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THE LEGEND OF AARE ONA KAKANFO

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BY
AKINLOLU AJE



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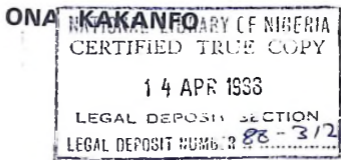
LEGEND

OF AARE

ONA KAKANFO

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**THE
LEGEND
OF AARE**



BY AKINLOLU AJE

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gilbert Akinlolu Adisa Aje is a veteran journalist. He has been in this profession since 1949 when he began as a cub reporter with the defunct "West African Pilot", Sabo, Yaba, the leading newspaper in Zik's Group of Newspapers. He was born at Oshogbo on May 2, 1927, of an Egba father and an Oshogbo mother. At the age of thirteen, while still at All Saints' School, Oshogbo, he wrote his first poem. By the time he left the primary school for Ilesha Grammar School in 1944, he had gone through his guardian's complete work of Shakespeare.

Whilst at the Grammar School, he wrote articles and poems in the "Ionian Magazine", (the collective mouthpiece of some eight secondary schools at the time) under the pen-name of "Gilbertia". Mr. Aje moved to the defunct "Daily Service," Apongbon Street, Lagos in 1950 as reporter with ex-Governor L.K. Jakande who was Editor of the paper until the latter part of 1953. He was an unrivalled "Scoopist". In 1954, after covering Oyo riot, he was promoted North Regional Editor of the "Service". His Editor-In-Chief then, was Chief Bisi Onabanjo, ex-Governor of Ogun State.

In 1958, he was founding editor of the Action Group's, "Middle Belt Herald", Jos. In 1962, he was briefly Acting Editor "Daily Telegraph" Yaba. He also edited "Nigerian Business Digest" "Weekly Focus" and was Supplements Editor of DRUM magazine and its sister, TRUST. He was the Assistant Editor, NEWBREED magazine at the time it was banned in 1978.

Mr. Aje is a versatile writer and journalist. He has been a columnist of SPEAR magazine since 1973, where he maintains "The World's Greatest Lovers" column (which highlights the private lives of great men and women, king and queens, the world over). SUN DAY TRIBUNE is another (for which he has been writing "Historical Excursions" regularly since 1983); HEADLINES he also regularly contributes to since the early 70s and EVENTS (a new monthly.)

which has secured his approval for a new column, "Yesteryears of Life".

Recently, he was one of the old reliables who wrote the "Daily Times" posthumous: "AWO - THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE."

Twenty years ago, he began his research to write fifteen historical books whose scripts are now ready.

PREFACE

This historical documentation is an attempt to bring the biographies of all the legendary Yoruba Field Marshals into one piece, where any researcher or historian can read of the activities of each and everyone of these men, whose undertakings changed Yoruba history and portrayed most of them as belonging to the callous clan of bloody men.

Most Yorubas have heard the saying: —

“Aare npe o, o lo ndi’fa
Bi ifa ba fo ire,
Ti Aare ba fo ibi nko?”

Aare calls you,
You say are at divination
Suppose the Ifa oracle says you
well And the Aare says you
nay?

This historical account is about the lives of all the Aare Ona Kakanfo (Field Marshals) that ever commanded Yoruba armies, right from the creation of the title. The odium attached to the title was as a result of the disrespect for constituted authority oftenevinced by Aares; the callous shedding of blood in which most of the Aare glorified; the love of hatching intrigues, hatred, calumny, envy and jealousy; the restless spirit which animates their wreckless behaviour; the beastiality in them, which often made them put less premium on human lives — as if they were no better than those of rodents; the daring spirit which roused some of them to challenge their lords and lieges, the dread their names and presence invoke in their enemies on the battlefield and the chilling terror their servants spread about the neighbourhood all these made people curious about what they really were and what their exploits were like. These are the allegorical tales which the naive would want to know. The bard wants to learn by heart these exploits for his historical composition. The legend that have never failed to arouse the interest of listeners, very concerned enought about the past of their progenitors.

True, the chieftaincy of Aare Ona Kakanfo was created so as to block the possibility of any, Yoruba King leading his army in person on the battle field, thus avoiding the demoralisation that could follow should such a king be killed or die on the battle field.

There were also invaders from other areas, for example northern parts of the present Nigeria; invasions from their Nupe neighbours and the incursions of the Dahomeans. It was in view of these threats,

that King Ajagbo decided to introduce the Aare Ona Kakanfo 'chief-caincy.

Again the legend of the Kakanfo had been that of men stewed, seeped and steeped in magical arts, by which they were credited with powers to become invisible while fighting on the battle fields; decapitating their enemies while still being invisible or wearing charms that defied gunshots, and the onslaught of swords and machets. Some of these instruments of death simply break or bend and refuse to cut through their skins. There is talk that other men as steeped in magical arts, also use special guns and swords that reduce such immunity from gunshots to nothingness, causing the death of the dreaded Kakanfos. The Aares were also credited with charms to shorten journeys of two days trekking to half a day.

And for the purpose of relating the legends of these dare-devils, I have referred to them in this book as Aare or Kakanfo, both meaning the same thing. Apart from bringing the biographies of each of them into one piece, the records have been updated as well, bringing the number of the Aares to fifteen with the installation of Chief M.K.O. Abiola. The incumbent, Chief Abiola is, therefore, not the fourteenth. Also, the birth place of Field Marshal Oyabi has been disputed by his descendants whose own version have been used in this book.

This correction came about as a result of my earlier treatise of the Kakanfos in the piece published on September 13, 1987 in the **SUNDAY TRIBUNE**. That piece was very limited since there was a constraint on space in that weekly newspaper. It is the same exercise that has been repeated here. But the stories are more lucid, detailed and contained in-depth analysis of their activities and motivations. The biographies of Chief S.L. Akintola and Chief M.K.O. Abiola are exhaustively dealt with here.

I agree that there might be one or two omissions from the controversial lives of the two above — named Aares which might be possible. I have tried to be fair to these two last holders of the offices of Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland, especially since both men were peace-time Aares, this modern age.

There is the traditional belief that Kakanfo always died violent deaths. This could be true of most of them. But it did not follow that that is the rule. However, the last Aare died from the bullets of power-seeking soldiers who stage a coup on January 15, 1966 and the man, Chief S.L. Akintola, became a sacrificial lamb for the perpetration of army rule. The distasteful, mystical ill-fated "thirteen" had nothing to do with Chief Akintola's death. His death was

the culmination of facts and factors that history could not, and, will never ignore.

Chief Abiola, in his own case, is the first Egba man to hold the title. And, never mind Kurumi's sympathy for the Egbas, he (Kurumi) was never one of them, although, the remnant of the Ijays trekked to Abeokuta which they made their home and have become absorbed into the fold of the Egbas. They now occupy Ago Ijaye in Abeokuta. Thus, the conferment of the Chieftaincy title on Chief Abiola nurtured the idea of the legend about the Kakanfos being related in one book, one after the other. This gives the reader the opportunity of comparing the life of one Kakanfo against the other. It also makes it easy to decipher what became of the others, whether the head of everyone of them was severed at death and sent to the Alaafin (Palace) at Oyo or only one or two were so treated. I might as well say that there is no record to show that the head of every former Kakanfo was severed and buried in the Palace at Oyo.

Whether they were all ruthless and blood-thirsty or, were men who stirred trouble without reason — this can be seen from their exploits here. However, on two other occasions, two Bashoruns were also dangerous despots. Bashorun Gaa of Oyo and Bashorun Oluyole of Ibadan. Both exceeded even the worst of the Kakanfos and showed that absolute power corrupts absolutely.

The installation of Chief Abiola as the fifteenth Kakanfo of Yorubaland has generated so much heat and controversy that political disputants took shots at the Alaafin, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi The Third, for not taking their permission or that of leading Yoruba Obas. On the other hand, Chief Abiola himself is no new man to chieftaincy institutions in Yorubaland, Ibadan, Rivers State and among the Efiks of Calabar, for in all these, he collected 54 chieftaincies — an unbeatable record for a colourful man.

The interest people take in the Kakanfo issue attracted very many people to the scene of installation in Oyo town. This time, the lucky Chief is no politician like his predecessor in office. That accounts for the unprecedented crowd that witnessed the ceremony. Were he a politician, his opponents would have stayed back. What is certain about the office of a modern Kakanfo is that it can no longer be the dreaded Aare which Yorubaland heard so much about. Even then, Nigerians will watch with keen interest, the activities of Chief Abiola. Many will be curious to see whether the man, very versed in the Koran, will defy the tenets and injunction of Islam not to worship other gods. For how shall we describe a chieftaincy which says cer-

tain incisions — 201 of them will be made into his head. Into these, 201 different medicines or charms will be rubbed. Again, whether he will plait his hair in pigtails as the rule dictates or not, remains to be seen.

Finally, the new information on Aare Oyabi shows that we need to update our history books. Our so-called trained historians are of little help. They have a tendency to look askance at those who write history books but were not graduates of history. Yet, the British administrators' diaries and records used in writing the history of Nigeria, did not come from the pen of history graduates. Rather than producing only text books, from which quick money could accrue, our historians should concentrate on digging up more facts about the past of their own locality and, where possible, those that could be easily accessible to them.

Our historians still have a lot to do — by way of writing the history of most of our leading townships, without exaggeration. And even when Yorubas traditions differ from town to town, much could still be done. There are certain reserved areas, forests and groves, which people must not enter, except they are initiates. Our culture, our tradition — these cry for documentation. But, one can also appreciate the constraint which interested historians face. This is money, without which their investigations would be mere wishes.

There are other historical packages I intend to release very shortly too. I thank those who have made this book possible. The inspiration originated from the Editor, Sunday Tribune, Mr. Folu Olamiti who first suggested my first write-up in the Sunday Tribune of September 13, 1987.

This book finally came about through the suggestion of the Chairman of Events Communication Limited, Chief V.A. Odunaiya, a lawyer by profession. Thus, this book is, in short, a collaboration between myself and Events Communications (Nigeria) Limited.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank the Oyo State Commissioner for Information, Alhaji Bola Adedaja, for his co-operation on the supply of the pictures of the installation of late Chief S.L. Akin-tola as the 14th Aare in 1964 and Chief Librarian, Concord Press for dossiers from files on Chief M.K.O. Abiola.

January 4, 1988.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

ON January 23, 1988, the Fifteenth Are Ona Kakanfo (Fied Marshal) will be installed at Oyo, the political capital of Yorubaland. Usually, the title is the culmination of a series of events, and exploits of the recipient of the title-wars and victories, credited to him, or, in this modern age, his achievements and popularity.

Alhaji Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola, Chairman of ITT (Nigeria) Limited, the Concord Group of Newspapers, Wonder Loaf and many other companies, will kneel before the Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi the Third, to receive the honour of this warrior-chietaincy.

Since the announcement was made that this special title will be bestowed on Chief Abiola, there have been much noise — voices of acclamation and, of dissent. But, many Yoruba indigenes do not know what are involved in being the Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland.

The author had searched the records and found out from Yoruba elders, what the title involves; Who were those who had held the post? What did they do? How did they live and how did they cope with the office? Were they good-natured, generous men or autocrats and blood-suckers who cared not for how many people died in their wars but rather, how to feed the living soldiers with whom they were to do the next battle?

The title is for the man who dares look death in the face and one who would never parley with danger. It is for a man who dares Death and one whose life could be sacrificed for the good of one's people and nation. It is a post to which the lowest-born Yoruba man could aspire and one that blue-blooded aspirants dared not take or ever have taken up (for who would sacrifice a prince?) because its incumbents never know mercy.

Previous Are Ona Kakanfos were known to have been high-browed; blood-thirsty; autocratic; callous; selfish; greedy; treacherous; vain-glorious; mellow-hearted to sycophants; ruthless, unforgiving and vengeful.

In the savage days of "might is right", when superstition, charms, incantations, fetishes and appeasement of gods recommended themselves to the good graces of the people; days when charms prevented matchets from inflicting any cut and gunshots and harmless grain-shots could be picked from inside the body, with the correct charms and juju, those were the days when a man could be invisible at will or turn into a rock or stream of water or just evaporate like vapour and disappear.

The title of Aare Ona Kakanfo was for the foremost of these "indigenous" soldiers, whose armies were undrilled and untutored like their white contemporaries.

The title did not just come around. At the time it was introduced by Alaaḡin Ajagbo, it was said that no one King was regarded as an overlord of the other. Leaders, chosen by the people were expected to defend the territorial claims of the nation; ensure that the people were not raided and captured by more powerful people; support a king whether he be right or wrong and abide by whatever judgment he might give on any judicial issue.

In short, it was felt that the duties of a king was in the city and not to expose himself to the poisoned arrows of the enemies. Or, to the misfortune of being killed or captured by their enemies. There were a couple of occasions when kings had led their armies to battles and died there.

King Ajagbo, who was born a twin, had a most brave friend, a great hunter and one on whom bullets, arrows and matchet cuts had no effect. He was a man who knew how to fight his enemies with charms. He could command a strong crowd of besiegers to strike camp and go home or to fight themselves until they would all have decimated themselves which was the chief reason for King Ajagbo choosing a man, Kokoro Gangan, as the first Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland.

King Ajagbo felt that instead of he, the head, leading his men physically to battles, it was best left to a man who did not fear death; a man who was believed to have a charmed life. a man on whom the instruments of war had no effect.

Before this title was created, the man who led the Alafin's army to war, was his Bashorun. This was the man whose post is equivalent to that of a Prime Minister.

The Bashorun is the chairman of the Cabinet of Oyo. The collective name of these Chiefs is "Oyomesi" (Oyos know the answer). The other members of the Oyo Cabinet are the Agbakin, Samu, Alapini, Laguna, Akiniku and Ashipa. The last mentioned is deemed the most junior but his forefathers owned Ago Oja now Oyo town.

The office of the Aare Ona Kakanfo has been aspired to, by men who had distinguished themselves in wars.

The post has its own characteristic

The Aare is the de facto head of the Eshos. The Eshos area cream of soldiers, made up of the young brave scions of the aristocracy; ready to lay down their lives for the nation. And in an age when the spoils from plunders and battle-fields were greater than one could reap from the farmlands or the trades, the tales of prowess performed by each of these scions made commoners want to become Eshos.

Also, in those alcyon days, any rascal could be a warrior. In fact, those who rose to be great warriors then, were dare-devils who had nothing to lose. They were mainly the trouble makers and malcontents; murderers and outlaws who preferred being Robin Hoods than living the peasant lives of farmers.

History depicted the early Aares as stubborn and obstinate; troublesome, ruthless and vengeful; as autocrats and despots who hated the rise of any other person to positions of power.

When there is no war, they appeared to be fidgety, stirring trouble elsewhere so they could find something to do and not sit calmly in the mornings or go to farms at cocks crow.

"History of the Yorubas" by Rev. Samuel Johnsons says: *"Nearly the whole of them were connected with stirring times and upheavals in the country – Afonja of Ilorin, Teyeje of Ogbomosho, Kurumi of Ijaiye; Latosa of Ibadan being specially famous. Ojo Aburumaku of Ogbomosho fought no battles, there being no war during this period. The change that has taken place in the country left the Ibadans at this time, masters of all war operations. But in order to keep his hand busy, Aare Aburumaku formented a civil war at Ogbomosho which he also repressed with vigour....."*

"After Kurumi's death, Abogunrin, his head slave, had the honour of burying him. This was done in secret and the two slaves who dug the grave were slain also, to accompany their master, so that the spot might not be disclosed. But the place was found out afterwards and the skull taken over to the Alaafin as the custom was, for all who bore the title of Aare Ona Kakanfo.

"Kakanfo are generally very stubborn and obstinate. They have all been more or less, troublesome, due, it is supposed, to the effect of the ingredients they were inoculated with. In war, they carry no weapon, but a baton known as the King's "invincible staff". It is generally understood that they are to give way to no one, not even the King, their master, HENCE KAKANFO ARE NEVER CREATED IN THE CAPITAL, BUT IN ANY OTHER TOWN IN THE KINGDOM.

"There can be but one Kakanfo at a time. By virtue of his office, he is to go to war once in three years to whatever place the King named and, dead or alive, to return home a victor or be brought home a corpse, within three months.

"The ensigns of office are:

- (i) The Ojijiko. This is a cap made of the skin of a leopard and of the red feathers of parrots' tail, with a projection behind reaching as far down as the waist. (This is like a Yoruba hunter's cap or what the modern youth terms "Elemu nget on" (Palm wine drinker gets on).
- (ii) "An apron of leopards skin.
- (iii) "A leopard's skin to sit on always.
- (iv) The Asiso, the Pig-tail hairstyle of hair cut
- (v) "The staff invincible."

A Kakanfo's title is a niche lower than that of the Bashorun of Oyo.

Whereas the Bashorun is entitled to wear a coronet — a minor crown as his mark of office, the Aare Ona Kakanfo wears his Ojijiko. The Bashorun ranks next to the Alaafin and is supposed to be related to him — hence the coronet.

The Kakanfo ranks immediately after the Oyomesi. He is the head of the *Esos*. These *Esos* are addressed as "Iba" (a military salutation). The post is not hereditary but was usually won on merit and

could be aspired to, by any Yorubaman, wherever he may be. Even then, only the tried and the brave soldier could aspire to the post.

There is the Yoruba saying that "An Eso never has a wound from the back except from the front. Whoever has a wound at the back amongst the *Esos* must have turned — tail".

As for the *Esos* these are supposed to be 70 captains of the guard. Of these, ten are supposed to be under seven councillors. Each of them wears an "Akoro" — a special coronet." Each of them also carries no weapon like his leader, the Kakanfo. Instead, they carry a baton each too.

The rule of war, it has been said already, was that an *Eso* must never turn his back on a battle, no matter what happened. He should fight to the last — kill his enemy or be killed in the endeavour.

All the 70 *Esos* must reside in Oyo city — ready to defend it, to the last drop of blood in them.

They are of two groups, 16 superiors and 54 inferior (juniors) ones.

PREVIOUS AARES

An Aare Ona Kakanfo, on taking office, must shave his head completely and 201 incisions are made on his occiput, with 201 viols rubbed into the incisions — one for each cut. This is supposed to render him fearless and courageous. They are always shaved, but the hair on the innoculated part is allowed to grow long and, when plaited, forms a tuft or, a sort of pigtail.

There have been fourteen Kakanfos — Chief S.L. Akintola, being the fourteenth. The one Kakanfo usually omitted was Aare Oluyedun of Ibadan. He was the first Ibadan man to hold that post, even if there is no record of his achievements. Latosa was the second Ibadanman to become Aare.

THE AARES

PLACE OF BIRTH OR ORIGIN

1. Kokoro Gangan	Iwoye
2. Oyatope	Iwoye
3. Oyabi	Oke-Illuku (not Ajase)
4. Adeta	Jabata
5. Oku	Ilorin
6. Afonja L'aiya L'oko	Ilorin
7. Toyeye	Ogbomosho
8. Edun	Gbogun
9. Amepo	Abemo
10. Oluyedun	Ibadan
11. Kurumi	Ijaye
12. Ojo Aburu-Maku (Son of Toyeye)	Ogbomosho
13. Latosa	Ibadan
14. Ladoke Akintola	Ogbomosho
15. Kashimawo Abiola	Abeokuta

Among notable Esos, an alternate to any Aare was the Onikoyi of Ikoyi. The first Alake of Abeokuta, King Okukenu, was a "Sagbua" of the Esos. Others say that Lisabi the Egba rebel leader, was also an uncompromising Eso, never mind his sad end.

As was first mentioned at the beginning of this treatise, the first man to introduce the title was King Ajagbo, the Alafin of Oyo. The King who had a twin brother, Ajampati, and bore marked resemblance to his brother.

King Ajagbo sent out many military expeditions. His great army commanders were his Bashorun, the Agbakin, the Kakanfo and the Ashipa.

CHAPTER II

KOKORO GANGAN

AS has been stated above, the warrior — King Ajagbo, sent out a military expedition under each of the above Chiefs.

He was particularly fond of Kokoro Gangan a native of Iwoye whom he conferred with the new title Aare Ona Kakanfo.

No doubt, the man merited the honour. He was said to be a very able General and therefore, a great Generalissimo, to attain which post, he had executed many daring deeds.

Having consulted his cabinet and the Obas or dukes under him, the king bestowed the title on him. King Ajagbo, who was said to have lived for 140 years needed someone to ward off attacks of daring and wayward warriors in his old and serile days. He had to depend on his own Oyomesi Chiefs. But, with age taking toll on his nerves, these city sires had to administer the home and could not be released to go to war.

Thus, there was a need to have a sort of professional warriors to do battles, people very competent. And since Kokoro Gangan's prowess on the battle fields became ditties coupled with the fact that he (Kokoro Gangan) was the King's friend, he was conferred with the title

Records of the wars fought by this great man, remain obscure. They did not feature in ballads of the Alaafin's palace minstrels nor could anyone remember that he fought a special battle.

What is believed by historians was that if Kokoro Gangan did not deserve or merit the post, he would not have been appointed in those turbulent days. And, had he done badly in any war, he would have been notoriously known for that.

A dawdy, old man would not approve an equally senile man as Field Marshal.

However, palace minstrels still recalled that the people of Ikereku (an Egba town) were insolent to King Ajagbo and would not pay their usual "Isakoles" (tribute). So too, did the people of Iwemo in the Popo country (in Dahomey) Onko and the Olopa.

These towns were the first-ever which the Aare Ona Kakanfo captured and razed.

OYATOPE

Both Kokoro Gangan and Oyatope were friends, sharing the same interests.

They were both credited with strange mystical powers and, about the same age.

There is no record of what the man did before and after he became the Kakanfo. If he were underserving of the post, it was felt that there were other men who would have been conferred with the title.

Whilst he was the Aare Ona Kakanfo, no Yoruba Chief or marauder came forward to challenge Oyatope. Again, had there been any challenge to the Alaafin's authority, Oyatope would have taken care of that and that would have been part of history too.

OYABI

It is now known that Aare Oyabi, who was quoted by this author as having been born and domiciled in Ajase, Porto Novo, came from Ahoro Sanndo and finally settled at Oke-lluku, thanks to a rejoinder on an earlier treatise made on the issue in the *Sunday Tribune of September 13, 1987* where I had quoted my facts of his origin from the *History of the Yorubas* by Rev. Samuel Johnson.

On the strength of the rejoinder, I hereby update the previous publications to say that Oyabi was domiciled at Oke-lluku from where he was invited to fight Bashorun Gaa by Alaafin Abiodun.

I have it on the authority of Prince A.O.T. Oyekole (on-behalf of Ago Aare Royal House), that Oyabi's first ancestor was Ajibesin Adensile, a muslim Alfa who was also an aso-ofi weaver in Ahoro Sanndo a man "whose valour in repelling a Dahomean invasion, made him a Chief in Ahoro Sanndo.

"Thereafter, his son, Alao Sao, was made the Oba of Ahoro Sanndo. It was this hereditary throne that Oyabi inherited at Oke-lluku before his appointment as the Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland. Oke-lluku is 36 kilometre away from Offiki — a town in Ifedapo Local Government Area of Oyo State."

"The Dahomean war drove the people of Ahoro Sanndo to Oke lluku long before Oyabi was born."

He lived and died there.

However, events in Oyo City, the capital of Oyo (Yoruba) Empire, was experiencing political perversion of a despot who, without being king (but just the Prime Minister) was determined to rule and outshine the king himself. That despot was Bashorun Gaa, next in authority to the king and, who, as Bashorun, was the head of the Oyomesi.

Bashorun Gaa was everything in Oyo Empire. He dethroned one king and enthroned another. In fact, he told the King that everyone of them must come every morning to pay court to him by prostrating before him and asking after his health. In short, his ploy was to execute every king, if he did not like him and, to avoid the Alaafin being able to consolidate his authority.

In fact, Gaa removed and enthroned five Alaafins, four of whom he killed, the sixth of who, killed him in expiation of what despotic acts he had previously carried out.

When he became the Bashorun, Gaa was to enthrone Prince Labisi as king. Labisi commenced the many rituals connected with his ascension to the throne. But seventeen days after the commencement of the rituals, Labisi committed suicide.

Earlier, to show Prince Labisi that he, Bashorun Gaa, was the ruling authority in Oyo and not the Alaafin, Gaa executed Labisi's two great friends, Olubo and Ajibadu — as a prelude to his show of power. Then, he ensured that Prince Labisi did not enter the palace to perform the most important rituals, preceding enthronment. He knew Prince Labisi had no supporters who might restrain him (Gaa) from being autocratic, for, Bashorun Gaa had charms and spells by which he could become an elephant or a leopard. Who would dare Bashorun Gaa, the notorious Prime Minister of Oyo?

As soon as Prince Labisi noticed that Gaa would not want him to be King, the Prince took poison and died which he considered more honourable than being installed a puppet king to be ordered about by one of his (the Kings) officers. One Yoruba adage says: "A kuuu joye, o san ju enu mi ko ka ilu lo". (Better not to be chief than to be a chier who says I has no authority over the town)"

The next unfortunate King was Prince Awonbioju, alias Oduboye.

To remove the popular odium of his being responsible for the death of Prince Labisi, Bashorun Gaa allowed Awonbioju (meanikng

“precious as Eyes”) to be enthroned and to reign for 130 days before murdering him for not prostrating to him every morning at his (Bashorun’s) semi-palace.

Next, Gaa backed Agboluaje to the throne. Having been installed, King Agboluaje would go to the Bashorun’s palace to pay homage to him. And because the new young King was doing this, Gaa allowed him to reign for a longer period than his predecessors.

Having been installed as king, King Agboluaje’s friend, Elewi-odo, a Popo king from the Dahomean territory, paid a visit to the Alaafin. He had come with many gifts to rejoice with the Alaafin. He made sure that, he, a coastal monarch, brought the best textile, damask and silk materials for Agboluaje.

The Alaafin decided to hold a durbar (Bebe) in his honour. This Bebe is an accursed affair. Every Alaafin who held one, history confirmed, often died soon after. But the King was unaware of this.

The siting arrangement was such that wherever the Alaafin set his throne, the Elewi-Odo’s was set opposite. Whatever agbada (big native gown) the Alaafin wore, his visitor used the same material as a covering cloth according to the dress of Popo kings. The Bashorun grumbled about this and, at last, the people backed the Bashorun that their King should wear incomparable dress, not a uniform dress with another king, to whom he was very superior.

A special dress was later made for the Alaafin which the Elewi Odo never had.

As soon as Elewi-odo left Oyo, the Bashorun declared war on him. Alaafin Agboluaje was worried. But Elewi-odo sent a message to him not to panic and that by the time the Bashorun’s army arrived his domain, he would have deserted the town.

The main reason for the war, was that Bashorun knew that if the Elewi-odo could spot such costly dresses and jewelleryes, his country must be very rich and, the richer it was, the greater the spoils of war.

The Alaafin felt himself guilty for the declaration of war by his own country on his recent august royal visitor. It was share hostility which should not come from a brother, friendly king. Agboluaje never got Elewi-odo’s message. Rather, to escape the shame, Agboluaje took poison and died.

The next Alaafin was Majeogbe.

As soon as he ascended the throne, he set about fortifying himself against the great charms of Bashorun Gaa. He was a wretched King for, he had no money. No tribute was being paid to him. Instead, the provincial kings-dukes and Chieftains paid annual tributes to the Bashorun instead of his King.

In this reign, some of the excesses of the Bashorun and his sons were recorded.

On one occasion, Gaa asked that a carrier, with a heavy load on his head, be decapitated — for the fun of it. The man had caused no offence other than that the Bashorun wanted to enjoy the authority he wielded so unrestrainedly. Secondly, he wanted to see the reaction of the stumped body — the head..... if it could raise itself and the body, whether it would continue its journey or grope about.

On another occasion, a son of the Bashorun, shot an Oyo farmer to death for "disfiguring the face of the earth by making yam heaps for planting crops."

Another excess of Gaa's children was recorded when one of them shot a farmer on the latter's farm. Gaa's son said he thought the farmer was a monkey.

So wicked was the Bashorun that he kept a horse in his stable for three years without giving it any fodder, although he always heard the horse neighing.

One of the precautionary measures taken by King Majeogbe, was a charmed lamp which would burn eternally. As long as it burned, he would experience no death nor could any one go near the lamp to put it out. Meanwhile, King Majeogbe had succeeded in poisoning (through third parties) the Bashorun by which the latter became grippled.

But one day, a quarrel occurred between one of Majeogbe's princes and Gaa's sons in Gaa's quarter. It was a cause for war against the Alaafin. The charmed lamp was still burning and as long as it burned, would the Bashorun not know peace. And, knowing that, Bashorun Gaa employed people to quench the lamp. Each volunteer collapsed just before he could reach the lamp. As a result, Bashorun had to seek the help of strong medicine men to put out the lamp. He later found one Aragberi man who volunteered to send his slave to do the job. He armed the slave who was to put it out.

The slave did. And died there. The King, too, died immediately, although the now lame Bashorun compensated the Aragberi man.

The Bashorun, being lame, had to be carried to the Audience Hall every morning before the door of the place was opened. At the end of the day, he was removed after the last visitor or complainant, had left, so that none knew that he was lame in both legs. Sometimes, he crawled to the Audience Hall himself, then called on his slaves to open the door.

After Majeogbe's death, Prince Abiodun alias Adegolu was installed King by the Bashorun.

Each morning, Alaafin Abiodun betook himself to the Bashorun's palace to prostrate to him in homage. So happy about this was the Bashorun that he was asking, "who taught this boy to behave"?

Abiodun was no fool.

He soon told the Bashorun not to expect him for a couple of days as he was sick and would want to treat himself, so he could quickly recover. With this ruse, Abiodun disguised himself like a beggar and went to pay a visit to a bossom friend of his also called Adegolu, who resided at Akala.

When he asked for his namesake, Adegolu's wife told the disguised King that her husband had gone to his farm. He would wait, said the disguised king, as the message was a matter of life and death. His friend's wife was not expecting the Alaafin, so she could not suspect she was before him. She expected the Alaafin to be at Oyo. When Adegolu the farmer came, Adegolu the King said the message he had was from the Alaafin and it was only for the farmer's ears. They locked the door on themselves and the King identified himself.

King Abiodun disclosed his humiliation; the despotic excesses of Gaa and his children and how he starved him of the tributes, so that but for his royal farm and a few crumbs from friends, he was a King only in name. He said that with 6,600 Yoruba towns and villages at that time — he was still a poor man. Bashorun's children went from place to place to collect the tolls and tributes. They dominated everything and none dared raise a finger. What were they to do?

The pair agreed that the task was enormous and so, both of them went to Aare Oyabi at Oke-Iluku where he was traditional ruler of the not-too large town. All three agreed that a day be set for t

massacring of all Gaa's children and relatives and then, a war would be declared on the Bashorun. The message was relayed to all the provinces.

The Alaafin hurried back to Oyo and resumed his puppet kingship. But on the appointed date, all Chiefs and provincial kings did as directed. Before this, the king had called the most powerful relation of Gaa's, one Olubu, and promised to make him the next Bashorun if he raised no finger to help Gaa. On the appointed day, all relations of Gaa's were exterminated-not even the ambitious Olubu was spared. All their pregnant wives were death with. Their stomachs were ripped open and the embryo cut to pieces.

When the reports reached Gaa, he called the few remaining relatives and his domestics and dependants and in-laws and told them that united they stood, divided they would fall. They were to resist the king and Aare Oyabi who was marching on Oyo.

Olaotan, Gaa's eldest son was with his lame father, a chivalrous but also wicked man. Troops from the provinces, were pouring into Oyo City and a civil war had started. Very soon, most of Gaa's men had been slain and so, Gaa thought he could use his magic to escape. He called his slaves to bring him four mortars. These were to be the legs-fore and hind-of an elephant. Two pestles were brought. These were to be charmed into ivory tusks of the elephant. But, alas, the magician who would metamorphose into an elephant, was lame in the legs. He could not even put his legs in the mortars.

Thus, Gaa's son, Olaotan, told his father: "I warned you about this charm that one day, it would fail. Hasn't it now?"

Gaa's palace was surrounded by Aare Oyabi's royalist troops. Gaa's domestics fought on. Then, the troops set fire to the main palace of the Bashorun and everyone ran outside, only to be slaughtered. The Bashorun was carried outside and captured alive with an Ilari called Gbagi, who carried him and did not desert him. The Alaafin sat in state as the terror of the Empire to whom five Kings had prostrated, cowered and begged for his life. A corpulent man, he was made to prostrate under the intense heat of the sun. There, he was, perspiring profusely while the whole place was soaked with his sweat. He was then subjected to the greatest indignities ever. Youngmen and small boys came near to pluck his beard and touch the hanging tumour on his head which most peopl

could not go near enough to see.

A bonfire was made in front of the palace. All the posts of Gaa's palace that had not been burnt out, were piled into the fire. Gaa was told it was time for him to warm himself "as it was too cold now". He begged for his life but it was too late. He was thrown into the blaze.

He died as he had lived.

After his death, a one-day Bebe (durbar) was held to celebrate the occasion. After this, Oyabi returned to his town of Oke-Iluku.

Two years after this, the Alaafin invited Oyabi to Oyo to receive the present he had taken time to choose for the successful conclusion of the Bashorun Gaa affair. He could not be bestowed the special honour because, he died on his way to Oyo.

ADETA

Except the truth that he was Aare after Oyabi, there is also no record of what he did.

Against the background of a man as notorious as Bashorun Gaa ten Aare would not have stifled the Bashorun or laid him low. It was an era of passive field — marshalling, when "big egungun would not let the small and infantile ones come out to pick gifts," if only for dances.

OKU

What happened to kings, Bashoruns and Aares about whom little is known was either that they came to the throne or their post as old men past their prime or that the period was peaceful or, no "spoil joys" like Bashorun Gaa, were around. What was definite was that he was an Aare Ona Kakanfo.

CHAPTER III

Afonja — the curse of Yourbaland, was the man who changed the course of Yoruba history so much that his Ilorin birth place became a tainted Yourba town ruled by Fulani aliens who he (Afonja) had invited to help him fight the Alaafin of Oyo in his bid to be independent of the Alaafin instead of being a liege under the central authority of the Alaafin.

Ilorin became Fulani's gain and Yorubaland's loss. And so would it ever remain.

King Abiodun was the Alaafin who resisted Bashorun Gaa's nazist regime, and put an end to that reign of terror.

By the time Gaa died, Abiodun did not have years to live.

Thus, it was King Aole who went to the throne with all the treachery of Afonja being hatched.

This handsome prince went to the throne after Bashorun Gaa had died and Oyabi, the Kakanfo as well as Oku, his successor, had died.

Afonja immediately proclaimed himself the new Aare of Yorubaland.

He had been contemptuous of the late Alaafin Abiodun. The long notorious reign of Bashorun Gaa had weakened Oyo Empire. Everyone paid his tribute promptly to Gaa, the devil incarnate, until the handsome, weak Prince Aole became the Alaafin.

As we will remember, city dwellers of Oyo, were not expected to aspire to the post of Aare Ona Kakanfo because the post had become very notorious that it constituted a rival and a challenge to Oyo royalty.

Afonja had been resident in Ilorin. He had proved himself a worthy great warrior and an accomplished tactician, like his late Ilorin father.

Ordinarily, an Aare is not known to give way to any King because the viols rubbed into the 201 incisions on his head, made him heady and fearless that he might even challenge the Alaafin, were there to be any cause for dispute on who was greater and who should rule the city.

On his material side, Afonja was a prince, being the son of an Oyo princess.

The office of Aare was known to be below a prince, which Afonja coveted and single-handedly promoted himself to.

However, ambition was one thing, independence was another. Both of these traits of character manifested themselves in this Ilorin duke. He, Afonja, had been a man of restless spirit. He surveyed

Oyo Empire and found no one to challenge him as a rival candidate for the vacant post of Aare. He had been famous for his military exploits around Ilorin where he had made himself the be-all and end-all of all he surveyed.

Again, Afonja had made himself odious to the new Alaaḡin Aole, by refusing to send him the yearly tributes from his province of Ilorin.

As it was traditional for every new Alaaḡin to name who his enemy was, on ascending the throne, King Ao's was requested by the Oyomesi, to name his enemy so that the town could be captured. He replied;

"My enemy? My enemy is too strong for me."

He was, pressed however, to say who this enemy was and he named Atonja of Ilorin.

This ambitious prince of Ilorin had the instruction to keep the invading Fulani marauders away from the northern tip of Yorubaland. The Hausa Jihadists have been eyeing Oyo as a ripe victim for spoils of war. Somehow this task had been foiled by Yoruba army which checked their advances.

Being greedy and ambitious, Afonja collected tolls and tributes for the Alaaḡin and appropriated them with nothing sent to the Alaaḡin. How then, could the Alaaḡin, like a famous warrior who had none to fear and none to check him or call him to order? Maybe, thought the Alaaḡin, the combined army of Yorubaland could call off the bluff of the man.

After the Alaaḡin had named his enemy, Yoruba military leaders assembled a worthy army to face "the King's Enemy Numbe One," otherwise known as Afonja.

When this immense army was ready, King Aole told the commanders that before they moved on, the fortified town of Iwere from which the royalist troops withdrew once, without capturing, should now be enveloped and delivered to him.

The rule of Yorubaland warfare, for any new Aare, regarding the first assignment to be given by a new Alaaḡin — as was supposed to also affect all the wars to be fought by an Aare — was that the Aare must conquer any place assigned to him within three months or go to sleep (commit suicide). King Aole was invoking this assignment to Aare Afonja of Ilorin, as an excuse for getting rid of him. Knowing that Iwere town was fortified by man and nature and that it would be impossible to conquer it within three months as specified by tradi-

tion, Afonja would have to commit suicide if he failed to do so within the specified period.

Yoruba generals, were aware of the King's pleasure on Afonja. They, too, did not like Afonja, who was too rich and arrogant. The strategem resorted to, was to tell Afonja a different story. He was to be told that the King wanted him to conquer a place called Gbeji.

The generals were to lead him on until they get to Iwere, when they would then inform him that that was the real place the King would want him to conquer first, before proceeding to Gbeji. Of course, we have been told that Iwere was impregnable, being set on a rock with its natural defence!

However, the Bashorun of Oyo and the Owota had sent private intelligence to Afonja as to the true position. There were four conspirators — the Onikoyi of Ikoyi, who was also a claimant to the post of Aare, the Owota, the Bashorun of Oyo and the Kakanfo.

If the Onikoyi had been on the side of the Alaafin, Afonja would have had someone to fear. But the Onikoyi seemed also afraid of Afonja. Besides, he felt he, too, could be independent of Oyo over lordship like Afonja, paying no more tributes to the Alaafin and thus, becoming richer. And what if he was on Alaafin's side and Afonja won? Afonja would then declare war on this capital of Ikoyi with none to help him out. So, he backed Afonja.

There were two great armies.

One was led by Afonja and Onikoyi. That was the army of the provincials. The other army was led by the Bashorun and the Owota. That was supposed to be the actual royal army.

As the hosts reached the foot of the hill on which Iwere was situated, the king's brother — who was with the city host — and his eunuchs; the principal royal slaves and their soldiers, pointed out to Aare Afonja, that the town of Iwere, situated on top of the hill, was, by the wish of the King, the town to be captured and laid low.

The king's enemies, led by Afonja, remarked that that was incredible because His Majesty did not tell them Iwere was to be captured. Even if that were so, it was surprising that His Majesty would have signalled that out as his enemy, since the place was a royalist town, that should not be put to the sword. The conspirators asked 'Is this not King Ajagbo's maternal town?' "Why put a royalist town to the sword, after all, it was King Ajagbo who created the Aare Ona

Kakanfo chieftaincy which His Lordship, Afonja-laiya-loko, bears today."

Most immediately, Chief Opele of Gbogun drew his sword and killed the king's brother. It was a signal for open rebellion.

The royalists were decimated and annihilated.

The conspirators immediately sent word to Oyo to tell the king that they were provoked into attacking the royalists, by the behaviour of the king's supporters. They were sorry the king's brother too, had been killed.

Meanwhile, the anti-royalists were marching on Oyo city itself. For 42 days they encamped before the city because they could not decide on whether or not, to attack it.

Finally, the insurgents — the Bashorun, the Onikoyi, Chief Opele of Gbogun, the Owota and Afonja himself, sent an empty calabash to the Alaafin. This, in Yoruba tradition, meant that King Aole had been rejected as Alaafin. The empty calabash was after the same pattern as the bowl which was sent for the head of John the Bapists to be put after his execution. The Chiefs and Oyo city, demanded his head. And since he could not be executed like an ordinary man, he was to take poison and die ("go to sleep" or "turn his back" on the world and go to Kingdom Come).

King Aole had anticipated such a move. He had prepared his mind for the worst and had put his affairs in order.

He then took his next crucial action.

He came to the quadrangle of the palace, three arrows ready to hand in the quiver and an earthen plate in his hand.

King Aole was said to have stood on the back-bottom of a mortar, to give irrevocability to his curses and impercations. He then said:

"My curse be on ye for your disloyalty and disobedience. May your children disobey you. If you send them on an errand, may they never return to bring you word again. As you now do to me, so shall they do to you. To all the points I shoot my arrows will ye be carried as slaves. My curse will carry ye to the seas and beyond the seas. Slaves will rule over you and you, their masters, will become their slaves...."

The King raised the earthen plate and dashed it on the hard floor, invoking: "I gba laa so, enikan kii so awo. Beeni ki oro mi o se. To, to to."

This means "A broken calabash one can mend; no one mends a broken dish. So must my imprecations remain irrevocable."

He then left the quadrangle and went inside his room where he took a prepared poison and died.

No sooner was King Aole's death announced than Afonja and Opele, Baale Gbogun, proclaim their independence from Oyo sovereignty. The Onikoyi, who also had his own ambitions, did not want to be under Afonja, lest he exchanged one despot for another. He too, proclaimed his independence. But the Bashorun of Oyo who had joined the conspiracy, had nowhere else to go, but the same, sacked Oyo city.

That was the immediate breakup of Yoruba Empire and the enthronement of federalism with a weak and unrecognised centre. Each section, re-demarcated his area of authority and took action against his neighbour if he transgressed or flouted the local laws. Border disputes became rife and were never referred to the King of Oyo.

Since the people of the period believed in juju and strong charms, Afonja, fearing lest the curses of King Aole overtook him, sent for a muslim mallam called Alimi, who was said to have come from Gwandu, to come and make charms to neutralise Aole's curses and scatter his (Afonja's) enemies, so that the new seat of power could be Ilorin and not Oyo.

Fearing lest he alone might not be able to face whoever rose against him, Afonja also invited a brave mercenary leader called Solagberu from Kuwo. This man came with his own "jamaa" (host of mercenary soldiers) and settle outside the Ilorin town.

Since Afonja also feared such a man as the Onikoyi and other brave generals with whom he defied King Aole and sacked Oyo, he teared an attack from Ibadan. This was because Ibadan had lately become an important military settlement. The town continued to grow from strength to strength.

In fact, things were happening at Oyo and Ibadan. The soldiers there, were getting ready for an invasion of Ilorin, especially, showdown with Afonja who has humiliated their King.

Afonja approached Mallam Alimi his "priest" and urged him to go to Gwandu and raise Hausa soldiers to join his host of defenders, of Ilorin territory. The Hausa and Fulani "anansara" were arriving daily

under different military leaders. And although they were supposed to be loyal to Afonja, the figure increased at such an alarming proportion that all the Hausa and Fulani mercenaries needed was an occasion to show their hands against the arrogant Afonja.

The Hausas who called their hosts "Jamaas" were raiding as far as to Ede, stretching to Iresa and Ilobu — most Ibolos were of a section of the Yorubas. Also, Nupes and other northern folk were joining Alimi's men. Solagberu's camp was also swelling.

Some of the Hausas came from Kobanji, Kohe, Kuwo, Agoho and Gbanda to join Solagberu at the "Oke Suna," Ilorin camp.

Meanwhile, although all the children of Bashorun Gaa were supposed to have been exterminated when he was captured lest there be any left of them who might turn up to avenge their father's death. There was one, Ojo Agunbamburu, a son, who was small but he was hidden away by a good muslim priest who had nursed and brought him up in the Bariba country.

The Kakanfo, wanting to avenge his father, Bashorun Gaa's death, pretended he had come to espouse the King's cause and had with him — had arrived Oyo with a great army.

When it was learnt that all that Ojo was concerned with was to challenge and route Afonja for humiliating the Alaafin, more supporters of the King joined him. He then proceeded toward Ilorin with the host.

As the army progressed, Ojo was quickly met by Afonja's men. In three straight pitched battles, Ojo sent the Ilorin host running off for cover. At Ilorin, the Kakanfo's men went and got ready for the decisive battle.

The Kakanfo quickly fortified Ilorin and awaited the Oyo army.

When the Oyo and Ilorins clashed, Afonja was almost routed when the Kakanfo received a message from Adegun, the Onikoyi, of the Oyo, to stand on and that, although he was on Oyo's side, he would not be a supporter of the Kakanfo's as he would not want to be seen as a servant of the Alaafin. He said, although he was on Oyo's side, he would give way to allow Afonja to plough through the Oyo host. He (Adegun) would also turn on the Kakanfo's men and attack them.

The Oyo men carried out to the last word. Ojo's men were highly surprised. They, including their leader, turned tail and fled and their

victory turned sour and, into outright defeat. The flower of Ojo's army were Bariba men — where he was raised. They were known to be terrible on the battlefield and so, even in defeat, they marched off in orderly manner. They were not pursued by Ilorin soldiers. And so, Ojo Agunbambaru, went back to the Bariba country to lick his wounds.

It was a terrible thing for the Oyo host and an unforgettable experience for Ojo, who had not even raised a finger yet, to avenge his father, the late Bashorun Gaa.

Afonja, victorious in that treacherous encounter, proceeded against Iresa and other towns which had backed Ojo Agunbambaru and smothered them.

When a new Alaafin was to be enthroned at Oyo, Afonja was not informed since he (Afonja) had affronted Oyo so much that he was regarded as a pronounced enemy of the Empire.

The new head of the Oyo Empire was King Maku, who reigned for only two months. When Afonja heard that a new moon as risen at Oyo (a new Alaafin had been enthroned), he retorted, "Let that moon quickly set."

Meanwhile, the Hausa-Fulani hosts were getting ideas into their heads about who should head the administration of the combined hosts (did not the invited Jamaas outnumber the Yorubas?). Similarly, they were showing disrespect to Aare Afonja and were ready to call him "Kafri" to his face.

Afonja too, felt the pulse of the people and anticipated that the Fulanis were likely to rebel against him and seize power, even though he had originally invited them to Ilorin to help fight the Oyo Empire or, the Alaafin of Oyo.

The information that Afonja was sending to the Onikoyi and others to back him in ejecting the already too-powerful Hausa-Fulanis, leaked. The muslims, believing that their presence in Ilorin was a continuation of Othman Dan Fodio's Jihad or Islamic evangelisation of pagans, decided to strike the Yorubas first.

The move on Afonja's stronghold by the Hausa-Fulani fundamentalists shocked him.

Afonja's men were outnumbered and he himself was hard-pressed. He sent to his friend, Solagberu, to whom he had been haughty and merely condescending. Against all rules of friendship, Solagberu refused to budge. He maintained an unconcerned neutrality. Afonja sent his servant, Bugare, to Solagberu the second

time, to come quickly and to forget whatever disagreement there might have been between them.

Afonja said he was expecting the Onikoyi and his army and that, together they would trounce their "invaders" who had been invited to come and help, but now want to become his master in his own house.

He even put the parable — "Gba, ranmi de'leru.... ajinido ti d'oko (Do, help carry this little load, claims ownership of the load; the philanderer claims to be husband" — to depict the treachery of the Fulanis, as if he had not been treacherous too, to the Yoruba cause and the Alaafin.

Solagberu ignored his friend for all the message Afonja was to send, although the former was later to regret his neutrality in abandoning his friend.

Afonja was helmed in on all sides. He and his men fought shoulder to shoulder and back to back. He fought from the main road into his quarters. And in order to drive him out, the Hausa-Fulani mercenaries set fire to his house and everyone of his dependants ran out for safety and capture or death.

They fought on, back from his quarters to the streets until he was too wounded and could fight no more. Spears and darts pierced him through. They became so many that he could not even fall down because the spears-many of them touched the ground after piercing him, and helping his being propped up-standing (not falling).

Even when he was dead, none could come close to him for, they thought he was merely pretending to be wounded-so much was he dreaded, being so great a warrior and also, spotting much charms which made them fear him or, prevented their swords cutting through his flesh, at first.

At last, he fell, after they dared to come near him and found he could not even hold any weapon which they proffered. He had been dead over an hour earlier.

Thus fell one of Yoruba's greatest men of valour, brought down by treachery and arrogance-a single man who sold the Yorubas to the Hausas.

His family still live in Ilorin.

At the end of the war, Mallam Alimi his invited priest-turned master, collected his young children (the adults had been killed) and his wives and gave them quarters to live in. Alimi's descendants thereafter ruled Ilorin, excluding his (Afonja's) descendants from the throne.

In fact, this writer met the head of the family in 1978 while doing a story for NEWBREED Magazine on the future of traditional rulers in Nigeria.

The present head of Afonja's Ilorin family is Mallam Mohammed, the Babasale of Ilorin. The family has dropped any claim to the throne of Ilorin.

When Afonja finally fell, the Jamaas burnt his body into ashes — so "compassionate" were they!

CHAPTER IV

TOYEJE

As had been stated earlier, there could be no two Kakanfos simultaneously. That rule was supposed to obtain at all times.

Toyeje was an Ogbomosho man. He was an astute, loyal and capable leader of men.

As soon as Afonja was killed through the treachery of the Fulani mercenaries, Toyeje, who became the next Aare Ona Kakanfo, exhorted Yoruba warriors to unite and fight to expel the alien mercenaries from Yorubaland (Ilorin).

But there was this struggle for power among Yoruba military leaders.

The Onikoyi of Ikoyi, head of the Provincial Obas and one of the greatest military masters of his days, did not see why Toyeje should be the Aare when he the Onikoyi was not dead. He however forgot that at no time did any Oba combine his Obaship with the office of the A.O.K. unless his place was a small settlement.

To subvert and thwart the claims of Toyeje, the Onikoyi publicly backed Edun of Gbogun as Aare.

Thus, two A.O.Ks ruled Yorubaland on the demise of Afonja.

The existence of two Kakanfos did not enrage the Alaafin who was himself concerned with how to expel the Hausas.

However, Toyeje was surrounded by many intrigues. This was surprising as the Aare himself always held court and his own supporters always ensured that he was briefed about events in the Empire.

When an Aare was not hatching an intrigue, he would be faced by the one being perfected by jealous would-be rivals. Yoruba generals did not profit by what happened to Afonja nor were they serious in considering how to recover the territory lost to the Fulanis.

They were divided among themselves and could not agree on how to go about the expulsion of the Hausas. To further challenge the Yorubas, the Fulanis were ending out military expeditions from Ilorin, to capture some other bigger Yoruba towns at the expense of the dithering, feuding Yoruba military leaders.

In spite of the looming war against the Ilorin Fulanis, Toyeje decided to order to show the Onikoyi that he, the Aare was not to be taken

granted, declared war on Ikoyi.

Both Toyeye and Onikoyi were independent of the Alaafin — who, had they been his fiefs, would have stopped them from such provocative insults, challenges and declaration of war.

In the contest, Toyeye was in alliance with the Timi of Ede, Solagberu of Ilorin and Oluwo of Iwo. Jointly, they went to the attack of Ikoyi.

Meanwhile, Edun, the rival Kakanfo, propped up by the Onikoyi also prepared himself for war, on the side of Adegun, the Onikoyi, his sponsor.

There was no doubt what the intriguing Edun of Gbogun was doing. He had become envious of his benefactor, Adegun of Ikoyi. He even seriously considered Adegun as a rival candidate.

Thus, Edun even involved Adegun in a war Adegun was ill-prepared for. That was the Kanla war.

The Ilorin were preparing to attack Yorubaland but Yoruba military leaders, were divided amongst themselves and feuding.

Edun sought the support of the Ilorin hosts. He was ready to serve Ilorin and not Oyo, should the Hausa-Fulani give him support. Not that alone.

When the two armies joined arms, Edun promised to play the traitor, first against Toyeye and then, betray Adegun, the Onikoyi by pretending to be fighting on his left and, suddenly giving way so that the Hausa-Fulanis could kill Adegun.

Once Adegun was killed, he, Edun would then deal with Toyeye, the Aare. He had talked Adegun into the Kanla war. The town of Kanla had sought aid from Ilorin. Adegun too, had played the treacherous game being planned against him, before. Now, unbeknown to him, Edun had sealed his doom at the Kanla war.

At the appointed time, Edun gave way and Ikoyi's flower of youth found their leader surrounded by enemies. They went to his succour but were overwhelmed by the Ilorins. Adegun died fighting.

Once the Onikoyi was dead, Edun found himself with only one rival — Toyeye.

But man proposes, while God disposes. As Edun planned evil, so did evil pursue him. He had gone to Ilorin to seek support. His town of Gbogun was a big one, much coveted by the northerners.

The pretext for fighting Edun was that Edun did not pay obeisance to the Emir of Ilorin whilst there, nor did his town of Gbogun send any tribute to Ilorin nor made any declaration of support for Ilorin, categorically.

The Ilorin horse were ready. Edun started fortifying his town of Gbogun against his former ally, Ilorin. He was the only man to avert that war if he paid obeisance to Ilorin in person. But no Kakanfo ever did that before.

Better to die in the flower of youth, at the chance of winning a noble name, than to die like sheep and goat unknown and unmourned. If he died, defending Gbogun, that was better than being humiliated by the treacherous Ilorin.

In fighting Ilorin, he had to reach Ikoyi first. And that town had just been pillaged when Adegun, its Oba died at the battlefront.

Now, Edun asked the place to move out or he would be forced to reduce it before dealing with the Ilorins. Edun was feared. And so, the town of Ikoyi was again deserted.

The new Onikoyi was Siyanbola. He fled to Ilorin for safety.

When the Ilorin host arrived, they found Gbogun heroically defended. Ilorin cavalry made several charges but could not break its defence. The town was therefore besieged.

For days, several battles were fought without either side being victorious. The town had to be reduced by famine before it surrendered.

Edun escaped in the confusion which followed. He left by way of Gbodo. The Ilorins, realising that he had slipped past their fingers, chased hotly after him until they caught up with him. He had a few bodyguards with him insufficient to defend him.

On the other hand, the Ilorins dreaded him and could not give him a direct battle.

His people of Gbodo into which he had taken refuge, what would they do for this Field Marshal they had been very proud of before? Betray him? Defend him and, if so, at what cost to themselves?

Finally, the people of Gbodo took up arms against their own Field Marshal and killed him — regrettably. The Ilorins had told them "You are all in trouble and would be killed if you let Edun slip past you."

History records "His head was taken off, raised upon a pole and carried in triumph to their camp and thence to Ilorin. Odunewu, his eldest son and some of the distinguished war chiefs who were taken, being compelled to ride behind it, in order to grace the triumph of the conquerors. On the third day after their arrival at Ilorin, Odunewu succeeded in purchasing the head of his father and had it decently buried to save himself from disgrace"

OJO AMEPO

Afonja had many generals fighting on his side against the Jihadist insurgents. One of them was Ojo Amepo.

When his boss, Kakanfo Afonja was killed at Ilorin, Amepo moved to Akeso. That was a base from which he conducted his raids into neighbouring towns and villages.

Among the places raided by Amepo were Iware, Okiti, Ajerun Koto and Ajabe near Ijaye.

Like Adegun, the Onikoyi, did when he put up Edun of Gbogun as Aare Ona Kakanfo in opposition to Toyeye of Ogbomosho the official AOK so too, was Ojo Amepo put up as AOK against Edun of Gbogun.

The contemporaries of Amepo were Salako and Ojomgbodu who fought on the side of Afonja against the Huasa Jihadists. And because these Ilorin mercenaries killed his master, Afonja, Ojo Amepo swore he would never be on the same side with the Ilorins.

The propping-up of a candidate for the post of Aare showed the state of anarchy in the country then.

Amepo was reputed not to have lost any battle before, that is, when he was in command. He still nursed the hope of avenging the death of his late Aare Afonja.

At this time, the people of Epo districts of Oyo Empire were paying tributes to Amepo and not to the Alaafin. The practice in the olden days, was to allocate a number of towns and villages to a warrior chief as their ruler. Tributes from these places go to the chief, who, in turn, used the money to defend them or help develop the place when necessary. As a chief, he had to supply fighting men when there was any war and from his districts must come most of his own soldiers – apart from his fighting slaves.

Ilorin fighting men had besieged Ago Oja (now Oyo).

Amepo, hearing this, decided that relief should be sent to Ojomgbodu who was holding out there. Amepo sent Dado, a great warrior who was his (Amepo's) commander-in-chief.

With Dado were such great warriors as Adekanbi, Soso, Dese and Lagbayi.

Amepo sent Ayo, another general to Wonworo. Both places were obstinately and stoutly defended. The compact defence would have continued but for the tragedy which overtook the corpulent Ojo Amepo at home.

The tragedy?

Since Amepo sent the two groups of generals to the reliefs of both Ago Oja and Wonworo, he had not heard anything from their fronts. No sounds of musketry; no howling on any battlefield. How was he sure they had not been ambushed and killed?

So, early one morning, he stole out of the camp at Akese, with twenty young urchins, not even up to the grades of boydguards. He went by a side-way so as to hear or eavesdrop on the conduct of the war.

As he picked his way, he got to a tree with luxuriant foliage and shade. Under this tree, he dismounted to stretch his legs. He was wearing his red uniform.

Unfortunately, as he was thinking of being alone, some Ilorin calvary men from Wonworo farm raids, espied him from afar and knew whom he was. The men were to return by way of Akese to Ago Oja.

Too late, the Ilorin horsemen rode hard to catch him before he suspected anything.

When he saw his danger, he tried to raise his heavy, corpulent body to the horse but was a bit late. His youthful, inexperienced boys could do nothing. The Ilorins cut them to pieces as they also did to Amepo himself.

After they had slain him, the Ilorin calvarymen cut off his head and hands and carried these to their camp. A loud ovation greeted this new calamity to the Yorubas especially as it meant victory for the Ilorins.

To dampen the spirit of the Akese soldiers, the Ilorins rode to the camp there and asked them to surrender. And in case they did not know why, they exhibited the head and spotted hands of Amepo.

After the first shock of the news, Dado rallied his men together and spoke brave words.

"We are here to defend the town and not our master whose misfortune is only an incident, though a lamentable one. Prepare yourselves for battle tomorrow because you will receive severe encounter like you never had before. You will then know how brave men resent treachery."

Secretly, a contrary instruction went to the camp at night.

By daybreak, Dado's men had left the beleaguered town, for Ilorin Odan which thenceforth, became the headquarters of the flower

the Empire's army.

Very soon, they had devoured all the food in the farms around for miles. And so, they moved to Ijaye. There again, they brought the place nigh famine. Ijayes therefore, started attacking the marauders each time they were seen on their farms.

OLUYEDUN

This Ibadan great fighter did not last long enough to leave much about himself and his prowess as an invincible Field Marshal.

Oluyedun came from a family of warriors. His grandfather was one. His own sire was the great Afona of Ilorin and so, he had many things to recommend him to the post — ability, wealth and fame.

It would have been interesting to read the exploits of a man whose father's passion for independence led to the break-up of Yoruba Empire and finally sold Ilorin to the Hausa Jihadists.

Oluyedun was not listed as one of the Aare Ona Kakanfo by Rev. Dr. Samuel Johnson in his "History of the Yorubas. But "Iwe Ibadan" by Oba I. B. Akinyele, did.

It was Oluyedun who became the Kakanfo after Edun. Also, Oluyedun took the title of Aare instead of simply being Baale of Ibadan after the warrior Maye (an Ile Ife General) and become the first man to hold that post (of Baale) in Ibadan. Oluyedun was a contemporary of Maye, who was executed in Ibadan on the order of Kurumi.

Oluyedun was Kurumi's contemporary too, but died shortly after assuming office.

The oversight committed by Rev. Samuel Johnson in not recording Oluyedun alongside the Kakanfo is regrettable.

Whether the title was conceded to him because of age or because his father was the A.O.K. Afonja, did not matter. Even if he fought no battles, he must have fought much earlier in his life. Kokoro Gangan, Oyatope and one or two other Aares, had not curricular vitae attached to them.

It is interesting to note that what Dr. (Rev) Samuel Johnson, author of HISTORY OF THE YORUBAS wrote about Oluyedun (after denying him a place on the A.O.K. list):

"SETTLEMENT OF IBADAN

"After the fall of Erunmu, the war Chiefs returned to Ibadan."

"Ibadan then consisted of the central market and about half a mile of houses around. The town wall was where the principal mosque now stands.

"Hitherto, Ibadan had been occupied as a military headquarters for Marauding and other expeditions; but after the war, at a public meeting held to consider the future course, it was resolved that as they now intend to make this place their home, they should arrange for a settled government and take titles.

"Oluyedun came first.

"He was the son of the late Afonja of Ilorin and, as such, the scion of a noble house. He was honoured and respected by all. He might have been the Baale, but he preferred to adopt his father's title of Kakanfo and it was conceded him, not for his valour, but for his age and dignity, being a survivor of the men of the preceding generation."

It was wrong for Rev. Johnson to overlook this ancient man, because no war was credited to him. Surely, if he was not a warrior, his father's name alone was not sufficient to make him the head of government over such intrepid veterans as:

Lakanle	Otun Aare Ona Kakanfo
Oluyole	Osi Kakanfo
Ade lakun	Ekerin Kakanfo
Oluwaiye	Ekarun Kakanfo
Abitiko	Ekefa Kakanfo
Keji	Aare Abese
Osun	Sarumi
Labosinde	Babasale

With these tough men under him, Oluyedun could not have been a soft man. After all, he was a contemporary of Kurumi and senior to Oluyole.

Maye, an Ife general, was the first Baale of Ibadan. He was destooled and exiled and finally executed. Then came Oluyedun as Aare. Kurumi had won his fame before that: but famous as he was, he had not been made the Aare before Oluyedun became one. Kurumi was a contemporary of Oluyole both of whom became Aare and Bashorun simultaneously on the orders of King Atiba.

KURUMI

Kurumi was very concerned with what food the living would eat, not how many died fighting. It was Dado who was then, superior to Kurumi and who said it was better to give the Ijays a frontal attack for killing their soldiers.

As the soldiers of Dado moved to Ijaye, everyone ran away so that, the town was deserted by the time they got there. So, Dado, Kurumi and others simply took over the town instead of setting it ablaze. Thus, the Egbas of Ijaye ran away and Oyos took over.

At Ijaye, Dado, who led the army since the death of Amepo, had a weakness, a very costly one. He would not farm, like the others were doing. He loved war and the rattling noise of salvos from guns. On several occasions, he had gone to the farms and had fired several shots, to scare his people into thinking they were being attacked by enemies.

Each time he was challenged, he called them yellow-livered cowards, until for the first time, he was challenged by Kurumi one of his subordinates. After he had been cautioned but would not desist from that practice he was expelled from the community.

By now, sectionalism was rearing its head among Yoruba leaders. If a man came from the same village with a general, he had a god-father and could do no wrong.

Kurumi was a domineering chief, a great clansman and too sectional.

Ikoyi Chiefs were all devoted to him. They were from warrior areas which formed the cosmopolitan province of Oyo, while the others (Chiefs) were made to feel inferior to the others.

There were two camps.

Those from Epo (Ikoyi) districts were led by Kurumi while those from Akese (late Amepo's base) were held in contempt. Among the leaders and generals so affected were Ayo, Lahan, Adekanbi, Ajadi, Sukoto, Akuna-agba-ni-igbe and Oluwole.

In order to avoid confrontation between the two factions, the Akese group moved to Abemo, 12 miles away from Ijaye and between Ijaye and Oyo.

When the Arakanga war began between Ibadan and the Egbas, the Egbas invited both Kurumi and Ayo.

At a stage, the King of Oyo, His Majesty Oluewu, invited all leading warriors in Yorubaland, starting from Oluyole of Ibadan, Kurumi of Ijaye, Ayo of Abemo and Timi of Ede, to a parley on the audacious rapacity of Ilorin soldiers whose striking power they knew

and feared and which, as Yorubas, it was their duty to check and drive out of Yorubaland.

Any aggrieved minor Yoruba Chief, would run down to Ilorin and accuse responsible Yoruba kings of drivers crimes. The most insulting one to the Ilorins was that the Ilorins were often told that all Yoruba kings had sworn not only to drive the Hausa away from Ilorin but would even capture the Sultan of Sokoto too; that no Yoruba king would prostrate to Hausa Emirs and whatever was known would incite and create ill-will in the minds of the Hausas were related to the Ilorins.

Some of these allegations were true. But Yorubas who became "Lord Haw-haws" to the Hausas were despicable trouble shooters.

The famous fighters of Abemo were, in themselves, having their own trouble.

For example, Ayo was head of those at Abemo, but Lahan was his second-in-command.

Lahan was a descendant of Oyabi, the third Aare of Yorubaland. Lahan was also related to Kurumi. At that time, Kurumi was not yet the Aare. Lahan felt he could no longer stand being ignored by Ayo and taken for granted. He crossed camp to Ijaye to join his king. Thereafter, Kurumi, who was already jealous of Ayo and would do everything to pull him down, was plotting Ayo's overthrow, only Ayo was no match for either, if each came on him (Ayo) separately.

Kurumi and Lahan planned to surprise Ayo one nice day. This leaked to Ayo who got himself ready for any eventuality.

To the duo of Lahan and Kurumi, add Oluyole, the cunning Ibadan autocrat worst than all two put together.

When the stratagem for the liquidation of Ayo ripened, each of the three—Lahan, Oluyole and Kurumi — found that he (Ayo) had been on the alert. Finally, the wily Oluyole had to return to Ibadan. That far, Kurumi and Oluyole went, then each went his separate way — as far as ambition was concerned — until it became glaringly clear that, as Bashorun, Oluyole wanted Kurumi, his superior, to defer to him.

Oluyole had spent five days with Kurumi as they worked out the capture of Abemo and the liquidation of Ayo. That plan had to be scheduled.

Again, Oluyole planned to be around Abemo. He informed that he had come to the neighbourhood of Abemo and Ijaye in order to do honour to the Aseyin of Isehin who was expected at Ibadan.

This time the plan did not go awry. Ayo was surprised and Abemo captured by the trio. Ayo escaped though, and was on his way to Ago Oja, to seek asylum with Prince Atiba.

Knowing that Ayo was going to implicate him and, because it was obvious that the wily Oluyole wanted the throne of Oyo to himself (he was a prince of Oyo on his maternal side) Atiba plainly told Oluyole that he could neither accommodate Ayo nor keep Oluyole at Ago Oja. Ayo was to proceed to Ojomgbodu on his way to Ilorin.

If Ayo was given asylum by Prince Atiba, Ago Oja would have been attacked.

He (Ayo) was surprised and killed at last, as he rested under a tree after reaching Ago Oja and going past it.

Just about this time, the throne of Oyo was vacant and Prince Atiba coveted it.

In order to secure the support of the two most important Yoruba leaders, Atiba promised the ambitious Oluyole the post of Bashorun of Yorubaland (not Bashorun of Oyo.) To Kurumi he promised the special title of Aare Ona Kakanfo, if both backed him.

Earlier, Atiba had made himself acceptable to the Ilorins through an earlier visit.

Oluyole schemed to eliminate Prince Atiba but Kurumi stood between Oluyole and the throne, between Ibadan and Oyo.

Finally, Kurumi became the Aare and Oluyole, the Bashorun, after Atiba became the Alaafin.

As the A.O.K., Kurumi was a blood – thirsty tyrant. he put to death all equals, contemporaries and up - rising youngmen aspiring to leadership so that he alone could be unrivalled.

He made sure that all important profitable political posts remained in his family.

Kurumi became the Mogba (head priest) of Shango cult, His own brother was the Alagbaa of Egungun cult. Another brother was his Chief Executioner (Jomgban). He was such a terror to all that the Yoruba adage "Aare npe o, o lo nda ifa; bi ifa ba fore, ti Aare ba fo ibi nko?" (Aare calls you and you say, you are consulting the oracle, what if the oracle is favourable and Aare is not?) This about explains all – that his wish was law – a despot.

Meanwhile, since becoming the Bashorun, Oluyole had been finding some pretext for the liquidation of Kurumi. He once ordered Kurumi to come and pay homage to him as the Bashorun of Yorubaland and not ordinarily Aare of Oyo. Kurumi ignored him and would not go to Ibadan for any reason of state.

Then, the occasion which Oluyole was looking for, came.

A man, Asu, native of Ijaye, had built a hamlet at Fiditi. He had run away when Kurumi and others had invaded it. Now that the place was becoming bigger, he wanted it captured.

Accordingly, Kurumi sent a company of people there to capture the town (of Fiditi.) The man, Asu, defended the town and, meanwhile sent to Ibadan for protection.

Oluyole was happy about this. He sent relief to Fiditi. In spite of this, Kurumi captured the place. Thereafter, Oluyole started gunning for Kurumi.

Ijaye, Oluyole vowed, must be captured and Kurumi killed.

Meanwhile, the friendship between King Atiba and Kurumi, had cooled. In fact, he (Kurumi) no longer liked him (Atiba). This sourness continued until Atiba died and his son, Prince Adelu ascended the throne.

Kurumi objected strongly, to Adelu becoming the Alaafin. He held that, as Aremo, he had no right to the throne. His right was to die when his sire also expired. This was the age-old tradition. When the King dies, his eldest son, who had an immunity to any crime he might perpetrate in town, must die with him. Having committed too many unspeakable and despicable crimes, he could no longer be King or, he would be a despot, argued Kurumi. and he was right.

Again, Kurumi quarrelled with King Adelu over the properties of a childless lady — one Abu — of Ijana, who died.

Both King and Aare, claimed her properties. When the King's servants went there, Kurumi's men ambushed them and took the properties from them. King Adelu protested to Ibadan and, in order to enlist the sympathy of Oluyole, the Alaafin sent him 40 slaves, eight demijohns of beads, native gowns (agbada) and vests, adding to Oluyole "by this, I now declare war on Ijaye....."

Minor powers were fusing against Kurumi and he, too, sought the alliance of Abeokuta and Ilorin, but Ogunmola, the Ibadan leader forestalled Kurumi by securing the Egba support with gifts. When Kurumi sent presents to the Egbas, again, the greedy Egbas also accepted them.

Finally, it was this way which finished Kurumi — now old whose five sons Ogunmola an Ibadan General, captured and executed, Kurumi was not known to smile after the death of his sons. Nor did he do anything spectacular until he finally died of heartbreak.

After Kurumi's death Abogunrin, his head slave, had the honour of burying him. this was done in secret and the two slaves who dug

the grave were slain also — to accompany their master, so that the spot might not be disclosed; but the place was found out afterwards and the skull was taken over to the Alaafin as the custom was, for all who bore the title of the Aare Ona Kakanfo.

It should be interesting to know why Ogunmola was so callous to Kurumi.

In the first attempt to unseat Kurumi, Oluyole, the pretended friend of Kurumi, sent Ogunmola to face Kurumi. Ogunmola was captured by Kurumi and Kurumi ordered that Ogunmola should be tied to the pillar of his Ijaye house. After that, Kurumi ordered that Ogunmola be given ashes to lick-which the latter was forced to do.

The wheel of Fate, having revolved round, this time, in favour of Ogunmola, the Ibadan man lost no time in staging his own revenge by killing Kurumi's sons.

At no time had there been any Aare who was ever friendly throughout, with the Alaafin. Whichever place an Aare lives, the place would always be in turmoil, with loads of problems and explosive issues to his discredit.

Afonja lost Ilorin to the Yorubas and called on Mallam Alimi and his heirs to forever be Emirs there. Kurumi was notorious for turning against his friend, Kind Atiba and becoming Prince Adelu's enemy. It was also on record that Ijaye was razed and he himself, died of heartbreak when he lost all his five sons in the Ijaye war.

OJO ABURUMAKU

The next Aare Ona Kakanfo was Ojo Aburumaku of Ogbomosho.

This Kakanfo fought no battle. He held the title because, by right, he was the very next man with such an experience to equal that of an Aare.

His contemporaries had all died and the circumstances were such that no peers came forward for the post.

Ibadans were now masters of the battlefields and none dared face them. They even routed Ilorin.

There could be no Aare without some excesses. So, he formented trouble in his own town of Ogbomosho and then, repressed it with double the vigour of its initiation.

CHAPTER V

LATOSISA

When Baale Orowusi of Ibadan died, the veteran warrior, Latosisa and Ajayi Ogboriefon who were next to him refused the title of Balogun or Baale of Ibadan.

The historian, Oba I.B. Akinyele, the Olubadan of Ibadan wrote on page 87 of his "Iwe Itan Ibadan" ...Oye yi kii se oye rere. Ki Olorun ma jeki a ri eniti yio jee si aarin ilu yi mo laifai. Ami....." (The chieftaincy is a notorious one. May God make it impossible for anyone to hold that office in this town. Amen)

One of his appendages said:

"Bi Aare nse o, o ma b'Oshun, Oran (naa) ko kan too 'sa, O ba b'orisa, o ba b'Obatala Asubiaro nii se ni kanrin...."

English:

If Aare is your undoing,

Don't appease the Osun god;

The issue is not the gods'

Even if you appease the gods

Even if you appease Obatala, Asubiaro's undoing is endless...."

Anyone who reads through the rest of his expletives would know how really wicked Latosisa was.

According to "History Of The Yorubas" by Rev. Dr. Samuel Johnson, "Latosisa usurped the title of Aare Ona Kakanfo by might over right, by displacing Ojo Aburumaku, the Kakanfo of Ogbomosho as Oluyole had attempted to do in the case of Gbenle, the aged Bashorun of Oyo. He sent to Ojo Aburumaku for all the insignia of office which he was obliged to resign to him and on the third of October, 1871, he was publicly installed."

Had Ojo Aburumaku refused to co-operate, it was clear that Ibadan would have invaded Ogbomosho, which was the weaker side. Most Yoruba towns, for fear of reprisals, would have backed Ibadan against Ogbomosho since might was right in the age in which they lived.

It will be recalled that when Alaafin Atiba created Oluyole the Bashorun of Yorubaland, Oluyole was aware of the existence of the traditional Bashorun of Oyo and leader of the Oyomesi. He also knew that that office had never been bestowed on anyone outside Oyo town, because the duties attached to the post were to be performed

formed on a day-to-day basis, in Oyo town, and in the Alaafin's palace and not at Ibadan or, from Ibadan.

When Baale Orowusi of Ibadan died, neither Latosa (also called Latosisa) nor Ajai Ogboriefon wanted his office of Baale or Balogun of Ibadan. Whoever did, knew the trouble awaiting him. Ogboriefon was the Otun Balogun (and therefore, the senior) while Latosa was the Osi Balogun.

Latosisa refused that cabinet meetings be held in his house, just as Ajai Ogboriefon too, would not host such meetings.

Finally, Latosisa made it clear that he was a muslim like AOK Ojo Amepo, and that meant no rituals for him, if he took the title of Aare. Secondly, he wanted a blank cheque-autocratic powers, unchallengeable by anyone.

The Alaafin did not say he objected to the man being the AOK but he knew that, at whatever stage an Aare of Yorubaland was created, the signs were too evil to be contemplated until they start unfolding.

First, the people of Ife wanted Latosisa to come and level Modakeke. But, remembering that there was no wall or boundary between Ife and Modakeke, the rebound would affect Ife too. He was implored to forget the war.

So, Latosisa diverted his army to Ado which provoked no war.

When his army got to Ado, no one resisted them. Ibadan army led the people they caught to Ibadan, like complacent slaves. Even the King of Ado came to Ibadan in his regal robes.

Just then, Latosisa remembered that his second wife's hometown was Ado. so, he ordered that every captive from Ado war be released. Many were such captives.

Latosisa obtained all the 41 wives of the King of Ado for him, in addition to his 21 children who had been "captured," and 30 Ado Chiefs. The Aare bought a horse for the King and caparison for three slaves. He also reinstated him.

Ibadan troops returned home on February 21st, 1874.

The new Aare was self-centred and greedy. His ambition and avarice knew no bounds. At first, he was clement, then, he started manifesting the traits of an Aare — obstinacy, recklessness, blood-thirstiness, crudity, autocracy and other evil behaviour.

For example, he instigated the murder of the Iyalode (woman leader) of Ibadan, Madam Efunsetan. Although this woman was, herself, notorious, greedy, avaricious, haughty and wicked, he did not allow Nemesis to catch up with her.

Madam Efunsetan's background showed that she was a most wealthy Egba woman trader, domiciled at Ibadan, where she carried on her business. She had about 2,000 slaves of her own.

This woman had an only daughter, who died during childbirth. Believing that she could no longer have any issue, she made up her mind to be calculatingly wicked. She ensured that every woman slave of hers who got pregnant, was aborted. Some died in the course of the abortion being doctored.

This attitude became known to all and sundry in Ibadan. But, she was always playing her cards with the authorities — the right gifts and laudatory speeches at council meetings.

But, all along, Latosisa had envied her that she was richer than those of them who were warriors who had to risk their lives and kill every time or be killed, on battle fields.

Latosisa found excuses to dethrone her, especially since she was from Abeokuta and not Ibadan or from any of the other Oyo satellite towns.

Thus, Latosisa charged Efunsetan with certain "misonducts:"

- (a) That Efunsetan did not accompany him to the Modakeke — Ado war.
- (b) That, while Ibadan was at this war, Madam Efunsetan sent no provisions (foodstuffs) to the army and,
- (c) That she did not come to welcome the Ibadan army at the city gate when it returned from the war.

Madam Efunsetan made appropriate defence to each of the allegation but, each of defence was ruptured and dismissed with a wave of the hand. Had not the Aare made up his mind on what to do to her?

On May 1, 1874, Latosisa deposed her and replaced her with her immediate lieutenant—Madam Ola, the Otun Iyalode of Ibadan.

This woman was reluctant to fill the vacancy of her predecessor. Latosisa sent back to her the following words.

"If you refuse, just you take a single cloth, and headtie and leave the town immediately."

She accepted the title.

Again, it was Nemesis catching up with Madam Efunsetan. Her own predecessor-in-office became impecunious and this adverse circumstance caused her being relieved of her office by Ibadan Government. Efunsetan did not demur for a second before accepting the title.

When it is remembered that each traditional or very important

Chief, was allotted some villages whose tolls he or she collects and was overlord of the villages (Such a Chief is also responsible for approving the installation of the village head and his lieutenants and the settlement of any dispute, whether domestic or over farm lands) one can see how difficult it was to decline or relinquish such an office.

In the present state of affairs, Madam Efunsetan did everything in her power to retain her post and appease Latosisa, but to no avail. She sent emissaries among the leading Chiefs of Ibadan with gifts to Latosisa but he would not recant his pronouncement.

The Chiefs seemed to pressurise Latosisa for, the Aare later called her on June 22, 1874 and said she had been forgiven. Then, that same night, the masquerade (Egungun) associated with execution, paraded the streets of Ibadan which it never did without good cause. But Efunsetan was not executed. The only way to eliminate her was by poison.

Since she had no living issue of her own, she had adopted a boy, Kumuyilo, who became her heir.

Efunsetan's enemies now resorted to bribing her dependants so that they could poison her. Chief among these was this adopted son. It was clear that it was Latosisa who wanted her head. She was aware of her unsafe position. She prepared her own food; slept in different rooms every night; had sleepless nights and saw death in everything. She saw everyone as her likely murderer and could not trust any of her domestics. She no longer went out nor did she receive visitors as she was unsure whence her death might come from.

However, on the night of June 30, 1874 Kumuyilo - who had been threatened and promised immunity from persecution if he killed his benefactor and adopted mother - got two bribed slaves to do the dirty job. They entered Efunsetan's room through the ceiling and clubbed her brain out.

When her death was announced next morning - it had been expected much earlier than that - she was immediately accorded a great public burial. Kumuyilo became her legal, surviving son.

When the news of her death reached Abeokuta, the Egbas asked to know the cause of her death. Those who supported her being merely fined, declared their innocence. Everyone looked glum and all indication was, to ask the Aare who did it. Of course, they knew it was the Aare's handiwork.

Ibadan Chiefs convened a meeting on it, in order to consider what answer to give the Egbas. It was a rowdy meeting and no decision was taken. But at the next meeting Kumuyilo was brought to the meeting with his hand tied like a culprit. He was asked how Efunsetan died and he had to confess.

Kumuyilo named the Balogun of Ibadan, the Oluwo and the Sobaloju. Usually, the holder of the title of Sobaloju is the official spokesman at public meetings. It was clear that the deed was master-minded by the Kakanfo and the Balogun. Kumuyilo could be executed for an offence he did not commit, even if he was privy to it. Kumuyilo was ordered to leave Efunsetan's house with only one dress and return to his root, his humble beginning. But, the two slaves were executed on July 10, 1874 and Efunsetan's estate reverted to a distant relative.

She had her own troops and captains over them and was expected to contribute fighting men to Ibadan army when war was declared anytime. She was strangely cruel to her women slaves. Her life had been subject of drama by playwrights.

There is a second version of the Efunsetan story.

Efunsetan, alias "Aniwura" never approved any of her female slaves and domestics, to marry and any of them who became pregnant was executed on her orders — according to Oba I. B. Akinyele's *IBADAN*.

The historical episode recorded said, once upon a time, a nee relative of the Iyalode pregnated one of her women slaves. Efunsetan decided to execute her for being pregnant without her permission.

The young relative went soberly to her, thinking she would be pleased with him because he, it was, who did the deed. Efunsetan spurned his pleas and told him, that her policy, even before she had been to execute any such waif of a girl. So, the youngman ran to senior Chiefs and begged them to intervene. And when they did she still confirmed that there was no exception to her rule — she had to die.

Again, Oba Akinyele related that the youngman next went to the Aare to relate his experience. As a result, the Aare called a rally of Ibadan people to inform them of Efunsetan's many mischiefs and the one she was about to perpetrate. Efunsetan carried out her threat and the Kakanfo ordered her to (a) leave Ibadan City or (b) Commit suicide.

When, few days after, she did nothing (Oba Akinyele's version continued), Latosisa ordered her house to be looted by the public. Just before that, continued the story, "two of her female slaves dropped two heavy pots of water on her and she died.

In spite of this, her house and properties were looted.

One of her slaves later became the Owa of Ilesha.

Thus, there are these two versions of the Efunsetan episode. The former comes from Rev. Johnson's which, commonsense dictates, is more accurate.

The second despotic act of Latosisa was the one concerning Chief Aijenku Foko, one of the early warriors and residents of Ibadan. Aijenku (meaning "Never eat to die") was a contemporary of Bashorun Oluyole and a youth in Lakanle's (the man who succeeded Kakanfo Oluyedun) time.

Aijenku made himself unwholesome to Latosisa for advocating that there should be no more war with Abeokuta. This was for reasons of state. Ibadan imported manufactured goods from Lagos through Abeokuta or Ijebu Ode. Aijenku was also the man to whom all tolls at the Abeokuta gate were paid. If there was any war, Aijenku would get no money from Abeokuta toll gate and Ibadan would lose her trade with the coastal towns. Besides, Aijenku was the only one to speak after Latosisa — to check him if he felt Latosisa was impulsive. No leader ever likes that.

Aijenkun was the one man whose troops alone opposed the Egbas at Ijaye war with Kurumi the AOK. He was already the Asiwa-ju to Oluyole when Latosisa was only a palm tree dresser.

He was, like other warrior Chiefs, allotted villages which he administered. One of them was Igbajo, a tributary of Ibadan.

When there was a rebellion at Igbajo, the people deposed the Aregbajo (The Baale there) and chose another substitute. The deposed man ran to Ibadan to state his case to Aijenku and enlist his support. Unfortunately, representatives of the town came to Aijenku to state their own case as well.

Both candidates went to the Aare for the same reason. The Aare sent for Aijenku, for his views, before concluding that the former Aregbajo be reinstated. Incidentally, Aijenku supported the new candidate.

There was another scene.

Aijenku Foko's men once raided Fijabi's farm. Fijabi reported the matter to Latosa who offered no comment. But next day, Fijabi and Iyapo, both children of late Baloqun (War-Chief of Commander in

Chief) Ibikunle, went to Foko's farm and raided it.

Aijenku Foko, on reaching the next council meeting of the Chiefs, raised the matter with the Aare. According to the historian (Olubadan I.B. Akinyele), he asked if it was not the Kakanfo who urged Fijabi and Iyapo to raid his farm.

This turned into a cause for hostility because, as soon as he made his accusation, he left the meeting. As soon as he left, the Aare asked if his Chiefs did not connive at his being insulted by Aijenku, as none of them spoke in his defence. Everyone denied this.

Aijenku Foko was first stripped of his authority and tributes over the villages under his care. That having been done, Foko hastened to the next meeting the following day to apologise to the Kakanfo, who had also denied him the collection of tolls at Abeokuta gate.

The Kakanfo ignored his apology and told him he would be told his fate later. So, he went to reside with another Chief as his compound could be looted on the Kakanfo's authority anytime. After many pleas from friends, he was asked to vacate Ibadan city. He still believed the Kakanfo would pardon him, so he returned to his friend's house.

His slaves used to visit him there.

Then, these slaves were instructed not to go to see him anymore.

Finally, when all pleas had been exhausted, he was ordered by Latosisa, to commit suicide. His properties—as was the practice in Ibadan (when a wealthy Chief has been exiled or ordered to die) — were looted and his slaves (many of who chose to declare themselves free), ran to other masters.

History recalls that once, when Chief Lakanle was the O'un Aare Ona Kakanfo to late Oluyedun, Oluyole (who later became the Bashorun) was the Osi Aare On Kakanfo.

When Oluyedun died, Lakanle was to succeed him but Oluyole, who had not much money like Lakanle, played a fast one on his friend and rival.

He organised other Chiefs against Lakanle and, when that first failed, he organised a public looting against him.

Having finally bought the Chiefs over, these sent Aijenku Foko to tell Lakanle that the Chiefs had decreed that he should die. Aijenku was one of the minor captains in Ibadan army when Lakanle was Commander.

Lakanle, hearing Foko's voice asked, "Isn't that Aijenku?" And when the latter said it was he, Aijenku went on to tell his Commander — the love of whom he once professed — that he had been ordered to die.

Lakanle asked whether it was ethical for one who professes one's interest to come and relate with aplomb, one's sudden and ordered departure from the world. He then cursed Aijenku that what fate befell him then, would be the lot of Aijenku. Of course, Aijenku remembered the curse too well, the day he was asked to die.

Lakanle, on that occasion, slit his stomach, brought out his entrails, wrapped them around his head and rode to Oluyole, the tricksters house, and returned home as soon as he was sure Oluyole saw him.

There was another story, portraying the excesses of Latosisa.

In the reign of Baale Olugbode, one of his ablest Commanders was Ibikunle, the Balogun of Ibadan, who fought many battles for the city.

Ibikunle left behind many sons, one of who was Iyapo, the Seriki. Another brother of his was Oyewo, who died at Ilesha war.

Iyapo was a brave as his later father, late Balogun Ibikunle of Ibadan.

When Ibadan had no more gun powder for the army, it was Iyapo who went to Porto Novo to purchase it. On his way back, the Egbas waylaid him. He and his men fought back, drove the Egbas away and reached Ibadan safely with the munition. He had also distinguished himself in other wars.

Ibadan Chiefs, tired of the autocracy of AOK Latosisa, conspired to remove him. Meetings about this, were held without Iyapo, who was a known supporter of the Kakanfo and a brave warrior.

The main grievance against the Kakanfo was that he had decreed that wars should not be declared too often (so that his men might not get more loot) but rather, to conduct wars once every three years. The Chiefs were annoyed. They argued that the Kakanfo, having become very wealthy through plundering and looting of enemy properties, decided to ration warfares so that others might not become rich.

And so, after many meetings, Iyapo was brought into the conspiracy against the Kakanfo. After each meeting, the oily-livered ones would go back to relate the proceedings to Latosisa.

The Kakanfo called them one by one and bought them over. Each of them, having been told what he himself said in his exact words, knew the conspiracy had failed, in which case, it was sensible to betray the others and be on the good side of the Kakanfo.

This game continued until only Iyapo was the odd-man-out. He heard what had happened and how he had been betrayed yet, refused to go to apologise and expose the conspiracy.

Iyapo, the young military leader, was equally rich and very popular with his age-group, and Ibadan youths in general.

When Iyapo got to one of their general meetings (of Ibadan leaders), he greeted the Kakanfo, who grunted and said no word. He greeted the Chiefs and not one of them said one word. It was sure sign of bad blood, betrayal and discovery. Iyapo rose from his seat, jumped on his horse and rode to his quarters with his drummed signature tune of "Kiniun Onibudo." His men followed him.

Back home, he ordered a coffin to be made for him.

Iyapo went into his room and took lethal drugs which coursed through his blood and he soon died, before the Kakanfo could plan any havoc on him.

The other fellow whom Latosisa, the Kakanfo, wanted out of the way, was Ilori, son of Bashorun Ogunmola. But Ilori was captured by the Ilorins.

On another occasion, the Kakanfo decided to invade Abeokuta. Balogun Ajayi Ogboriefon told him that Abeokuta was not a place to attack, without careful planning.

Said Balogun Ogboriefon to the Kakanfo, "Abeokuta is not a town you go to fight and return in three days. It is a town one can capture by besieging it for about a year or two and make it submit through starvation. Besides, if we should adopt the short-term sanguinary warfare, we shall lose many lives. We will have no time to care for the wounded. These will die on the way, during the to and fro journeys..."

The Kakanfo rejected the advice.

Soon, the Kakanfo decided Ibadan should assail Oshiele.

When sometime after, Ogboriefon reminded him that it was time to go to Oshiele war, the Kakanfo replied: "It is not time yet. My Commander is not here yet."

"Your Majesty, I am your Commander" retorted Ogboriefon, "I am here sir. Which other Commander do you want to wait for?"

"O, I am waiting for Ayikiti," parried the Kakanfo.

This Ayikiti was an Ife and Modekeke Commander.

The Ibadan host grumbled to the Kakanfo's hearing. They decided that they were not going to fight even if they got to the battle front. Only Ayikiti and his army would fight.

And, alas, Ayikiti's army comprised Illa, Omu, Ife, Modakeke, Ekiti and Ijesha soldiers for, at the time, Ibadan was the overlord of the towns and areas mentioned.

Thus, the irresponsible statement of the Kakanfo caused a great dissension amongst the Ibadan host.

Ayikiti's men fought valiantly but were repelled by Egbas with the Ibadans sitting on the fence. Too many of Ayikiti's men died. They were routed, which was why the Ifes, Illas, Omu Ijesha and Modakeke armies came to the conclusion that Ibadan army was a weak one, a proof of why Ibadan sent for them. If the Kakanfo's army were as weak as they fought that day, then, they too should throw off the yoke of Ibadan — the army of which they can trounce any day—assessing this from Ibadan's performance at Oshiele.

This war, and the unexplained stance of Ibadan, was why these people rose against Ibadan and declared their independence. They were not to know that it was the arrogance of the Kakanfo which made him say he was waiting for his Commander — which also made the Ibadan host pretend to be fighting, when they were not.

By the time the Aare knew it was his careless talk that caused the break up of the Oyo Empire, everyone of these Yoruba sub-tribes and Ilorin from another front, were fighting against Ibadan.

Ilori, son of late Bashorun Ogunmola was assigned to face Ilorin while Ogboriefon handled the combined force of the Ifes, Ekitis, Illas and the Ijesha. Ilori died the day he took the field to face the Ilorin host.

Having captured and executed Ilori, the Ilorins thought that was all.

Again, having driven the Ekitis away, Ogboriefon, in anger at the Ilorins having gotten Ilori, turned-about to Ilorin quietly until they were almost in the Ilorin camp before his drums proclaimed his presence.

Ibadan had cut off the bridge at Otun river so that the Ilorins would not escape. They fell on the Ilorins and decimated them heavily. This was what in Yoruba history, is often referred to as Jalumi (Jump-into-river) war.

Alli Luluwoye, the Otun Balogun of Ibadan was jealous of his boss, Ogboriefon. He sent messages to the Aare to say Ogboriefon was boasting that what the Aare could not do, he, Ogboriefon, had done. Besides, that Ogboriefon would be richer than the Aare and therefore become difficult to handle when he returned to Ibadan.

The Aare should recall Ogboriefon to Ibadan.

The Aare did.

When Ogboriefon returned to Ibadan, he was seen by the Aare to have made more money indeed, from raids and looting. The risks on the battle-fields were discountenanced by Latosisa.

On his return to Ibadan, Latosisa praised him in the council of the Chiefs, then offered him a poisoned kolanut (which he did not know was poisoned or was deliberately given to end his life). He ate it and died few days after.

The Aare had to move to the Kiriji theatre of war because his commanders refused to prosecute the war the way it should, because:-

- (a) There was envy and jealousy amongst them.
- (b) Because Sanusi, son of the Aare had been bragging that had he been at the front, he would have won much earlier, (i.e. had he arrived same time as his father's colleagues.)
- (c) It had been decided to make it impossible for Latosisa to win the battle otherwise, his Commanders would be the whipping boys.

Latosisa died at the war front on August 11, 1885.

Like Ogunmola and Oluyole's children, Latosisa's children were above the law. They raped and seized women at will, committing atrocities no one else would dare embark upon.

CHAPTER VI

LADOKE AKINTOLA

This master of ambiguities, incomparable orator, brilliant debater, schemer and administrator, joined the special clubs of tragic actors called Aare Ona Kakanfo, on October 9, 1964. His end was like most of his predecessors in office — bloody. His life was turbulent towards the end, a name endeared, then turned sour and hated by a majority of his clansmen and, finally, made unpopular by his belief, ambition, conceit and other traits that are to be found in any Aare Ona Kakanfo. But it was as the Premier of Western Nigeria that he was better known and remembered.

Samuel Ladoke Akintola, was the first civilian to wear the garb of the military title of Aare Ona Kakanfo. Whatever made the then Alaafin Bello Gbadeqesin Ladigbolu, confer the title on a civilian was not quite clear. But Akintola became the fourteenth AOK of Yorubaland and not the unlucky thirteenth. And, in any case, what figure has been lucky to an Aare, seeing that their end hardly differed?

The end came to Chief S.L. Akintola when he was 55. At the time, he was not too popular to move about as freely as he would have wished. And when his assassins struck, they were army boys in Khaki. The assassins made sure that the Kakanfo had company on his way to Kingdom Come. That end came on January 15, 1966 the day a youngman called Major Kaduna Nzegwu and his mates staged a military coup and removed from earth, the Prime Minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, then based in Lagos; his party boss, Sir. Ahmadu Bello, Premier of Northern Nigeria based in Kaduna, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola (a.k.a. SLA), Premier of Western Nigeria based in Ibadan, the Federal Minister of Finance, Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, based in Lagos and a number of senior army officers.

Akintola did not die as he lived. Certainly, no matter what political quips and irregularities there were in his fifty-five years, he did not deserve the end that came to him. Of course, no matter what, he deserved a better death. But, for a Kakanfo, he must have known what he was letting himself in for.

S.L.A. as he was popularly called, was born on July 10, 1910 at Ogbomosho. Thus, he became the third Aare from that town, to hold that office.

His full names were Samuel Akintunde Ladoke. His surname was Akintola.

Among the Yorubas, a family chooses the prefix of "Akin" if the family has connection with brave deeds; if they were warriors or if it is wished that the child becomes a brave, dashing "warrior". The final culmination of the "Akin" would spell out what the parents were after. Thus, Akintunde (in a family where the surname is Akintola) means "the brave man is back", especially if the grandfather or dear male member of the family died not long ago, the new child would bear the name indicating that the dead man has return from the spirit world. And SLA's ancestors where warriors and one of them was a slaver.

Now, Samuel Ladoke's father was himself Akinbola while his great, great gransire was Adeyeri — the seventh man to settle in Ogbomosho, then a hamlet. Adeyeri was a native of Igbon village — near Old Oyo (Oyo Igboho.) He was forced to migrate as a result of the constant wars between Ibadans and Ilorins.

Adeyeri, who loved his family very much, feared that a day might come when they might be overpowered — the whole family — and sold into slavery. That would mean the end of his beloved family seeing themselves or, ever knowing what became of the others. So Adeyeri took his family to southern Ilorin. In fact, Adeyeri died at Ilorin.

However, Adeyeri's family could not continue to stay at Southern Ilorin because of the worsening chaos and shifting loyalties of the Yorubas during the wars. And so, to Ogbomosho they went.

At Ogbomosho, Orishadare, SLA's great grandfather, became trader. He did not make much money from trading and so, he turned to slavery. Orishadare had a brother, Akinola Jalado who commanded an army platoon during the Ilorin wars. He would capture many slaves who would be passed on to his senior brother, Orishadare, for sale.

There was surprise in the family therefore, when the British came gunning for slave dealers. Slave trading became an underground business.

When he died, Akinbola, had amassed wealth from that self sanctioned illicit business. As the British were dead against slaving, Akinbola went up to Northern Nigeria to trade. He was the father of Akintola

who, in turn, was Samuel Ladoke's father. Thus, it would be found that the family had trading instincts in them — they traded, first in slaves, then textile and finally, timber sawing.

Akinbola belonged to the first generation of Christians in Ogbomosho, having joined the Baptist Mission of America which built its church in the town in 1857. When he traded to the north, he married and had a son, Akintola who did his own trading in Minna in 1914. SLA was born in a polygamous family.

Trade in textile was bad in Minna because of the First World War. But, despite this, Akintola (senior) sent Samuel to the CMS School, Minna, as there was not Baptist School there. That was in 1920. He became attached to Ojediran Akintola, his father's half brother, who once saved SLA from drowning.

In 1922, he was sent to his grandfather at Ogbomosho, to continue schooling. But when Ojediran died in Minna, Akintola (Snr) decided to return to Ogbomosho, unable to live in Minna without the deceased.

In Ogbomosho, Samuel Ladoke Akintola, having finished his primary school, went onto Baptist College, Ogbomosho. His father was doing saw-milling in town then.

It was said that, right from school, he had a penchant for intellectual argument and was very profuse in his absorption of literary classics. He was good in tracks and javelin-throwing and was a good footballer.

When he passed out of Baptist College with flying colours, his high performance at the final examination made the tutors (to) recommend him to Baptist Academy, Lagos, as science teacher. There, he became a junior member of staff.

He had been courting Miss Faderera Awomolo, a sister of a friend of his. She was a nursing pupil at Ogbomosho. When he moved to Baptist Academy, Lagos, the frequency of their meeting was affected. And when her father, a policeman knew of their association, he strongly objected to her marrying an Oyo man (so the Ijesnas call all Oyo-speaking people, especially, those with facial scarification.) Her father was Ijesha.

Faderera came to Lagos in 1935 on a course, on which completion, she refused to return to the interland. The couple married without the consent of their parents at the Lagos Registry on August 8, 1935. Her parents boiled over, on hearing this, but soon faced realities.

Soon, they had a bouncing baby girl they named Omodele. Akintola was earning £6 (N12) per month then.

Among SLA's students was Dr. Kingsley Mbadiwe.

SLA was the Secretary of the Baptist Teachers Union, a branch of the Nigerian Union of Teachers. Together with Mr. E.E. Esua and Mr. Okanla, they served on the BTU and the NUT. They agitated for fringe benefits which tutors at the CMS Grammar School were already enjoying. The real agitators were Esua, Okanla and Ogunjumo all of who, were dismissed. In protest and without any job in view, Akintola also resigned along with them — so strong was his loyalty to the dismissed men.

His students were happy he left because he had been a veritable disciplinarian.

Akintola added two more urchins to his family, Yomi — his eldest son and Abimbola, another daughter. Besides, he had spent twelve years as tutor at the Baptist Academy, Lagos.

Ogunjumo and Okanla who were sacked, were from Ogbomoshok. And so, he, too, joined them in the employment market, hopping from office to office, in search of a job.

However, he got a clerical appointment with the Nigeria Railways Corporation. He had met Chief H.O. Davies and their friendship ripened. Late Chief Bode Thomas also worked with the Railways.

Akintola was contributing to newspapers at this stage. He became disenchanted with the clerical job at the Railways, so he applied for appointment on the DAILY SERVICE Editorial Department and was employed. Thenceforth began those series of events which culminated in his becoming Deputy leader of the Action Group, Federal Minister, and later, Premier of Western Nigeria.

He had joined the Nigerian Youth Movement, where he met such members as Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ernest Ikoli, H.O. Davies, Dr. J. I. Vaughan, Dr. J. Akanni Doherty, Dr. Akinola Maja, Samuel Akintanya and Obafemi Awolowo.

Mr. Ikoli was the Editor of the "Daily Service" while Akintola served on its editorial. He had taken a four-year tuition in journalism while teaching at the Baptist Academy, where he edited the NIGERIAN BAPTIST.

Dr. Azikiwe had been named the man who introduced tribalism to Nigeria by preaching to people Igbo origin that the Ycrubas were ahead of them and that they needed to catch up with them, educationally and in every sphere of human endeavour. This gospel of his was repeated at the many Ibo Unions and thus, the Ibos constituted

themselves into rivals of the Yorubas, whom they came later to condemn, rival and hate according to SLA's biographer — son Ladipo Akintola, in the book AKINTOLA, THE MAN AND THE LEGEND.

The gospel of hate was dished out by the now defunct WEST AFRICAN PILOT. Zik's newspapers were aggressively hostile to Lagosians and the Yorubas in general.

The man replying Zik's attack and hatred of the Yoruba was Ernest Ikoli, an Ijaw man, aided by SLA.

The NYM was formed in 1934 to protest against the low quality of the pretended Higher Education at the Yaba High College. Zik and HOD joined the Movement in 1937 and 38 respectively. But when Mr. Kofo Abayomi, its chairman and member of the Legislative Council resigned his seat in the Council to proceed to study ophthalmology, the vacancy created by him caused a big rift and much dissention in the party and escalated tribal jingoism.

Both Akinsanya and Ikoli vied for the legislative vacancy. Zik backed Akinsanya and Lagos Yorubas voted massively for Ikoli, an Ijaw man. How then can the Yorubas be accused of tribalism as was then preached by Zik's WEST AFRICAN PILOT? Akinsanya said he was defeated because he was an Ijebuman. The NYM almost died, until 1941 when Mr. Obafemi Awolowo, based at Ibadan then, tried to revive it.

Akintola became Editor of the DAILY SERVICE in 1943, after Ikoli had gone to the Legislative Council, having less time for the paper.

In 1945, Nigerian workers were agitating for salary review under the leadership of Mr. M.A.O. Imoudu. Zik and his newspapers were also attacking the Colonial Government ceaselessly, Zik gave it out that the Colonial Office had planned his assassination.

As Zik supported the strike, Akintola said it was needless, as Zik was using it as a political ploy. On that account, Zik portrayed the SERVICE as enemy of the workers and his PILOT as the worker's paper. The workers, at one of their meetings, later decided to boycott DAILY SERVICE and read only the WEST AFRICAN PILOT.

The directors of the SERVICE asked Akintola to publish a retraction on the workers strike, and to support the workers. Akintola chose to resign rather than eat up his words, an act that every newspaper editor hates most and would hardly do, unless he was forced to do so. It would mean that the Editor was incompetent.

Finally, the Directors understood Zik's ploy of playing to the gallery and thus, securing sympathy and members for the NCNC, the leader of which he was.

Later, Akintola secured a British Council Scholarship to study journalism in Britain, in 1946. He fought against Zik making a big hero of himself via allegation of attempt to assassinate him for supporting the workers and demanding end to colonial rule in Nigeria.

Akintola founded IROHIN YORUBA to complement the SERVICE. The Editor for IROHIN YORUBA was Mr. J.O. Adigun alias "Atioro Omo Atiala", later a Minister of the Western Regional Government and a foundation member of the banned Action Group.

In his hometown of Ogbomosho, Akintola founded the Egbe Irepodun which was to agitate for the severance of Ogbomosho from Ibadan and later, for an Oshun State.

His popularity soared when he led his people to oppose the appointment of Amoa Oyetunde as Baale of Ogbomosho.

Akintola and Mr. Obafemi Awolowo had been friends since their NYM days. Then, they continued their friendship in Britain, when Akintola returned to Nigeria and was going to visit his parents at Ogbomosho for the first time, he stayed with Awolowo at Ibadan. Thereafter, both men corresponded and visited themselves - Awolowo at Ibadan and Akintola in Lagos. Their children spent holidays together too.

In 1950, Akintola delivered a lecture to a group of Nigerian students in Lagos during which he said the British Colonial Government in Nigeria was incompetent, irresponsible and insincere and demoralising, so much that "It is an insult to the people of Nigeria to pay servants in order that the said servants may boss them..... By the peculiar constitution of the country, they have placed themselves above their masters. They are the tail that now wags the dog."

Again, there was the headline of an editorial of the DAILY SERVICE which screamed "WE WANT TO REMOVE THIS GOVERNMENT." Akintola, a lawyer then, was arrested and charged with sedition for advocating force, if dialogue failed. Those arrested included Dr. Akintola Maja, who was the Chairman of the Board of Directors and Chief Iman Y.P.O. Sodeinde who was General Manager of the Service Press Limited. Akintola was defending a client at Saint Anna Court, Tinubu, Lagos, when he was arrested.

The political situation in Nigeria then was tense. The government thought if he was jailed, it would further compound the situation

and so he was severely reprimanded and acquitted.

Whilst SLA was away, studying in UK, Zik used the NCNC and his newspapers to monopolise the forefront of Nigerian politics. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe led the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC) on a protest delegation to the Colonial Office in London in 1947 to protest against the Richards Constitution, considered to be draconian if Nigeria must be independent.

That delegation comprised Dr. Azikiwe himself, Dr. Ibiyinka Abubakar Olorun-mbe, Prince Adeleke Adedoyin, P.M. Kale (Representing the Cameroons), Zannar Bukar Dipcharima, Chief Nyomg Esien and Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti.

Even when Awolowo founded the Egbe Omo Oduduwa in London in 1945 with such students as Mr. Akintola Williams, Ayotunde Rosiji, Alaba Akerele and others, Zik and his newspapers did not give the Egbe any respite, although the Ibo State Union was receiving much publicity and was an affiliate of the NCNC.

When the Action Group was launched in 1951 by Mr. Obafemi Awolowo, he had invited SLA to it, but Akintola could not attend. Instead, he sent Oladeji Adigun (formerly of IROHIN YORUBA) to represent him. Adigun was one of the party's ministers, later.

At the launching of the AG at Owo, Mr. Awolowo had said in part:

"It is not difficult to surmise the intentions of Azikiwe and his NCNC Press. They were engaged in a calculated effort to frighten away decent citizens from public life; to collect a crowd of degreed mediocrity and lackeys — the Orizus, the Mbadiwes, the Ojikes-eating out of the hands of Azikiwe's hands and thus, to pave the way for a dictatorship by Azikiwe.....The country will fall into the hands of political brigands, ignorant and unprincipled demagogues, peddling nationalism for the sake of their stomachs."

The Owo launching of the party was hosted by the then Olowo of Owo, Sir. Olateru Olagbegi and Chief M.A. Ajasin.

Akintola became the legal adviser to the Action Group.

It had been alleged that the Action Group was a tribalist party. Of course, it had to be. It took its cue from events of the period.

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe had whipped up sentiments of the Igbo people, pointing out that they were far behind the Yorubas educationally and in every other aspect. This was true too. The first Yoruba lawyer graduated in 1880 and the first Igbo lawyer in 1933. The disparity was there. So too in the field of medicine and so on. In fact, Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, first African Bishop, spent his

life mostly among the Ibos, preaching and teaching and interpreting the Bible into Ibo Language. This great African also invited educated Sierra Leonians and Yorubas to teach in Igboland.

Educated Yorubas were to be found in all the arms of the civil service as against a sprinkling of Ibos.

But, the Yorubas had been very complacent. They no longer cared to read nor were they inspired to want to be anything greater than amassing wealth.

The Yorubas did not acquire their education by subscriptions of members of any clan or family. Most of those who went for further education were self-sponsored or, by their parents. True, there were instances where some communities did sponsor their indigenes to do education abroad to return and take over the principalship of the community-built Grammar Schools and other secondary schools. These are historical facts.

Before Zik returned to Nigeria in 1937, there was no "Ibo consciousness" nor did anyone think of founding any clan-union among the Ibos. With his arrival and, backed by the Yorubas — they stood as security for his WEST AFRICAN PILOT — Zik whipped up tribal fervour amongst his people and preached recalled Charles Kingsley's *Odyssey* and how the Trojans went in search of adventures and came back with the Golden Fleece. Every achievement of an Ibo man abroad was well publicised and little or no publicity for the Yoruba boys. These were SLA's accusation against Azikiwe. They never were pals.

It was a duel usually between the Yorubas and the Ibos. And this was carried even into sporting activities where Challenge Cups were played on ethnic basis.....Yorubas versus Ibos. The North was unaware of these duels of the tribes down South.

These were reminders which Akintola remembered each time Zik whipped up the Ibos to his side by saying he was being discriminated against because he was not a Yorubaman. The result: Ibos would quickly contribute money for the defence of any of his newspapers which got dragged to the court.

When the Yorubas imitated the Ibos by launching Egbe Omo Oduduwa (Ibo State Union had been in existence for a longer time there was a lot of hullabaloo and a condemnation of the Egbe because it was not affiliated to the NCNC. On the other hand, all Ibo clan unions were affiliated to the NCNC.

Akintola did not like the creed and gospel according to Azikiwe hence they hardly hit it together.

Akintola went through hell as a student in UK. He was there with his wife, Faderera. He had maintained that, to save money, one could cut off breakfast. So, one winter morning, he left home for classes without breakfast. Akintola simply fainted at the bus stop, and was carried to a married British couple nearby. From him, the couple discovered Akintola never had breakfast. They warned that winter was not a time to do that in Britain.

While in Britain, his student at Baptist Academy, Alhaji S.O. Gbadamosi, who had become rich, used to bail him out of financial mess by remitting money to him.

His wife, Faderera did Higher Matriculation in Britain and dress making at Paris Academy.

His course in journalism was for a year but Akintola was also doing law alongside. He was called to the Bar in 1949.

In Nigeria, he formed the legal firm of Samuel, Chris and Michael – his junior partners being Chief Chris Ogunbanjo and Michael Odesanya (later judge of the High Court) junior brother of Alhaji S.O. Gbadamosi.

Akintola won the 1951 election on the platform of the AG. He became a Federal Minister of Labour.

The NCNC continued its cry for "Self Government Now" while the AG held that that was impracticable. The AG later demanded independence for 1956.

When the "Self Government" motion was moved in the House of Representatives by Chief Anthony Enahoro of the Action Group on March 31, 1953 there was an uproar there. The North opposed the motion and the Premier of the North, Ahmadu Bello, amended the deadline from 1956 to "as soon as practicable."

In protest, all Action Group Federal Ministers were ordered to resign by their party. These were the Ooni of Ife, late Sir. Adesoji Aderemi, late Chief Bode Thomas, late Chief S.L. Akintola and late Chief Arthur Prest.

Following this motion, a crowd of anxious Nigerians booed the Northern legislators when they emerged from Parliament Building in Lagos. This embarrassed and annoyed the northern legislators.

Chief Akintola had been asked by the AG to go to give a lecture in Kano to explain the Independence Motion. Before he arrived there, someone had incited Northerners against Southerners resident in Kano. Akintola's arrival was the signal for the beginning of the riot. Thus, Akintola's mission was a disaster.

.Northern Nigeria then threatened to secede from Nigeria, following the boogie exercise.

But the nation survived it. Ever since, the like has never been repeated. In fact, it resulted in a Constitutional Conference to smoothen the rough water and eliminate animosity.

The AG won its campaign for a federation at the Constitutional Conference while it lost the plea for Lagos to remain part of Western Nigeria.

Chief Awolowo once said of his Deputy, (Chief Akintola).

"He is a breezy, affable character who cannot be ruffled easily, if at all. His peculiar gifts consist in his capability to argue and defend two opposing points of view with equal competence and plausibility. This quality, backed by his sense of humour and his capacity for nuances, made him an insoluble puzzle to our opponents."

Chief Akintola stood firm when the Western Nigeria capitation tax for social projects, was introduced. From the proceeds, the AG Government of Western Nigeria was to finance its free education and health schemes. The amount was ten shillings flat. That levy started the Oyo riot of 1954 and made the party lose the 1954 Federal Election in the Region. The NCNC had 22 and the AG 19 Federal seats, hence it had no Federal Ministers in the next Government.

The whole of Akintola's life was one stretch of a gruelling contest after another.

When the Deputy Leader of the AG, Chief Bode Thomas died Akintola had to contest the post with Chief Arthur Prest. Chief Akintola won.

In the argument on the Ilorin-West merger, the Minorities Commission that was appointed to look into the fears of the minorities found against its mergeance with Western Nigeria.

The crisis that brought about a schism in the Action Group was more personal to both leaders than, party-like. Both have been good friends, spotting the same dress and even the wives, did same. They spent weekends together and their children exchange visits on holidays, the depth of the friendship can be well fathomed by anybody.

As 1959 approached, the Action Group leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo continued to state that he had completed his assignment in the Region as Premier. He was contesting the 1959 Federal Election. What he stopped short of saying was that he wanted to be Prime Minister.

Thus, the 1959 Federal Election came and, so far, it had been a record electioneering campaign system in which helicopter & sign-writing in the sky, featured. The AG leader, his deputy and other AG leaders campaigned in groups. But the result did not favour the AG. It lost the election and Chief Awolowo became Leader of Opposition instead of Prime Minister of the Federation. Chief Akintola lately held that post.

The original plan was that Chief Akintola, the party's deputy leader, should replace Chief Awolowo as Premier of Western Nigeria.

According to Mr. Victor Ladipo Akintola in his father's biography "AKINTOLA: THE MAN AND THE LEGEND", Chief Akintola tried to persuade Chief Awolowo not to gamble with the Premiership for Prime Ministership, but that Premier Awolowo would not hear of it. If the AG introduced free Primary Education in Western Nigeria, it would be an achievement to do so on Federal level and give many children the chance to read and write.

But the 1959 Federal Election was a total disaster for the AG and its leader.

It was said that Awolowo rejected a national government which Akintola spoke about, to Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister.

The crisis really started from the moment Chief Akintola became the Premier of Western Nigeria. Whilst he was a Minister in the Federal Government, he was a loyal member of the AG and a worthy Deputy Leader of the party.

The difference was that a man is loyal and obedient as long as he is poor. Place him on a higher pedestal and you find that a cat can look a king in the eye.

Most Action Group legislators and party functionaries competed for the favour of Chief Awolowo for as long as he was leader of the party and Premier of the Region. For that long, Awolowo had largesse to distribute. For as long as he had the earthly power of making and unmaking the future of anyone, so long would people frown on a man who questioned his leader and smile on a man he not only shook hands with, but whose activities Chief Awolowo approved.

From the moment it was realised that the Action Group lost the federal election and therefore, Awolowo would not be Prime Minister of the Federation of Nigeria nor the Premier of Western Nigeria, his staunchest supporters — especially those greedy, grab-bing, convetuous ones — looked at him as a hollow, man of straw.

He could not remove the Premier of Western Nigeria nor make himself the Prime Minister.

Therefore, the man to obey, was the new Premier, Chief S. Akintola.

But in a country where a ruling party has never suffered a reversal it was impossible to see who was going to be steadfast. When Ahmadu Azikiwe leader of the NCNC, decided to contest elections from the Western House to the East, it was decided that certain ministers both in the Regional and the Federal, should resign for consistency's sake and in order to re-organise the NCNC parliamentary system. Prof. Eyo Ita, the Premier, Eastern Nigeria and his other Regional Ministers as well as the NCNC Federal Ministers led by Mr Alfred Chukwu Nwapa, refused to resign.

Chief Awolowo was prepared to weather the storm as Leader of Opposition — the post previously held by Chief Akintola in the Federal Parliament. But he would hear nothing about Akintola negotiating for a national government to embrace the NPC, NCNC and the AC.

When Awolowo was the Premier, he lived in his own house at Oke-Bola, Ibadan. He said it was better to live among the people and experience their wants. He was, therefore, against living in the Government House, Ibadan.

On the other hand, when Akintola became the Premier, he found there was no accommodation for him. Decidedly, had Akintola endeavoured to know what arrangements the Head of Service Western Nigeria, had for him, he would have instructed that a good residence be arranged.

Akintola, as the new Premier introduced a farm-settlement scheme for school leavers, to arrest mass unemployment. The scheme was doomed to failure. He had supported the free education project as introduced by his predecessor in office.

In trying to create a lax atmosphere, devoid of the political stringency in existence before his time, Chief Akintola reduced tax in the Region. The NCNC had promised that if it won the election, it would abolish the payment of income tax. Not to be unpopular after such a promise, Chief Akintola reduced the tax without consulting his party. He had failed to take cognisance of the low revenue that would result and the fact, that, without money, it would be impossible to execute the projects of his government.

Again, Akintola rebelled against having to consult his party leaders on matters of party policy. It was felt that each time Awolowo set

for him in Lagos, to discuss party strategy or take decision on certain government policies, these were seen as interference, against which he rebelled. Indeed, this, and the first trauma of having no accommodation, un-nerved him and made Akintola recalcitrant.

His biographer, Ladipo Akintola, who incidentally, is his second son, wrote in AKINTOLA — THE MAN AND THE LEGEND:

"With the public frustration being directed at him, Samuel Ladoke had to fight the restrictive measures of his leader, Awolowo. But there reached a time when he could take no more. He was a logical man and he began to question the right of Awolowo to put reins on him when Nigeria was practising a style of Western democracy that regarded a Premier as being supreme in his capacity as the head of a cabinet. How could he possibly be an effective leader, if he was to be a yes-man to a failed revolutionary, who, by virtue of having been the founder of the party whom Samuel Ladoke was serving, set himself up to be the Superior Voice with regard to policies and decisions. Samuel Ladoke was fifty-one years old in 1960, an age that would be considered young by many.

"For Samuel Ladoke, frustration had set in — and this he directed against Awolowo, since the greatest stumbling block to serving the people the way he thought best, was the reins Awolowo kept putting to prevent him from effecting ideas into practice.

"Matters came to a head in 1962 when Samuel Ladoke openly accused Awolowo of trying to adopt democratic socialism, as opposed to a free enterprise sort of democracy...."

On this, Mr. Ladipo Akintola quoted Chief Anthony Enahoro as saying:

"One major cause of the crisis was that, for the first time in the history of the party, the leader of the party no longer combines party leadership with the office of the Premier and members have been encouraged to look beyond the party for patronage. Here then, was a dangerous opening for a rival leadership to be organised unless the Deputy Leader was completely loyal to the leader and had no ambition to supplant him. The attempt to rally ministers around the Deputy Leader were hardly calculated to inspire loyalty of the Deputy Leader to his leader."

The Action Group crisis was as a result of a personality clash—the new Premier wanted to assert himself and shake himself free of his leader. His leader said No, the party is above personalities." That was all there was to it. Akintola felt he had all the party patronage at his command and could give such patronages and take government

decisions too, Awolowo said no.

"In spite of the fact that I am not the Premier, you must toe the party line since what you do as head of government of the Region would rebound on the AG whose leader I am."

The personal antagonism between the two builders of the Action Group continued to fester ignominiously.

The crisis engulfed the wives of the two hitherto mutual friends.

According to Ladipo Akintola, the biographer of his father, wrote

"It has been suggested that the personal antagonism between the wives of the two men helped to inflame the tension separating them, thus ensuring that a crisis — whatever the chances of averting it — was guaranteed. The two wives were both deeply devoted to their husbands, but Mrs. Faderera Akintola was a more individualistic and liberated lady, who relished the sight of her husband in power and wanted him to use that power in his own right without having to answer to Awolowo. Mrs. Awolowo, on the other hand, was a business woman, shrewd and energetic, using her husband's position for her own business benefits. There can be no doubting that both women were influenced by their husbands as both women were said to have made their husbands complaints against each other, their own business as well. As a result, the once close relationship they enjoyed was replaced by hostility and the desire, somehow, to pay each other back for their husband's antagonism against one another. The time-bomb of vindictiveness was finally exploded in Faderera's favour, triggered by the famous Coca Cola War as it was known."

It all started from the sale of that locally manufactured mineral.

Mrs. Awolowo was sole distributor for the Western Nigeria Development Corporation's Pepsi Cola and Miranda. The Chairman of that company was Chief Alfred Rewane, Political Secretary to Chief Awolowo. But since Chief Akintola became Premier, Pepsi was no longer patronised by government offices. Instead, the Regional Civil Service changed its patronage to Coca Cola.

Coca Cola was owned by Leventis group and Mrs. Akintola was friendly with Leventis. Besides, her eldest child, Omodele, was the Public Relations Officer for Leventis, in Western Nigeria.

If Pepsi and Miranda sold more, then Akintola would have more in his government purse. There would be money to prosecute projects he had to abandon for lack of funds. But if Coca Cola and Fanta sold more, it meant more money for Mrs. Akintola and more money for her husband's government.

Whichever way one looks at it, each side tried to use her influence to get the upper hand. And Mrs. Akintola won. Mrs. Akintola and her daughter, Omodele, made sure that they mounted a stronger campaign for arms of the Regional Government to patronise Coca-Cola while Pepsi and Miranda were rejected.

One of Chief Akintola's complaints against Chief Awolowo was that he approved the National Bank of Nigeria, giving more loans to Ijebu than to Oyo. This was a wrong thing to do, he maintained. Had the grant of bank loans been balanced and not lop-sided, then, Akintola would have had no cause to complain on the issue.

There was also the issue of democratic socialism about which Chief Akintola said he was not consulted.

By this time, it was too clear that the great and incomparable Action Group, was disintegrating. It was sure to split into two fragmentary parts and someone might be expelled. The like had happened in the NCNC when Dr. Azikiwe was to shift his Western House membership to Eastern House via a by election, as we have seen.

It was a situation where most office holders in Western Nigeria were loyal to Chief Akintola. There were a few bold ones who stood by the leader of the AG.

Came the eighth annual convention of the party, scheduled to take place at Jos. There, it was believed, new policies would be enunciated and clear guidelines on decision-taking would be clarified. But by then, the party was in two opposing parties.

At the Jos convention, Chief Awolowo left no one in doubt as to how matters stood.

He castigated Akintola so much that, not being prepared for what he got, Akintola left the Jos Convention in a huff with four of his ministers.

The situation called for caution.

Public spirited Yorubaman who were foundation members of Egbe omo Oduduwa, waded into the matter to no avail, that is, until Yoruba traditional rulers stepped into the matter and managed to mend the fence on May 10, 1962.

The two men rode together in a car through Ibadan and were hailed as the united duo which they used to be.

Chief Awolowo had accused Chief S.L. Akintola of maladministration, disloyalty, indiscipline and sabotage, Akintola, of course, defended himself too, for hours. It all failed, that is, the reconciliation.

To get at the pains Akintola felt i.e. grievances against Awolowo one must read part of his speech relayed by the Press. It read:

"By far the most disturbing aspect of the interference of Chief Awolowo with my administration has been his insistence on the diversion of government fund to certain private sectors of business. For instance, the National Investment Properties Company Limited. It may be interesting to note that the Government has already, on the initiative and inspiration of Chief Awolowo, diverted as much as six and a half million pounds to the company. But it appears to me indefensible to pour into one single company millions of pounds when many economic projects of the government have had to be abandoned for lack of funds. Chief Awolowo, of course, has consistently cried about the reduction of cocoa prices, yet, one would think that if the sum of six and a half million pounds, which had been diverted to the NIPC had been available, the farmers would not have to contend with the reduction of price of cocoa.

"The NIPC owns a number of skyscrapers in Lagos and Ibadan. Its two directors are Chief S.O. Sonibare and Mr. Alfred Rewane. I should only add that recently, I had occasion to announce in the House of Assembly that since the company cannot pay its debts to the government in strict accordance with the terms of the agreements, I intend to ask that its assets or part of them, be passed to the Regional Government in full satisfaction of its liability.

"As between me and Chief Awolowo, this would seem to be the last straw that broke the camel's back. Since the announcement, he had never again hidden his determination to remove me from office."

Things were happening fast.

A motion for the removal of Chief Akintola from office as Premier was moved by Chief Enahoro at a party meeting. Another motion by Chief Enahoro was to the effect that if he did not resign, he should be sacked. But in case he resigned, the party would consider giving him another assignment.

Akintola travelled to Ogbomosho next day to convene a meeting of the Oshun AG. And members from Oshun Division were almost more than those Ibadan and district could muster. These protests against any threat of removal, adding that it would be assumed to be a declaration of war against Oshun Division AG legislators.

But Awolowo too, was not idle. He too, convened another meeting at which AG legislators in the house of Assembly signed a vote of no confidence in Chief Akintola's Premiership and calling th

Governor of the Region, Sir. Adesoji Aderemi, Oni of Ife, to remove Akintola from the Premiership he then occupied. As a result, Chief Akintola was removed from office on May 27, 1962.

Akintola then got his lawyer, the brilliant Olu Ayoola, later High Court Judge, to file a suit that he could not be removed from office without a motion of the House of Assembly.

As substitute, Chief Awolowo named Alhaji Dauda Soroye Adegbenro as State Governor.

When the House met, business was at its initial stage when trouble started in the House of Assembly during which many legislators were wounded.

A state of emergency was declared in Western Nigeria.

Chief Awolowo was detained at Lekki Island, near Lagos while Chief Akintola was confined to Olokemeji forest.

An administrator, Dr. M.A. Majekodunmi, was appointed to run the Region's government.

The Western Nigeria High Court declared Akintola as the legal Premier while Alhaji Adegbenro appealed and won when the issue was reviewed by the Privy Council, London. Also, the Federal Government appointed an enquiry to probe the finances and borrowings of the NIPC. The Coker Commission of Inquiry found Awolowo guilty of diverting money to the NIPC.

Events having reached a stalemate for the two chief actors in the political crisis, Akintola began to scheme again. If one goes through the biography of the man, Akintola, one would find that he had the qualities of the previous Kakanfos.

Without being a war chief who had seen any battle, he had fought all the many battles that life could place on any man of ambition. He had the slyness of a fox; the watchfulness of a hungry tiger; the eloquence of a builder or destroyer; the devotion of an achiever; the vengeful ability of an Afonja, the indomitability of a go-getter; the callousness of an eagle when it catches its prey and the satisfaction of an angler whose bait and hook have caught a mackerel.

The solution to the crisis would have been a fresh election.

If a fresh election were held, in spite of what Akintola had done, he would have lost the election and be booted out of the Government House. He had lobbied with the NCNC to see if he could form a new government with them. He already had an understanding with the NPC and both Sir Ahmadu and Balewa were his allies. They were both against a fresh election because AG would win. An alliance with another party was better.

Chief R.A. Fani-Kayode, former Chairman of the Action Group Youths Association had defected to the NCNC. He had contested election in his home town of Ile Ife and won with a landslide. Fani-Kayode had rallied the NCNCers together in the West and they had come out much stronger. Akintola had formed the United People's Party and now, he looked at the political firmament for an alliance with a party other than the AG.

Akintola thought he could do business with Fani-Kayode whom he knew well since the early days of the Action Group. His UPP was a fraction of the disloyal Action Groupers who clung to him as Premier because of what party patronage they could get from him and a few, because he had helped to get them nominated in Oshun Division.

Akintola had a good stand with the Northern Peoples Congress led by Sir Ahmadu Bello. But a splinter group was not what he should have taken to the NPC for an alliance. So he did a deal with Fani-Kayode. What if they both formed a new party and ditched the NCNC in the West? If the pact went right, a place had to be found for "Fani-power". So, the post of Deputy Premier was found for him.

Oba Cladius Dosa Akran had been named Deputy Premier to Chief Akintola. Now, in the quest for human figures so as to form a government, Akran was asked to sacrifice his place to "Fani Power." After much jaw-jaw, he agreed.

The new party was named Nigeria National Democratic Party. (NNDP) — a name formerly borne by Herbert Macauley's Local Party in Lagos.

The Action Group had supported the creation of a Mid-West (now Bendel) State. And so both Chief Dennis Osadebay and Dr. M.I. Okpara liked that. So, it was impossible to find an ally, other than the Yoruba NCNCers.

The NPC had turned against the NCNC because of the agreement it had with the Action Group. The AG and the NCNC had formed what they called UPGA — United Progressive Grand Alliance. It was sure that majority of Yorubas still love Awolowo. If any election was held, the NEPU (led by Alhaji Aminu Kano) was the NCNC ally in Northern Nigeria. Who was to be NCNC playboy in the West? The NPC frowned at the NCNC with whom it had done business and such people as late Alhaji Adelabu who had become Federal Minister.

Meanwhile, the NNDP had been born and the UPGA too had emerged. And, as the 1965 Federal Election drew nearer, the NPC too asked Akintola what the position was. Akintola took in NNDP to the NPC and this time, the allies were like this:

AG
NCNC
NEPU
UMBC



United Progressive Grand Alliance.

NPC
NNDP
Mid-West Demoractic Front
Niger Delta Congress



Nigeria National Alliance (NNA)

Thus, there were two distinct parties.

The 1965 Federal Election result favoured the NNA. There were allegations of electoral malpractices and, among the Yorubas who would not want to hear anything about Akintola's party, it was preposterous to hear that his party claimed to win. Why? Because UPGA talked of boycotting the election, thus giving the chance for election frauds.

In the North, 78 out of 167 were returned unopposed for NNA. Other plays were employed by the NNA. The Election in Northern and Mid-Western Nigeria were held on December 30, 1964. In Eastern Nigeria, the election was totally boycotted while in the West, the boycott was a disaster for UPGA. Akintola's NNDP claimed to win. His party's victory simply inflamed pro-Action Group supporters to violence and a twist was given to "SLA" by Yorubas who call "SLA "Ese Ole" (thief's leg) which was simpler for any Yoruba illiterate to pronounce than SLA. Any historian who witnessed these events would confirm how truly unpopular Akintola and his party were.

Why? When Awolowo was detained, Akintola's supporter rejoiced. When the Coker Commission of Inquiry sat, detractors of Awolowo came to say that loans and frauds were committed by simply signing the documents with their legs instead of hands. This, they said, was to avoid anyone knowing whose handwriting it was. How incredible.

In order to make it difficult for the AG, its public meetings and campaigns were sometimes banned. The Police would simply refuse to issue permits to the party. Sometimes, the Electoral Officers, were not available to the AG (UPGA). And so, by October 11, 1965, Akintola's party claimed it already had fifteen NNDP candidates returned unopposed. This might be due to the boycott. But more could be arising out of the fact that the Electoral Officers had instructions to disappear or make themselves scarce to the UPGA candidates.

The unpopularity of the NNDP was so manifest that indignation, Chief Fani-Kayode bragged "If you do not vote for us, the angels will"

It was clear that miracles of the sort are not come by in this age other than winning the election by fraud. No angel was coming to take side with what the Yorubas termed "treachery" as enuciated by Akintola to Awolowo, and much later, by Campaore to Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso.

The NNDP claimed to have won the election. Its supporters were fewer than those of the UPGA, especially the Action Groupers. How come the NNDP won? It was this which led to the break-down of law and order in Western Nigeria. The NNDP claimed to win seventy-three seats, the Action Group fifteen and the NCNC two, adding that four results were still expected.

When the criminal charges of treason were made against Chief Awolowo and his disciples, one of the defending was Mr. Olusegun Awolowo, eldest son of Chief Awolowo who was in the team of those defending his father Segun Awolowo died while racing in his car, to Lagos from Ibadan, to defend his father.

This was shocking enough. It swayed many fence-sitters in politics, to Awolowo's side.

Soon after, Akintola's eldest child, Mrs. Omodele Odunjo, took an overdose of drugs and died on October 26, 1965. How both families swapped death, will, forever, remain a mystery.

Chief Akintola was holding constant meetings with the leader of the NPC, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto. He had just returned from one such meetings on January 14, 1966. At Kaduna, the Sardauna, Sir Ahmadu Bello; the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Chief Akintola talked about what should be done to suppress the breakdown of law and order which was next to anarchy in Western Nigeria and the growing state of violence in that State. On arrival, Akintola asked his wife, Faderera, to precede him to his hometown, Ogbomosho, while he, himself, stayed back in

Ibadan, to receive Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia who was visiting. After receiving the Emperor on January 15, 1966, Akintola planned to join his wife at Ogbomosho. Akintola, Balewa and Sir Ahmadu discussed the information they heard about a possible military coup and what they could do about it. Then, Akintola came back on January 14, to Ibadan. What if he did not come back and had a rendezvous with someone, somewhere else? Would he have been killed in the early hours of the next morning .

In the very early hours of January 15, 1966, Chief Akintola was woken up by the shrill but piercing bell-like noise of the telephone. On the other end was Mrs. Fani-Kayode, wife of the Deputy Premier of Western Nigeria who was officially next to SLA. She was hysterical. She gave out that some soldiers had come and taken her husband away to where she knew not.

Chief Akintola immediately understood the meaning of that. It must be the military coup they had discussed less than twenty-four hours ago in Kaduna. Was it to be so soon then? He tried to calm her, but she was still hysterical and could volunteer no more information about whether the men were in uniforms and what way they went.

When he hung up, SLA who was in his pyjamas went in to change his dress. If the soldiers visited Fani-Kayode, they would be on their way to him. It was better that he was not led away in night dress. So, he went in and changed into buba and trousers in readiness for his date with Fate. Most members of his family were there — Yomi (his eldest son); Yomi's wife, Dupe; Tokunbo (SLA's youngest child). Yomi's little son, Akinwunmi and Omodele's son, Gbolahan Odunjo, were also there. SLA looked composed, but resigned to Fate. The atmosphere was tense. What to follow

Suddenly, the lights went out. One of the live-in servants went out to switch on the generator. He was shot. There were sounds of army vehicles outside. As they jumped down, they started shouting his name "SLA come out" "Akintola, come out," They shot into the air at random.

SLA asked his children to go into a room and close it. Since it was his name that the coup-makers shouted, he was going to give himself up to the dispensers of death. The rest then, would be God's will, like Jesus said: "Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit."

Having locked the kids inside and believing that he was the only one the army chaps wanted, he tried to escape through the back of the house. Then, he heard the soldiers shout that unless Akintola

came out they would shoot everyone in the house. Akintola should come out with his hands raised on his head. So, he turned back and abandoned his plan to escape. Better to give himself up than let his family be exterminated.

As the soldiers burst into the house, they saw him come towards them. They opened fire and riddled him with bullets. It was not correct that SLA shot back and fought them. He had a revolver and an automatic weapon in the house. He did not go for them. The soldiers left his bloodied body sprawling on the floor, where they first sighted him.

The children started to weep and would not be consoled.

In the morning, Chief C.D. Akran received the children into his house, temporarily. His eldest son, Yomi, moved his father's corpse to the mortuary. SLA was finally buried at Ogbomosho on January 23, 1966.

Already, the traits of character he exhibited in his lifetime were daring. True, he fought no battles, but he was not different to the rest of the Aare Ona Kakanfo, most of who died violent deaths. That was not to say that he was not as mystically armed as his predecessors-in-office.

With the different preparations he had drank and the incisions into which other mystical preparations were put, he did exhibit some of those powers, on some occasions. Only a Kakanfo would travel to trouble-infested areas and come out scot-free and unharmed. And as a "war and crisis leader" of the Yorubas, Ladipo Akinola, his (father's) biographer, writing about how his father displayed unusual and occultic attributes, in the epilogue to "AKINTOLA: THE MAN AND THE LEGEND" said:

"We have seen Akintola as a man. We have seen him as a politician. We have seen that in both conditions, he displayed unusual attributes. The author does not feel that this testimonial on its own, is sufficiently strong to attach him with the aura of a legend. There is, however, one significant role he played, in which occurred some extraordinary phenomena that would entitle him to be presented in a legendary light.

"That was his Aare Ona Kakanfo chieftaincy.

"This title itself, is attached with certain legends which lend it an occult effect. In the case of Samuel Ladoke, it is given credibility by the fact that he fulfilled all its strange codes. A man holding the title is regarded as a war or crisis leader of all Yorubas.

"He cannot live and die as the normal or average human being. Once the Chieftaincy ceremony had been completed, his stare cannot be met directly by ordinary mortals.

"To illustrate this is an incident witnessed by the author (Ladipo Akintola himself) in 1964. Present in the car that was headed for the Liberty Stadium, Ibadan, were Samuel Ladoke; the author; a police orderly and the driver. A large, hostile crowd surrounded the car shouting abuse and hurling missiles. In a fit of annoyance Samuel Ladoke commanded the drive to stop. The driver did so. The police orderly was trembling and sweating, the author subdued and frightened.

"Slowly but deliberately, Samuel Ladoke got out of the car and started to walk towards the missile-throwing crowd, who backed away from him. They retreated slowly at first, but, within a few minutes, this became a wild rush to escape from the lone figure. Moments later, the whole area was empty. Samuel Ladoke sedately returned to the car and the journey resumed. It was as if some supernatural force had been at work and everybody in the car was awestruck.

Samuel Ladoke never explained to any of his family how he was able to effect such a phenomenon.

"In another scene, not witnessed by the author, Samuel Ladoke was scheduled to address a rally. At that time, Oyo was predominantly NCNC and there was a great deal of hostility against the rally. So, the NCNC leaders planned their own rally for the same day at a square, close to the location where the Action Group rally was to take place.

"The idea, of course, was to draw the crowd away from the Action Group rally. By coincidence, Samuel Ladoke had to pass through the venue of the NCNC rally to get to the Action Group rally. His passage was like a red flag before a bull-the crowd started jeering and hurling abuse. He ordered the driver to stop and leapt out the car. As he did so, the sky suddenly became overcast and lightening started to fly across the sky.

"As if by magic, the whole place was suddenly empty! Neither of the two rallies could be held that day. But at the next election, Oyo voted for Action Group.

"A man holding the Aare Ona Kakanfo, the code decrees, cannot be killed unless he is willing to die. This again, was fulfilled by Samuel Ladoke when he decided to abandon his escape attempt to save his family. And, it is said that an Aare Ona Kakanfo title holder

must die a violent or unusual death. This apparently happened to all the twelve that preceded Samuel Ladoke, and, of course, it happened to him.

"It was the tragic end of a legend—the legend of the unlucky thirteen."

Earlier, you have read that SLA was not the thirteenth Aare Ona Kakanfo. He was the fourteenth. An oversight had been committed by Rev. (Dr) Samuel Johnson, who compiled the list of the Kakanfo. He omitted Kakanfo Oluyedun, the Balogun and Baale of Ibadan and son of Afonja of Ilorin. He was old when he became the Kakanfo. Thus, the record of the battles he fought even before he became the Aare did not outlive him.

He alone, and Kurumi did not die a violent death.

His installation?

Eye witness account of Chief Akintola's installation on October 9, 1964 at Oyo, goes like this.

Before 10 a.m. a great crowd of spectators had assembled. There were Chiefs from various parts of Nigeria, most of who had been invited by the Aare-designate, the Government of Western Nigeria and next-of-kins of the Aare-to-be.

Obas from various parts of Yorubaland were there. And so were women Chiefs and the very very important people in the land. They all converged at Aganju Hall.

Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, the Aare-designate was preceded by the Oyomesi who ushered him into the Abala which is the gateway into the Alaafin's palace. The Oyomesi led him to the Alaafin, Oba Bello Gbadegesin Ladigbolu the Second, who was seated on a dais.

As a matter of routine, the Alaafin asked Yoruba Obas if they agree to Chief S.L. Akintola, being installed as the Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland, to which they acquiesced. Thus, it would not appear as if the Aare was imposed on Yorubaland by the Alaafin.

This was followed by the Osiefa of Oyo making the official presentation of the candidate to everyone present. The crowd applauded — some standing up from their seats while others who had no seat were being urged to please get out of the view of those sitting. The ovation was tumultuous. Hunters shot their dane guns into the air, a most memorable occasion.

The ceremony proper, then began.

The Osiefa presented the Aare with his insignia of office. He was assisted by the Iwefas. Among the paraphernalia presented were the Ojijiko. This was a special cap, adorned with the red tail feathers of a parrot while the cap itself is a longish one, reaching to his waist. Sometimes, some charms are kept inside this cap to help steer off evil on the likelihoods of one popping up.

He was also dressed in the special apron, made of leopard's skin and a leopard skin to serve as his mat and stool when on official duty and in full regalia. Already, he was supposed to have made his hair in the fetish style whereby he leaves an "asiso." The hair is shaved clean, leaving the centre piece for the pigtail. The Akoko leaf played a part and the cap is put on his head with the "akoko" (known as "installation leaves") showing from under the cap.

He was given the Oduro - The Staff Invincible - which was his baton as Field Marshal. The Oduro presented to Chief Akintola was the one last used in 1861 by Aare Kurumi of Ijaye. It had been buried with him when he died in the war, by his head slave, Abogunrin who had two slaves to dig the secret grave. The two slaves were, themselves, killed on the spot so that they might not disclose the site to anyone while, on the other hand, they were also to serve him as servants in the spirit world.

The Oduro was exhumed with Kurumi's body and when his head was severed, the skull and the oduro were sent to the Alaafin.

After he had been arraigned in his official regalia, the Jagun of Oyo, Chief P.A. Afolabi then stood up. He described the day as a very special one. The recipient, he went on, was the Premier of Western Nigeria and the third man to be so conferred, from Ogbomosho.

Then followed other rituals. The Iwefas invited Chief Akintola into the palace. There the other things - incisions and other charms - were carried out.

When he emerged, it was with his shield and Oduro in hand, his eyes dazzling.

And in his full regalia, he prostrated to the Alaafin in the usual traditional obeisance signifying "Servitur" (Yours to Serve).

This was followed by the Osiefa who stated his duties to him. There then followed dancing by the new Chief.



The regalia of a Kakanfo staff & shield. But the Kakanfo never goes to war (battle-field) armed, apart from the staff of office.



Chief S.L. Akintola as Aare Ona Kakanfo

Picture shows Chief Akintola holding the staff of office called.... It is the "Baton Invincible" This one was retrieved from the grave of late Aare Kurumi.

His body was exhumed and his head cut for burial at Oyo.

according to tradition. On Chief Akintola's forehead is the native chalk mark.



With Akoko (enthronement leaves) leaves inside his cap and in full Kakanfo regalia, poses for a picture with his wife Faderera.



Fully dressed as Kakanfo is Chief S.L. Akintola, with friends and relatives.



Akintola and other chiefs thanking the Alaafin after he had been robed as Kakanfo.



*Installation of Chief S. L. Akintola as Aare Ona Kakanfo at Oyo
in 1964.*



Chief S. L. Akintola and friends; prostrating to the Alaafin on arrival at the place of installation—before his enthronement.



Chief S.L. Akintola, Premier Western Nigeria, Cross-section of invitees to his instalment as Aare Ona Kakanfo by the Alaafin Ladigbolu in 1964.

CHIEF M.K.O ABIOLA

IT is impossible to talk of Nigerian "achievers" without placing Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola among the first ten.

He excelled many people in the art of money making. The drive and urge to make much more money than he already got was Chief Abiola's first consideration. At 50, he seems to be just at the acme of a ladder, the way he goes after money. And would anyone blame him? A man whose domestic surrounding was a reminder of poverty would one blame such a person for worshipping at the shrine of Mammon?

It's an amazing rise from grass to grace for the son of a man who was never as rich as to own a currency note, whether £1 or N1, as his own. The elder Abiola was, indeed, a man of patience and fortitude, believing that Allah could still perform some miracles to lift him from the morass of penury to the pinnacle of wealth and fame. He had courted the wealth, but wealth merely whistled at him as it flew off, making a detour to land on the doorstep of his 23rd child, the first surviving, like King David whom God forbade to build him a temple. It was his son Solomon, on whom God devolved that honour.

Everything about Moshood Kashimawo Olawale (MKO) is interesting. They did not just fall into place. They were not there for him to pick. He fought from the lowest wrung of the ladder to the very topmost where he had perched cosily since 1964, and still labours, restlessly, to remain.

When he was born fifty years ago, that is, on August 24th 1937 in Lagos, his father was already 68 years old without a living child. The twenty-two earlier ones, all died before they were six months old. So, how was his father to know he would survive? But survive he did. "And by the time I was born, he (my father) had given up all hopes of ever having a living child. Of course, his ability to sustain the children was seriously in doubt. So, when I was born, he did not give me any name. Rather, he called me Kashimawo meaning "Let's wait and see." And his old man actually lived to see the doubt removed, just as that little child planted and innovated his name and drove poverty away from the father and himself.

Now, Abiola's name is synonymous with wealth.

And if some critics say he has more money than sense, it is because they long to change place with him and, that being impossible, they resort to throwing missiles of all types.

Kashimawo lived in his childhood, in the, hitching, colourful, painful clutch of poverty, which must be so terrible that he said of himself:

“All my life, I have fended for myself.....”

Looking further back on those unhappy days, he added:

“And that is why when people talk about ideas that tend to glamorise poverty, I wonder what they are talking about. Those who have seen poverty as a child like me, would know that there is nothing to really glamorise.”

Like some of our great ones from the hinterland, he already knew penury. He knew the family had no money to go round for food, not to talk of other necessities. But, today, he has already made his first billion and is quiet about it. Yet.....

“By the time I was nine, it was getting financially tough for my family. Father could hardly maintain us. So, I started going with other children to fetch firewood at about 3.30a.m. and walking from Ogba, Abeokuta, carrying the wood home, quickly splitting them into pieces and tying them up for sale.”

Wood fetching and selling is a common resort of ambitious and impecuniary children in the countryside where wood was fuel. In the hinterland, could go and fetch wood or pick fruits — mango, agbalumo, orogbo (bitter kola) and others, and sell, for a living. In fact, most of the wealthiest men, raised upcountry, once sold wood for extra money.

In order to make sale of wood easier for him and, in order to lessen the distance he always had to walk daily to fetch wood and bring the loads back home, Kashimawo devised a technique. He approached a woman cigarette, matches and kolanut seller, the type the Yorubaman calls “siga ree, isana ree” (here’s cigarette, here’s matches), dealer. He struck a bargain with her and both agreed that she could have a third of the price as commission on sales, so, he ceased to trek-wood on the head-from Ogba to his home where few people would have bought. Even then, the price would have been lower because there were not rich people around his area. Thus, the purchase price at Ogba and the GRA (Government Residential Area) was very high because those who lived in the area were workers. Kashimawo’s woodselling venture had taken off and in four months, he was re-organising it. He was no longer carrying wood on his

head. It was better conveyed by Omolanke (hand truck) because, it would carry more and fetch more. These, he now delivered weekly to her.

This man with investments spanning sixty countries and whose name is synonymous with wealth and generosity, sought wealth because he tasted poverty and knew what it is to be poor-to be sad because the money is not there to purchase certain necessities of life. He knew what frustration and the absence of money could cause. Many times, he bowed his head in shame. With this background would it surprise anyone that he is generous with his hard earned money? Yes, MKO is known to donate about N100 million annually, which felt he would help eliminate poverty through his donations.

Talking about his school life, Kashimawo recalled his days at the Baptist Boys High School, Abeokuta, shook his head as he recalled his 1951 – 56 college days and dolorously said:

"I sometimes did not have enough money to pay my school fees and buy exercise books. So, I was forced to read and memorise class notes. I memorise so much and that was how I developed my intellect. Now, my ability to memorise is so powerful,"

But, its been difficult to take one's mind off the days of penury. It was the fact that everyone around him was poor and needed something that Abiola decided to work hard and drive penury away from his doorstep. No one ate bread in his vicinity, when he was a child and scholar. Rice was table food of the rich. But his faith in Allah was unshaken. He believed in a greater tomorrow.

It was his mother who forced him to learn the Holy Koran. She was Zulikha Abiola. And on the day he finished reading the Koran in 1949, he remembered his mother singing "My Moshood who has finished the Kora will be a success and will have plenty of money." So, when he overheard her sing, he questioned her whence the money would come, she replied "The money would come. Unfortunately, I will not live to see it."

It was very prophetic because the day Kashimawo got a job on December 10th, 1956 at Ibadan, that day she died of severe dehydration in Abeokuta, after a long bout of diarrhoea. The doctor charged five shillings fees which none could afford to pay. She died in the morning but by the time Kashimawo got to Abeokuta, from Ibadan she had been buried. He had to borrow money from the company he was working for at Ibadan, in order to come to Abeokuta for his mother's funeral.

It is incredible that, the same wood seller would later decide to form a musical orchestra group, in order to eke out some extra money to keep body and soul together-is the self-same man who has ascended so much the ladder of success that he now holds the highest military honour Yorubaland could confer on any of its sons-the Aare Ona Kakanfo, apart from about some other fifty-four other Chieftaincy titles across Nigeria.

Once, late Adeolu Akinsanya and his orchestra had come to Abeokuta to play. Kashimawo already had his own piece too. But he had to study Adeolu's style and also note how many drums. He even tried his hand at boxing, that man, Abiola. Yes, he had seen the ugly, bleary eyes of poverty, because he had to sell the musical instruments in 1952, to pay a debt owed by his aged father. Whilst he led the orchestra, their booking fee was "high" — five shillings. It later rose to £5 plus some twelve balls of amala. Rice was delicious, but often get digested early. As a result, the musicians would be hungry soon after taking a meal of rice.

Abiola. He secured a Western Nigeria Government Scholarship to study Accountancy and left Nigeria for Britain on February 25th, 1960. He studied at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. He had been married to his wife Simbiat in 1959 after a long courtship.

When he returned to Nigeria from Britain, his father made him reject a job with the Guinness Nigeria Limited because Abiola (Snr) did not see how a good muslim could be working for alcoholic manufacturing company. Which was why he had to accept the job offered from Lagos University Teaching Hospital as Deputy Chief Accountant at the salary offer of Guinness (£7,000). Two years later, he was on the move again as Controller of Accounts, Pfizer Products Limited, Ikeja. It was from that, that he joined International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation as a Controller.

Then, he staged the neat coup d'etat over his white American boss through which he secured 50 per cent of the shares of ITT operational in Nigeria.

During the interview, there was much argument during which Abiola told him that he was a debtor and should pay. Murtala, who later became Head of State of Nigeria, reached for his revolver, but seemed to have thought the better of it, inaslong as he did not shoot at Abiola although, both of them struggled.

Apparently, Abiola, who had some pals in the army-they were even senior to Murtala-got in touch with this colleagues who intervened. Murtala finally signed the cheque for the £5 million.

Then came the game for which most people criticise Abiola. The versions defer.

According to Abiola, when he left the Murtala Muhammed (who, Abiola said, had vaunted "Don't you know I am the Chief of Army Staff") Abiola went straight to the ITT office.

"By the time I got back to the office, my white boss was misbehaving with the ladies and chasing them around. Drink, probably. So, I got a photographer who took a photograph and with the cheque (collected from Murtala) and the photograph, I went to the ITT headquarters and said This is the man you had put in charge of your operations. Unless I take over from this guy, I cannot be risking my life for a boss who is just drinking and eating and unserious.

"The guy was then demoted and made a deputy director and that was everything," rehearsed Abiola.

But the other story said there was an understand game; that when Abiola collected the cheque, he went to the house of the boss where he met the American boss drinking in his premises, with some "soldiers destroyed" (empty beer bottles) and one struggling on the table. He spoke to the man and, in his state of inebriacy, picked the dead soliders (empty bottles) and since the cheque was genuine, the boss was boisterous and easy to manage. Abiola, the story continued put the empty bottles on the table and got the photographer to snap the boss in his inebriate mood. It was this picture with which he was armed and which, along with the white boss, landed him the chairmanship of ITT Nigeria Limited.

Abiola's version continued, "I became the director. It was an immediate appointment. But I said also, that what I wanted was a partnership with the ITT. They said "No. No way in Nigeria."

With a staff of seventeen, Abiola formed his company, believing that if he could collect a cheque of £5 million, he too, could soar higher on his own, which was why he formed the Radio Communications Nigeria Limited. Later, in 1969, the RCN had landed a £20 million contract. He wrote the ITT about it, requesting the purchase

of 50 per cent of ITT shares, he would consider involving it (ITT) in his new contract. Abiola got it.

There are many sides to the man. One of this was his womanising. He is reputed to have as many as 25 wives, and an equal number of mistresses. And if there are uglier philandering stories about him, they were not documented. Some even sound incredible, but likely. No one would believe he made passes at the wife of late President Murtala Muhammed or was connected with eloping with a traditional ruler's wife.

His most publicised wife was his first (and therefore, the eldest wife,) Simbiat. The other is Dr. (Mrs) Doyin Abiola, nee Aboaba, a journalist and managing director of Concord Group of Newspapers.

He first met Simbiat in 1954 in an Arabic School at Abeokuta. It was the first time they eyed each other. Then, he went on to Baptist Boys High School, also at Abeokuta. Simbiat's parents were better-off than Abiola's and therefore, objected to any serious attachment between them. The girl pleaded that Abiola would make up the difference in money through his brilliance.

She was correct.

When Abiola decides to change the old cars of his wives, he buys them in twenties. The keys go to Simbiat who distributes to the others. She was with him in Britain.

But, to become an Aare Ona Kakanfo, that would return Abiola to paganism. He is an ardent muslim. The rule, regarding an Aare, is that he leaves the occiput hair to grow and made into pigtails. His religion abhors the other rituals of incisions and having to sit on a leopard skin.

The question is, "Would Abiola be able to combine the duties of an Aare in peacetime, with that of a muslim leader?"

Two days before his fiftieth birthday, Chief Abiola got the greatest birthday present ever. It was the offer of the chieftaincy title of the Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland. The offer came from the political head of Yorubaland, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi the Third, who, on August 20, 1987 wrote:

"My dear Chief

CONFERMENT OF CHIEFTAINCY ON YOU ON THE OCCASION OF 50TH BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY.

I have decided to honour you with a Chieftaincy title in conformity with your performance in the national life of Nigeria as a whole and as a Yorubaman in particular.

It has not been difficult to find a suitable chieftaincy in view of your recent elevation to the esteemed title of Bashorun of Ibadanland. There has been a vacancy to our highest traditional honour, which we now accord you as a fitting son of the Yorubas.

After very careful and favourable consideration of the issue by all members of my cabinet — the Oyomesi — it was unanimously agreed and recommended to me as the Alaafin of Oyo, to confer on you the Chieftaincy of Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland. And if this is acceptable, you are now the 14th incumbent to the Chieftaincy of Kakanfo of the Yorubas. I and all other Yorubas, shall, henceforth, address you as the Aare Ona Kakanfo, a post superior to the title you now hold.

Full citation and the ceremonies will follow the traditional pattern of the installation which will take place in Aafin Iku Baba Yeye, during my next coronation anniversary, at which time, a befitting arrangement will be made to bring out the historical pre-eminence of this exalted title among all Yorubas.

Let me, on behalf of all Yoruba people, congratulate you for your sterling qualities and express their hope that you will continue in the position, to promote unity and concord between the Yoruba people and other nationalities in the great Federal Republic of Nigeria, throughout Africa and the world at large, a task which you have set for yourself in the last fifteen years or more.

Finally, the Oyomesi have been impressed by your single-minded effort of making every Nigeria feel at home with you and pray Allah, to give you long and healthy life to enable you attain greater height for the benefit of all Nigerians.

Please, find attached, the list containing the names of previous holders of the exalted office of the Aare Ona Kakanfo in Yorubaland. Iku Baba Yeye.

Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III
Alaafin of Oyo."

Only in the previous February (1987), Chief Abiola was bestowed the controversial title of Bashorun of Ibadanland, the first non-Ibadanman to be so honoured

It did not stop there.

In July 1987, he was conferred with the title of the Honorary Major Tuskegee (US) "for his moral, financial and economic and physical and economic and physical sacrifice for the promotion of the black race throughout the world."

Again. A day earlier, while still in the US, he had been honoured with the membership of the National Association for the Advancement Coloured People (NAACP) in New York, the only non-American to be made a life member of the 79-year old NAACP and the first person to win the heritage award in ten years.

The memory of his beloved mother continued to reflect and haunt him so much so that nothing was too great to immortalise the name of that good woman with. She had died the day he started working at Ibadan. And he had to apply for salary advance to stage the funeral of the kind mother.

Thereafter, when he was in money, he immortalised her again, by building the Zulikha Abiola College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Abeokuta. And, to immortalise his father, he also built the Salawu Abiola Comprehensive Secondary School, Abeokuta. Few days before his last birthday, Abiola handed over a science workshop equipment worth N20,000 to the second-mentioned institution.

Chief M.K.O. Abiola has God to thank for making him come from a poor family. That was meant to teach him humility, faith in God, generosity to the poverty-stricken, sympathy for the beggar and consideration for the down-and-out to whom he thinks, he will ever be a consolation with whatever he can give to minimise their sorrow. Poverty made him their brother. But fate redeemed him and made him "Uncle Abiola" who had flown out of the window to the olympus of the rich and mighty.

He can hardly forget his background, where poverty was bedmate and a menace and a dreaded dragon. And for a man, who, at the age of nine, had been fetching wood to sell for food and school fees

"once you are infected with poverty, there is nothing you can do. You didn't know what it was. You just find that while the other boys are eating, you couldn't eat. And that is why everything must be done in my life, to ensure that poverty is eliminated."

Of course, the Bashorun still denies that he has escaped from poverty. When he was asked if he had escaped from poverty, Chief Abiola retorted:

"I have not escaped. I told you the dawn thing is a stubborn animal. You can never be sure you have escaped from it. Why must I be talking now and be going back to work? Unless you work, you cannot escape this damn thing and I will continue to work. I've never had a vacation. Not one day. If you get to my bed, you will find plenty of papers... all piled up. I work, work, work, until I go to sleep and when I wake up, before I say "Good morning," I work. That's the only way."

Take his generosity for example. He says it is an attempt too, to banish poverty. He does not believe that anyone who is rich, should enjoy his wealth alone. That would mean "being himself for himself". On the contrary, "you go far by seeing a reflection of your activities on other people. Since I was a musician, the first thing my orchestra — Kashimawo Orchestra—insist upon, was that you must give us twelve balls of amala, soup and stew for every hour we were going to entertain, because food is the most important element in poverty. Conquer the problem of hunger and you have virtually banished 90 percent of poverty. But how much of that amala would I eat? My father would not let me eat more than one ball. Half the amala we would have, were mine — as the captain — and we distributed to all the poor people in the area. We could have been selling the amala. But we didn't.

"The biggest challenge in my life is the challenge of poverty. Poverty is a very funny animal. You are never sure you have got rid of it. By the time you are getting complacent, that is when it returns. And that is why the Yorubas say that the whip you used to beat and drive away poverty, you must not let it drop. Any time it comes back, use it again. The funny thing about wealth is that you don't even know anything about it until you have got it. So, I didn't know what it was really.

"As a child, I never remember seeing my father with one pound currency note. It was always coins, coins, coins. So, you don't lose what you haven't got. I remember the first time that I ever ate fried egg. It was two weeks before I left secondary school. My present first wife was my girlfriend then. We had a misunderstanding then, not because she offended me, but, you see, her grandmother died and I couldn't afford one kobo to give her. So, I had to pretend she had offended me. Everybody was begging me on her behalf and she was apologising and I said "No. How can she do a thing like that?..." You see, if you haven't got money and you haven't got ju-ju, let your eyes be wild. Like late Chief S.L. Akintola told Chief

Lawrence Omole. "Your name is Lawrence. It is the money in your pocket that is Omole. If you don't have money, you don't allow yourself to dream big dreams, unless you are ready to face the firing squad. In my own case, money has not changed me."

For example, when someone compared Abiola to Jesus Christ, while showering ecomiums on him, Abiola quickly cut him short by riposting: "Jesus Chrst is more than me over a billion times."

And when the Alake of Abeokuta held a party for him on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday, Abiola showed he could be very humble for, he was so flattered that he declared: "This is the first time that I am hearing of the Alake, throwing a party for an individual in my lifetime. The Egbas have seen many great things — wealth, wisdom, power, education and so on — that they (the Egbas) are not easily impressed." Yet, he thought he had not done too much to merit being so honoured, especially, being a Gbagura man a section of the Egbas not much reckoned with by Egba Alake. And coming from those often snubbed, to be honoured by the Alake, meant much. Afterall, "In those days, to get nearer to Alake, you have to start to prostrate from nearly a kilometre away," an Egba elder was known to comment.

The irony of it all, was that even if the Alake eulogised him and praised him so much, he had no chieftaincy title for him that matches the Aare Ona Kakanfo's. All he had at Abeokuta, his hometown, was the honorary title of Bobagunwa of Egbaland. It was on all fours with any other chieftaincy that is localised and not as widely respected as the Kakanfo chieftaincy.

And so, after his toast had been proposed at the Alake of Abeokuta's party, Abiola replied; "I thank God for creating me and making me an Egba man," And as he recalled his poor background, he declared: "what you learnt in poverty stays with you for life."

Went on Chief Abiola, when asked about the chieftaincy beads he has gathered (he has 54 chieftaincy titles already):
"All those titles are, to my mind, mere recognition of God's work. They have not had any effect on me at all. The same way I relate to my driver, I relate too, with Kings. I owe those who criticise me — I owe them understanding and love. Those who are my friends I owe humility and to the Almighty God, I owe total obedience and submission. I cannot get angry for a minute or two. But rather, after I had expressed myself, that's gone. I am by nature, a very hard person. I get moved by occasions but I never get carried away by it. No way. At the end of the day, when I am in bed with myself and my

God, all the money in this world can buy you the most prestigious bed in this world, but no amount can buy you one second of sleep. Money can buy you medicine, only God can give you cure. My belief and faith are that God is total.

"If He could do for me what he had done; if ne could do what He had done for my parents, there is nothing He cannot do for you. So, anybody who looks down upon you is a Fool. Anybody who looked down on anybody is a bloody fool."

His politics? For a man who was an elected member of the Constituent Assembly in 1977 and one of the most famous of the leaders of banned National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Chief Abiola would always be in the forefront of whatever he sets his mind on doing. He was an uncompromising opponent of late Chief Obafemi Awolowo's political pronouncements and policies. And somewhere below, his stand on leadership utterances betray this. Meanwhile, when asked why he "escaped" from politics so early (saying he would no more traverse the murky waters of politics), Chief Abiola explained:

"I did not escape from politics. I escaped from fooled in masse, why must I countinue to hold the horn of the cow and some people keep on milking the cow? I just couldn't stand it anymore. And, you see, I will go with you in partnership. But I will not go with you in servitude. I believe in agreement being reached or people taking me into confidence when they are unable to stick to what had been agreed. When such circumstances happen, I expect you to call me and say this is what is happening. I will not be able to do this for the following reasons. But for some people to assume I would get the message, I don't get such message.

"In the politics of Nigeria, A must always be right on every issue, B must always be wrong on every issue. That cannot always be right. What determines whether you are right or wrong is not so much the individual, but the circumstances that confront him. And circumstances change. And when circumstances change, the issues must change. What are important are the issues, not the individuals.

"People felt Abiola want to be President and we must prevent him from becoming President. If you don't like Abiola, drop Abiola. But there is no reason why the President must come from a particular section of the country. The most important thing is the people. Why must leadership gravitate along a particular way? It is against the law of nature. In my case, what does that make my children in such an amalgamation?"

"You see, I am not concerned about today. Not even about yesterday. Yesterday is gone. Today is practically gone too. I am concerned about tomorrow because that is where I am going to live the rest of my life. And my children too. Why should I, because of today, mortgage the future?"

What of his controversial Chieftaincy title of the Bashorun of Ibadanland?

The Chief had his own views of people's reaction to the conferment. He commented:

"I was told people have created all manners of phobia about Bashorunship. They said if you are the Bashorun, you won't live long.

"But I say, give it to me. If I die, I die a Bashorun. Everyone will say Bashorun Abiola is dead. When will I not die? If you say because you are afraid of death you want to be turned into a dog, one will just be trampled under some dirty tyres of some old lorries.

"Look, This Aare Ona Kakanfo Chieftaincy title. I was not told. I just sat in my house and I received a letter. The fourteenth Kakanfo of Yoruba race. Of course, I will take it.

"I just saw the handwriting on the letter as the handwriting of God on the wall. Somebody just had to deliver it."

Being the Aare Ona Kakanfo means nothing special to Chief Abiola. At least, he would be Abiola and his manners would remain the same.

And has he any regret in life?

Of course Chief Abiola did not regret being the Aare or anything. Or, being poor before. Everything just went the way God willed it and "Regret is a waste of time."

But it is not on every aspect of our political life that Chief Abiola has been commenting. For example, he was not very articulate — as was his wont to comment on the controversy of the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

Chief Abiola, who is the Baba Adinni of Yorubaland, declared "I have no hand whatsoever in Nigeria's membership of the OIC".

In fact, he went on, he was not even consulted nor had he any previous knowledge of the bid to want to join nor has he taken any side in the controversy. At least, so said he to the Concord Community paper for Ogun State on June 27, 1986.

Chief Abiola observed, "The OIC is not a personal issue but a political, diplomatic matter, which only the government of the day is capable or competent to dabble into. It is absolutely irrelevant what

M.K.O. or any other Nigerian believes in. What matters is what Nigerian Government does and the matter is totally in the hands of Government. The churches still open daily. The singing and dancing in the Celestial Church, still go on undisturbed, while Guru Maharaji has emerged on the Nigeria scene."

He said the critics of OIC were alarmists whose stock in trade was to disrupt and distract the attention of Nigerians from important issues. And because of the stance of the Concord — Chief Abiola's daily newspaper — the leader of the Church of God Mission International, Archbishop Benson Idahosa, told members of his church not to read the Concord newspapers anymore.

As an all-rounder who took interest in almost everything around him and one who would not be repressed by taunts or appeasement, Chief Abiola remembered that the first football match in Nigeria was played in his hometown of Abeokuta in 1874. He was a footballer and a lover of sporting activities, who had flirted with boxing too.

It was, therefore, no wonder that Chief Abiola runs three football clubs — the Moshood Abiola Football Club, based at Abeokuta, ITT FC and the Concord FC. The Moshood Abiola FC (also known as "Abiola Babes" was founded in 1982 and had won some laurels for Nigeria. But it was a costly venture of an investment. In fact, in 1987 alone, Chief Abiola invested N2.4 million on his Babes, getting a return of only N28,000 for his pains. He complains that the Nigeria Football Association had not paid his Club their due deserts. On the other hand, he had to finance the trips his boys made outside Lagos and Nigeria in order to play the games slated against them, whereas, the NFA paid fares and hotel bills of the Junior Eagles and Flying Eagles. In other words, the NFA has been with-holding sums of money due to the Babes from gate takings.

There seemed to be other Football Clubs that are also affected by the shoddy way the NFA had been handling the gate takings. And, although Chief Abiola did not call for an inquiry to investigate the wrong-doings so obvious to the public, sports lovers seem to have kept their fingers crossed to see whether the Sports Council or the Federal Military Government would do something to save soccer's future in Nigeria.

Chief Abiola seem to be fed up with the mean and shabby treatment meted to his Club and so, dissolved the set up, although it was clear that what nice treatment and encouragement he gave to the Babes seem to be an over-pampering, since the boys were expected to perform better. On the contrary, they let down the Bashorun, and

their supporters. Of course, he paid his team boys off and took the cars he had bought each of them.

The Bashorun of Ibadanland and Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland wrote to the NFA, saying:

"With the prevailing situation, I can no longer afford to finance Moshood Abiola Football Club. The Management of the Club will settle the terminal entitlements of all players and the staff, all of who have been relieved of the obligation under their contracts with the Club with immediate effect...."

Talking about soccer, Chief Abiola once put down certain suggestion for the development of sports in Africa. He is often referred to, as the "Pillar of Sports in Africa." He has had to charter planes to convey sports enthusiasts to venues of sporting competitions— at his personal expense, making huge donations where necessary.

Which was no surprise when he made out *twelve points* which must be examined and executed in order to improve sporting activities in Africa. Among these were that:

1. Sports technology must be introduced into all facets of sporting activities in Africa.
2. Facilities and sports science equipments must be accorded a special priority.
3. Teams of experts in the area of scientific research and coaching should be in sport laboratories.
4. Teams of competent African sports scientists should be given the exposure that would make them manipulate all modern sports equipments.
5. There should be set up, central All-African sports science laboratories.
6. African nations should set up a mandatory budgetary target for each nation, for sports development.
7. African athletes should be given intensive medical screening.
8. The diets of African athletes should be monitored and controlled.
9. Approved standard facilities should be the prerequisite for the choice of venues for preparing for competition and.
10. Encourage local and foreign entrepreneurs to manufacture sports materials on a massive scale.

However, he had not proffered any recipe for antagonism of any home crowds against visiting teams who might seem to be the better side in any sporting encounter, especially, soccer.

As a man of many parts, Chief Abiola is an up-to-date student of current affairs.

Commenting on apartheid in South Africa, the Aare said African nations should not just sit down, providing funds alone, or relying on foreign troops to fight the freedom battles for the black South Africans, in order to prop up that country's sovereignty as it would affect the blacks. They should do more.

On a recent visit to the United States, he delivered a paper on "Living Up To The Ideals Of Pan Africanism." That was in Washington D.C.

Said Chief Abiola: "African nations should bound themselves together as one nation and face South Africa, if Africa is serious about continental unity." The helplessness of countries like Mozambique and Angola, in containing the onslaughts of South African-backed rebel troops and the futility of their diplomatic efforts so far, to deserve a semblance of independence, argued the case for unity.

It was his view that "the impotence of the Organisation of African Unity, to muster a continental force to defend its principles and resolutions, highlighted by the on-going conflicts, had subjected the continental organisation to ridicule. The salvation of the front-line states lies not in the SADCC — to which they had been forced to seek economic clout, to salvage their battered economy — BUT IN A UNION GOVERNMENT, bound by common resolve and destiny."

On the local political scene, the Aare said "President Babangida's economic programme is well thought-out, a political 'structural' adjustment, necessary to complement the SAP. This would lay a solid foundation for stability for Nigeria and introduce political legitimacy at the grassroots... a crucial step which Nigeria's former colonial power omitted to plan."

The Kakanfo supported the zoning of the Presidency, saying that it would eliminate balkanisation of the country. Besides, the Kakanfo commended the decision to introduce a two-party system into Nigeria. As for the rotation of the Presidency, the Chief said this would eliminate tribalism and ethnicity.

He did not see anything wrong with socialism as the goal of Nigeria. However, Chief Abiola wants a better role for traditional rulers in Nigeria.

Commenting on military coups, Aare Abiola declared: "Military coups have not helped African nations to develop." Rather, they create more problems than they set out to correct", Chief Abiola was speaking at the Shiroro Hotel, Minna.

"Soldiers have no moral rights to use the guns bought with the people's money — against them. After taking power, the military always take the people for granted by postponing the handing over day."

One day, Chief Abiola saw commuters struggling to board the buses. As his car sped along, he sighed. The matter weighed heavily on his mind. What could he do about it, now that the oil subsidy is to be withdrawn?

This led to this observation by him. "Government should undertake a mass transport system in the country if it withdraws oil subsidy, because the removal of the subsidy will place heavy burden on the masses."

The Kakanfo has decided to invest in road transportation, to alleviate the suffering of commuters.

But there, too, was the question of the political fugitives. One of them is the former Federal Minister, Dr. Umaru Dikko, who was accused of being one of those who led this country into economic bankruptcy from which Nigeria is yet to recover. The abortive kidnap bid at a London Airport, made headline news. Dr. Dikko was reported as saying one of those who were gunning for him in Nigeria was Chief Abiola. True, Dikko made sure Abiola did not smell nomination for Presidency candidature in 1983 whilst in Nigeria. Nor the chairmanship of the National Party of Nigeria, to which both of them belonged. Dikko, who blocked the chance of Abiola many years back, said in London that if he came back to Nigeria, one of those who were likely to avenge the past, was Chief Abiola.

A surprised Abiola retorted: "Umaru Dikko is merely running away from his own shadow. Nobody is chasing him. Nobody wants to hurt him, least of all myself. However, I feel flattered that he says he is afraid of me anyway. If I don't have anything against President Shehu Shagari who captained the NPN ship, why should I be against an aide like Umaru Dikko?"

When a conference on famine and food shortage in Africa was held in London, Chief Abiola was one of the speakers there.

A newspaper editor, Richard Dowden of the African Guardian, wrote under the caption "Yorubas Feast Where The Elites Meet."

"Only a rich Nigerian would not think it inappropriate to mark his fiftieth birthday with a conference on Africa's food crisis and to interrupt the discussion on hunger and poverty with a birthday banquet for some 500 guests at a smart West End London Hotel.

"When the Nigeria aristocracy get together, you would think there was no one else in the world worth knowing. The quantity of material draped over the shoulders, round the hips and over their wives heads would have provided curtains for all the hotels in London.

"Fifty is a milestone age to reach, especially if, like Chief Abiola, you have achieved a great deal, including the education of 400 children who are not your own flesh and blood".

The writeup was featured in the "London Line" column of Miss Donu Kogbara of the *VANGUARD*.

Chief Abiola holds 54 Chieftaincy titles as was earlier mentioned. These included chieftaincies from Calabar and Iboland. Three of the titles were offered recently, to commemorate his fiftieth birthday.

The Shoun of Ogbomosho conferred the chieftaincy of "Aare Ataiyese of Ogbomosho" on him; the Okere of Shaki conferred the Balogun Adinni of Shaki on him, while the Orimolusi of Ijebu Igbo conferred on him, the chieftaincy title of the Aare of Ijebu Igbo. Already, he holds the title of Bobagunwa of Egbaland (1977), Baba Adinni of Yorubaland (1983) and Bashorun of Ibadanland (1986). His chieftaincies cover the length and breadth of Nigeria.

As a businessman, Chief Abiola often shies away from the most politically controversial issues. He does not plunge into it by himself, unless he is drawn into it... by subterfuge or confrontation. It is the only way a man in multi-business could stay away from making enemies for himself and his business. Pronouncements on political issue have ruined many a businessman who had, by such statements, stepped on other peoples corns. Reactions of those who felt hurt by such statements have been to deny certain vital things to his company. Sometimes, damaging remarks are made about a critic's companies so that such companies could close down. Not that Chief Abiola fears anybody. And in THIS WEEK issue of September 7, 1987 the Kakanfo disclosed how he made his first N1 million when he went to collect the ten and half years old £5 million ITT debt from Brigadier Murtala Muhammed. Would a coward talk to a soldier with a gun the way Abiola did? According to him Murtala bullied him and he roundly shouted back at him, adding, for Murtala's information, that he knew Murtala's bosses, some of who were his own contemporaries. Murtala immediately cooled. But in spite of his wealth, it is surprising that he still supports socialism as earlier said.

Said he: 'Even Karl Marx and his socialist intellectual descendants acknowledge the productive genius of the capitalist class and assigned that class a critical, though, transitory role in the history of economic progress and technological advancement. For example, if Nigeria is not a socialist country, what about its Land Use Act? The Act is a first step in that direction, having made all Nigerians tenants on government land.'

Besides, Chief Abiola does not also support government ownership or, investment in any business. One discovers that each time government invests in any business, it exposes its weaknesses and inefficiency, said Chief Abiola.

When it came to inserting the Sharia in the nation's constitution, the muslim members of the Constituent Assembly (in November, 1977) — among them Chief Abiola, Alhaji Kam Salem, Dr. Olusola Saraki, Alhaji Babatunde Jose (all of them numbering some eighty) walked out of the Assembly, although they did return to it. And so, the chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee (The Forty-nine Wise Men), Chief Rotimi Williams, went to the Constituent Assembly to assure the members that Sharia would not be imposed on anybody. The public still await Chief Abiola's pronouncement on the two issues of Sharia and the OIC, although, the nearer he is to his goal, the more careful must he be, with his comments on most controversial issues.

Ever ready to promote his business, Chief Abiola, on Monday January 23, 1978 put a mathematical calculator in the pigeon holes of all the 230 members of the Constituent Assembly — "With love from the ITT". Some of the members were embarrassed. The calculators were too welcome to those who knew how to use one. There were others who were having a calculator too many. While there were those who were just indifferent to the said present. But, a present is a present.

The previous Sunday, he had given a party for the Constituent Assembly Members (CAN) and had given the same calculators to some of those at the party. But since he was not sure who was present or absent at his party, he distributed them again through each man's Constituent Assembly pigeon hole (which bore each members name) at the venue.

And when mischief makers were ready to twist the whole gift issue, he thundered, "What the hell do I want from anybody in the Assembly?" He asked that anyone who did not want his own calculator was free to return it to him.

Chief Abiola has had brushes with many people. And one of them was Mr. Fela Anikulapo Kuti. They had been pals before. And when Fela decided they were no longer pals, he showed it in his songs and his characteristic way. Of course, "M.K.O." ignored him. Again, when the idea of forming a political party was crystalising, someone passed some clean sheets of paper around to the Constituent Assembly members. They signed. But when a newspaper took up the trail of the signatures and interpreted them to mean that the 100 signatories were on Chief Awolowo's side, the signatories — including Chief Abiola — denied that they had ganged up on Chief Awolowo's side. Those involved in the signature exercise included Alhaji Suleman Takuma, Mr. A.A. Ogundokun, Mr. J.B. Chuwang, Mrs. Janet Akinrinade, Dr. Olu Saraki, Alhaji Kaloma Ali, Mr. Kunle Oyero, Chief Olu Awotesu, Mr. Donald Etiebet, Alhaji Adamu Chiroma, Mr. Obi Wali Mr. Anthony Obong.

The new Aare Ona, Kakanfo is a man of so many parts that it would be difficult to write fully on his various activities. Chief Abiola means so many things to most people. Some will speak of him with admiration. Many will speak of his generosity. Others have spoken out of envy-like the man who said "Abiola has more money than sense." Yet, after reading this book, you can form your own conclusions. He has been linked with Mrs. Murtala Muhammed and with a royal queen from the hinterland when the King himself made frantic efforts to get his wife to return to him. But no one was sure it was Chief Abiola. Surely, his philandering and sexcapades should go into SPEAR Magazine's column, World's Greatest Lovers." To him, that aspect of his life must be the fun he derives from his wealth — the son of one of the poorest men in the world, saved from hunger and want by God and made a wealthy man so he can help the less fortunate. And along his path, women come to season and sample what it is to know Chief Abiola, so they can regale their friends with tales of his performance in the encounter never witnessed by a third party, God being the umpire. Of course the women deliberately thrown themselves in his way. Like the lady people said, went to his office with her tale of being put in the family way. He was said to shout back "where did it take place? Daytime or at night. In the office or at my place. May God save me from these women. Get out of my office." Yes, there are women, ready to foist themselves and their unwanted pregnancies on him. Like the title of the book which proclaimed, "God Protect Me From My Friends: I can Take Case of My Enemies."

Finally, in most parts of the world, ITT runs Sheraton Hotel. But Chief Abiola, it was alleged, would want no part in hoteliering! People believe that somewhere along the line, whatever profit is declared, certain officials manage to make four times that, with just the left-over for the proprietor, for continuity's sake. Those in the business know this.

The world watches Chief Abiola to know whether he would behave like the typical Aare Ona Kakanfo — the bully who would never recant; the callous Chief with no milk of human kindness; the bravest of the brave, ready to take umbrage at the least provocation; ready to do battle of words with those who would want to pull his tribesmen down; and in this modern age, ready to create jobs for the down-and-out. Yet, Chief Abiola would continue his philanthropic pursuits and the exercise of making Nigeria a better place to live in.



An "elderly" congratulation by an old dame is welcome.



*Left to Right:
Alaafin of Oyo Oba Lamidi Adeyemi III; Mr. Kolawole Abiola, son of
the Bashorun of Ibadan and the Bashorun himself.*



Some Emirs from Northern Nigeria congratulate Chief Abiola



Oba Ashanike conferring with some Chiefs before the Installation



Chief (Mrs) Simbiat Abiola, the Iyalode of Egbaland and her son, Kolawole (standing behind his father) at his Installation as the Bashorun.



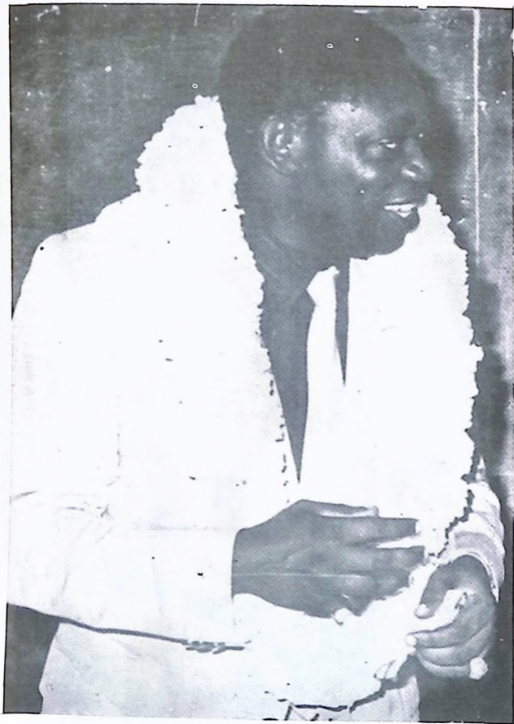
Putting the Akoko leaves right at the Installation



Chief M. K. O. Abiola as the "ADA IDAHA KE EBURUTU" of Calabar.



Basorun Abiola amazed by the size of a Camel presented to him by Alhaji Usman Faruk as a birthday present



Chief M. K. O. Abiola as a Sportman.



Chief M. K. O. Abiola at the lunching of Ondo Rural Development Fund.



This book is an attempt to bring to the reader all that he needs to know about any of the dreaded fifteen Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorubaland.

As Aare, the holder of the title is the field Marshal and generalism of Yoruba army. The Aares were dreaded in those days since all of them were unpredictable, irritable, irrational, despotic, treachevous, very daring and above all, mean people.

Why was the poast of Aare Ona Kakanfo created? What does it mean? Who can be a Kakanfo? What rituals are connected with it? Do they have split personalities? Why are they notorious and treacherous? Is it true that when they die their heads are cut and burned at Oyo?

The most outstanding and colourful among them include Oyabi, Afonja, Kurumi, Amepo and Latosisa. The two modern ones are Aare S.L. Akintola, late Premier of Western Nigeria and th incumbent, Aare M.K.O. Abiola. The vise to prominence of these two compel thorough reading.

Mr. Bisiryu Afolabi
Chief Librarian
Concord.