not want others to get it on a platter of gold."

Whatever be the truth in these assertions, one thing is obvious. Those who lost out are bitter. One of them, Imo Ukuha (Arochukwu, Imo State) says: "a political ostracism of the easterners is obnoxious." Alexes Aniello whose committee recommended the deletion of section 9(. sub-section 1(C) called the result "a dangerous precedent based on an illegality. It was arithmetically and methodically proved that we had no quorum."

However, Bukhari Bello (nominated

member from Sokoto State) sees not reason for all the heat. Bello did not vote for or against the motion because he does not consider the issue fundamental. But Peter Odili (Ahoada, Rivers State) contends that many of those who voted did not act on principle. Adds Fred Ekiyegah (Sagbama, Rivers State): "Lack of objectivity was responsible for the result of the voting".

The next day, the noose around the neck of state creation was slackened, if only slightly. An amendment was carried to the effect that "a single majority of all the members in each house of assembly in a majority of all the states would be enough to approve the results of the referendum."

It was a respite for state creation agitators. Between 1979 and '83 in spite of the many and varied demands for new states, none was created mainly because of constitutional bottleneck which, incidentally, the assembly has adopted with only a little alteration. For now, one thing is certain. The reverberations will be felt for sometime, especially on the political scene, as Aniello stated ominously: "Based on what happened today (ie. last Monday) alliances have been confirmed or demolished."

By Paul Nwabuliku in Abuja

No offence meant

MALACHY Ezeilo, one-time Works Commissioner in Anambra State has come out with an explanation of his role in Jim Nwobodo's administration, the circumstances that led to his parting with Nwobodo and the speculated bad blood between him and his former boss.

Reacting to recent statements said to have been made by Nwobodo, Ezeilo, now a principal partner in a Broad Street law firm, says that he had no problem with the Second Republic Governor throughout his four-year stint as commissioner. He described as untrue the statement credited to the recently-released governor that "Ezeilo wants my head".

Ezeilo says that he never gave evidence at any of the trials that led to the conviction of Nwobodo for the simple reason that he was not present at any of the trials. Like others who served in the Nwobodo administration, he was in detention with the former governor

at the Enugu prisons during the course of the trials. Also, Ezeilo adds that as Works Commissioner, he was not in charge of the state's security vote nor did he have any knowledge of the ghost accounts, both issues which led



• Ezeilo: No bad blood

to Nwobodo's imprisonment. "So, in the two convictions for which he stayed well over four years behind bars, I did not testify directly or indirectly", he reiterates.

Ezeilo explains that any disagreement with Nwobodo was on "purely political terms." According to him, his resignation from the defunct Nigerian Peoples' Party (NPP) was consequent upon what he saw as the refusal of the Nwobodo administration to build a vital road from his local government area Ezeagu, to Abagana.

The only matter involving Nwobodo in which Ezeilo says he gave evidence was the Greenfield Construction Company case. Ezeilo recalls that the Awote Panel which looked into the case was not a formal trial probe because the panel "was more or less a fact-finding and debt-collecting panel."

Ezeilo is definite that he had no personal grudge against the former state governor. "I am certainly not one of his detractors," he told *The African Guardian*.

By Paul Nwabuliku

Tower of troubles

Lagos State University boils again

RARELY has an academic community worn such toga of conflict. Even before the second term of its first vice-chancellor was up, the Lagos State University (LASU) got literally mired in intrigues, bickerings and mudslinging.

Interestingly, it is the top echelon that is lurked in this game of devility, which perhaps explains the rough waters in which Professor Ajibade Rokosu, a former commissioner in Lagos State, has found himself. Rokosu who heads the bio-chemistry unit of LASU was removed as Deputy Vice-Chancellor last month. But Justice Ishola Oluwa, Pro-Chancellor of the University says there is nothing strange about his removal. Rokosu, he adds was never, legally speaking, a deputy vice chancellor because, though he was statutorily appointed by Senate, the visitor (ex-Governor Mike Akhigbe at the time of the appointment) never ratified his position.

But the pro-chancellor had been seen within the top academic community of LASU as the greatest obstacle between Rokosu and the post of deputy vice-chancellor. The Pro-chancellor, it is alleged, had expected Rokosu to toe his (Oluwa's) line when he assumed office as pro-chancellor, but he (Rokosu) was not disposed to support Oluwa's schemes. And so was stalled whatever hopes that were there for Rokosu to be deputy vice-chancellor.

In spite of Justice Oluwa's dismissal of these as "frivolous issues which should not bother me," critics still strengthen their positions with what they allege as another of Justice Oluwa's designs to sideline Rokosu in the bio-chemistry unit.

On September 12 this year Dr. T. Kehinde Obidairo from the University of Benin was appointed as a professor of bio-chemistry in the faculty of science of LASU. The appointment generated an avalanche of protests. Oluwa was told that as the pro-chancellor, he has no powers to appoint an officer of a professor's rank; that such powers are vested in, and can only be exercised by, the vice-chancellor. And suddenly, another letter, dated

September 30, and signed by LASU's registrar, J.B. Soares, was dispatched to Obidairo scaling down the post offered to associate professor of bio-chemistry.

The pro-chancellor's bent on appointing Obidairo is a carefully laid plan, it is alleged, to unseat Rokosu as head of the bio-chemistry unit. This assertion is fuelled by Oluwa's alleged statement describing Rokosu as "a non-academic." While denying this allegation Oluwa, not one to mince words, admits unobtrusively that "Dr. Kehinde Obidairo is a first class material, whom if Mrs. Alele-Williams agrees to release, LASU will quickly take on." Inside sources within LASU reveal that Obidairo's interest in taking up appointment with the university has been on for long. He had been assessed twice in the past but had never been appointed.

But troubles within LASU are yet to take a respite just as the incumbent Vice Chancellor Professor Folabi Olumide is set to take up his seat after he had been sent on compulsory leave last July. The vacation order given to Olumide was the climax of problems which dogged his tenure and prompted an administrative probe under the auspices of former Lagos State governor, Mike Akhigbe. The probe had centred on contract awards by the University; issuance of local purchase orders (LPOs) between 1984 to 1987; etc

Ironically, Governor Raji Rasaki last week set up a visitation panel headed by renowned educationist Professor Babs Fafunwa with a nine-point brief which included examining the administrative and financial management of the university since 1984, studying the issuance of LPOs, looking into the disbursement of the university's foreign account and examining the remuneration, recruitment, promotion and placement of staff.

Olumide who was to have resumed office on Thursday December 1 received a letter from the University Council last Monday to keep away from the campus. The letter did not stop at this. Olumide was also given two options: to quietly ease himself out of the institution by not returning as the V.C. or resume to face the visitation panel. Olumide opted to return and face the panel. His acceptance to resume duties may not, however, materialise as it was reliably learnt that the University Council is yet to endorse his resumption.

By Wale Akin Aina with reports from Ekpein Appah and John Ndego

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Stoking the fire

Examination fraud rocks Institute of Chartered Accountants

THE tell tale signs of an examination fraud are there. The questions are almost blue-print of others set somewhere before. Barely two weeks after trying up the second part of the accountability professional exams, (PE2), the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Nigeria (ICAN), is at its end to unravel the mystery behind what may turn out to be a major scandal rocking its 21-year long reputation as the sole organiser of the exams. As pieces of the jig-saw fall into place, a group of aggrieved students of ICAN have turned the heat on instructors of the PYE Institute — a private preparatory body of the exams, some of whose instructors it is claimed, double as members of the ICAN examination council. Their verdict: guilty.

In an unsigned letter, the concerned students remarked that these teachers are involved in the practice of drilling their students with the same questions as those prepared by ICAN. What irks the students most is that the questions are so tailored in order to appear as "mere coincidence" when they re-echo in the final examination. As sampler, ICAN's number three question of the Financial Accounting III, is almost the carbon-copy of the PYE's question one. The only difference being in the arrangement of the figures of the balance sheet which were simply swapped from right to left on the other.

In all, 13 questions out of a total of 18 questions fielded from three papers — Financial Management, Management Accounting and Financial Accounting — emerge as exhibits.

The students' representatives fear that "there is a frantic effort by those who perpetrated this leakage and some of their collaborators at ICAN headquarters to cover up the scandal" and in spite of the protests, marking has been duly carried out.

ICAN authorities are unamused. An official of the body, not willing to reveal his identity, dismisses the allegation as false: "What do you term leakage?" he demands, adding "as far as we are concerned, the similarity is borne out of mere speculation. If they hit, they hit. It's their luck." He would not expatiate on the "speculation" or how he arrived at that conclusion. The allegation according to him, has been made up to discredit PYE.



• Kuforiji-Olubi: Not aware of the goings-on

Resisting the temptation of parroting the "lucky" number syndrome", Vice President of ICAN, Mrs Bola Kuforiji-Olubi says she is unaware of the controversy. Contrary to reports that she has promised to "look into the matter", a surprised Mrs Kuforiji-Olubi wondered how possible it would be for her to make such promises when she does not even have an idea of the goings on. She avers: "ICAN has a high integrity and professionalism to maintain and will not knowingly put a committee of dishonest people to oversee the exams."

That is where the difference in argu-



• Sosanya: Between ICAN and ANAN there's no love lost

ment ends. She does not hesitate to add that since the standards are high, it is not unlikely that some people will seek ways of coming in through the back door. Dropping the usual refrain — "one cannot overrule such intrigues."

In a similar cautious manner, Mr. Ayo Oni, Deputy Vice President of ICAN, will not want to make comments until he has investigated the story. As a former chairman of the exam committee, he believes such allegations are not "unusual", yet holds that each should be tested for its validity. Oni will not reveal the constitution of the examination body or the extent to which PYE is involved in the setting of the examination, "for security reasons."

PYE officials are not playing ball either. A keep-your-distance stare and a sealed lip is all they offer.

In the heat of the wranglings of who raised the "rumour?" accusing fingers point at ANAN — the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria — an unregistered accounting body whose long disparity of opinion with ICAN is common knowledge. According to sources, ANAN can adopt mud-slinging tactics to break ICAN's monopoly.

In a tone that suggests he is used to such comments, ANAN's president, Mr. Osumuyiwa Sosanya, simply says: "There's no love lost between ANAN and ICAN. We want them (ICAN) to exist." Beyond that, however, Mr. Sosanya offers what he suspects to be the bane of ICAN: the proliferation of private training institutes which substitutes excellence for commercial gains, the high-handedness in awarding marks as well as the apparent indifference to security consideration in the course of setting exams. He reveals that in a record time, examination questions were put together at the Ogun State hotel; and goes further to assert that because of these factors, there is likely to be leakage at the level where the examination questions are set.

Beyond the jaw-jaw of who and who are involved in the controversy, the fires of scandal are threatening the very basis upon which ICAN rests its credibility. Bust inside sources at the ICAN head-quarters do not see what the hullabaloo is all about. With a shrug of the shoulders they simply snap: "we have heard this kind of story before."

By Josephine Akarue with reports from Humphrey Bakere.

Downgrading the intellect

HERE is a seeming depression in the academic environment. It has, firstly, to do with the availability of general books, and especially recommended works for institutions of higher learning. SAP-induced high duty tags on books, as well as foreign exchange restrictions, have ensured that the flow of such texts has dwindled to a trickle. Whenever they can be got, the prices, even of the few locally produced ones, are so prohibitive that the purchasing power of would-be users is often a constraint. Meanwhile, the incomes of parents and guardians, under SAP, have depreciated in value. Some respond by not sending their wards for any form of education.

For the lecturer, the situation is a painful one. Pledged to a task of imparting knowledge, he finds to his discomfiture that the quality of that knowledge is becoming suspect. Knowledge is constantly on the move. Science, for instance, is a dynamic undertaking, for which there are no finite answers, and fresh breakthroughs are constantly being recorded. In contrast, current academic texts in the country have sometimes been found to be of outdated editions.

Journals are in short supply or not available at all in most fields, thereby closing the intellect to developments elsewhere. Opportunities to attend international conferences to be up-to-date with recent trends have declined. Conversely, acute limitation of funds has inhibited the ability of these institutions to attract world-renowned academics either as spot lecturers or visiting professors.

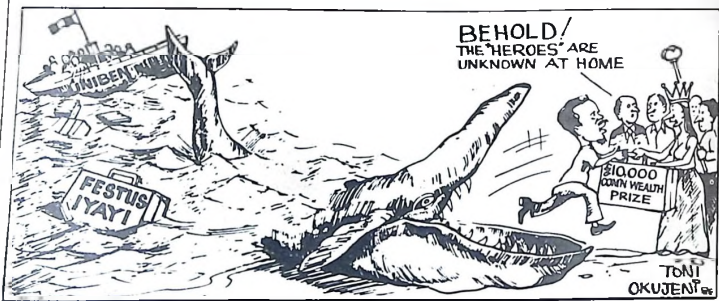
The imparting of knowledge is sidelined to the point of irrelevance in the present quest for economic recovery and societal advance. The status of the teacher may have worsened four-fold in this society. The ambition of the inquiring mind, to extend the frontiers of knowledge, has been tainted with the bare demands of survival, in a materialistic environment, which relegates his functions. With the official

denigration of his role, the reigning ethic is—"Junk scholarship, how much does a professor earn anyway?" The result is that the best academics, scientists, professors of medicine, etc. take the brain drain exit or joint the hustle for the Mercedes "V boot" or cocaine riches.

Perhaps the brain drain could hold some panacea after all. In those other societies, the Nigerian academic or expert is exposed to a facilitatory environment which makes his work satisfying and meaningful. He is supported with the right complement of equipment, books and journals, away from the atmosphere of staleness in the Nigerian setting, and he is enabled to make a contribution to humanity which could rebound to the credit of his home country, especially if he is working on a significant area of development. Nigeria is probably one of the few countries where students may graduate in chemistry without having to pass through a laboratory.

The disdain for knowledge has implications beyond present social and economic exigencies. It creates a situation of growing illiteracy as more youths fall out of the educational line due to low returns from the venture or inability to meet sky-rocketing fees and levies. The future of the society, then, is being mortgaged on the altar of the problems of the moment. There is a seeming lack of faith in the future, and of the role of the intellect in the shaping of a glorious future. What keeps a nation going is the level of intellectual and mental resources it can muster at any time. The civilizations of ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, and contemporary advances in the United States, the Soviet Union and Japan, flowered on this mental pedestal.

The nation will be well-advised to improve the lot of the academic and curtail restrictions on free flow of books. The intellect constitutes the soul of a nation, without which all striving is mere groping in the dark.



The enchainment of man



"The state does not care to forestall these flagrant violations committed in its name but rather points to fleet-footed robbers as alibi. The list of insensitive acts is endless"

BY ISI OMOIFO

MORE than 200 years ago, Parisian Jean-Jacques Rousseau took a long look across the oceans and the continents, at the nations and dominions of the world. He returned to his desk and with a heavy hand wrote: "Man is born free, but is everywhere in chains."

His words struck deep at the consciousness of Americans, especially those who identified themselves with the culture of the Enlightenment. These were, fortunately, the framers of the American constitution, enacted before Rousseau's death in 1778. The constitution contained clauses, even a resounding preamble, on the rights of man. The French constitution of 1791 later reasserted these rights.

Looked at globally, the ideals of the enlightenment appear to have been mostly half-understood or conflated with pre-existing notions and institutions. The democratic project launched by the enlightenment sought to terminate the old scandalous system of aristocratic rights and privileges and to extirpate monarchical or arbitrary rule. All citizens were to be equal before the law. Ensuing "declarations" clanged upon the inviolability of the human being, on freedom of speech, movement, association and other civil and political rights which have since been surpassed by the advance of the intellect.

The Russian Constitution of 1918 swept social and economic rights to the centre of the national agenda, following upon the writings of the German, Karl Marx. The United Nations in 1948 pushed forth an eclectic covenant, known as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It came after the "living nations, each sequestered in its hate" had fought two of the world's bloodiest, most intellectually disgraceful wars. Others followed: The Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, the Declaration of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in 1967 etc.

A cruel disjunction subsists between declaration and reality, permitting charges of hypocrisy and self-deceit. The western world which decks itself out as "free nations" has left the human race with the most

lasting impressions of the horrors of slavery and turned her sons and daughters into slaves of the industrial machine. In the socialist world, freedom begs for entry into the hall of meaning, while most of the Islamic states have been caught in waves of primordialism.

It is in Africa that may truly be encountered the "martyrdom of man." The individual is three times diminished by the acts of petty despots, by the caprices of the weather and by "mind-forged manacles." Country after country in Africa, the leadership inclines its vision towards the rising curve of the military budget, turns its back to the growth of scientific and technical expertise and hustles poets like Malawian Jack Mapane into jail, blocking all sources of systemic advance. Institutional incompetence, notes Ghanaian writer, Ayi Kwei Armah, falls like an elongated shadow across continental dreams.

It may even be feared that many countries in Africa could get hooked on oppression. It is not beyond possibility that if these countries are freed from their oppressor, the people would for the very first time organize to restore the tyrant as inevitable to their systems. So conditioned they may be to the oppressor's whip that the cumulative tendency would be to treat it as a normal attribute of life. This may not be far-fetched considering the energies the majority invests in defending irredentist cultural elements. Many, for instance, would defend with the last drop of blood the vestiges of royal institutions.

Equality before the law, one of the principal tenets of modern democratic society, may have been seriously compromised in this country. This should not seem surprising in a land of cultmen and clansmen, contacts, connections and, of course, corruption. To a large extent, externally-derived laws may hang out like helpless strangers in our midst, easily trampled upon by cultural dynamics. This merely supports the case of advocates of change, who insist upon a rupture in attitudes and manners if the society is to level up to the challenge and loftiness of its laws. The feeling that they may fall outside the context of the law probably fuels the arbitrary acts of big-wigs and certain armed personnel like the series of incidents involving Air-force men.

IN Nigeria, garrisons of armed policemen fan out into the streets, mounting check-points at virtually every kilometre. They shall be there even this Christmas, ordering citizens around with no crimes on their records, except probably to be born where it is determined that all shall be unfree. The citizen, who protests the show of the more-often-than-not, venial and sadistic reflexes, becomes liable to "accidental discharge." The state does not care to forestall these flagrant violations committed in its name but rather points to fleet-footed robbers as alibi. The list of insensitive acts is endless.

Meanwhile, it is sport and merriment all-day-long in the rest of the planet. Oceanic waves roll to and from with white outstretched arms to the beach sands. Birds career in flight and sing aloft the joys of living. But from the human quarter, a deep, pathetic wail.

Package of wrongs and rights

As the UN marks human rights declaration, can IBB wrought the miracle?

PERHAPS, the regime intended it as a legitimacy ploy. But to a people already satiated with a daily diet of draconian laws, it was the very elixir they had been yearning for. So, when Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB), a general, ousted the brazenly autocratic military government of Muhammadu Buhari, August 27, 1985, and replaced it with his own, few, if any, questioned the incongruity, the inherent paradox, of a military junta flying to power on the wings of human rights.

Only a few Nigerians could have resisted the coup-day manifesto of IBB: "We must never allow ourselves," he reminded Nigerians, "to lose sense of natural justice. The innocent cannot suffer the crimes of the guilty. The guilty should be punished only as a lesson for the future. In line with this government's intention to uphold fundamental human rights, the issue of detainees will be looked into with despatch."

He capped that speech with the repeal of Decree four which protected public officers and the government from false and or embarrassing reports. Said he: "As we do not intend to lead a country where individuals are under the fear of expressing themselves, the public officers' (Protection Against False Accusation) Decree Number Four of 1984 is hereby repealed with immediate effect." Consequently, President Ibrahim Babangida granted unconditional pardon to Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor, two journalists of *The Guardian* newspapers, who had been jailed under the decree.

Not long afterwards, the President re-affirmed his administration's avowal of human rights at the Nigerian Institute of Strategic Studies, Kuru, near Jos. "I believe in fundamental human rights," he said, adding that "jungle justice is not part of the better society." "We in this administration," he thundered, "do not believe in the unfortunate idea that Nigerians can never be made to accept responsibilities for their own cause except through government-sponsored terror and repression."

He soon matched his words with action. Muhammadu Rafindadi's



◆ Detainees in Police holding cell in Lagos: Jungle justice is not part of the better society

"Chambers of horror", as the cells of the Nigerian Security Organisation (NSO) which the erstwhile ambassador headed were called, were thrown open to the press and public scrutiny. Those who had been sequestered there for months, sometimes without charges or interrogations, were let go to breathe the air of freedom. The NSO was disbanded. Tribunals were set up to re-examine the cases of political detainees and those found innocent were discharged. Perhaps, in the euphoria of the moment, the President himself declared, obviously in reference to Buhari's tenure, that there was no justification whatsoever to keep anybody in detention for 18 months without bringing him to trial.

Other notable pluses followed on the regime's score card of human rights. Public debates, even on such arcane subjects as an IMF loan, were encouraged. The decree stipulating the death penalty, even retroactively, for drug traffickers was replaced with a "more humane" one of imprisonment and forfeiture of property. The proscription of such bodies as the Nigerian Medical Association and the

National Association of Nigerian Students was lifted.

The passports of two of Nigeria's elder statesmen, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, seized by the previous government of Buhari, were released. Even the ubiquitous social critic, Dr. Tai Solanmi who had rarely seen anything good in any Nigerian government, requested for and got an interview with the President. When he emerged out of Dodan Barracks, Solanmi was full of praise for the regime. In an unaccustomed hyperbole, he said that Babangida was the greatest thing that has ever happened to Nigeria.

Today, Solanmi is singing a different tune, even a vitriolic one. Says he in his *Saturday Tribune* column of September 4: "there is a long catalogue of instances to show how the government, even with the formal abrogation of Decree Number Four, has used a sledge hammer in knocking out what human rights many of us thought were now happily guaranteed."

He cites in evidence, public officers and associations, who, critical of government policies have apparently suf-



• Agbakoba: in the forefront of human rights struggle

debate and commentary on the activities of government under this regime than any in the past."

Such higher levels of public debate and commentary may not necessarily translate into more human rights. To a growing number of Nigerians, the human rights era of IBB is a fast-receding echo of halcyon days. At no time in Nigeria's history has this one issue taken the centre stage as now. Last week, the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO) launched its annual report for 1988 on the violations of human rights in Nigeria on Saturday, December 10, to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

Prison conditions and prisoner abuse

(CLO records)

• Prison conditions in Nigeria fall far below the United Nations standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners. Acute congestion and overcrowding constitute the most serious problem. Ikoyi Prison was built in 1961 with a capacity for 800 prisoners. At the end of October 1988, 2,376 prisoners were held there. Only 293 of this number are convicted prisoners; 2,029 are awaiting trial. Thirty-four persons are detained under the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree No Two of 1984-20 of those held in Ikoyi prison are listed as juveniles.

The situation is the same in almost all the 130-odd prisons nationwide. More than 70 percent of prison inmates are awaiting trial and most of them have been held in prison custody for periods ranging from three to 10 years without trial. Twenty-four of these prisoners,

awaiting trial and held at Ikoyi Prison for between three to 10 years were released through court actions initiated by the CLO early in the year.

• Prison food and feeding system are grossly inadequate. A paltry sum of N2.50 is provided for the daily feeding of a prisoner — which is hardly adequate for a single meal for an average person. A Lagos High Court in September 1988 refused to hear an application instituted by five inmates of Kirikiri Prison seeking to compel an increase in their feeding allowances.

• Medical facilities in the prisons are virtually nonexistent.

• Prison death is rampant. In Ikoyi prisons alone, 89 prisoners awaiting trial died within the first 10 months of 1988, while 21 prisoners died at Port-Harcourt Prisons within the same period. The cause of death is usually overcrowding, poor feeding and starvation,

The report of the organisation, (see box), founded on October 15, 1987 by two Nigerian lawyers, Mr. Olisa Agbakoba and Mr. Clement Nwankwo, chronicles in minutiae, the sundry and invidious ways human rights abuses are perpetrated through governmental practices and otherwise. In the opening message, Agbakoba recalls that in the mid-year report of the organisation published in June this year, "the verdict was that human rights conditions in Nigeria fell far below minimum standards prescribed not only in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but also in the Banjul Declaration of 1981." He observes that, "regrettably, this 'year's report, shows no noticeable improvements in the way government has responded to human rights issues."

The most pervasive aspect of human rights abuse in Nigeria, it would seem, arises from the basic concern of the UN declaration: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

Violations of fundamental rights in this regard are legion as documented by the CLO and other sources. One of the tragic cases was that of Ajani Adeshipe, a trader at Agege in Lagos. As narrated by Femi Falana, the lawyer who handled his case, Adeshipe was approached sometime in December 1983 by one of his customers, Baba Lati, a traditional doctor, to buy beer worth N120.00 on credit for the naming ceremony of a baby.

Adeshipe obliged.

A month later, the Peugeot 504 car of a lady in the neighbourhood was stolen. Before reporting the theft to the police, the lady consulted Baba Lati, whose Ifa oracle allegedly pointed at Adeshipe, his creditor. Based on the lady's report of Ifa findings to the police, Ajani Adeshipe was arrested on February 5, 1984. After six months in detention, his family filed a writ of *Habeas Corpus*. In a counter-affidavit, the police brought a detention order, as was quite usual during the Buhari regime, and inserted Adeshipe's name on it. With that, the High Court held that it could not go into Adeshipe's detention, because its jurisdiction had been ousted by the order.

Transferred from Pantli Police Cell to the Ikoyi Prisons, all in Lagos, Adeshipe met Afro-Beat King Fela Anikulapo-Kuti who was serving a five-year jail term. They separated when Fela was transferred to Maiduguri prisons. As soon as Fela was released, Adeshipe sent word to him and he (Fela) contacted the Chambers of Aka-Bashorun. An affidavit was subsequently deposited to by Adeshipe's wife on filing the application. This time there was no counter-affidavit. In fact, in reply to the substantive application, the state counsel, Mrs. M. E. Odunane said: "My Lord, it is rather unfortunate that this man was forgotten at Ikoyi Prisons. Looking through the papers, the allegation against him was totally unfounded. I want him to be unconditionally released." On January 26, 1987, the presiding judge, Idowu Agoro, ordered the immediate release of Ajani Adeshipe after spending three years in detention. When asked to file a suit for compensation, Adeshipe pleaded passionately with his lawyers to leave the matter with God the Almighty. He feared, as his lawyers later understood, that such a court action could annoy the police into re-arresting him.

In comparison to Ajani Adeshipe, Joseph Odogu suffered a worse fate in the hands of the police. In March, 1979, Odogu was arrested by the police while driving his Peugeot 404 saloon car on the Badagry Expressway. After a futile search for incriminating evidence at his house, the police asked Odogu to report at the Lion Buildings, Lagos, to make a statement. There, he was detained "without the knowledge of his wife whom he married the previous day."

After being shuttled from one police

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in Nigeria



cell to another in Lagos, he was eventually charged with armed robbery at a Yaba Magistrate Court. On the strength of a holding charge, the Magistrate refused his application for bail, ordering that Odogu be remanded in prison custody until the next hearing date. A few adjournments later, Odogu was forgotten in prison custody. On April 5, this year, he regained his freedom through the CLO, after spending nine years in detention as a suspect. For his sufferings, the presiding judge awarded Odogu ₦2,000 as compensation, a sum which Soyinka considers a "disgrace" and "does not bear thinking about."

The incarceration of another victim, Nathaniel Utoh, though grave, has elements of the senocomic. On April 7, 1970, Utoh was sentenced to a four-month imprisonment for a minor offence. In the alternative, he was ordered to pay a fine of £50 (₦100). Unable to pay, he opted to go to jail. By prison calendar, Utoh was due for release on July 7, 1970. For inexplicable reasons, he did not regain his freedom on that day. It took Governor Mike Akhigbe's prerogative of mercy for Mr. Utoh to regain his freedom, along with 77 other prisoners, after he had spent 17 years behind bars.

True, many of these violations predate the present administration. But as critics point out, a government that is overly concerned about human rights must feel sufficiently disturbed about such reports to act. As CLO President Agbakoba told *The African Guardian*, "We (the organisation) have records of inmates dying in prison confinement without being brought before any court of law for trial for any offence whatsoever and the most painful thing is that government appears not to be aware of its functions in this regard."

Gideon Onyia, a member of the Constituent Assembly is not fully convinced that the government is firm enough in the enforcement of fundamental rights. "The real test of human rights," he says, "is detention without trial for months or years." According to him, "the decongestion of prisons is not the most important thing; rather, the emphasis should be on ensuring that innocent persons do not suffer." Although, he believes that the track record of the present administration on human rights is better than that of its predecessor, he, nevertheless, says that the government must make serious attempts on such issues as getting the murderers of Dele Giwa, the editor-in-chief of

Newsweek who was assassinated by parcel bomb.

Caught in the welter of accusations of government insensitivity, if not connivance at human rights abuses, the Justice Minister, Prince Bola Ajibola, admitted at the June seminar of the Human Rights Committee of the

When the counter-affidavit was served on Odulana's lawyers, they thought it was the end of the matter. A glance at the detention order revealed that the Chief of General Staff, Vice-Admiral Augustus Aikhomu signed the detention order on September 24, 1987. A closer examination, however, re-



• Ajibola: Violation of rights in Nigeria is not a deliberate government policy

Nigerian Bar Association in Benin that "the system was not perfect." Deflecting the charge from government, Ajibola insisted that human rights violations in Nigeria were not the product of deliberate government policy but the "over zealousness of some security agents."

To some Nigerians, such exculpatory explanations would not hold. Femi Falana, for example, would readily point to the case of Bernard Odulana, a trade unionist with the Department of Customs and Excise. According to him, Odulana petitioned the President sometime in September 1987, accusing one of his ministers of smuggling. The petitioner promised to give information to back his allegations. While awaiting a reply to his petition, security agents picked him. For 62 days, he was held *incommunicado*. Falana's chambers filed a writ of *habeas corpus* at a Lagos High Court. According to him, the government reacted by filing a counter-affidavit with a detention order attached to the motion fixed for November 21, 1987.

vealed that as at that date, the CGS was a Rear-Admiral.

Odulana's lawyer filed a "further and better affidavit" alleging that the detention order was back-dated as the CGS only became a vice admiral in October 1, 1987. Upon this discovery, the state counsel asked for adjournment. When both parties returned to court, a couple of days later, a revocation order was produced to back up Mr. Odulana's unconditional release from "unlawful detention."

Still, critics point to other areas. Under the Buhari regime, Decree Two of 1984 was generally held to be obnoxious because of its widespread use and abuse even at a time when only the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Major-General Tunde Idiagbon was technically allowed to invoke it. Under the present dispensation, the exercise of that decree has been extended, apart from the CGS, to include the Inspector General of Police and the Minister of Internal Affairs.

Further, the retention of numerous

decrees which oust the jurisdiction of the courts and the burgeoning of tribunals whose verdicts are not subject to appeal are generally held out as manacles to meaningful human rights. In citing Nigeria for human rights abuses in its 1988 report, Amnesty International noted that of the more than 100 persons executed in Nigeria from January to December, 1987, a majority of them were sentenced by tribunals from which there was no right of appeal. Amnesty observed further that the right of appeal to a higher court was denied more than 170 persons tried in connection with the religious riots which broke out in Kaduna State.

Furthermore, the human rights body noted trade union leaders were detained without trial for up to one week in December and four leading members of former governments remained under restriction, without trial, throughout the year.

Perhaps, no area of human rights abuse is as sour as that of the dehumanising conditions in prison and police detention cells. As the CLO report notes, 97 inmates, most of whom have never been to a court of law died this year alone at the Ikoyi Prisons. Says Agbakoba: "We do not have records of other prisons, but it is clear that the situation is not different."

What prison or police cells could do

to a detainee is graphically illustrated by what a newspaper termed as a drama at the Anambra State Robbery and Firearms Tribunal. The robbery suspects, according to the reports, had arrived at the tribunal shockingly emaciated and in rags. A member of the tribunal, Major Olusegun Fadare, whose humane sensibilities appeared to have been offended declined to participate in the proceedings. When the tribunal chairman, Justice M.C. Ejiogor made moves to begin the trial, Major Fadare insisted that he could not stand the sight of the suspects. "My Lord," he was reported to have said, "the sight of these men is too horrible, I still insist on seeing them clothed."

When the chairman, however, refused the major's arguments on the ground that the tribunal had no business with the suspects' welfare, and again attempted to go on with the trial, he was again opposed by Fadare, who volunteered to give the suspects his own clothes. The tribunal had to retire for about 45 minutes to enable the major to drive home to bring two shirts for the suspects.

Even the Nigerian Prisons Service annual report for 1984 admits, albeit indirectly, that prison conditions are sub-human. In its general review, the report identifies some of the problems as follows:

- Gross inadequacy of essential stores such as soap, blankets, beds, prisoners' uniforms, staff accoutrements, padlocks, disinfectants, etc. Consequently, many prisoners slept on bare floors and both staff and prisoners went about in tatters. The incidence of epidemics was on the increase, among inmates.

- Abandonment of capital projects by contractors resulting in non-completion of on-going prison development programmes. Prison is thus aggravated.

- Continued use of bucket latrines in some prisons which constitute health hazard to both prisoners and staff.

- Acute shortage of drugs in prison clinics and ambulances to convey serious and emergency cases to the hospital. This resulted in increased outbreak of epidemics in prisons and higher mortality rate among prisoners.

There is hardly any contest that human rights in Nigeria is still in its embryonic stage. The question really is: Can the Babangida administration wrought the miracle? Or will Soyinka prove prophetic that the "existence of any military regime is a negation of the principles of human rights?"

By Godwin Agbroko with reports from John Nwaobi, Abdul Orah, Debo Adesina, Abraham Ogbodo, Tunde Oyekola and Paul Nwabuluku in Abuja

Another view of human rights

Gani Fawehinmi talks of the socio-economic angle

FOR over 20 years, I have fought for the fundamental human rights of Nigerians. I have been detained 15 times. My first detention, lasted 10 months in 1969. I have been charged to court 10 times but I have never been convicted. Now, really the emphasis on human rights has generally been placed on the intangible aspect of human rights, leaving the more tangible areas.

All human rights associations in the western world including Nigeria, including the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), all of them have ignored those rights that are meaningful to the masses. The rights that have been ignored are those that touch on the socio-economic exist-

ence of the people: what the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights calls economic rights. Which are these economic rights? The right to shelter, the right to paid employment, the right to free education, the right to good and free medical services and so on and so forth.

These are more important than freedom of expression; even more important than the right to vote. What does freedom of expression mean to a man who does not know where his next meal will come from? Or where his children will be educated or where he can get free medical service for himself and his family? The emphasis according to my own perception of what



● Fawehinmi: "Human rights should be right to work, free education."

human rights, should be in terms of: right to life, work, free education, free medical service, good shelter, then freedom of expression and so on in that order.

In essence, the most fundamental of human rights is the abolition of poverty and an unashamed annihilation of the quiescence of human rights. It destabilised the workers' voice, it banned the press by proscription, it repressed the students by shooting. Every conceivable socio-economic rights of the masses have been removed. What we achieved in 1960 by way of political independence, he (Babangida) has surrendered in 1988 to foreigners by way of privatisation and commercialization. He has surrendered our rights through economic dependency, through SAP. His regime has presided over the socio-economic liquidation of our sovereignty.

Thirty days in hell

AT 7.00 p.m. on July 10, Dr. Festus Iyayi, a dismissed lecturer of the University of Benin, and former National President of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, was picked up in his home by officials of the State Security Service (SSS). For 30 days, he had a taste of the harrowing ordeal in a detention cell in Benin and subsequently in Lagos. Iyayi, this year's winner of the Commonwealth Prize for prose, in a breathtaking narrative, detailed his experiences in the September-October, 1988, edition of *Law and Practice*, a journal of the Nigeria Bar Association. Excerpts.

THE SSS (State Security Service) woman who introduced herself as a Chief Superintendent of Police and the SSS man who accompanied her arrested me in my home at 7.00 p.m. on Monday, July 10, 1988. Both of them were armed. The SSS woman did the talking. She had instructions, she said, to pick me up for a chat with her boss.

"Couldn't the chat wait until the next morning?"

"No", she said. Her boss was waiting. In any case, I would be back home in about an hour and to prove that she was sincere, my wife and other friends could accompany me to the SSS headquarters. So we all went (my wife, three friends) with them to the headquarters which the SSS shares with the Police in the Government Reservation Area in Benin.

...The police officer to whom an SSS man handed me over three hours later waved a sheet of paper in the air. The SSS woman and man who had picked me up had disappeared as soon as they brought me in. "That's your detention order", the police officer declared. "You are going into the cell".

"Cell?" "Pull your clothes!". "Why am I going into the cell? I am not a criminal".

The police officer looked at me maliciously. "This paper," he said, waving the piece of paper in front of his nose this time as if to fan himself with it, "says you are to be detained. If you are not a criminal, why are you here? Now, pull your clothes."

"Go behind the counter and pull your clothes!"

Behind me, another policeman armed with a gun that looked like an AK 47 was shouting abuses at Grace (my wife) and other friends and herding them towards the iron gate that completed the wire fence round this section of the police station. The rain was pouring. I saw him raise the butt of the gun and strike at the shoulders of Dr. Agbonifoh and then Dr. Shitta. I heard loud protests. I saw Grace being dragged by the arm towards the gate in the rain.

"Go behind the counter and take off your clothes", the police officer with the sheet of paper ordered now.

"Make una bring am come in here now", one of the bare bodies (inside the cell) called out.

"Make sure you wrap up your clothes properly", he (the officer) snapped. "You are wasting our time".

I took off my shirt, then my shoes, then my pair of trousers. I stood before them in my socks and pants only.

"Take off your socks", the police officer said sharply. He had come round now and held a bunch of keys in his hands. I took off my socks.

I put the small wrap of clothes in the space he had indicated, behind a variety of rotten junk, torn and discarded police boots, blackening banana peelings, mud, spittle...

The police officer put the key in the lock and turned it. "Head of State", he sang out and a fairly wide chested man

turned his head, rather disinterestedly but all the more deadly: "Make sure you handle him with iron hands".

I stared at the police officer. "What do you mean by that?" He opened the iron grating. The iron bars clanged against each other. "Go inside", the man ordered now and stood aside.

"What is your name?", one voice behind me demands. "Why are you here?" another one to my left demands.

"Answer us!" another to my right demands. And then, blows to my body, my head, my face. I am slapped repeatedly. I try to protect my face and then I am slapped even more for doing so. In a few minutes, my eyes are swollen.

"Remove your pant", one of my attackers with the neck of a bull orders. I hesitate, for which I receive two slaps at once.

My eyes sting me, my ears sting me. I see stars flying round me.

"Sit on the floor", one of the voices commands. I dimly see the blackened, raw floor, wet, slimy. The man with the neck of a bull lowers his fingers and raises the rag which



• Iyayi

I lower my pant

Laughter.

"Look at it", one of them cries out.

"It is gone inside already, see by how much it has gone inside."

More laughter.

"Sit on the floor."

"Now sit down", another voice commands. I sit down again on the wet blanket of gravel.

All this time, the detainee to whom the police officer had referred to as the head of state ignores me. Now, he raises his face, his fingers picking between his teeth, and looks at me.

"You have been most rude", he says threatening. I try to protest.

"Shut up!" at once from several voices.

"You have been most rude", he sneers again, the smaller finger of his left hand probing between his teeth. "and you are going to pay for it".

I do not say anything.

"Stand up when the head of state is talking to you".

I rise at once to my feet.

"How much have you got on you?", the bull-necked one continues.

"I have nothing on me", I say in reply.

"Now you are going to pay us ₦200.00."

"Two hundred naira!"

"Yes."

"I don't have that kind of money."

"How much can you pay?"

"You will pay us ₦100.00" one of the men eventually decides, and scratches his scrotum. "You will pay us the money tomorrow. Wasn't that your wife?"

"Yes."

"You will send her for the money when she comes in the morning. Is that clear?"

"Yes."

"Once you have paid it, you can stay in state house with the head of state."

"Thank you."

"Tell us why you are here", one of the men who I now understand to be a minister demands.

I tell them very briefly about the ASUU strike, how the regime had responded to the strike by proscribing the union and then detaining its leaders.

"But you said you are no longer in the university", one of the ministers observes.

"Yes."

"Then why are you here?"

"I don't know. I didn't go on strike. I was sacked last year and after that the vice-chancellor used thugs to throw my family and my things out of my house. Now they are holding me for a strike action I did not take part in."

The cell is a smelling house. There is a corridor, about four feet six inches across and some 24 feet that separates the two rows of cages. The cages on the left are multiple ones. They are eight in number and were built to accommodate two inmates only. Each of these cages now holds about 12 or more detainees who are padlocked inside. To get out to ease themselves, they must bang the door of the cage several times before one of the personal guards to the head of state will come up with the keys.

On the right hand side of the corridor are the single cages. There are five of them and in three of them, there are at least three detainees. The last two single cages have been converted to toilets. The detainees urinate and excrete here on the floor or into giant plastic basins.

In that 24 feet of corridor, there are 51 of us and in each of the cages meant for two inmates, there are at least 12 inmates while each of the single cages holds between three and four detainees. The entire corridor is lit by two candles. One of the candles is already one quarter burnt out, the other almost half way.

The sleeping arrangement is also such that we are arranged like sardines in a can: detainees have to lie down with their heads in opposite directions even as they lay on their sides so that their legs would cross each other.

Every now so often, banging would start in the cages.

"Cell six for piss!" Meaning: I want to urinate; I am in cell six.

"Cell seven for shit!" Meaning: I want to defecate. I am in cell seven.

The banging would grow. A stream of violent, raw abuses would start inside the cage.

"Duty Officer!" the demand would rise to a frenzy.

"Don't urinate on me! Stop that! Bastard!"

"If you must urinate now, you must do so," the Duty Officer would call into the cage. "I am not coming back a second time..."

However, another five minutes would pass and the banging would start all over again.

In the morning around 6.00 a.m. the iron door to the cell clanged again and another policeman came accompanied by the same minister.

"Clean up the cell!"

The detainees begin to get up one by one. One of the personal guards to the head of state came over to me.

"Get up," he said to me. I stood up.

"You are to take the basins outside!"

"Me?"

"Yes."

"Look here", one of the detainees intervened. "Don't you know this man? Can you pretend that you do not know him?"

"And so what?"

"Find somebody else to carry the basins outside."

"What will he give to us?"

The detainee who had intervened on my behalf turned to me and then looked at him. "He will get you two loaves of bread."

"Okay then", the personal guard agreed and then opened one of the cages and ordered three of its inmates to come out.

I watched them as they dragged out the three big basins from the cages. I watched them as they began to gather up the faeces on the floor with their bare hands and throw them into the basins. I watched them as they were helped to

" I watched them as they dragged out the three big basins from the cages. I watched them as they began to gather up the faeces on the floor with their bare hands and throw them into the basins. I watched them as they were helped to set the basins on their heads..." "

set the basins on their heads. I watched them walking down the corridor with the basins on their heads. I saw the iron grated door to the cell open and watched them go out. About 10 minutes passed and then they came back, dripping with water.

"What happened?"

Prince Muda, the man who had intervened on my behalf turned to me. "Sometimes some of the detainees ask to be allowed to carry the basins outside so that they can have the hose turned on them by the police. That is the only way in which anybody can have a bath here."

Another commotion at 11.00 am announced the arrival of breakfast; about two and a half spoon cuts of eba served with a slimy mucous whitish green liquid without the trace of any bone let alone fish or meat, served by the oil minister.

"Festus Iyayi!"

I stood up. A policeman was at the gate to the cell.

"Come out." Envious faces looked at me.

"Put on your clothes." I found my clothes still intact and put them on.

Later that afternoon at 2.00 pm, Tuesday July 11 1988, Mr. Frank Dimowo, Mr. Emman Amade and I were driven by the SSS in a dull brown 505 car with a sticker bearing 'Nigerian Airports Authority' to Lagos. We left Benin under a huge blanket of rain. We arrived in Lagos at about 7.00 pm.

I was detained in Benin at 7.00 pm on Monday July 10 1988 and released in Lagos along with my colleagues, Dr Jega. Mr. Dimowo and Mr. Amade on August 10 1988.

Money-bags are here

Syndicate market props up investment

THE syndication market is up again. Last week, 10 banks came together in Lagos to sign a current loan syndication for two Nigerian subsidiaries of the Churchgate Group. Basking in its successful overhaul of the once ailing Bendel Textile Mills, Asaba (in which it now has 50 per cent equity) the Indian Multinational slipped into the capital market to tidy up its nine-month negotiation of a N45.2 million multi-credit syndicated facility with the consortium.

The loan package put together by the International Merchant Bank (IMB) is for part-financing of major expansion projects of International Textiles Industries and Ocean Fisheries. The other unspecified foreign component has been knotted by Royal Investment Financial Corporation of America, who provided funds to Ocean Fisheries to add eight new trawlers to its fleet of 19. Each of the trawlers costs \$1.7 million. The Group's Financial Director, Gopal Rao, said that the Federal Ministry of Finance granted Churchgate in 1986 an approval to raise \$15.5 million loan in foreign currency.

The Ocean Fisheries' new N25 million loan package is being funded by six banks of which IMB is providing N7.5 million. Other five participating banks include the United Bank for Africa with N5.5 million; Financial Merchant Bank, N3 million; Commercial Bank (Credit Lyonnais) and ABC

Merchant Banks are both offering N2 million each; while Savannah's input is N2.5 million. African Continental Bank is also contributing N1.5 million, while Lion Bank's share is N1 million.

Ocean's N25 million syndication is composed of N23 million term loan, repayable in 6½ years with an 18-month moratorium. The remaining N2 million is in overdraft. The N23 million loan attracts an interest of N17.5 per cent (or one per cent above IMB's prime lending rate). Ocean Fisheries needs the local funds to build up dry docks and set up a shrimp processing plant. The new five-ton-per-day shrimp plant when completed, according to Rao, will enable the firm to meet customer specifications. Ocean Fisheries also hopes the plant will enable it to double its shrimp export currently worth \$6 million

annually. It is envisaged that this expansion will push its labour force from 600 to 900 by next March.

ITI which was incorporated in 1974 is getting N20.2 million from seven banks. IMB is offering N5.7 million; ICON N4 million; UBA N3 million; Commercial Bank Credit Lyonnais N3.5 million. ACB is also providing N2 million. The Lion and Allied Banks are also chipping in a million naira each. ITI's total package is composed of N16 million of term loan repayable in 6½ years at 18.5 per cent interest with an 18-month moratorium, while the remaining N4.2 million is in overdraft. ITI requires the fund to part-finance its 8.5 ton-per-day new

projects as worthy of support." IMB's Executive Director, Razak Lawal agrees and attributes IMB's support to the group's performance record: "We are impressed with the Group's range of activities." Other participating banks also appeared impressed. Says an ICON top banker: "we are sure of the projects, that is why we agreed to participate".

But why the syndication, when IMB can provide wholly the fund for one of its oldest corporate customers? IMB's Corporate Finance General Manager, Olurotimi Williams agrees that the total sum is not beyond the bank's legal lending limit. He attributes the trend to the need to spread risk and, as



• Lawal (standing): "We are impressed with the Group's range of activities"

25,000 spindles spinning plant at Isolo, Lagos as well as strengthen its backward integration programme by increasing its yarn production to 2478 tons per annum. For its trouble, IMB is raking in a token N5,000 as Agency Fee.

A joyous Bhagwan Mahtani, executive director of Churchgate, sees the gesture as an acknowledgement of the relevance of the Group's projects to the economy. Says he: "By agreeing to contribute various sums to the projects, the banks have endorsed these

well as diversify the available resource to similar pressing needs of other customers.

Apart from Churchgate which may make a return soon, it appears that Luncheon Vouchers Nigeria Limited has also taken the cue. And IMB may likely put the deal together. For Williams, "the syndication option is likely to be more utilised in the future as more corporate bodies seek bigger funds from the capital market."

By Felix Obanya

The 1989 budget: Fine-tuning SAP

It is instructive that current criticisms of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) are usually bereft of tangible and pragmatic solutions to the current economic difficulties. Though it must sound somewhat pedantic to repeat the old cliché, the truth is that SAP is all about blood, sweat and tears. The Nigerian people have displayed a high degree of tolerance for economic deprivation, while government has displayed significant courage in coming to terms with the inevitable. One is inclined to believe (and this is a personal conviction) that, given the limitations of the economic system that Nigeria has adopted, SAP is essentially on course.

Political economy vs economic technicism

The truth of the matter is that the Nigerian government has been pursuing what must certainly qualify as one of the most people-oriented economic stabilisation programmes of modern time, while at the same time employing the conventional wisdom of economic technicism. This fact is borne out by the seeming contradiction whereby one will find critics on both sides of the divide; while some are vehement concerning the human cost of SAP, there are others (including this writer) who are convinced that government is still shying away from the market-orientation of SAP.

Both sides are correct, but fortunately for both sides, they do not have the difficult mandate of government, which requires that while the economy be restructured, the social entity called Nigeria also be preserved. The danger which the critics are now posing to government is that of confusing and, or pressuring the administration

into making fundamental mistakes after having accomplished so much that is positive. It is distressing now to hear constituencies that argued vehemently for a growth strategy, to make a U-turn and complain that this strategy was inflationary. You can't squeeze water out of a stone!

Right objectives, wrong policies

Strictly speaking, one could fault the timing of a reflationary 1988 budget.

penditures was doubtful. Yet, it is essential to have agencies like the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure, DFRRRI in times of national economic adversity, especially if the activities of such agencies are concentrated around the rural population, whose standard of living is battered during economic dislocation. Government must have its own visible contributions towards alleviating hardship.

should have been removed to pay for the special programmes, and thereby eliminate the deficit. We, however, said that we would not countenance the removal of the subsidy. What then will we countenance? One is inclined to believe that the policy direction of the 1988 Budget was essentially sound, and should be pursued, except that this time it should pursue the correct statistics.

An agenda consideration in 1989

- Oil revenue should be projected on \$10 per barrel (the market looks bad);
- Eliminate the entire petroleum subsidy if we are to have a balanced budget.
- Leave FEM/Autonomous Markets alone as they are; by the third quarter of 1989 we will be entering into the fourth year of the new regime of exchange rates, and government will discover that the demand would have moderated significantly, while the supply on the Autonomous Market would have picked up;

- Liberalise the extension of credit in the banking sector to aid those with something serious to do;

- Reduce interest rates only for agricultural lending — we have to get the food situation right for the next decade;

- Reduce corporate taxes by linking the reduction to levels of new recruitment of labour;

- Implement vigorously all the other initiatives in the 1988 Budget which got off to a slow or non-existent start.

1989 will be a very tough year, let's start passing the word around that we still have some way to go before the promised land.

By Victor Ogundipe, assistant general manager, Special Duties, First Bank of Nigeria Limited.



"It is distressing now to hear constituencies that argued vehemently for a growth strategy, to make a U-turn and complain that this strategy was inflationary." — Ogundipe

Nevertheless, it was a useful device if the reflationary element of budget proposals had been directed to the productive sectors via the expansion of credit. Government spending is inefficient (that is the basic lesson of SAP), and it was always clear that the multiplier effects of the proposed ex-

It should, however, pay for such activities from available revenues, and leave the arena of reflation to the productive sectors with the most prospects of multiplier effects on the economy. In the case of the 1988 Budget, the entire remaining petroleum subsidy

Enter the new Panasonic

INNOVATION is the hallmark in the field of technology. Some of the latest products of such innovation are the new Panasonic copiers models FP1300 and FP1520.

These machines can produce "crisp, clear, true-to-original" copies as well as self diagnostic display of the copier faults. The FP1520 is however different from the FP1300 in that it has two-step enlargements, three-step reductions and a perfect colour production that looks more or less like the original.

They have other such functions as memory function, multifeed bypass and a magnifying process. At prices anywhere above N15,000, MOS Office products Limited offers them for sale.

LCCI to determine own fate

THE marking of the Centenary anniversary of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), was not all clinking of wine glasses and patting of backs alone.

At the one day seminar organised to mark the occasion last Tuesday, many national issues were raised and observations made. One of the important observations is the habit of top government functionaries delegating junior officers in their stead at occasions they are supposed to be present.

This was prompted by the absence of chief Olu Falae who was supposed to be the guest of honour at the occasion to deliver the keynote address. Even then, the officer he delegated at the last minute to represent him, came one and half hours behind schedule when the business session had begun and the first paper by Chief S.L. Edu presented.

The chamber viewed this with serious concern. The contention was that Falae should have known his schedule well before then and should have turned down the invitation. Chief J. Akin-George, a one-time president of the chamber specifically noted that this habit is fast becoming a common thing among government officials. Said he: "It is slight on the industrial



• Akin-George (left) and Falae

class" as it tends to create the impression that "they (industrialists) were inferior to the government". Elsewhere in the industrialised countries, he says, "the industrial class controls governmental machinery. But the reverse is the case in Nigeria."

To that extent, the LCCI resolved that efforts should be geared towards ensuring that only those with the interest of the industrial class are put at the helm of affairs come 1992.

The lure of Chinese Restaurants

TO many observers, Chinese Restaurants may not mean much to them. But for hoteliers, their worth is known and they have never hesitated in creating an annexe for them whenever they come knocking.

But Ogun State Hotel is not so fortunate to have them come knocking. And it appears it would not want to wait endlessly for them,

hence it came up with an advertisement last week for suitable organisations and restaurateurs to set-up and operate a Chinese Restaurant within its complex in Abeokuta.

Currently, there are over a hundred Chinese Restaurants spread all over Lagos alone with well over 80 per cent of them situated within major hotel complexes.



Job guardian

Principal Internal Auditor: Qualification, B.Sc. Accountancy, Business Administration or Economics and with either ICA, ACA, CIPF or ICMA. Working experience of eight years and age between 25 and 40. Contact: The Programme Manager, Borno State Agricultural Dept. Programme, P.M.B 1452, Maiduguri.

Training Manager: Qualification, B.Sc. degree, AIB or ACCA and should be a retired Senior Manager in a Commercial or Merchant Bank. Contact: The Advertiser, P.M.B 12869, Lagos.

Production Operators: Qualification, HND Mechanical Engineering with five years experience. Contact: The Manager Personnel, Mobil Nigeria, P.M.B 12054, Lagos.

Naira fails against the dollar

THE naira at the 68th bi-monthly Foreign Exchange auction held last week failed to hold against the dollar, the pound sterling and the CFA francs, but appreciated against the rest. Against the dollar, it went down 0.31 per cent; pound sterling, 0.58 per cent and CFA francs, 2.76 per cent. The Swiss francs and the deutsche mark depreciated against the naira by 2.49 per cent and 2.24 per cent respectively. By this outcome, the naira will in the

next fortnight exchange N5.38 to the dollar; N9.90 to the pound; N3.63 to the Swiss francs; N3.05 to the deutsche mark and CFA francs, N0.02.

At the autonomous market where the restriction on exchange rates was lifted last month by the Central Bank, the rate fluctuated officially between N8.50 and N8.80 to the dollar but some reports say it may have exchanged for between N9.30 and N10 during the week.

Cross rates vis a vis other currencies

Name of Currency	Buying	Central	Selling	Depreciation percent
U. S. DOLLAR	5.3263	5.3530	5.3798	-0.3101
POUND STERLING	9.8003	9.8496	9.8988	-0.5828
DEUTSCHE MARK	3.0237	3.0389	3.0541	2.2442
SWISS FRANC	3.5964	3.6145	3.6325	2.4900
FRENCH FRANC	0.8863	0.8908	0.8952	2.0543
DUTCH GUILDER	2.6826	2.6961	2.7095	2.2366
JAPANESE YEN	0.0431	0.0433	0.0435	1.6166
CFA FRANC	0.0180	0.0181	0.0182	-2.7624

STOCK MARKET WATCH

A hold, a fall

Shareholders' attitude causes a slump on the market

FOR brokers idling under a dull stock market for sometime now, the nerve returned to the market early this month as many quoted companies posted favourable half-year financial results. In the last one month, scramble for equities has been recorded persistently, but it appears shareholders are adopting a "buy-to-hold" attitude. This has resulted in a plunge of about 33 per cent, in the number of shares traded from November 11, from a total of 512,857 down to 348,083 for the week ended December 2, 1988. Even the government sector which recorded two deals worth over N520,000 seems to be experiencing shortage of stock supply as investors are holding tenaciously to their gilts, according to the Exchange report.

Lekan Fadina, General Manager of the Second-tier Securities Market (SSM) whose sector traded 2,200 shares in four deals, believes this would not have been the case if brokers who are expected to keep investors adequately informed are not themselves ignorant of what goes on in the stock market. He argues that brokers should be more market-oriented by seeking "where the market is and vigorously educating investors." According to him, brokers ought to ensure that the "buy-to-hold" attitude

of most investors is altered by developing products that they can trade on the market and providing them with other services. Fadina sums up the reality: "Stockbrokers are not very well informed about quoted companies. The average stockbroker does not engage in adequate financial analysis of the stocks he deals in. And due to their lack of in-depth financial knowledge of most of the securities, most brokers cannot justify movement of stock prices. In some cases, superficial reasons are given for price movement, while stocks are either under-priced or over-priced with few actually reflecting their true value."

Not all market analysts share the views of Fadina that investment in equities should be based on long-term forecast of the prospects of a company rather than on short as is presently the case. To a stockbroker at the City Securities Limited (CSL), stock prices are only a reaction to the market forces of demand and supply. This, he says, is dictated by the track records of the company; an impressive performance will, all things being equal, attract high demand and boost price. Activities at the stock exchange last week appeared to favour those brokers who have put their faith in market forces. Nigerian Breweries Limited (NBL), with a third quarter turnover of N364.4 million as against N227.6 million and profit of N61.1 million as against N24.5 million for the same period in 1987, recorded the highest point of 10 kobo. A. G. Leventis, with a turnover of N25.2 million and profit of N0.6 million as against N25.2 million and N0.2 million respectively for the same period in 1987, came second with 5 kobo gain.

Others which gained along the same line were, Grommac and Metal Box, 3 kobo, Texaco and NTC, 2 kobo; Agip, AP, Livestock Feeds, Pfizer Products, Thomas Wyatt and UTC each gained 1 point. 7-up bottling company which had been on Technical suspension due to its 'Rights Issue' had its price restored and thus gained 11 kobo. The common stocks index — the performance gauge of the market — rose from 230.9 on Monday to close at 232.5 on Friday, a rise of 1.6 or about 0.7 per cent.

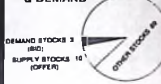
By Lucky Flukpa

THE AFRICAN GUARDIAN ECONOMIC INDICES

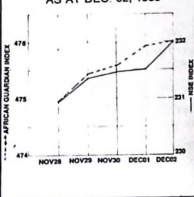
LEADING CONTRIBUTORS AS AT DEC. 02, 1988

MINI BANK	0.8
FINVEST BANK	0.8
LEARN	0.7
TOTAL SPECIAL	0.7
FINC	0.6
IND. BOTTLING	0.5
OF OTHERS	11.8
	16.4

SUMMARY OF SUPPLY & DEMAND



GUARDIAN & NSE INDICES AS AT DEC. 02, 1988



Lowest Priced Stocks

Stock	Price (K)	Par Value (K)	Total Dividend (K)	Last Div. Date
Ng Sew Machine	15	50	6.0	24-6-83
New African Glass	17	50	0.0	25-8-86
Cross Riv. Breweries	19	50	1.0	19-8-82
Taylor Woodrow	25	50	1.5	05-8-84
Stackville	26	50	0.0	16-7-81
Costam	26	50	1.0	07-12-84
Lennards	28	20	2.0	05-03-87
Mechanico Bank	30	100	0.0	
Boric Ng	34	50	10.0	25-8-86
Pharma Desk	40	50	2.0	15-8-87
Accor Ng Ltd	44	50	5.0	05-9-86
University Press	45	50	7.5	30-8-88
Ovantine (W A)	48	50	8.0	06-6-80
Leventis Motors	50	50	3.0	15-9-87
Roads (Ng)	50	50	5.0	07-10-83
G Capex	50	50	4.0	30-9-86
Leventis Technical	50	50	2.0	27-9-88
Capex & Alberto	50	50	3.0	19-11-86
Intra Motors	50	50	3.4	02-10-87
Daily Times	50	50	5.0	01-11-86
Blackwood Hodge	50	50	5.5	14-6-82
Capital Hotels	50	50		
Bowac Ng Ltd	50	50	1.5	09-6-81
Boric Inter	50	50	0.0	26-1-88
Nigma Ng Ind	50	50	8.0	22-10-78
Aluminium Est Ind	50	50	0.0	



• Fadina. Brokers should be more market-oriented

What's wrong with our spellings?

Carelessness, ignorance cause common errors

A LARGE number of teachers, scholars and social scientists the world over are quite worried about the growing phenomenon of wrong spellings of many English words and names. It is, of course, not quite surprising that many an English word should be commonly misspelt. English spellings are anything but rational. Else, why should "lieutenant", pronounced "leftunant", be spelt the way it is done? Or why should "read" (past tense of read!) and "red" which sound alike be spelt differently?

A friend who prides himself on being an African cultural partisan argues that, unlike European languages, African languages are easy to write: once you know the letters and the proper pronunciation, there is hardly any word that cannot be written with ease. He is right. And also wrong. Right because once you have known such diphthongs as "gb", "kp", "gh" and "kw", and how they are pronounced, you can correctly spell almost any African word or name. Wrong because there are African words not written the way they are pronounced. Xhosa is a South African name which is not pronounced the way it is spelt. One wonders how many people can claim that they can spell Urhobo or Bini words and names.

Back to our discussion on common misspelling of English words which is, in fact, inevitable. English is no pure language, even if there is

anything like that. Enriched or polluted — depending on the side to which you belong — by the cultural experiences of the Spanish, French, and, of course, Africans, it could be regarded as a hybrid of linguistic and cultural pollinations.

Have we forgotten that "delente", "corps", etc., are French, or that the interesting character of Don Quixote is from a classic Spanish novel, *Cervantes*; or that "okro" which some people today

English, etc; the first two being the dominant in the world, with the United States bestriding the world like a colossus, putting into great use its economic power, technology, and mass media. Africans do not write or speak just the Queen's English any more. American English is fast gaining ground. And with it come new forms of spelling.

These days it is common to find Africans use, like the Americans, "advice" or "practice" as a verb instead of as a noun. But to do so in an English class or examination in Nigeria will definitely earn the person the disapproval of the

tively. Sometimes, "bizarre" appears as "bizzare" in newspaper headlines while "occurrence" and "occurred" become "ocurrence" and "ocurred" respectively. "Prestigious" is a word many Nigerians like but they often spell "prestigeous." Which of these are ranks in the police force or the armed forces: "Superintendent" and "lieutenant" or "superintendent" and "lieutenant?" Don't be suprised should some people tick the latter.

Everyone knows the state which Michael Dukakis governs. If you ask someone to write down the state in a piece of paper, he is likely to write Masachussettes or anything other than Massachusetts.

What's the cause of the common misspelling of words? Low basic intelligence? Researchers rule it out. They must be right.

In 1976, American Supreme Court justices differently and repeatedly wrote "marihuana" instead of marijuana; they wrote it the way it is pronounced. The *Newsweek* magazine recently stated that distinguished American writers F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway were bad spellers. Said the magazine of the latter: Hemingway was obssmal in his own right, routinely writing "apoloige" and "responsibility", and retaining the final "e" when adding suffixes — as in "loving". But Hemingway himself had explained: "The spelling and construction of my letters is careless rather than ignorant".

We have been discussing misspelling of words, but most people may call the topic just "misspelling".

By C. Don Adinoba



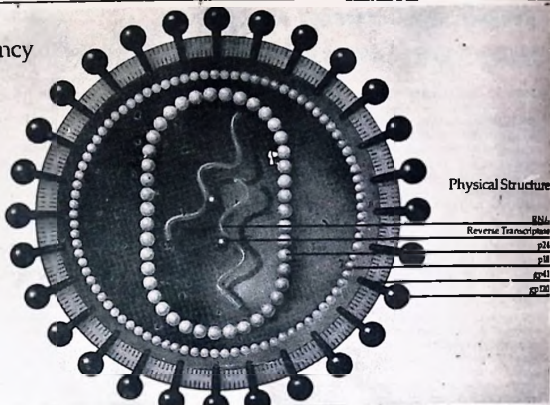
consider a traditional English word, is a corruption of the Igbo word, *okwuru*, the name of both a tropical plant and its edible fruit?

There is, indeed, absolutely no way common errors in spelling English words could have been avoided in Nigeria or any other African country. English is, to most Africans, either a second language or a third one. It is the language of British colonialism. English is no longer a "homogenous" language. We now have the Queen's English, American English, Australian

teacher or examiner. After all, we have a tradition of writing the English language here!

All said and done, there are a lot of words which are misspelt here, whether we are writing the Queen's English or the American. If you go through newspapers, magazines or personal notes of many people who set out to write "aberration", chances are that you will find "aberation" or "abberation". "Harass" and "embarrass" are often written as "harrass" and "embarass", respec-

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)



Visual Contents

• The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV): The world's latest pandemic holding mankind to ransom

AIDS and the patient

Study confirms survival potential with zidovudine drug

AS at November 1, 124,114 cases of AIDS were officially reported from 142 countries, the World Health Organisation, WHO, said in its latest report. WHO itself estimates that five to 10 million people may have been infected with the AIDS virus, the world's latest pandemic which has virtually defied imaginative solutions by the best medical and scientific minds.

Jonathan Mann, director of the World Health Organisation Global Programme on AIDS said recently that progress was being made in efforts at developing a vaccine but that most scientists believed that it would be at least five to 10 years before an AIDS vaccine emerged. "I believe that we will likely have an acceptable drug sooner than we will have a vac-

cine" he said.

An international collaborative programme, called HIVAC, was started in 1984 to help develop such a vaccine. About 2,000 papers rallied hopelessly to the theme at the fourth International Conference on AIDS last June in Stockholm. Attended by more than 7,000 delegates from almost all the countries of the world, including Nigeria, the conference could only report improved understanding of the complex AIDS virus. Professor Luc Montagnier of the Pasteur Institute, Paris, and Robert Gallo of the National Cancer Institute, Maryland, U.S.A. co-discoverers of the virus, were at the six-day gathering. Montagnier told this correspondent that it had not been conclusively demonstrated that the prevalence of a

form of the AIDS virus, HIV-2, in the West African Sub-region had an inhibitory effect on the deadly form, HIV-1. Such explanation had been proffered for the low incidence of AIDS in Nigeria, put at 49 at the last count, including a baby.

Montagnier is currently working on the above subject in conjunction with some Nigerian researchers. He spoke about the peculiar tendency of the AIDS virus to hide in macrophage cells (usually large, immobile cells found in connective tissue in the walls of the blood vessels) making their detection by antibody or antigen impossible.

Dr. G.L. Ada of the department of immunology and infectious diseases, Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public

Health, Baltimore has explained that one of the reasons why the development of AIDS vaccine is difficult is because the main surface properties of the virus changes very rapidly, so that the antibodies produced against one strain do not prevent infection by a newly arising strain.

Since elimination of the virus is still some distance away, research has been directed towards producing drugs that block the enzymes which make it possible for the virus to copy and reproduce itself. Azidothymidine (AZT), which is now called Zidovudine, is the most favoured of such drugs and its use has been approved by the American Food and Drug Administration.

Messrs I. Goring, Messuit, J. Deleuze, J. Deibowitch, J.P. Escande, all of the department of dermatology, AIDS reference centre Tarnier-Cochin, Paris, have said that the presence of Karposi Sarcoma (KS) was an indica-

tion for treating AIDS infection with zidovudine. "However, since we never observed total disappearance of KS under AZT, the combination of AZT and interferon and/or bleomycin should be used," they advised.

Annabel Hedi and colleagues at the AIDS-study group, City Hospital, Munich, West Germany, reported a reduction of mortality and opportunistic infections as well as improvement of quality of life in AZT-treated AIDS patients. They also described toxic side effects associated with AZT treatment.

N. Clumeck and colleagues at the Division of Infectious Diseases, St. Piere University Hospital, Brussels, Belgium said their preliminary study showed that AZT scheduled six-hourly, was as efficacious as four-hourly administration and was very well tolerated and most acceptable for patients. Further studies are continuing on its optimal dosing regimen and long term effects.

A study contained in the latest Journal of the American Medical Association, involving the largest and most diverse AIDS patients yet evaluated, confirmed the potentials of zidovudine. The study, by Terri Greagh-Kirk, MD, of the Bunoughs Wellcome company, Research Triangle Park, NC (makers of zidovudine) and colleagues, involved 4,805 patients. The programme ran from October 1986 through 1987, and the overall survival at 44 weeks after start of therapy was 73 per cent and 88 per cent in patients with better clinical status prior to therapy.

According to the report, data from the study simply implied that initiation of treatment early in the



• Montagnier: Gazing into a future marred for mankind by the virus

disease process after the diagnosis of AIDS materially affected prognosis. "... the finding of a strong association between stage of illness at time of initiation of therapy and survival suggests the need for studies of patients still earlier in the disease process," the report said.

The risks and benefits of measles immunization in AIDS-infected children have also been assessed by scientists. Hermann Mendez of SUNY-health Science Centre at Brooklyn New York, concluded after analysing sera from HIV-infected children who had been immunized against child killer diseases that anti-body responses to those diseases were low.

Ida Onorato and others concluded after their analysis of the effect of two alternative measles immunization policies on one million children, that all children, regardless of HIV status, should be immunized.

Analysis of their data showed that an adoption

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Futuristic designs

Fashion house jets ahead of time

A MODESTLY constructed catwalk down which go 13 models in graceful strides could present a fascinating sight. Under the theme "Africa Silhouette", Maureen Amenechi, proprietress of House of Maulechi launched an exquisite collection of outfits at the Federal Palace Hotel, recently.

Broken into three sequences, namely "Africa in Shade", "Expressions of the Day" and "Soigne Finale". Amenechi's creativity was displayed in modernistic adaptations of age-long traditional attires. Of particular interest was the introduction of new designs in *Buba* and *Wrapper*. *Bubas* took on either a V-neck, or were buttoned down the back. *Wrappers* were sewn at one end, leaving the other hanging loosely. Fabrics experimented with included *Aso-Oke*, *Adire*, *Ankara*, and *Akwete*.

Exploring the versatili-

ty of *Adire*, Amenechi turned out trendy skirt suits. Blouses had imaginative neck lines, and in a few cases, dotted with studs or fanciful buttons. Women, who for religious reasons would rather cover their heads, were given something to choose from too. A black and white skirt suit was offered. Matching the patterned skirt was a scarf, tied loosely round the head. Though this trend isn't exactly a novelty to the western fashion scene, it's relatively a new introduction here.

In "Expressions of the Day," the audience was treated to a collection of casuals which were done in fabrics of jersey, organza, cotton and denim. Ideal for travelling, parties and general fun, it was a splash of trousers, skirts and baggy tops. Patch-work and stones adorned most of the out-fits, serving to



• "His and hers"

highlight their simplicity. If Amenechi's designs are anything to go by, then the 1989 fashion scene might be one of

bright colours, transparent fabrics and sashes tied loosely around the waist.

By Omotayo Afolabi



• "Iro and buba"

Overheard

► All of you driving pilot-cars are so useless. I will not tolerate this nonsense. You will repair the two cars.
— Governor of Lagos State, *Raji Rasaki* to a police sergeant who damaged two cars in the governor's fleet.

► Most of the funds raised at book launchings are illegal. You have to register as a charity to receive all those donations.
— Ken Saro-Wiwa at the launching of his book 'Prisoners of Jobs.'

Humour as mask

Author serializes the buffooneries of society

WHEN many years ago, novelist Chinua Achebe placed the troubles with Nigeria squarely on the shoulders of leadership, fellow-writer Ken Saro-Wiwa fired a rebuttal published in the dailies. Saro-Wiwa, 47, holds firmly to his stance in that article: "My worry is not about government but about society. A people get the government they deserve."

The main problem which Saro-Wiwa has identified as nurturing the circle of bad governments is low level of education. His 1985 publication, *Sozaboy*, subtitled a novel in rotten English, put forward this outlook. "In *Sozaboy*, I used pidgin English, in fact, to show how lack of education affects the mind of the individual and subsequently allows him to be exploited both by the society and those better educated than himself."

In his latest novel, *Prisoner of Jebbs*, which satirizes corruption-ridden African countries, invariably under the hammer of dictatorships, the phenomenon of the "disappearing millions" in an elite prison is blamed on the lack of attention to detail by the prison director. The prison bureaucracy, which parallels the larger Nigerian context, hardly keeps records or monitors expenditures.

Saro-Wiwa believes that attentiveness to detail derives from proper education. "Sometimes, corruption prevents people from paying attention to detail!" he adds.

Saro-Wiwa has been in and out of the marble halls of government. He was at 26 appointed

administrator of Bonny in his home-state, Rivers. That was in 1967, following the liberation of the oil-city from secessionist forces. One year later, he was made commissioner, holding successively, portfolios for Works, Education and Information for about five-and-a-half years. The Babangida government appointed him into the Directorate of Social Mobilisation, a post he quit last October. He is currently on the board of the Nigerian Newsprint

eight writers within one generation." and the University of Ibadan, where he twice won the English Departmental Prize. He has published over seven books in prose, poetry and drama as well as children's fiction. Six more are due next year. *The Transistor Radio* fetched him the 1971 BBC African Theatre Prize. His television comedy series, "Basi and Company" may have attracted the highest viewing figures for any network programme. The latest publications are under his own imprint, Saros International Publishers, which along with investments in real estate and a "struggling"

versation turns to the minority question, a muted anger takes over the mood, which is not banished by his gentle delivery. "What is happening is the robbery of the minorities, particularly of the delta. Gowon (former military ruler) started the trend by seizing the oil resources of the delta, including the offshore oil. He did it only because they were minorities. He bought the north-south divide, which is the most simplistic analysis, because Nigeria is a nation of over 300 ethnic groups. The majority groups have little or no regard for Nigeria. What they are interested in is exploiting the minority resources for the development of their areas. If you look at the geography of theft of government resources in this country, you will find that the biggest thieves have come from the majority areas. "They don't contribute anything. They just chop. It is another form of colonialism and I think minority groups must fight for independence."

He does not think highly of Nigerian academics. "You go to the University of Lagos, every one is struggling to have a Mercedes Benz. You go to Cambridge, nobody there rides a mercedes."

He refers to other societies where select and conscientious groups work hard and think up solutions to problems unlike in Nigeria where the elite are busy hunting after the best cars and chieftaincy titles. "Really, all that is idle. That is why I blame the press. Nobody is asking how they make the money. Instead they get lionized by the people and the press. I use humour to mask the pain, the excruciating pain which I feel."

By Isi Omoita



• Saro-Wiwa "The majority groups don't contribute anything"

Manufacturing Company, Oku-Iboku.

"Being in any of those positions has not stopped me from criticising the government. You need a lot of committed people in all echelons of government and if things start going wrong, they could point them out. The writer in government could take part in damage control."

Of small build, with a pipe usually dangling from his lips, Saro-Wiwa attended Government College, Umuahia, "which has produced

production company comprise his business interests. Almost all his works have a satiric bent. "As a writer, I like to challenge and cheer the reader and satire is the best means of doing that."

Saro-Wiwa is easily infected by his own humour. His eyes sparkle with merriment at the recall of some of his humorous creations, like "Mr. B" of the T.V. series and he presently breaks into laughter, revealing the flash of well-formed teeth. When the con-



Members of the Under-21 after a training session: Set for the challenges in Hydrad

Up against the desert

Nigeria's Under-21 can heave a sigh of relief

WITH the fixture drawn skills are being honed for next year's FIFA Coca-Cola junior world cup in Saudi Arabia. This time, Nigeria's Under-21 soccer team seems favoured by lady luck. Nigeria escaped being grouped with Brazil who has often been out *waterloo*. In the fourth FIFA/Coca-Cola competition, five years ago in Mexico, Brazil ruined the appetites of Nigerians with a 3-0 defeat in the preliminaries into the quarter-finals. Again in Moscow in 1985, Brazil broke Nigeria's back with a 2-1 semi-finals victory. Nigeria has always been dogged by the hard luck of being grouped with tough opponents. Apart from a 2-2 tie with Canada last year, the team, skipped by Willy Opara, took a 4-0 and 2-0 clobbering from Brazil and Italy respectively.

This time, however, the flying eagles have landed in a group which features Czechoslovakia, Portugal and host, Saudi Arabia. As first time participants in the competition, Czechoslovakia and Portugal might appear easy foes. But this would be self-deluding. Czechoslovakia, especially, has already

proved she is no push-over by shoving out 1987 champion, Yugoslavia, in their qualifying encounter. This is no easy feat against the background of Yugoslavia's performance in Chile last year: Australia, Togo and host, Chile received a fierce 4-0, 4-2 pummeling; invincible Brazil was arrested 2-1 in the quarter finals and East Germany was dispatched out of the semi-finals 2-1. Yugoslavia went on to pick the cup out-shooting West Germany 5-4 in penalty kicks.

Soon, the lads who fell the formidable Yugoslavs would be known but it would be folly for the Flying Eagles not to be prepared. Czechoslovakia's junior team might just boast a legacy of tradition. In the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games, the Czechs won the soccer gold medal.

But besides the potential threat posed by Czechoslovakia, the Flying Eagles would also be at the disadvantage of playing against the hosts, Saudi Arabia. Certainly, their only insurance at the King Fahd Stadium is adequate preparation because in their moments of thirst, they would not expect the de-

sert to reveal its oasis.

The Flying Eagles share one characteristic with most Nigerian teams. Most times, they are able to hold their own against other African club-sides, but outside the continent the drums of victory go silent. Beyond the availability of modern training facilities, the winning formula of the European teams cannot be entirely divorced from effective football administration.

Still in its developing stages, football in Niger-

ia remains beset by haphazard planning. The Flying Eagles coaches are not only handicapped by the lack of funds to facilitate training tours, they are still grappling with the problem of putting a team together, and keeping the boys in camp. But rewards can be got by the handlers addressing themselves to the art of blending the individual skills of the boys. And many talents abound such as Mutu Adepoju who scored a hat trick at Ibadan when Nigeria licked Lesotho 4-0.

The groupings

- Group 1**
S. Arabia, Nigeria, Czechoslovakia, and Portugal.
- Group 2**
Norway, Iraq, Argentina and Spain.
- Group 3**
Brazil, East Germany, US and Mali.
- Group 4**
Costa Rica, Columbia, USSR and ether Quarter, Syria, New Zealand and Austria.

Golf marches on

Rich sport takes over poor lands

IT may be the butt of such jibes as the game of the idle rich or the land-devouring sport. With an 18-hole golf course gobbling up about 130-200 acres, the problem of land availability was going to be manifested sooner or later. In Britain where the existing 2,000 golf courses might not cope with the demands of golfers for long, the land problem is as real as the dole queue.

True to its gluttonous reputation, golf has turned on farmlands to gratify its appetite. But

this is good news for British farmers whose fields have low agricultural prospects since their unwanted land could be sold for golf courses. An acre of bare farmland, and of coastal farmland with lightweight cost about £4,000 and £1,000 respectively.

Though the game is relatively cheap, prices vary considerably. Playing at such exclusive clubs as the Wentworth in Surrey costs non-members about £115 a day. But there are courses available for £8 a day.

By John Nwaobi

One world, one Nigeria, one people

By S.O. WEY

THE core issue in the world today, with particular reference to Nigeria and Africa in general, is whether we are going to allow leaders who use religious passions or ethnic prejudices for unprincipled political ends to shout this country to ruin; or whether Nigeria in particular can comprise ONE PEOPLE free from political party strife and sectoral interest.

An understanding of the world is necessary before we can talk about ONE NIGERIA and ONE PEOPLE. The first world cataclysm on the earth's surface occurred perhaps when the White and the Blue Nile, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea were created; later, wind-propelled ships began the process of human migration by water in addition to continental human land-waves of migration.

It was only in 1915 that Alfred Loether Wagener, a German geologist, suggested that about 200 million years ago, all the world's continents were ONE LAND MASS. Then plate tectonics brought about the continental drift, the splitting away of the continents and the subsequent emergence of the world oceans — the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Indian oceans, among other waters. Migrations, seasonal or permanent settlement, are forces to reckon with in world development.

The time may come soon when it would not matter whether we worship the sun-god and other gods at shrines or prophets in church or mosque. Their modern equivalents and in various forms are already flourishing. However, all days would be alike for the worship of the Supreme Being. And all human beings, irrespective of their sexuality could address themselves to the correlation of the mind and work.

The Portuguese saw similarities in the languages of West and East coasts of Africa, based on what linguists call 'fundamental language'; that is, words for parts of the body and for pronouns and numerals which have similitudes. For example, it is understood that there are some words in the Kikuyu language that have the same spelling and meaning as in Yoruba language.

Here is a pover for intellectual digestion. Has Afa divination in Nri kingdom in the eastern part of Nigeria any linkage with the Ifa divination in the western part of Nigeria? In a paper on "Indigenous Perceptions of the Past, Present and Future" read by Professor M. Angulu Onwuejogu at the April 1988 Kuru conference on African System of Thought (which I attended), he suggested that there were common linkages in this regard.

This is not all. The NOK CULTURE in the middlebelt of Nigeria, its historical connection with Kano in the northern part and the old Ilorin in the south which extends to the border of the old Sokoto province, provides an acculturation which links the south with the northern part of Nigeria.

It is the combination of the four elements, religion, truth, justice and law that gives wisdom, understanding or social-learning. When Lord Denning in his book *The Family Story (1981)* suggested that 'Justice is not temporal but eternal', he was referring to justice as a product, not of man's intellect but of his spirit. The basis of constitution-making is social justice, not as a cosmetic preamble. Law is defunct if it lacks justice. It is in 'due process' that truth is found.

Only when people genuinely share common values, based on a single source of Supreme Being as the final arbiter can we have a united society. When faith as a working hypothesis comes to be regarded as absolutely true, rather than what is reflected in the heart, then fundamentalism will increase and universalism will decrease.

In the pursuit of a single and general system of judicial administration for the whole of Nigeria, we have to distinguish between the Common Law and precedents as at present practised by our courts in which both Christians and Muslims have reached their highest pinnacle without any distinction, and the indigenous customs which must be reviewed along with the Sharia or Maliki law if a single system of administration, on which our salvation depends, is to emerge.

We need also to include acceptable commercially related laws with particular reference to banking and interest rates where foreign joint venture is indicated. This brings us to the threshold of a new banking concept relating to usury about which all sectors in Nigeria must reach a common understanding.

We may still need another panel whose members would be competent to consider the various customary laws

from all parts of the country as Napoleon did, in France, formulating an integrated system of laws different from those of the varying laws in the United Kingdom which continues to this day to uphold Scottish laws among others to the detriment of a united Ireland or a European Community for that matter.

In framing an integrated system of laws of Nigeria as a whole, the panel would have to distinguish between the obas, as custodians of culture, as co-equal with spiritual chieftains in many parts of Nigeria on the one hand; and the emirs who are also the religious chieftains in Islamism. And what about muslims residing in communities where there are no emirs?

This is where culture, environment and the history of the indigenes and the settlers will have to come into play. There is no room for any sector of society, however pious and absolute in religious matters common to all, to insist on a pristine position which will prevent the emergence of One Nigeria One People. The days of one section-one people ended with the era of the triarchy of leaders in 1966 when I left the corridors of power in Nigeria. Peace maintained by traditional leadership and followership are closely intertwined at whatever level of community: local, national, regional continental and global.

WEY is a retired Secretary to the Federal Government

Checking the pens

WE have always suspected that a disease does exist with potentials that rival the dreaded Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in its ability to strike immeasurable fear in any sane(?) person. Unlike AIDS, this disease is quite human rather than viral, an attribute that makes it quickly distinguishable and in effect easily avoided, even in casual contact.

The disease is, of course, the Nigerian journalist. Surprised? Don't be. Because not too long ago, the Bahari/Idugbon regime had concocted the now obsolete Decree No. 4 for the eradication of this disease "in all materials particular". But as providence would have it, the decree died and the Nigerian journalist has continued to thrive and multiply without any hindrance whatsoever. Or so we thought until a visit to the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) last week.

We discovered that on many of the beds occupied by patients of the hospital, case files which are usually hung by their bed sides had disappeared. Did we hear you ask why? Hear this. Hospital officials say journalists are fond of visiting the hospital, perusing the casefiles of patients and then writing reports that are most times considered embarrassing to the hospital's management and staff (please note that nothing has been said about the patient here). Now the hospital has evolved a fool-proof



of the rate at which official secrets(?) find their way to front pages of newspapers. We hear that the officials have already accused some people of trying to put "sand in their garri" (which is quite expensive these days) with unabated reports on the local government.

Well we know that if these measures do not work out, officials can always resort to a more physical confrontation as that of Professor Okosor, deputy provost of the College of Medicine, University of Lagos who last week hurled unprintable invectives at journalists who insisted on speaking with the World Health Organisation representative, Dr. Srew-Graves on the performance of the Nigerian Experts Advisory Committee on AIDS. This works very well, as journalists normally avoid physical confrontations, leave and later write front page reports on the invectives and physical abuse perpetrated on them by the officials.

Mission impossible?

PERHAPS you have once witnessed a funeral where a sympathiser would weep copiously and uncontrollably, and before you know it, has surpassed the bereaved in tears and wailing for the dead whom he had not the remotest relationship with. Well, often times, it is the bereaved that would forget (momentarily) their sorrows by the grave side and try to console the sympathiser.

But why this recall of morbid imagery, you might be tempted to ask. Well, this parable of the sympathiser and the bereaved was jolted from our memory by a report we saw the other day in the papers. An undergraduate in one of our prestigious ivory towers had taken the Federal Government to court over its refusal to terminate (and perhaps exterminate) the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The undergraduate is praying that the court determine whether the failure of government to put a full stop to SAP within the stipulated period was not subversive of the transition to civil rule programme (and perhaps our stomachs and general welfare). Our undergraduate was not done yet.

In his 34-paragraph statement, he urges the court to declare the failure of government to discontinue SAP as illegal and unconstitutional (as a military regime?). He is also seeking a "mandatory injunction" restraining government or its agents from further implementation of SAP in Nigeria in any manner whatsoever.

Just as you may want to jump for joy that somebody is taking a stand in the interest of "our stomach and general welfare" we learnt of a rather strange development; we have heard that just a few days after filing his suit, a high powered delegation was despatched from the undergraduate's Kwara State home town with the express mission that he be brought home to his parents for "consultation". The parents, we understand, feel that if there is any grouse with SAP, it is they who should be complaining since they are the ones who, as bread winners, are being sapped by SAP. The undergraduate, they feel, has nothing to fear but to "face his books".

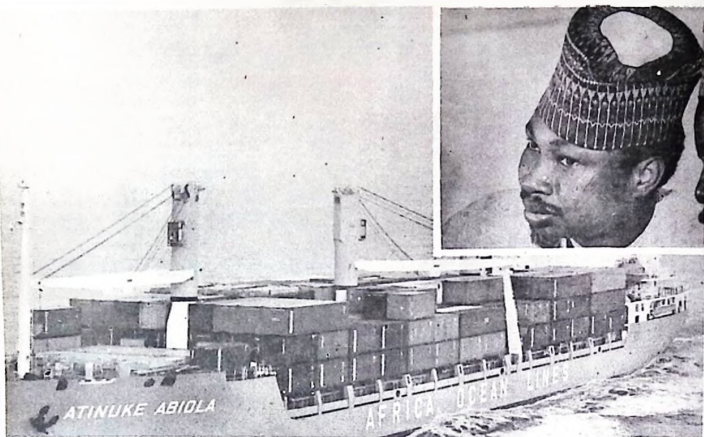
Well we are not sure yet whether the matter has been resolved, but then we will not be too surprised if the suit is discontinued. After all, at one of those funerals, when the bereaved tells the sympathiser that the weeping should stop, it usually does.



plan to keep away prying journalists who insist on making every other person's business their own. Casefiles of patients would henceforth remain under lock and key, we hear, unless requested for by a doctor or a senior health official in the hospital. But it is not only in LUTH that the fear of journalists is raging.

Last week, the Lagos Island Local government put out the word that journalists seeking entry into the premises of the Lagos City Hall, would be thoroughly frisked at both the entrance and the exit points. Why, you ask again? Because the Island Local Government officials are tired

Focus on the Shipping Industry



• M.V. Atinuke Abiola Sailing in Nigeria's troubled waters; NMA's chairman, Major-General Magoro (inset)

THE gateway to a country's economy and the barometer for measuring the level of economic life of a nation: This aptly describes a nation's maritime industry and Nigeria is not left out.

Before 1983 when the downward turn of Nigeria's economy became visible, the nation's sea ports were bubbling with life at an average of 50 ships anchoring daily. But today, with the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), the banning of major imports into the country and the general economic crunch, the ports are now virtually empty.

To further compound the unfavourable maritime climate, over 80 per cent of the locally generated cargo was lifted by foreign shipping concerns. At a time, Nigeria's maritime loss to these foreign concerns was put at N1.8 billion annually. On the average in the past decades, its national carriers earned only N240 million.

The picture becomes clearer when the global freight payments for a year is put into perspective. Of the N147.97 million being global freight payments made in 1983 alone, Nigerian ship owners earned only N79.58 million or 5.39 per cent, while foreign shippers earned N137.39 or 94.6 per cent of the amount.

It is against this backdrop that the clamour for a new national shipping policy to regulate the nation's maritime trade was initiated. The promulgation last April of a National Shipping Policy was, therefore, seen as the actualization of a dream. For the first time, the nation's all-comers maritime trade was to be regulated through a government fiat, thus ending the overt imbalance in the carriage of Nigeria's sea-borne generated cargo.

The decree, which was signed into law by President Ibrahim Babangida and released as Decree No. 10 of 1987, was hinged on the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Convention on the Code of Conduct for Liner Conferences with particular reference to the Cargo sharing formula of 40:40:20.

By this formula, 40 per cent of the total generated cargo by trade with Nigeria would be conveyed by Nigerian National Flag Carriers, the other 40 per cent by vessels of originating countries, while 20 per cent goes to Third Flag Carriers (cross trades). Apart from this, the shipping policy has the added advantage of giving legal muscle to the UNCTAD code of 40:40:20, encouraging indigenous ship owning and equitable cargo sharing, conserving foreign exchange, increasing the level of visible and invisible earnings from shipping, and improving indigenous maritime technology.

The National Maritime Authority (NMA) despite problems at home and abroad, has, however, made some progress in implementing the shipping policy. Its first act was to recognise five indigenous shipping firms as national carriers. The firms are the Nigerian National Shipping Line (NNSL) the African Ocean Lines (AOL), the Greenline Shipping Nigerian Limited, the Nigerbrass Shipping and lately, Bulkship Shipping Limited. A national carrier status qualifies a shipping company to participate in the sharing of the 40 per cent cargo reserved for Nigerian indigenous carriers in the shipping policy decree.

The NMA has also attempted to restore some measure of sanity into Nigeria's unregulated sea lines, criss-crossed at will by both foreign and Nigerian shipping firms. It has

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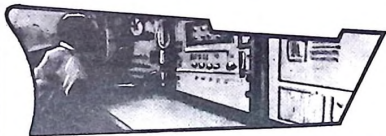


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• Folawayo His Nigerian Greenlines contribute to the growth of maritime.

assigned six indigenous shipping firms to the world's six international sea routes. The NMA also shared cargo generated on these routes to four deserving national carriers. They are the NNSL, AOL, Nigerbrass and Nigerian Greenlines. Cargo sharing is at present made fortnightly at the NMA headquarters to the four lines which recently increased to five. Although both the cargo sharing scheme and the routes allocation have drawn the ire of the indigenous carriers, Dr. Ekong, the NMA director-general insists that his performance has been creditable.

However, in an attempt to implement the shipping policy, the NMA has been bogged down by problems, which include definition factors. There is also the problem of manpower shortage at the NMA and financial constraints. These include intra-institutional factors — banks, insurance companies, shipping lines, agencies, clearing and forwarding companies, ports authority, etc., which are militating against the effective implementation of the national shipping policy.

Protests by international shipping bodies against the shipping policy are also counting against its implementation. Prominent among these bodies are the European Economic Community EEC and the OECD who have accused Nigeria of enacting a protectionist policy and vowed to torpedo the policy. This was quite evident during the inconclusive Geneva UNCTAD shipping Code Review conference.

Apart from these problems of implementation, there are a plethora of other problems bedeviling Nigeria's Maritime industry. Top on the list is smuggling and the nefarious activities of smugglers among whom are crew members of the indigenous lines themselves. There also seem to be no solution yet to the dominant position of foreign shipping firms in the national maritime trade. As at today, Nigeria's sea routes are still dominated by these foreigners who reap huge profits at the expense of the locals who are financially and technically disadvantaged.

It is also on record that no single Nigerian owned oil tanker lifts oil from Nigeria when oil accounts for over 98 per cent of the country's export. All the freight revenue estimated at billions of naira is solely earned by foreign lines while Nigerians watch helplessly. Apart from this imbalance, there is still hope for the shipping industry if

only the 11 indigenous shipping firms could put their act together and co-operate with the National Maritime Authority (NMA).

Of the 11 shipping firms, the NNSL, established in 1951 and with 19 ocean going vessels backed by Federal Government might is the most powerful. Though bugged down by debts which its chief spokesman, Willie Nwokedi blames on debtors "who have refused to pay us," the NNSL if well managed has the potential of turning around the nation's economy. The company enjoys the exclusive right to carry 70 per cent of Nigeria's sea generated cargo by virtue of the number of ships it has. It is also the only shipping line with the privilege of criss-crossing all the world's sea lanes without hindrance.

It is a member of six conference lines, UKWAL, COWAC, MENAC, FEWAC, AMWAC and the Nigerian-Brazilian routes. Its major problem, it seems, is debt, owed principally to overseas creditors. In 1986, it obtained a loan of N70 million from the Federal Government to pay off some of its debts while some were rescheduled. Today, it is still neck deep in debt prompting it to put for sale five of its ships which are also considered economically not suitable for today's shipping trade. All its ships are between 10,000 and 14,000 leadweight tonnes.

Another budding shipping company that is holding its own is the Nigerbrass Shipping Line, a private shipping company owned by Alhaji Mahmud Waziri. It was established in 1976 and has since then firmly registered her presence in the international shipping scene through her commercial activities.

The company is a member of MEWAC and COWAC and covers the North and South Continent of Europe, all Italian, Spanish and Southern French ports and the Brazilian and South American sea routes.

As a founding member of the Brazil-Nigeria Conference since 1972 the company started operation on a joint venture basis with Lloyd Brasi-Leire, the Brazilian Government owned shipping company plying Lagos-Rio de Janeiro-Santos and Sao Paulo ports.

Today, Nigerbrass owns the Nigerian flag ship, *MV Congo Hope*. Other shipping firms in the country include the African Ocean Lines, the Nigerian Greenlines owned by multi-millionaire, Alhaji Wahab Folawayo.



• NNSL's M.D., Rear Admiral Oguna: Bugged down by debts.

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