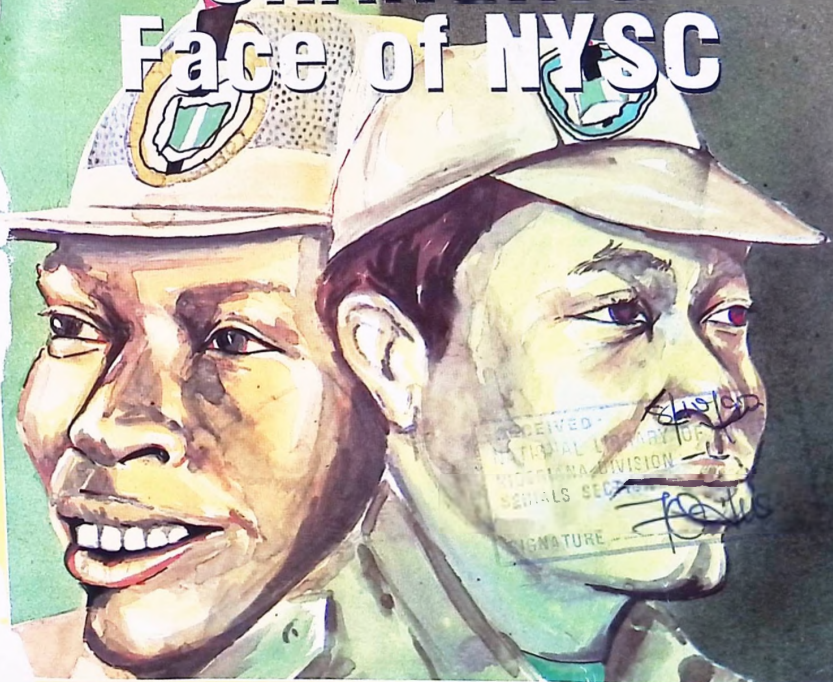


Abdullahi Ibrahim (SAN)  
speaks on Karibi-Whyte tribunal

March 25 — April 1 1991 Vol. 2 No. 13

# Citizen

## The CHANGING Face of NYSC



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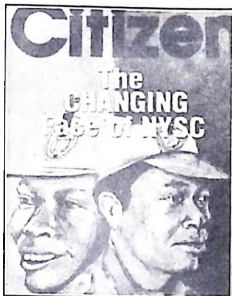
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March 25 - April 1 1991

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# Citizen

All the News in Perspective

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## PREFACE

**T**he National Youth Service Corps, NYSC had a difficult period of gestation and when its brave midwife delivered the baby in May 1973 after a protracted labour, controversy greeted its arrival. University students embarked on a nationwide demonstration to protest against the scheme. In those good old days, university graduates had so many plum jobs lined up for them, a car and a house to complete the generous package. So they could afford to throw tantrums about the punitive aspect of the NYSC scheme. Nobody wanted to serve in remote states on a chicken feed allowance just to promote national unity.

Today, 18 years later, the story is different with corps members ever too ready to manipulate NYSC posting to ensure that they serve in states of their choice. With soaring unemployment, the scheme provides a means of keeping body and soul together. But employers are getting choosy about the corps members they select because there are fewer jobs to offer and the scheme is battling with a steady erosion of its mandate. Our team went to town to assess the NYSC and the cover anchored by Tawey Zaka with additional reporting by Bilikisu Yusuf, Mahmud Jega, Abu Momoh and Rabiu Barde reveals the battle for survival and relevance the scheme may yet have to fight.

\*\*\*

Our guest on Platform this week is Alhaji Abdullahi Ibrahim (SAN), a legal luminary, a former minister, and chairman of the nation's foreign policy think-tank, the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, NIIA. He bared his mind on sizzling national issues, corruption, abolition of states and the Karibi-Whyte tribunal where he served as a member. Mohammed Bomo, Bilikisu Yusuf and Delia Nzekwu bring you this controversial interview.

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Citizen, March 25, 1991

## SDP—The Struggle- Within

Sir,

I took time to read your magazine's March 18, Volume 2 No. 11 Cover story "SDP The struggle within". Your information and analysis cannot be beaten, denied or faulted but for your conclusion that the fortunes of the SDP in future elections will depend on how well General Yar'Adua, Chief Nzeribe and the "Western caucus manage the presidential ticket crisis between them". Middle Belt as the fourth member of the crisis management team.

The chance of either Kingibe or the Western caucus, choice going sible with the support of the Middle Belt, who one must now admit, constitute the bulk of the SDP stronghold in the North. The Middle Belt will certainly not sit around this time while the big three of their representatives go about milking the cow they have shepherded!

Zakari A. Sofa  
Kaduna.



Sir,

The Ooni of Ife needs to be cautioned on his recent utterances and romance with the two political parties, not only because it is against the transition to civil programme rule but also in the interest of the nation as a whole.

If a custodian of the people's tradition could be allowed to do as he likes other traditional rulers may follow suit, what then becomes of this county?

The press also is to be blamed as it kept quiet over this pronouncement. No wonder it is often said that the south controls the press in Nigeria. Heavens was almost let lose by this same press from the south when Abubakar Gumi said no southerner is going to rule this country.

What is actually becoming of press in Nigeria one ponders.

Moshrod Adeboye  
Offa

## Things press men do

Sir,

I have always read Mohammed Haruna's article with keen interest. No doubt, his articles exhibit a sense of maturity most journalists lack.

When I read through the article titled "The things press men do" my conviction of his high sense of maturity dawned on me. Although he is a journalist, he has been able to point out the ill-manner of our journalists. I wish all are like him. I wish he would continue to use his pen to unmask the misdeeds of the lot of Nigerian journalists. Let us keep our fingers crossed and see how they will react to the Ooni question.

Isaac Eteveigho  
Lagos

## Gulf aftermath

Sir,

The worst has been done, the world already knew who won the war militarily and who won politically. The so-called allied have forgotten one thing, that it is not a military victory that changes events, but the determined behaviour of a people.

We are told and it is believed that destruction in Iraq is beyond what was required. Well, thanks to Bush for using his most advanced military technology on a country like Iraq. No less thanks to the Soviet Union, which had made this possible by relinquishing its position and made the world a unipolar system. As many of them rejoice in their victory, they should also remember that that is the beginning of another era of violence in the Middle East.

Kunle Soladoye  
Ilorin

## Governor Ayuba, Sir

Sir,

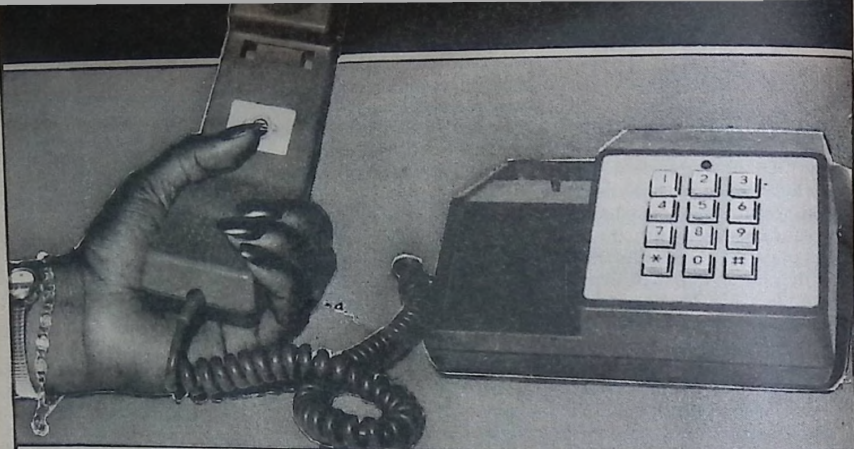
When you took over the administration of Kaduna state late last year you openly dismissed though belatedly your predecessor in office as having done virtually nothing during his tenure.

Some of us now believe your words to be true and we notice with satisfaction the manner you go about your job of developing Kaduna state, but please tarry-awhile because you will not do yourself justice to accomplish in a hurry what needs to be done meticulously.

We also advise that you listen to many a varied opinion than those closest to you.

Baba Gado  
Zaria City

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



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## NYSC: Where is thy sting?

**T**he National Youth Service Corps, NYSC, welcome as its concept is, has in the 18 years of its existence had too much dirt rubbed into its visage, and Colonel Hafiz Momoh, 47, its new boss, is unhappy with Nigerians for saying so aloud. Why, we are on course, he says. The NYSC is performing exactly the way it was designed to work. Agreed, corp members sometimes, using 'long legs', get us to post them back to their states. But they often have "very good, genuine reasons". In any case, their number (1%) is too small for them to steal the show from us. We still run things".

Col. Momoh's defensive line runs on: no, there is no waning corper enthusiasm. It is imagined. NYSC has come to stay. If it is scrapped today the nation will boil. Remember what happened in 1985 when NCE holders were 'excised' from the scheme! They demonstrated and today are still protesting against their forced exit. The infamous Obasa trial in 1985? Yes, it happened but only within a particular period and it was dealt with firmly. "Now, the nation has beamed its light on the organisation very closely", the director says. "Everything is highly monitored". The all-clear sign has been given, and, by Col. Momoh's reckoning, life should go on.

The NYSC boss is right about the scheme having come to stay. All but few vocal Nigerians, who Col. Momoh wants ignored, have come to accept the wisdom of a programme aimed at getting younger Nigerians to know their country better and promote national unity. Where he and the rest of us part ways is his insistence that the scheme "is going on the way it was designed to work". To be sure, the nation's universities and polytechnics still churn thousands of graduates that feed the scheme annually. The ritual of dispersing them to 'needy' employers has been religiously kept. The convergence of views, however, will only stretch this far.

We don't agree that the face the NYSC presents today is the same one that Nigerians knew in the 70's. Then, it was the face of a corp that spoke with authority and was obeyed. Today, what we see is a weakened authority, facily arm-twisted by even youths it used to order around. Corp members not only impudently reject their posting by the NYSC Directorate but also indicate employers they want to work for.

Come to think of it, maybe we shouldn't come down too hard on Col. Momoh and his team. They too are handicapped by the very law - Decree No 24 of May 22, 1973 - which set up their flagship. The law stipulates that no corps member should be assigned to his state of origin but goes on to permit such preferential posting under certain special conditions. It did not take the cleverer corp members long to discover this ambivalence and they have been exploiting it to the detriment of the national interest. As Col. Momoh himself has recognised, it is time that loophole was blocked.

Then something needs to be done about the welfare of corp members. A starting-point was made in January with the raising of the stipend to 350 Naira. The annual awards for distinguished service would have been as commendable if they went to corp members who really merited them. Alas! Col. Momoh talked about building lodges. If this eventually materialises one problem that so far has seemed intractable would have been removed.

A word for the director's upcoming innovation: a corper's forum and 'grassrooting' of the scheme. The forum is meant to give corp members a say in the way the scheme is run and the localisation process which will see NYSC offices go up in local government areas is intended to chase the corper and his problems to his base rather than he "pursuing" officials to headquarters. We look forward to that coming up too in the new year.

## Fertilizer

**A** circular letter from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture dated March 8, this year, informed all state governments

that the cost of a bag of simple fertilizer is to be raised by 100% from the present 17 Naira to 34 Naira, while a bag of compound fertilizer now



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costs 40 Naira, up from 20 Naira. This still means that the Federal Government will heavily subsidise the commodity, whose factory price is 128 Naira per bag. State governments will also continue to shoulder the entire cost of transporting it from factories and seaports to their states; Katsina State, for instance, spent 40 million Naira last year to do this. Local governments will also bear the entire cost of transporting the commodity from state capitals to their areas. This means that, despite the 100% price hike, fertilizer is still more than 90% subsidised by the three levels of government.

However, fertilizer procurement and timely distribution in the country still leaves much to be desired. Supplies to farmers are still far below demand, thus resulting in long queues, acute shortages and illegal diversion of the commodity and its resale on the black market. Last year, when the official price was N17 to 20 Naira per bag, fertilizer sold on the black market for 45 Naira to 50 Naira. Authorities must take all necessary measures this year to ensure that the commodity is not again bought and resold at prohibitive rates. Anything less will defeat the spirit of the high level government subsidies.

## Enhancing agriculture

Recently, the president, General Ibrahim Babangida revealed at the convocation ceremony of the University of Agriculture, Makurdi that a decree would formalise the transfer of the country's two universities of agriculture for funding and programming purposes. The move was hailed by agriculturalists as the crucial rationalisation required to harmonise the functions of the universities with the needs of its sector — client, the agricultural establishment. Under the inherited institutional arrangements, agriculture, the mainstay of the economy before the oil boom era, gathered the moss of neglect reflected in poor funding for agricultural research and extension. Indeed, agriculture was treated with the theoretical approach, thereby producing bureaucratic agricultural officers. The existence of a wide gap between practical needs of Nigerian agriculture and the training and agricultural education programmes resulted in declining food production.

To correct the decades of neglect, agricultural institutes and river basins were established, paving the way for the emergence of the specialist agricultural universities. The transfer of the latter to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture is to ensure that they design outreach programmes, articulate and execute research that will address the relevant needs of the national food and fibre system. Under the new system, the Ministry of Agriculture will benefit from the strong linkages with its prime specialist institution and also tap consultancy and

technical support services from it, thereby eliminating reliance on foreign consultants. Rather than reviewed as an anomaly, the transfer of the universities of agriculture to its Federal Ministry is consistent with what obtains in several countries where the union has promoted food self sufficiency drive. It should do the same for this country which requires food security at this time more than at any other.

Despite the immense benefits expected from the rationalisation, sceptics are quick to observe that transferring the universities to a ministry may set an unhealthy precedent where other disciplines may also demand preferential treatment. What happens if the various law faculties in all the country's universities agitate for a transfer to the Federal Ministry of Justice? Apart from the compartmentalisation such a decision will promote, it certainly will make no contribution to speedy dispensation of Justice. This is an odious comparison and a far cry from what obtains worldwide.

Yet critics have their well founded fears that the civil service lethargy may well strangle the most virile of institutions. This should not be allowed to happen. The expectations of agriculturalists is to find solace in a ministry that will develop the culture of adequate fiscal and logistic support for its greatest partner in the drive for food security for the nation. We believe that only the fulfilment of these expectations will usher in the much sought era of abundant food for all and a surplus for export.

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## MOHAMMED HARUNA

one to that effect. This was why no one from that part of the country contested for any of the major party posts.

It may be argued that this was a unilateral understanding by the West. If this is true, then the other geo-political factions of the party must accept the charge that they engaged in a cynical manipulation of the understanding to further

an undue advantage over others.

The moral issue apart, there is a second reason why you should stick to your job as chairman of your party. This is simply because the job of building a party is of primary importance for building a democracy. Party chairmanship may not enjoy the power and privilege of presiding over the nation, but as Professor Omo Omoruyi has been

## Letter to Babagana Kingibe

Permit me to go straight to the subject of this letter to you, namely the widespread speculations that you are gunning for the presidential ticket of the Social Democratic Party of which you are the chairman. As you know very well this development has since threatened to tear your party apart. Before the development, the assumptions have been that your party's presidential ticket has been reserved for the South or more specifically the South-West.

Sir, you have since come out to debunk this assumption. The ticket, you have said repeatedly, is open to all who are interested because there has never been any formal agreement reserving the ticket for any part of the country. In this you have been amply supported by your party's general secretary, Dr. Alex Aniolo and publicity secretary, Dr. David Iornem. Not only that, you have also been backed by the Eastern and Middle-Belt caucuses.

Naturally the Western caucus is unhappy with this development which it sees as backsliding on the part of the party secretariat. If you ask me, I would say they have a point. There may not have been any formal agreement at the first annual convention of your party in Abuja last year to reserve the presidential ticket for the West, but if we are honest with ourselves, we would admit that there was not just a tacit understanding but a crystal clear

their own sectional objectives. Contest for power is of course as much about taking advantage as anything else. Yet there must be a limit on this, otherwise the contestants would end up reaping chaos rather than power.

Sir, it is partly because of this need for contestants to recognise a limit to the taking of advantage that I think you should not run for the presidential ticket of your party. They say all is fair in war and politics is war minus the guns. But then even in wars there are conventions, or morality if you will.

Personally I do not think that in the contest for office we should throw morality to the dogs. This was one reason why I wrote the other day against Chief Olu Falae's presidential candidature. He, it was, who signed the circular which gave public servants a deadline to resign if they wished to participate in the transition politics.

This was so soon after your assignment as the secretary of the Constituent Assembly. You resigned honourably and joined the Patriotic Front. By staying back, I thought Chief Falae forfeited the moral right to participate in the transition politics.

This moral issue applies in your case as the chairman of the SDP. I know that the parallel with Falae can be over-drawn. The fact remains, however, that as party chairman theoretically at least you have

trying to impress on politicians at the Centre for Democratic Studies, party political work is certainly more crucial for entrenching the democratic ethos in society.

I agree with those of you who think the job of presiding over this country is too important to restrict the choice of the electorate by any crude elimination formula. Democracy is about acceptance first and all else second. And in offering someone for the elective leadership of the nation, or state for that matter, a sensible party would know that it restricts itself in its own choice at the risk of losing to its rival party(s). Even then, I think as someone who is a beneficiary of the zoning formula, whether there was a formal agreement on it or not, you stand disqualified to contest for the party's presidential ticket during the transitional period. Others from your geopolity may contest but you should not because you are an honourable man.

Sir, you are on record as having said you have enough work minding the party. You have, however, refused to make a categorical statement as to the possibility that somewhere along the line you would say that you have done enough party work and seek its presidential ticket. For the sake of peace and harmony in your party, you should declare today that you have no interest in that ticket whatsoever, at least not before 1996.

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It may be argued that this was a unilateral understanding by the West. If this is true, then the other geo-political factions of the party must accept the charge that they engaged in a cynical manipulation of the understanding to further

an undue advantage over others.

The moral issue apart, there is a second reason why you should stick to your job as chairman of your party. This is simply because the job of building a party is of primary importance for building a democracy. Party chairmanship may not enjoy the power and privilege of presiding over the nation, but as Professor Omo Omoruyi has been

## Letter to Babagana Kingibe

Permit me to go straight to the subject of this letter to you, namely the widespread speculations that you are gunning for the presidential ticket of the Social Democratic Party of which you are the chairman. As you know very well this development has since threatened to tear your party apart. Before the development, the assumptions have been that your party's presidential ticket has been reserved for the South or more specifically the South-West.

Sir, you have since come out to debunk this assumption. The ticket, you have said repeatedly, is open to all who are interested because there has never been any formal agreement reserving the ticket for any part of the country. In this you have been amply supported by your party's general secretary, Dr. Alexis Aniolo and publicity secretary, Dr. David Iornem. Not only that, you have also been backed by the East-ern and Middle-Belt caucuses.

Naturally the Western caucus is unhappy with this development which it sees as backsliding on the part of the party secretariat. If you ask me, I would say they have a point. There may not have been any formal agreement at the first annual convention of your party in Abuja last year to reserve the presidential ticket for the West, but if we are honest with ourselves, we would admit that there was not just a tacit understanding but a crystal clear

their own sectional objectives. Contest for power is of course as much about taking advantage as anything else. Yet there must be a limit on this, otherwise the contestants would end up reaping chaos rather than power.

Sir, it is partly because of this need for contestants to recognise a limit to the taking of advantage that I think you should not run for the presidential ticket of your party. They say all is fair in war and politics is war minus the guns. But then even in wars there are conventions, or morality if you will.

Personally I do not think that in the contest for office we should throw morality to the dogs. This was one reason why I wrote the other day against Chief Olu Falae's presidential candidature. He, it was, who signed the circular which gave public servants a deadline to resign if they wished to participate in the transition politics.

This was so soon after your assignment as the secretary of the Constituent Assembly. You resigned honourably and joined the Patriotic Front. By staying back, I thought Chief Falae forfeited the moral right to participate in the transition politics.

This moral issue applies in your case as the chairman of the SDP. I know that the parallel with Falae can be over-drawn. The fact remains, however, that as party chairman theoretically at least you have

trying to impress on politicians at the Centre for Democratic Studies, party political work is certainly more crucial for entrenching the democratic ethos in society.

I agree with those of you who think the job of presiding over this country is too important to restrict the choice of the electorate by any crude elimination formula. Democracy is about acceptance first and all else second. And in offering someone for the elective leadership of the nation, or state for that matter, a sensible party would know that it restricts itself in its own choice at the risk of losing to its rival party(s). Even then, I think as someone who is a beneficiary of the zoning formula, whether there was a formal agreement on it or not, you stand disqualified to contest for the party's presidential ticket during the transitional period. Others from your geopolity may contest but you should not because you are an honourable man.

Sir, you are on record as having said you have enough work minding the party. You have, however, refused to make a categorical statement as to the possibility that somewhere along the line you would say that you have done enough party work and seek its presidential ticket. For the sake of peace and harmony in your party, you should declare today that you have no interest in that ticket whatsoever, at least not before 1996.

NYSC

# The changing face

For 18 years the NYSC authorities have been presiding over gradual erosion of their power.

**A** top aide to Colonel Hafiz B. Momoh, new national director of the National Youth Corps Scheme, NYSC, told *Citizen* recently in Abuja how anxiety about the survival of the scheme drove him one

scrapped. "Eh! the policy maker shouted. 'Do you want the nation to boil?' Then I said, 'if you don't want it to die, you have to do something to keep it alive.'"

The paradox in asking for the death of the scheme to save it (from

ing to Mr Absiryu Wajilda Birdling, director of the NYSC in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

So, survived it has for 18 years now. But how much of its original face has remained? Created by Decree No. 24 of May 22, 1973, the



Gowon: initiated the Scheme in 1973



Col. Ali: its first director

day to see an influential government official, indeed a member of the Armed Forces Ruling Council, AFRC, the nation's topmost decision-making organ. "I told him (the AFRC member) I wanted the NYSC

financial strangulation) did the trick and exacted a pledge from the AFRC member to see "Mr President about it". He must have been as good as his word, for the scheme now gets "steady funding", accord-

NYSC sets out to: "Inculcate discipline in Nigerian youths by instilling in them a tradition of industry at work, and of patriotic and loyal service to the nation in any situation they find themselves; raise their

moral tone by giving them the opportunity to learn about higher ideals of national achievement and social and cultural improvement; develop in them attitudes of mind, acquired through shared experience and suitable training, which will make them more amenable to mobilisation in the national interest; develop common ties among them and promote national unity..."

The founding fathers intended to achieve those objectives, particularly promotion of national unity,

by ensuring that "as far as possible youths are assigned to states other than their states of origin", and "each group assigned to work together is as representative of the country as possible".

**S**ection 9 (1) of the decree empowers the NYSC directorate to determine where to deploy a corps member to. But over the years, it has presided over gradual erosion of this power. Corps members brazenly reject deployment to states other than theirs. Recourse to

arm-twisting to secure preferential posting is not uncommon. Mr. M. I. Echeanyanwu, chief inspector in the FCT secretariat, told *Citizen* that it tried to resist corps members who exploited "long legs" to bend the rules on posting, but it did not always succeed. "Sometimes the pressure gets too much and we have to yield", he admitted.

Mr Echeanyanwu suspects that the average Nigerian is not well educated about his country. What he calls fear of the unknown is still

## Eight years ago

**T**he service year—oh, dear. There were the motor accidents. On my way to camp on 21st August, 1982 our Emenike luxury bus dived off a bridge at Gwagwalada and landed in a lake. I spent a week in hospital tending to my injured ribs. The second accident, four months later was at Zaria. Our Kombi bus somersaulted and I suffered 2 fractures, deep cuts, a concussion and a road-safety paranoia-for-life.

There was the NYSC camp at Awgu, perching precariously on a steep hillside. Even the beds arranged in dormitory are sharply tilted on the slope, as was the toilet, the dining hall, and all the paths. This, after all, was the Tactical Headquarters of the Biafran People's Army.

There was that first food I ever cooked. My younger sister Fatima wrote 2 pages of detailed instructions on how to prepare stew, and I followed it with the authority of the Qur'an. She wrote: "Wash the meat. Boil it for 5 minutes with onions and salt until it is no longer red. Remove the meat. Fry to-mapep until it is dark red. Return the meat...." "What she left unsaid, I did not do. She did not say, "preserve the water of the boiled meat....", so I poured it away. Nor did she say how much to-mapep I should use. I used two tiny tins, and was surprised at the

end that the "stew" contained almost no *dage-dage*.

There was my principal, Miss P.C. Okeke, who agonised over what subject I could teach. My posting letter said I had a B.Sc in Zoology, and she didn't seem to know what that was. "So what can you teach?" "I can teach biology". She was delighted. "So you can teach biology! Very good. I have no biology teachers!"

There were the students of Nnobi Girls, 1500 of them. With most of the village's able bodied population gone off to the cities of Nnewi, Onitsha and Enugu and far beyond, our students literally managed the village. They ran the farms, shops and market stalls. I was the only corper that year at Nnobi Girls, and was therefore very popular (old corporers will know what I mean). Everywhere I went in the village, I got things for free, or at subsidised rates. When I re-

turned to the school after my second motor accident, I got a reception that made Charles Lindbergh envious.

There were the NYSC officials. The principal inspector at the Enugu secretariat, Mrs. Omesuh, was so tough we all called her the "Iron Lady". After I returned from 3 months in hospital, she said I should "show cause" why I should not be disciplined for undertaking "an unauthorised trip".

The economy collapsed in April 1983, midway into our service year, and our 200 Naira allowances became less than half of that in worth.

There was also Maria. I offered to put aside all factors that divide Nigerians so we could marry. But no, she said. Roman Catholicism, she explained, was far away from Islam. "Where do we even go to marry?"

By Mahmud Jega





Kila: a disgrace

Akpan: left to clean the mess created by Kila

palpable and old prejudices had not been destroyed by orientation lectures. This fear of the unfamiliar, he says, leads to "dictation" by some corpsers of where they want to be posted. Said the chief inspector, "they use all available means to achieve that aim. But if they fail, the problem is carried over to the employer".

This is how the trick is played: a corper who has failed in a bid to get posted to a choice state, will accept his deployment but only reluctantly. It is not the end of the battle though. In his place of assignment the corper "frustrates" his employer at every turn. Before long, fed up, the employer gives him a letter rejecting him from his employ. The corper returns to the secretariat and is reposted. He begins the fight for rejection all over. After the third 'rejection' he is "qualified" for redeployment to another state. Mr Birdling, the FCT director, believes the Nigerian "society hasn't come to accept the NYSC for what it is". To him, the average corper is lazy, "uncommitted" and employers, including some state governments, are indifferent. For this reason, he is not surprised that many corps members find it quite easy to bend the rules of the scheme to their advantage.

The views of those two officials are contradicted by their boss at the headquarters. Col. Momoh, who

took over as national director in the new year told *Citizen* that "the percentage of corps members who influence their posting is so small that it is negligible". The few who did, he said, had "very genuine reasons", ranging from marriage to ill-health. He made repeated reference to "the law book", which allows for preferential posting under certain circumstances. No doubt, he was referring to section 15 of Decree No. 24. However, it speaks of only exemption from and deferment of service, extension or reduction of the mandatory one-year service period.

Further probing did succeed, however, in getting Col. Momoh to admit that an abuse of the special circumstances allowing for preferential posting did happen. "There is no doubt that because those conditions exist", he said, "conditions whereby you can exempt, you can't rule out the fact of some corps members cashing in on these things and faking lies in order to get preferential posting". He agreed that the time has come to have another look at the law, which since 1974 has gone through five amendments, the latest being last year's.

Another proof of the NYSC volte-face is the ease with which corps members, again, have been able to turn its state secretariats into rubber stamps. It is an ingenious way of making a detour of an adverse situ-

ation. Cases of rejection of corpsers by employers, which in the early days of the scheme, were few and far between, have settled into a definite pattern. Chief inspector Echean-yanwu in Abuja estimated that about 30% of the first batch of 700 corps members sent to the FCT this 1990/91 service year "came back to us after the orientation". In other words, about 210 corpsers were turned back by employers the secretariat had sent them to. He attributed this high rejection rate to the "peculiar accommodation difficulty" in the FCT and the wrong impression many corps members have of the territory. To them, the FCT is synonymous with Abuja and the latter with Garki, which in fact, is just one of the four districts that make up the capital city proper. Such corpsers therefore will tend to protest against posting to outlying "development areas" like Gwagwalada and Kuje.

The rejection syndrome, as it has come to be known, is a growing tentacle that is fast reaching other parts of the country. Nduka Uduafor, 23, University of Nigeria graduate serving in Lagos had previously been rejected in two places of primary assignment. His would-have-been employers turned him away because they could not provide him with suitable accommodation and he had to seek redeployment to another state. A *Citizen* investigation revealed over 100 other cases like that in the NYSC secretariat at Opebi. Retired Major Adediji Oguniyi, a chief inspector in the secretariat blamed corps members themselves for most of the cases of rejection. They lobbied employers to give them rejection letters, he said, "so that they can seek reposting to more lucrative establishments like financial houses". He also said that many corps members did not like posting to rural areas.

Kano State director of the NYSC, Mr. Olusegun Famuse, however told *Citizen* that all the 1,532 corps members serving in the state had no difficulty with their posting al-

though 20 of them who were posted to the rural areas rejected the posting. Despite the tendency of corps members to reject rural posting, about 500 are currently serving there.

This reflects the shift in the directorate's policy of de-emphasising urban posting. According to the new NYSC Director, Col. Hafiz Momoh the directorate shall in the next few years concentrate on promoting federal government's rural development programme. This policy will require posting corps members to serve in rural areas especially in sectors such as health, education and provision of infrastructure.

To alleviate the problem of ac-



Second Director, Omojokun



Obaa: a former director under whose care NYSC got raped

commodating the corps members, the Kano state government has allocated 3 buildings to the Directorate for use as transit camps because housing the corps members has become an almost insurmountable problem for the Directorate and employers.

Uche Emeka, deployed to Kaduna State, is a victim of the rejection syndrome. He was posted to a state school where he was told by the authorities there that they already had the number of corps members they required. He is idling at the NYSC secretariat. Emeka thinks "the problems of the scheme begin and end at the national headquarters and the state secretariats. The director told us that posting is done by computers but we know that corps members serve wherever they want with the help of NYSC officials". An ex-corps member who served in Borno state in 1987/88 also held the NYSC directorate responsible for rejection of corps members by employers. He said the directorate had a major problem of updating the list of employers. Col Momoh, though not clearly admitting that it is a major problem, said that certain "employers are not immediately apparent to the NYSC authority".

This administrative lapse has worked well for corps members who, having failed to get posted to their home states, now see a chance of working their deployment to employers who speak their languages and like their names and faces. They use the "long legs" of ethnicity to obtain letters from such employers which they take to their state secretariats, which are only too willing to rubber-stamp them. More often than not, these will be the same employers who might have told the NYSC authority that they did not need the service of corps members.

Director Momoh's remark that he did not see anything wrong in what at once is a violation of the NYSC decree will no doubt shock many Nigerians. "But you find that in most cases governments are the main users of corps members", he

argued. "And when government agencies are filled up we have to look for other agencies that are not immediately apparent. They may not occur immediately to the NYSC authority... In that case there is nothing wrong for a corps member going to construction companies, where his engineering ability is needed and bringing back a letter saying that they are prepared to give him a job if NYSC will release him". Moreover, corps members who went out of their way to scout for jobs, he said, "are helping us by drawing our eyes to a wider vista of opportunities".

To allow employers that much leeway, apart from making the position of the NYSC officials insecure, an undeclared but patent fear, "it gives him (the corps member who is wanted) a feeling of indignity", the director said. But he would not say why some employers rejected corps members because "they didn't tell us". What he knew he learnt from other people. His subordinate in Kaduna, Mr. V. N. Ezechukwu was more forthcoming with an answer. He said the reasons ranged from the increase in the annual turn-out of eligible graduates, which strains states' "absorptive capacities", corps members preferring urban areas to the rural, lack of accommodation and many companies shutting down because of an unfavourable economic environment. But he was faulted on that last point by his boss, who believed that "the economy as it is today is by far richer than it was many years ago... The economy as it is today can absorb the number of graduates that are coming out of the universities...".

It is one thing to force corps members on state governments but quite entirely another to cater adequately for them. For instance, state government and private companies which use corps members are required to provide "suitable accommodation" for them, but as the national director has been the first to point out, "this does not happen the way it is meant to". And true to type, corps

members who can no longer put up with the privations they have been put through are kicking up a lot of dust of protest.

**T**he 1,298 odd corps members in Sokoto State are luckier. Cases of rejection among the first batch posted last October-No-

ember "were very few", according to Mr Akinigbaba, the NYSC assistant director in the state. The government, he said, directed local

## "We are on course" — Col. Momoh

**CT:** How come that some corps members are able to influence posting back to their states of origin?

**Momoh:** The percentage is negligible. Some members have genuine reasons. For instance one girl got married before she did her degree. You should not stop her from joining her husband. Some too, unfortunately, have sicknesses that take them away from where they had been receiving treatment would be unfair. Conditions where you exempt some exist, so you can't rule out the fact of some cashing in on them and lying to get preferential posting.

**CT:** What percentage do you consider negligible?

**Momoh:** I'll take 5 percent. It's one percent or less.

**CT:** So you are prepared to tolerate this one percent of members who bend the rules?

**Momoh:** It's not a question of tolerating. The law is clear on this. A graduate called up to serve should be sent to a state other than his own state, except in certain cases, which are also listed in the law.



Momoh: current director

**CT:** Perhaps the time has come to have a second look at the decree, particularly that section that provides for exemption which you said some members are cashing in on.

**Momoh:** Yes. Some people would like to hide under the cover of this exemption, even parents, in order to get their children posted to places of their choice. But as much as possible we stop postings to areas we do not sanction.

**CT:** Your so-called negligible few who reject posting are children of people who are very influential in society. Don't you think so?

**Momoh:** That is a sweeping statement, but to some extent you are right. That much I'll concede. There is this don of a university — you cannot say he is not an influential member of society — whose son did not want to go to where he was posted to. He said he had epilepsy or something. The professor told us that there was nothing wrong with his son and that we should post him to wherever we wanted.

**CT:** In the deployment for primary assignments corps members bring letters from would-be employers and, a state secretariat handicapped one way or another, simply rubber-stamps the letters and allows them to go. Does this worry you at all?

**Momoh:** It doesn't worry us at all because it doesn't happen to the disadvantage of the scheme. Every state has a certain number of corps members we post to them. We divide them according to the number produced that year. If the absorptive capacity of a state is unable to stand the number posted to it, members can help us by identifying areas where they could get employment. I don't see anything wrong with that.

**CT:** Even cases where potential employers give names of corps members they want?

**Momoh:** There are few cases of that. There are cases of rejection of corps; we don't like it at all. We don't like a situation where we post corps to a particular establishment and they are rejected, especially where these establishments later ask you for members by name.

**CT:** What could be the reason?

**Momoh:** In Kaduna state, the governor strongly condemned rejection of members and those organisations that ask for the deployment of members by name. It is a bad thing. No organisation should ask for specific members or reject them.

**CT:** The turn-out of university graduates increases by the year and the national economy today is not in a position to absorb such a big number. Does that scenario portend a trend towards redundancy among corps? **Momoh:** Your question is based on a wrong premise. The economy today is richer than it was many years ago. Do you know how many banks or firms have sprung up in the last one or two years? Do you know how many development programmes state governments have been able to undertake? Did you listen to the last budget? There is the ability to grow — whether opportunities are evenly spread in the socialist sense of it is another matter. The economy can absorb the new number of graduates.

**CT:** So far you have given the impression that it has all been easy going since 1973. Don't you have any problem with implementation of the scheme at all?

**Momoh:** There is no human system that is completely alright. We have problems here and there, but definitely we are not suffering. We are on course. The NYSC is going on the way it was designed to work. What problems people have talked about are exaggerations. Our main problem is accommodation for staff. The scheme

governments not to reject any corper. Schools got a similar order, but if any school has any difficulty placing a corper it was asked to send him

requires members not to serve in their own states. We also want our staff not to serve in their states. They must have good accommodation. This is the single most important problem in the NYSC. State governments and firms, by law, are required to give accommodation to the members, this is not happening.

*CT: You dismissed my question about waning corper enthusiasm. But it does exist. You'll recall that at a time there was a problem with some NYSC officials, who were living in a very big way, acquiring property here at home and abroad. At the other end you had corps members suffering in rural areas. Do you expect somebody's enthusiasm to be fired by these contrasting lifestyles?*

**Momoh:** Here you go into again superlatives, assumptions. The NYSC is a big organisation. There was a scandal, but the law took its course. How many people were caught by the law after all the intensive investigations? Tell me the number of NYSC officials that were involved?

*CT: Sometimes it's not number that counts but the ugliness of the scandal itself.*

**Momoh:** So if two people do something that is very bad then the whole village where they come from is bad?

*CT: An impression would have been created that there were others whom the law was not able to bring out.*

**Momoh:** But that would be a very wrong impression based on ignorance. That's an indictment of the police. In the case of the NYSC certainly investigation was not left in the hands of the police. I don't know why you do not have confidence in your country. I think you as the press should fire the patriotism of Nigerians. All the questions you have asked me today are so negative. I'm not very happy about them. There are bad eggs in every society and a society is even lucky when it is able to nail those (bad) eggs. Everything is highly monitored. And it only happened within a period and it was dealt with. Why would you want to say that that affects mo-

or her to the ministry of education, which was expected to come up with what to do with the corps member.

rale, enthusiasm?

I assure that there is no waning enthusiasm. If you were to withdraw the NYSC today I can assure you many people will revolt. It has become a way of life. It has been imbued in the system of Nigeria.

*CT: What is your vision of the NYSC?*

**Momoh:** I would like to create a situation where members would participate more in the way the NYSC is run, where members can vent their feelings, where the academic knowledge they acquired in the universities can be harnessed, and used in the running of the scheme. The way we are going to do this is to organise meetings in every zone. We want to divide the country into zones and each will be manned by a resident inspector, who will create occasional assemblies of the corps members. Those will be sessions of problem solving. Problems of the NYSC and eventually those of the country. We want original ideas, thinking. We are going to document these. We want a situation where members do something... to make it a requirement for getting a discharge certificate.

We want to create offices in the local governments to assist them to develop. The NYSC must move in the direction the government is moving. Government is trying to place emphasis on the local government so that rural areas can be opened up. As agents of development, we have the manpower to give the local governments.

*CT: How many zones?*

**Momoh:** In each state there will be four zones, headed by resident inspectors. Each zone will comprise 3-5 local government councils, and in each local government there will be a resident liaison officer. Under this arrangement, inspection of corps members on primary assignments becomes easier. It has started in some states. Ondo is one. It will take off nationwide maybe next year.

By Tawey Zarka

**B**ut what about the private sector, which the state government cannot bully? "We don't have problems with the private sector", replied Mr Akinigbabe, "because, first, they request for corps members and then we send these to them. More often than not they accept them". In any case, this sector absorbs just 25% of corps members sent to the state. The rest are taken on by the state government. "All medical doctors are to be sent only to government", Mr Akinigbabe said.

The infamous 1985 trials of Colonel Peter Obasa, then director and Mr Folorunsho Kila, one of his assistants, on corruption charges did the greatest harm to corper morale. The two officers between themselves and others raked up a loot of up to 20 million Naira, with which they bought landed property both at home and abroad. Such brazen-faced corruption among officials took a heavy toll on corpers' enthusiasm, which the NYSC authority has been at pains to restore but is hardly succeeding. While officials had been busy helping themselves to a brimful NYSC treasury, supply of uniform, service kits and even camp food suffered.

Col. Momoh, the new national director did not think the corruption trials affected the morale of corps members. He believed prompt handling of the case went a long way to restore corps members' love for the programme. "Ok, there was a scandal one year and the law took its course", he said. "Since then the nation has beamed its light on the organisation very closely. Everything is highly monitored". The NYSC, he said, is not only "on course," "it has come to stay". The director warned that people would revolt if the scheme were abolished.

The question *Citizen* asked about waning corper enthusiasm in the face of brazen official corruption brought out the temperamental side of this fine, energetic soldier, who all through the best part of the interview tried to keep the lid down on

his temper, despite "your negative questions". Waning corper enthusiasm, he said, was imagined and he cautioned our man, who interviewed him in his Abuja Sheraton Hotel suite in the night of February

18: "I would certainly not want you to spread such comment, and I would like you to come armed with intelligent, academic things to ask me about the programmes of the NYSC, not things you assume, hear

from one person and say that is the opinion of everybody".

**T**o Col. Momoh, "the NYSC is going on the way it was designed to work". If it has made any *volte-face*, it is its new

## Thirteen years ago

**E**ven if the National Youth Service Corps has not served its purpose, it has at least taught me how to make "the great assembly". The great assembly was the great assembly; and your life depended on it.

When I reported at camp — in August 1978 I was very hungry. Not that I was looking for food. No, it was Ramadan, and after the 1000km drive and a quarter mile trek with carpet bags on your shoulders, you couldn't pretend everything was okay. Your face would betray you. You were irritable — you tended to listen and hear with your stomach instead of your ears.

After you were shown to your room you were told of the drill the following dawn. No problem, you would be up long before the drill — to take your *Sahur*. Now of course it is bath, *buda-baki* and sleep. They could come in any order but have them you must. The shower was quick, *buda baki* (breakfast) was quicker because none made any provision for it. So how could you sleep without anything in you? I still don't know how I managed it, but the sleep was sound enough. I missed my pre-dawn meal (*sahur*) for two reasons. First, there was no *sahur*. Second, I couldn't wake up even if there was one. It was the bugle blast by the drill master that woke me up. Hunger started a romance with us immediately. It was a romance turned into marriage — a marriage made in heaven which none could cut asunder. If divorce was impossible, estrangement ought to be a good way out.

I never knew what women did in

kitchens. They stayed long in there, were burnt by fire, scalded by hot water, choked by smoke. The result of course was worthwhile — good food. But women did more than get inconvenienced. They prepared "the things of soup", kneaded the dough and performed some things in pots. It was only after we left the camp that it dawned on us that as far as we were concerned what happened in kitchens might as well have been some secret society rituals.

Tijani Ibrahim, Sule Mohammed, Mahmoud Ibrahim and I carefully surveyed what lay on the table. Meat was there alright, so was geisha, salt, tomato and pepper sauce, packets of Uncle Ben's rice, some oil, green leaves, onions and maggi cubes. The piles looked formidable but imagining how all these would combine to become edible, and hopefully nice, food was a more formidable riddle. Which came first, which last? The chicken or the egg? We didn't even know how we would begin the cooking. Was it in oil or in water or a mixture of both? Some of us even suggested that since stew always looked red, adding palm oil was a crucial stage. Others said the redness was from tomato. The argument continued; we were making no progress.

We were delighted when we remembered that we hadn't said our *Asr* prayers. It was good to remember to do one's duty. It was even better when doing so gave you breathing space.

The mouth that you fashioned, O God, don't let it go hungry. We prayed in unison, instead of doing the usual *salatin Annabi goma-goma*. Teach us how to cook, O Lord. Each

of us also whispered a personal prayer. We broke up. Slowly and methodically we approached the kitchen. The intimidating piles were still on the table. We surrounded it in the manner an army surrounded its enemy. The chicken or the egg? We again asked ourselves. It is better to assume that they came together, Sule said. Yes. Hurrah! God has heard and answered our prayers. Together, of course, means all together — chicken, egg, cock, pen and feed. Funny, why didn't we think of it before? As we tried combining the separate piles into one big heap, our attention was attracted by Mahmoud's sudden shriek and dash for the stairs. We all followed. By the time we looked out of the balcony he had already scaled the three flight of stairs and was running toward the corner provision store. But what had we forgotten? We decided to wait for his return.

A minute later he came panting for breath with an object in his hand. A pot! So we all wanted to cook without a pot. Clearly this oversight was beyond comment. We silently followed him into the kitchen.

"The pot should be two thirds full of water", Mahmoud said, trying to remember from the sermon given to him by his wife; and he proceeded to obey it. No, someone countered, she must have told you one third full. Otherwise where would all these ingredients go? We all agreed with his objections. One third full of water now, the pot received meat, geisha, Uncle Ben's, sprinkle of oil, tomato sauce, maggi cubes, onions and leaves in that order. We closed the damn thing and put it on the stove. We looked at the watch. Good God,

rural focus. He said it was an agent of development and would want to help in the development of local government areas. The NYSC must move in the same direction as the government, which he said was

the sun had already set an hour ago. It was night and lunch was still not ready.

Exactly 45 minutes later — well that's what Mahmoud's wife said — we were back in great expectations. Mahmoud burnt his fingers trying to take the pot off the stove but he tried not to show it. He opened it. Surprisingly, it didn't look repulsive. But it gave some indeterminate smell — a cross between the stench of rotten fish, rice and fried onions. We would have hated it if we were not hungry.

That's "the great assembly" ladies and gentlemen. We couldn't wait to be served so, so we served ourselves. The first spoon always burnt your palate but this one in addition had no taste. Oh, the salt, we had forgotten to add that to the cooking. No problem, add it to the serving. We did.

The amalgam of the great assembly quickly helped me to discover Mama Iyabo's joint. It was a restaurant but you never rest: you were always battling with the meat. But the stew tasted like stew, and the rice tasted like rice. I stayed with Mama Iyabo's restaurant until Aliu Mohammed joined us. Women have much to learn from Aliu. From Oja Oba, to our kitchen, to the dining table, Aliu's marketing and culinary skills were unmatched. Iforgot the way to Mama Iyabo and began putting on weight.

Yet despite Aliu's willingness to put me through, the only thing I really learnt how to cook was tea. Oh I forgot, I could also make perfect coffee. For the corper's food gathering was really the most primary assignment. I failed woefully — hands up.

To many of us the NYSC scheme was a big laugh. While some were lucky to be posted to the private

determined to open up rural areas. "We have the manpower to give the local governments". The way he intended to go about this, he said, was to open zonal offices in the states, four in each. A zone will comprise 3-

sector — especially banks and non-bank financial institutions — with much work load, I was posted to a parastatal. Very good people the colleagues I met there but I got not much work. They themselves were doing nothing and they gladly shared it with me. Concerning integration, I didn't see, and couldn't make, any effort to integrate. The corporers who drank or went to parties found companions soon enough. The corporers who didn't formed a large enough community in its own right and knowing one another kept us busy. If the scheme set out to integrate corporers it succeeded very well. If it wanted to integrate them into the community it might succeed in future.

Our allowance then was N180. Immediately I received mine, I would hire a taxi to University of Ilorin and dive into their bookshop and kill about half the same day. I would either send away the remaining or finish it within a week. I was the worst financial manager and the NYSC just taught me how to be "worse". Therefore I would go and receive salary advance from a non-corporer friend — Karamba Ibrahim of the Bank of the North. The salary and its advance alternated to the very end.

Labour mobility, cultural integration, patriotism, sense of community service and humility. The goals were noble enough. Labour became truly mobile because graduates went from Calabar to Sokoto, from Sokoto to Badagry. From Lagos, they went to Jibia, from Kano to Uyo and from Maiduguri To Borgu. This much has been achieved and isn't it enough? Patriotism, cultural integration, and community service. Ahh, that's good theory.

By Adamu Adamu

5 local government areas and will be headed by a resident inspector. Every local government will have a corps liaison officer. Under this new dispensation, expected to come on stream in a year's time, "inspection of corps members on primary assignments becomes easier", said the director. "He (the corps member) can easily reach an official who stays there with him".

**A**nother innovation Col. Momoh wants to introduce is a forum where corps members can talk shop, "where the academic knowledge they acquired in the universities can be harnessed and used in the running of the



Kure: Minister of Youths, Sports & Culture.

scheme". Corps members will be encouraged during the "occasional sessions" to attempt at finding solutions to "problems of the NYSC and eventually problems of the country" by contributing "original ideas, original thinking", which will be documented. In other words, Col. Momoh in the near future will expect an original paper, a thesis, from each corps member as a requirement for getting a discharge certificate.

There is no doubt that Col. Momoh has brought along to the NYSC directorship tremendous enthusiasm and wide field of vision. Whether that alone will be sufficient to turn the scheme round to becoming once again the darling of the Nigerian youth is yet to be seen.

By Tawey Zakka with  
Bilkisu Yusuf, Mahmud Jega,  
Abu Momoh, Rabiu Barde

## Gubernatorial race '91



**N**ames of twelve candidates from the NRC and SDP are making their rounds as gubernatorial aspirants in Kano State. Five are from the NRC and seven are from the SDP. The rifts within the ranks of both parties and the consequent realignment of political forces has added a complex dimension to the nomination process that would have been decided more by the electoral college at the primaries than by influence of old time kingmakers.

To the politically naive, it is the electoral college that determines who gets nominated but the more experienced politicians and the watchers of their games of power play know that the kingmakers' clout is even more important. Subsequently, all voters in the primaries identify with one interest group or faction either for monetary and other consideration. These behind-the-scene manoeuvres influence the voting pattern. Although politicians are quick to deny the power of money in winning elections, contemporary experience lends credence to the fact that moneybags are the power barons who call the shots. Kano's power barons within the NRC are Alhaji Aminu Wali an NPN gubernatorial contestant in the 1983 elections and Chairman of Intersales West Africa Limited. The Wali group constitute the elite corp of the defunct NNA which is believed to be the brain behind the move to remove the cur-

## Kano Too many cooks

If numbers factor is all to rely on, the race to Kano Government House may be tough.

rent NRC chairman Alhaji Muktar Maibiskit to replace him with Alhaji Halilu Yusuf (Malam Aminu Kano's younger brother).

The attempt failed with a Kano High Court's injunction reinstating the chairman. Another power baron is Alhaji Bashir Usman Tofa, former NPN financial secretary in the Second Republic. An upcoming mil-

getting one of his political proteges nominated for the gubernatorial contest. Meanwhile the identity of this candidate is known only to Isyaku Tofa, and his close associates.

Like the NRC, the SDP in Kano has three major power blocks. The defunct Peoples Front (PF) group has a retired Major General as its power broker. The defunct PSP group is linked to a former governor of Kano State in the second republic under the defunct Peoples Redemption Party (PRP). Although he is a banned politician, so strong is the ex-governor's factor (referred to as "santsi") that all the members of the state executive council with exception of the deputy chairman, Alhaji Kamilu Maisikeli are from the *santsi* group. In addition, the *santsi* loyalists also have their grip on the local government executive councils. The third group comprise the remnants of the Malam Aminu Kano loyalists who were split between the defunct Liberal Convention



Abubakar: gunning for the Kano Government House

lionaire, Tofa commands the loyalty of members of the defunct Liberal Convention (LC). Although a disqualified politician his group constitute a vital part of the NRC power mosaic.

A formidable power broker, albeit a rather late arrival on the political scene is Alhaji Isyaku Umar Tofa, millionaire publisher and proprietor of Tofa Commercial Press. Not known to have any political ambitions, he has in the past few months acquired enough clout that political analysts believe will translate into

and the PSP, (referred to as *tabo*). With the dissolution of the political associations they made minimal impact with the NRC, led by Muktar Maibiskit and in the SDP by Kamilu Maisikeli. Most analysts see *tabo* as a spent force but it exists and it is strong enough to trigger a crisis within the SDP when the incumbent chairman, Alhaji Sule Lamido was stripped of his post by NEC and replaced by a *tabo* stalwart, Kamilu Maisikeli. In a controversial move, the NEC reinstated Lamido after realising belatedly that it had no ju-

isdiction to remove him in the first place. However, the crisis did considerable havoc to the fragile unity between the *santsi* and *labo* groups. There were allegations that the PF group engineered it to weaken the *santsi* group which has from its performance in the last local government elections, emerged even stronger.

### On their mark

#### NRC

1. Kabiru Gaya
2. Ibrahim Ahmed Babankowa
3. M.T. Waziri
4. Mahmud Abubakar
5. Yusuf Garba Ali

#### SDP

1. Musa Said Magami
2. Ahmed Rufai
3. Sule Lamido
4. Kabiru Rabiu
5. Aminu Inuwa
6. Magaji Abdullahi
7. Nasiru Muktar

**T**he SDP is the leading party in Kano State where it won elections in 33 out of the 46 local governments. This probably explains why it has more gubernatorial contestants. From the list of seven aspirants, Sule Lamido the current state chairman has the brightest prospect. A *santsi* stalwart from his PRP days in the Second Republic, Lamido was born in 1948 in Bamaina, Birnin Kudu. He attended Birnin Kudu primary school, Barewa College and School of Technology both in Zaria. He worked with the Nigerian Railway Corporation, the Nigerian Tobacco Company, Zaria and AC Christlieb in Lagos from where he retired in 1972 as a Marketing Manager, to establish his own business, Bamaina Holdings in Kano. He participated actively in politics of the Second Republic when he was elected into the House of Representatives in 1979 under the defunct PRP. He lost elections in 1983 but joined the SDP and is now the state chairman of the party.

Also in the race is Alhaji Musa Said

Magami who hails from Sumaila. A nominated member of the 1988 Constituent Assembly, he also has bright prospects. A staunch member of PRP in the Second Republic, Magami holds a B.Sc Social Science degree from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He is a public relations consultant.

Alhaji Ahmed Rufai hails from Kano City. An agricultural officer and former general manager of the Hadejia-Jamaare River Basin Development Authority (HJRBA). Rufai is a new breed politician. The controversy surrounding his tenure at HJRBA and his affiliation with the PF group may mar his prospects in the gubernatorial contest.

Another contestant is Alhaji Kabiru Rabiu, a new breed politician and graduate of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Rabiu hails from Kano City. Although Alhaji Magaji Abdullahi, the Kano State Commissioner for Water Resources is still a public servant, there are strong speculations that he may contest. An engineer by profession Magaji's eventful and fruitful tenure at the State Water Resources and Engineering Construction Company (WRECA) is a plus for any election he may wish to contest. He hails from Tattarawa in Dawakin Tofa Local Government and he is a new breed politician.

Alhaji Aminu Inuwa, a former Chief of Protocol and a new breed politician is also listed among the aspirants while the youngest among the contestants and also a new breed politician is Alhaji Nasiru Muktar. A sociology graduate of Ahmadu Bello University, Nasiru was born in 1956. He worked with NITEL before he was appointed Commissioner of Agriculture in 1986. He resigned to set up his own business in 1988.

From the NRC's contestants only Alhaji Ibrahim Ahmed Babankowa who hails from Ringim has made his intention public. At a press confer-

ence in Kano two months ago, the former commissioner of police told the press that the race to Kano state government house had begun. He is a new breed politician.

Alhaji Kabiru Gaya, an architect and also a new breed politician is among those whose names are being whispered in NRC circles. So is Alhaji Mahmud Abubakar, a former diplomat who served as Nigeria's consul general in Hong Kong from 1973-78. Born in 1938, Abubakar is from Kano City. He was the assistant general manager at the United Nigerian Textile Kaduna and also worked at the Kaduna Textiles as Managing Director. He contested the senatorial election under the defunct NPN in 1979 which he lost to late Sabo Bakin Zuwo then a PRP stalwart.

The two other contestants were former PRP members in the Second



Lamido: bright prospects

Republic. M.T. Waziri a successful architect and astute politician will be contesting elections for the first time. His maturity and deep understanding of the inner working of political parties is expected to stand him in good stead if he finally decides to contest. Like M.T. Waziri, Yusuf Garba Ali, a former Managing Director of Total is a successful business man. He was an active PRP member in the second republic.

By Bilkius Yusuf

# "Gani is burnt out"

This is the verdict according to Kanmi Ishola Osobu, who also views Gani as an iconoclast.

On March 8, Mr. Kanmi Ishola Osobu accompanied by Bashir Dalhatu walked into the offices of *Citizen*, first to tell its reporters and editors about the Nigerian Bar Association's hosting of the African Bar Association conference; secondly, to demand "a right of reply" so the NBA leadership could state its own side of the story of lawyers fighting over a contract which made a *Citizen* cover on March 4.

The two did touch on those matters but rather peripherally; interest was to gravitate to whether an independent judiciary is feasible under a military regime, whether it necessarily equates with justice and what has become of "our" radical lawyers or social reformers. Mr. Osobu, the chairman of the NBA's public affairs committee and presidential advisory council did not hold back from showing contempt for the so-called radicals within the NBA. His vitriolic attacks on Gani Fawehinmi, easily the representative of this school, surprised even himself. Towards the end, he attempted at mitigating the attack by pleading for fairness to Gani. "Put him in the hot seat and ask him questions about what happened."

Mr. Osobu did not hide the fact of his being an NBA "operative", and therefore, an establishment man. "I fight within the system", he said. Gani, on the other hand, "is not with the NBA". He is "boss to himself, he chooses what to do and how to do it".

Mr. Osobu's quarrel with Gani, who he calls "a friend" is not so much because he is an iconoclast, defying established NBA positions as for his double standard. First, Gani made himself "a friend of government" when he kept appearing before military tribunals during Buhari's regime in defiance of an NBA order. Secondly, he wanted decrees to be made part of "our" legal system, a position which Mr. Osobu said made Gani "a friend of



Fawehinmi

those people who want to terminate our profession".

His attack on the Babangida regime is unnecessary and mistaken, said Mr. Osobu because he did not see what business it was of Gani's to take on the government over Dele Giwa's death. He asked "did he know Dele Giwa whom he fears, courted trouble when he chose to make friends with government? If you take the benefit of being too close to government, you also take the burden of stepping on their mines", he said.

Since his imprisonment last year, Gani has not been heard much any longer. Mr. Osobu sees what has happened to Gani as inevitable. "He is burnt out because what he set out on his own to do was no longer possible and probably he took on something... which he didn't understand". Gani, he said, failed to do what his privileged position required of him: provide a "strategy that will take society to a higher level". No, Gani did not do that and he found himself, inevitably, "in conflict with society".

Bashir Dalhatu, always deferring to his boss on the presidential advisory council of NBA affairs of which he is

vice chairman, summed up the NBA's position on the radicals in just one succinct statement. A military regime presents the lawyer with two very clear choices — either you refuse to

## The judiciary

Osobu: In Nigeria, *prima facie*, there is an independent judiciary. The Nigerian Bar Association continues to ask for an independent judiciary. The integrity of our judges is such that we can say we have an independent judiciary. At least, trials are held in the open; then when there are crises of any dimension Nigerians ask for independent inquiries headed by judicial personnel, like *Citizen* asking for one in the Jennifer Madike matter. I believe that the hope of Africa is in Nigeria. Our standard in this country is very high, but that is not to say that it is the best. The legal profession is easily the oldest; we celebrated the 100th year 1985. Then our past and present leaders have all insisted that there must be justice, such that it is not easy for anyone now to depart from history or the cause of justice. The military happily recognises that the judiciary must exist and be given succour. President Babangida's regime recognises the need for an independent judiciary. Now it is the combined effort, well I'd like to call it the dialectical struggle, of every one of us that will give greater feeling to an independent judiciary.

Bashir: I think this is a situation where you have to make a distinction between social justice and independence of the judiciary. The latter is an ideal, but no society has attained it. Human beings have their failures and where you have

work with it or accept it with all its idiosyncrasies. The position of the NBA in this matter is that having accepted to work under a military government "and propagate (its) decrees in court... we cannot turn back and say these things don't.... exist", he said.

Both men understandably restricted themselves to the Nigerian situation in attempting to answer the question of the feasibility of an independent judiciary under military regimes. Osobu said the mili-

tary by its nature did not "invest in having a judicial set-up". He singled out Togo and Benin republics as examples of military regimes which "believe that it's a waste of time to have lawyers or what they call justice". Nigeria with an "independent justice" is a fine example to hold up as a model for the rest of Africa, Bashir said. "In Nigeria the judiciary has not been tampered with too much. There is a comfortable relationship" between the government and the judiciary, each

respecting the other and both "stay within their spheres of influence".

Osobu and Bashir are so impressed with the "high standard" of Nigeria's judiciary and its system of justice that they drop all modesty in proclaiming the country the "hope" of Africa. Any country whose citizens can sue its president and his wife, they argue, surely has freedom.

By Tawey Zakka with  
Mahmud Jega and  
Delia Nzekwu

## under military regimes

fewer people involved then the judiciary is much more independent, but where you have a lot of weak human beings manning strategic areas like the judiciary then they cannot be truly independent. I think that in Nigeria the judiciary has not been tampered with too much. Government and the judiciary have a comfortable relationship, each respecting the other and both accepting to stay within their separate spheres of influence.

**Osobu:** I see a possible balance. First, society itself must set basic parameters beyond which it cannot degenerate, its own constitutional position. In Nigeria we tried to do this in the constitutional provision for fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy. Some things have been settled in this country. We have the courts, a legal profession, freedom of worship that are now reduced to constitutional provisions. My own feeling is that the military should allow these things to go unabated, and of course, give it more fillip, because it is a source of

pride in itself that we have the type of country we want.

**On radical lawyers, social reformers and why the likes of Gani Fawehinmi have shut up.**

**Osobu:** Gani Fawehinmi, Tunji Braithwaite, Alao Aka-Basorun. No doubt there are certain things which they did that I don't like. In social criticism or whatever role you have assigned yourself, if you are not very, very careful you'll be burnt out, in the sense that it is either the matter will leave you behind or you'll have no more gas to continue with what you perceived to be the problem. I'm close to Gani, but at times I wonder what the hue and cry is all about. If Gani said he did not like the government because of its attitude to the Dele Giwa case, did he know Dele Giwa? There are several facts about him which many people would not be too happy about. For example, he was very close to government. If you take the benefit of being too close to government you also should take the burden of stepping on their mines.

In the case of Gani, it could be that what he set out on his own to do was no longer possible or probably he took on something the longevity of which he did not understand. Now, for a long time I've been fighting but I make sure I fight within the system. But many of these people you're talking about are working on their own. They are the boss to themselves, they chose the work and how they were going to do it. **Bashir:** Actually military regimes pose a problem to lawyers. Lawyers have a choice: either to say no, we don't believe in this and we shall not exist within this kind of environment or we accept it along with its idiosyncrasies and its laws, which are undemocratic anyway. What you do is to try to make it less undemocratic by constantly reminding the men in power that in a normal circumstance things should not be like that.

**Decongestion of prisons**

**Osobu:** This country must invest totally and absolutely in the rule of law and justice. There must be many courts, staffed by ef-

ficient and effective personnel, modern recording gadgets for judges and a time limit to finish cases. The prison system must be reformed. People in prison are dying like chicken. In any country as big as Nigeria today there is bound to be, let's say, 10% of evil people among 90% of good people. So the country has to provide for 5 million — 10 million people who have to be taken through the system of prison, sentencing, legality to hold them back in society. In Nigeria today crime and criminality is getting to a level that you cannot understand. People are using new methods to become comfortable, like cocaine pushers.

**Retirement of judges.**

**Osobu:** A lot of judges are leaving at 65, at their prime. They cannot do any other thing but be judges. But they are being cleaned out by one bogus constitutional provision, which says that they must leave the bench at the age of 65. These people must be used to do some decongesting in all the courts. They should be given comfortable situations through which they could rise.

# Makurdi's day of glory

One of the two agricultural universities in the country, Uniagric Makurdi, is set to turn agriculture round.

**P**enultimate Saturday, Makurdi, the Benue State capital succumbed to unusual flurry of activities as dignitaries trooped into the town to witness the convocation of the University of Agriculture. The historic occasion was a triple firsts for the university community being the first university convocation in Benue State. It also marked the installation of its first chancellor, Oba Olayinka Oyekan, the Oba of Lagos on whom was conferred an honorary Doctor of Science degree, and installation of the first pro-chancellor and vice-chancellor.

Agriculture received a boost at the occasion when President Ibrahim Babangida who is also the visitor to the university disclosed that a decree to facilitate the transfer of University of Agriculture from of National Universities Commission to the Ministry of Agriculture was underway. General Babangida observed that when promulgated, the decree would provide adequate instruments for the functioning of the country's two universities of Agriculture. According to him the decree would also ensure that the inherited colonial institutions which hindered development of agricultural technology, research and extension services due to structural defects gave way to practical schemes and integrative approach to research, training and extension. While pledging government's support to the University, General Babangida said the Commission on Higher Education was considering ways of improving conditions for academic staff in order to stem the brain drain and attract those already serving abroad.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor

Francis Idachaba outlined the development of the university, one of the two in the country. Professor Idachaba explained that the special grant given to the university had gone a long way in providing needed equipment for the university but additional 192 million Naira would be required for provision of facilities such as students hostels, offices and other capital projects. In addition 154 million Naira was required to equip workshops and Library.

Earlier, General Babangida had commissioned two blocks of students hostels and laid the founda-

lery frequently interrupted the eloquent reading of the Oba's citation by the university orator with bouts of drumming to the delight of the graduands and the visiting dignitaries.

After his installation the chancellor distributed prizes to outstanding students and other graduands. One hundred and twenty-one students received their certificates out of which 100 bagged second class honours, 20 with third class while Ebenezer Jonathan Ekefan who became the cynosure of the event bagged a first class honours.



President Babangida, presenting a prize to one of the graduands

tion stone of the library complex at the university's permanent site. The colourful part of the ceremony was the installation of Oba Oyekan, as chancellor and Dr. Dalhatu Sarki Tafida, a physician and former Kaduna State Commissioner as the pro-chancellor of the university. Oba Oyekan whose powerful entourage includes Lagos State Commissioners, Directors General, white capped chiefs, Oloris and traditional palace drummers infused some pomp and pageantry into the events. The drummers who occupied a prominent section of the gal-

Other side attractions of the convocation at the weekend were a lecture titled "The Role of Agricultural Universities in the Transformation of Nigerian Agriculture" delivered by Professor S.K.T. Williams of the University of Ibadan, a sumptuous convocation luncheon, cocktail party and cultural dances.

Makurdi is still tingling from one of the most exciting weekends it has had this year and it has the University of Agriculture to thank for the unaccustomed festival of high profile activities.

By Bilkisu Yusuf

Citizen, March 25, 1991

## PLATFORM

# Corruption is a bogey

To Abdullahi Ibrahim, corruption can be nipped in the bud if Nigerians can imbibe a culture of honesty

Nigeria like every developing nation has inherent natural and man-made problems. Its human weaknesses which border on the entire process of governance, on democracy, justice and equal opportunities for all have equally not been peculiar to any of its system of government — military or civilian because none is infallible. Thus in Ibrahim Abdullahi's assessment, 'one government may be faulty in one way and another government may be faulty in another.'

When for well over two hours the senior advocate spoke on *Platform*, the nation's socio-economic and political shortcomings were that watered down they almost defied existence. But this was explainable. Abdullahi, undaunted, would not touch issues of policy having been a minister not long ago.

He was an adviser to the minister of finance in the former Northern Nigeria, a commissioner in Kwara state, a member of the constituent assembly, a minister of education, science and technology and transport and aviation in Buhari's cabinet, but he refused to be drawn into talking about them. Instead, he spoke extensively on the propriety of the Karibi—Whyte tribunal that convicted hundreds of muslims to long terms of imprisonment on allegations of rioting and looting.

He spoke on the functions of the Nigeria Police Force. Can the police stop military coups? Alhaji Abdullahi was not straight forward. They can, in theory, arrest anybody committing an offence. "Since a coup is a criminal offence, they have a right to intervene". The military, after all, has no business with governance". It is established, he said, "to ensure territorial integrity. They should play that role. Their training is such

that they cannot easily fit into government," he said.

He is of the view that military regimes have robbed Nigerians of the opportunity to build a system, "a political culture". Alhaji Abdullahi is convinced that there is a way out even though it is at the mercy of the military which is forever looking for one excuse or the other to intervene. The recipe is good government, but not without the military itself educating its members on their constitutional obligations.

On education, the one-time minister spoke on law degrees being offered in the universities. As a member of the body of benchers that rejected the idea of studying law as a second degree, he said that turning the degree to a five-year programme as it is now, rather than the former four years, would suffice. This is because not many Nigerians can afford to send their children for a second degree. On the decentralisation of the Nigerian Law School, Lagos, he said on the one hand, moving to a central location, say Abuja or Kaduna with less social problems would generate better study. Moving it though, he said would break the tradition and habits cultivated through interaction with senior members of the bar during social functions.

True to his profession, Abdullahi requested that facts and "particulars" be tendered even for problems that generally exist. In dealing with the issue of corruption, therefore, he maintained reservations about the argument that purports military



Abdullahi: Condemns culture of silence

regimes as corrupt as the civilian. Universally speaking, nevertheless, he disproved the presumption that corruption could be stopped by legislation. Imbibing a culture of honesty, rather, would remedy this societal ill. This, he noted, can only be effected through education, the result of which is not immediate. "I think we can stop corruption through education and this will take sometime".

While the foundation for honesty and probity in the society should be rooted in instilling in children not to give and not to take, and to complain when they are compelled to tip persons in order to get the other party perform his or her duties, Abdullahi condemned Nigerians' adoption of a culture of silence when they should complain. "Nigerians generally do not complain", he said. So, many a time rumours are spread and "one is not even sure if the amount of corruption in the country is as high as people tend to put it." This, however, is not to say

that Nigerians should not seek for governments that "by and large practice probity, a government that is fair, able to bring peace and tranquillity".

**CT:** You served on the Karibi-Whyte Tribunal, the first of its kind set up to deal specifically with a religious crisis. The outcome of the trials was controversial to say the least. Why were there protests against the sittings of the tribunal especially the walk-out staged by some lawyers?

**Abdullahi:** It is a difficult question, difficult because I do not know whether the Armed Forces Ruling Council, AFRC, has dealt with these matters completely now. All that I can say about the tribunal is that it was an ordinary one set up to do a specific job, to try people who were involved in rioting that had some religious connotation. As for the work of the tribunal, it was nothing different from what a normal court does in the sense that people were arraigned before us, witnesses were called who testified and on their evidence the tribunal decided whether or not to convict.

**CT:** Lawyers opposed the sitting of the tribunal in Abuja when the crisis itself occurred in Kaduna state, especially Kafanchan. Distance,

places the law provided for. So, strictly speaking, the members of the tribunal had no choice but to sit where the law provided. As a member of the tribunal, I can say that there was sufficient security for people who bothered to come and give evidence. I cannot remember any case where somebody said he would not give evidence because he had to go to some other place. In any case, the tribunal was sitting as a criminal tribunal and it was the responsibility of the police to bring all their witnesses. So if somebody was in Funtua or Yola, as it was the case in one, it was the responsibility of the police to bring down the witnesses from Yola. I do not see how the fact that we sat in Abuja stopped anybody from coming to give evidence.

**CT:** You described the tribunal as an ordinary one, but there are regular courts for ordinary crimes. Why were they not tried in the regular courts?

**Abdullahi:** Certainly they could have been tried in the regular courts, but government in its wisdom decided to set up a tribunal and we were just appointed as its members.

**CT:** As a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, SAN, do you think we should encourage a situation where special

different parts of the country to try the offenders. For instance, the Penal Code operates only in the North. The Criminal Procedure Code operates in the south. What was all that about?

**Abdullahi:** I think there is a misunderstanding here. What happened was that the decree setting up the Tribunal provided that if such an offence took place anywhere in the country, if the offence was committed in say Abokuta and a man was arraigned before the Tribunal, it could try him under the CPC established in Abokuta. The tribunal used the law that is applicable to where the offence was committed. In other words, the tribunal had jurisdiction for similar offences that were committed throughout the country.

**CT:** But isn't there a law that says that an offence be tried within the magisterial district it was committed?

**Abdullahi:** The decree was promulgated to bring about a situation where the two legal procedures can be made operative in different parts of the country in order to allow the tribunal to function. Under the normal court system, the tribunal should have sat in Kaduna, Funtua or wherever. I agree. But I think there are reasons that made the government to set up the tribunal, (just as there are reasons that made it take the decision) to use the law as applied to all parts of the county. It was sort of giving the tribunal the tools to work with, so to say.

**CT:** There was an advertisement by the Council of Ulama which criticised the conduct of the tribunal. It was disturbed about the alleged tramped up tactics with which the police screened or rejected some of the suspects; the inability of police to arraign suspects who actually started the Kafanchan riots itself, the indiscriminate arrests of persons, etc. The advertisement, sort of, spoke about having no confidence in the security and the tribunal.

**Abdullahi:** I cannot remember vividly now the context of the adver-

**The military, after all, has no business with governance". It is established, he said, "to ensure territorial integrity. They should play that role.**

they argued for instance, hindered some witnesses from testifying on behalf of the accused persons.

**Abdullahi:** It is true that Kehinde Sofola, (SAN), who was the leading counsel, raised the issue by way of a preliminary objection. You are perhaps aware that the tribunal gave a ruling in his favour. However, the tribunal was working under the provisions of the law and the law provided that the tribunal sit at certain places and Abuja was one of the

tribunals are set up for ordinary offences?

**Abdullahi:** I do not believe that we should have tribunals for ordinary offences like looting, arson etc and the Nigerian Bar Association which I belong to, took up the matter a long time ago. One hopes they would not have cause to set up tribunals but allow such offences to be tried before ordinary courts.

**CT:** Government, in setting up the tribunal, had to string laws from

tisement you are talking about, but I can only speak for the Tribunal. The people who were tried had evidence adduced as to their guilt or participation in the riot. One thing people didn't realise when the Tribunal was sitting was that it was discharging so many people, these do not meet the eyes of the press. The Ulama probably did not know this. But the few that were tried and sentenced were the ones whose cases were blown up. But if anybody had bothered to look at the record of the tribunal to compare the number of people discharged and acquitted and the number of those actually convicted, one would know that these allegations cannot be true and they are not true.

**CT:** *Did the tribunal convict anyone who was involved in the death of anybody in Kafanchan?*

**Abdullahi:** Well this thing happened over a year ago. I can't tell you precisely whether or not if the tribunal did, the records are there.

**CT:** *It has not, nobody was prosecuted for either starting the Kafanchan riots or for the death of anybody. Now doesn't the tribunal and members have social responsibility?*

**Abdullahi:** Now let me ask you one question, would you expect a magistrate sitting in his ordinary court trying cases to go out and investigating cases before him? What you are saying is that the members of the tribunal should have gone out to investigate these cases, bring the people before the tribunal and then judge their cases.

**CT:** *No, what I am saying is that even a judge sitting before an ordinary court asks questions, he asks the prosecution and the defence to elaborate or to seek new evidence if necessary or to find out circumstances under which certain offences were committed. You described the tribunal as an ordinary court and yet in your answers it came out as a special court because several laws were required in order to even allow the tribunal to function, this is where the question of social responsibility comes.*

**Abdullahi:** A Judge has limits in whatever questions he asks in court, he might be seen to be fair and to behave in a fair manner to both the prosecution and the defence. It is never the responsibility of the judge and therefore members of the tribunal to pounce on the prosecution

and the defence and ask questions that they themselves should ordinarily answer. Once a judge goes beyond that, he is likely to be seen to have taken sides, and this should be avoided. The tribunal had responsibility to ensure that justice was done within the limit of the evidence that was produced before it and in my opinion should not have gone beyond that and it did not.

**CT:** *There is a controversy about the retirement age of Judges. A judge at 80 is considered in his prime in the US for example, but in Nigeria they are made to retire at 60 or 65 years. What is your view on this?*

**Abdullahi:** I am neutral. Ordinarily, I would have preferred a situation where judges retire not at the age of 60-65 as they do at the moment because some of the judges that have left the Supreme Court for example, of the recent, are so articulate, they are an asset to the judiciary that this country should have continued to enjoy the benefit of their knowledge. But when one thinks of what happens in other countries like America, one has to (compare) the conditions of work. They have so many facilities to assist them in the discharge of justice. Here, the situ-

## "I am a villager" — Abdullahi

The man who has been through some of the most exciting moments in the nation's history likes to describe himself as a simple man, with simple tastes, a villager. That may be so, but a villager doesn't overnight become a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, SAN or a government minister.

Alhaji Abdullahi Ibrahim, said he comes from a little village in Benue State, did all his primary schooling there before gaining admission into the famous

Government College Keffi. "After that I went abroad for further studies and was called to the English Bar in November 1963. I came to the law school in 1964."

Later worked as an assistant legal adviser to the regional minister of finance in the North. That gave me an opportunity to work with such excellent men as Alhaji Ahmed Talib, Luton and Alhaji Musa Bello. In that capacity, I learnt alot about our tax law. "I was sent abroad on attachment to learn about tax. On return,

states had been created and I was deployed to Kano where I stayed on as a senior state counsel, but left 1969-70 to join the famous NNDC as group legal adviser. From there, I went into private practice. It wasn't for long because I was soon made a commissioner in Kwara State.

After that job, he returned to private practice and has been doing so since then but for the times he was made a minister in Buhari's cabinet, then serving in the constituent assembly, the

Karibi-Whyte panel etc. In what year was he made a senior advocate? "I have forgotten the year". It wasn't surprising to us because he had kept mum over many other important things. "One thing I can tell you is that I am number 35 on the roll. There are about 80 now". How old is he then? "Knocking 50." was all that he offered. Apparently he is a man of few words and a firm believer in certain societal values, such as respect for the elder.

By Muhammad Bomi

ation is not exactly the same. One would like to see our courts with better facilities, so that by the time judges get to 60, 65, they are still very alert mentally. In this country, by the time a judge puts in 40 years on the bench he would have done so much work ... written all the proceedings ... written down counsels, arguments, done everything virtually by himself, and then make up his mind what his judgement should be. So our judges are really over-worked. By the time they get to the age of 60 or 65 one starts wondering whether they really should be allowed to continue. The conditions are so bad.

**CT: Talking about the maintenance of law and order in relation to the police, the public and the army and the difficulties the police face in carrying out its duty. Is it within the role of the police to prevent a military coup?**

**Abdullahi:** Since a coup is a criminal offence, they have a right to intervene.

**Citizen: We all accept that a coup is an aberration. Why then do judges who interpret the law accept the military governments as valid when they are not legal?**

**Abdullahi:** Governments that come in through coups are not illegal governments. You see, the Supreme Court of this country has had the opportunity of dealing with this matter.... At the point the coup makers come into power and install themselves as the government of the country, they are the government *de facto*. Apparently they are the ones in charge at that point in time. The Supreme Court felt that it was not illegal.

**Citizen: So we accept the coups...**

**Abdullahi:** A coup, if it does not succeed, then you prosecute the people, but once it succeeds, then the scenario has changed completely.

**Citizen: You said the coup planning itself is an offence?**

**Abdullahi:** Yes it is and that is why people have been tried recently.

**Citizen: What then are your views**

**about military intervention in the Nigerian polity?**

**Abdullahi:** I don't think the military has any business with governance. The military is established to look after the territorial integrity of this country. Their role is very well defined and they should play that role. Their training is such that they cannot easily fit into a government. So, they should remain where they belong. With the frequency of the (military) intervention we have had, can it be said in all honesty that Nigerians have been given the opportunity even to develop a system? To develop a political culture? Have we been allowed to make mistakes and correct our mistakes without military intervention? At this rate, civilians will never really get down to the business of running a political system.

**Citizen: What is the solution? Do you think a good government can prevent coups?**

**Abdullahi:** I think a good government can stop coups. I also believe that for a good government to be able to achieve that, that the military itself must educate its members about what their proper role is supposed to be. We have been told now that this would be the last coup, or it is hoped that this would be the last coup.

**Citizen: Giving your experience as a civil servant, would you agree that a society can corrupt the individual, that the economic situation brings about corruption?**

**Abdullahi:** If people are corrupt, they are corrupt because they want to be corrupt. I do not see any circumstance that can push people into doing certain things which ordinarily they wouldn't do. Persons with moral restraint can always resist some of these things.

**Citizen: But what of where those who should set the example, like government functionaries, do questionable things? Do you think, that the military has any moral right to speak of overthrowing a government because of corruption?**

**Abdullahi:** One cannot really talk

about an institution and putting the cap of corruption or probity on that institution. I mean, I don't know the particular things you have in mind. I cannot answer whether the military has a moral right to condemn anybody for corruption except if I accept the military is corrupt, and I have not said so.

**Citizen: The late General Murtala Muhammed once argued that the more states we create, the more we highlight the problems of minorities. Do we really need the states?**

**Abdullahi:** I think eventually we should be working towards abolishing the states altogether and may be use local governments as units of administration, not immediately, but we should start thinking about it. At the rate we are going, one day, someone who feels he is important would start agitating for a state in his area. It is being carried a little too far. If you give a Nigerian the opportunity, he would want a state in his immediate location. We run the danger of having Nigerians putting their states before Nigeria itself. In any case, what function is the state performing that a strong local governments cannot? With more money coming into the coffers of the local governments as from 1992, they would be placed in a strong position and could hire high calibre staff. They are far nearer the people.

**Citizen: Would that not amount to subverting the constitution because it sounds to me as if you are advocating for a unitary system of government.**

**Abdullahi:** Yes, it would be unitary, that is why I say it should take time and a constitutional amendment. The issue was raised in the constituent assembly, but everyone insisted we are in a federation, so further discussion was stopped. One hopes that eventually all the components of the country would develop, we get to a point where we would have confidence in one another and say we are prepared to have a centre.

By Mohammed Bomo,  
Bilkisu Yusuf, Abu Momoh  
and Delia Nzekwu

## AFRICA

# Liberia Talking against war

It's peace for the taking, but Charles Taylor dares all else.

A participant in the ongoing national conference in Monrovia (it entered its sixth day last Thursday) described it as an "All-Liberian asset", underpinning the "great expectation" it has aroused among all Liberians. And, indeed, it has all the ingredients of a potential peace—clincher. Brokered by ECOWAS, it has the whole-hearted support of the OAU, UN, and, very significantly, the United States (which sees Liberia as its own historical creation). A peace effort which enjoys such a tremendous amount of international support should have a galvanising effect on the peacemakers.

The opening day, March 15, was like a carnival, according to a report. Ordinary Liberians, weary of the 15-month civil conflict, danced and sang themselves hoarse, in anticipation of the return of peace to their country. The conference has allowed them a glimmer of it, and they could not wait to hug it. Wishes, if only they were horses... As one foreign reporter observed, "if wishing could make (the conference) go well then (it) should be a great success".

However, the conference floundered in the very beginning. Charles Taylor, leader of the main armed faction, National Patriotic Front of Liberia, NPFL, has not shown up. The movement is being represented by a three-man delegation, which has been mandated to "act and consult with the leadership if it can't". But since arriving in Monrovia it has left the other delegations in doubt as to its impotence. Taylor's explanation for not turning up in Liberia includes concern for his personal safety (two missions undertaken by Nigerian and Togolese foreign ministers on March 16 and 19 respectively failed to convince him that he



Taylor

would be safe), his claim that his territory (comprising 12 of Liberia's 13 counties) is under represented. Taylor who eyes the interim presidency himself wants representation on a county basis, which would have given him an unbeatable solid vote. However, ECOWAS, which earlier has barred Taylor and other factional leaders from contesting the post, prefers to invite political parties and pressure groups. He tried to get round this obstacle by setting up surrogate pressure groups, like teachers and lawyers' associations, but the attempt failed.

Professor Amos Sawyer, who heads the present interim government handpicked by ECOWAS heads of state in Banjul. The Gambia, last August has called Taylor's intransigence a mere "posturing", saying that it would not be long before he abandons taking the rest on "a circuitous route". But nothing that Taylor has said or done so far seems to bear out that optimism. And as if to underscore what an important factor Taylor has become, the conference after a week, had not come round to the nitty — gritty of its business, which is to elect what Nigeria's General Ike Nwachukwu

called "an interim government acceptable to the majority of Liberians", to replace that of Professor Sawyer.

The conferees were not even "throwing ideas at each other about the main issue", one commentator said. Rather they were only discussing technicalities like the conference agenda, who should attend and rules and procedure. By Thursday the role of Taylor had gradually walked itself to the top of the agenda. Is the conference, then, already heading for the rocks? The indications, unfortunately, point that way. First, after about a week, no substantial agreement has been reached. Second, Taylor who controls most of Liberia's countryside has continued to stay away and third, the delegates, frustrated by the time wasted on technicalities, are staying away from the sessions. A thick cloud of foreboding is gathering.

On Wednesday, however, the doves at the conference managed to pull out two compromise cards, meant to tickle Taylor's fancy and get him to come over to the round table. The first was an agreement to enlarge the committee which handles the credentials of who to invite to the conference and the agenda to include Taylor's men. The second was to get the vice president of the interim government to step down for a Taylor nominee. Whether he would find these sufficient concessions to drop his claim to be interim president himself is anybody's guess.

A failed conference, according to professor Sawyer, would leave only one option. "The use of ECOMOG as a means of enforcing the peace would be the most appropriate step", he said. He hoped this would not be necessary, given that there are "six or more months of discussion" to go. But after this conference, will there be any more opportunity to talk peace?

By Tawey Zakka

# Angola

## Peace at last?

After many years of bloodshed, UNITA rebels have finally agreed to a ceasefire

There were strong indications recently that the 14-year-old Angolan civil war may soon be over. The encouraging signs came in the wake of the decision by the country's main armed opposition group, Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to suspend its military operations. Speaking at the end of the week-long UNITA congress in his southern Angolan headquarters, Jamba, the rebel leader, Jonas Savimbi said if no date for the ceasefire was agreed in the next round of peace talks in April, UNITA would consider declaring unilateral suspension of military hostilities in the capital,

America, his backers, Portugal and the Soviet Union for a 7th round of peace talks in Portugal in April.

Last month UNITA and the Angolan government met in Lisbon to sign a ceasefire agreement, but the talks broke down without the expected agreement. The Angolan government had insisted on a deadline for a ceasefire before setting a date for multi-party democracy. The preliminary date had been set for April 15. The government has asked for cessation of hostilities by March 31.

As proof of the government's response to the rebel's recent concession, last week, the government lifted the 15-year old curfew on the

stability measure following an attempted coup d'état in 1977 organised by a member of the MPLA's political bureau, Nato Alves. It has remained so until a few weeks ago.

Also last week, the Angolan government put aside its 15-year old socialist one party rule. It inaugurated a people's assembly as a prelude to the country's embrace of multi party democracy. The assembly is expected to legalise the formal introduction of multi party democracy and market economy. The move is seen as an attempt to preempt UNITA demand that a multi party system must be introduced before any ceasefire agreement is reached.

Despite these heart-warming development, the main obstacle to peace is disagreement over a timetable for first free elections. Savimbi said he was ready to make concessions on anything except the date of elections. At this round of talks, UNITA is well placed to make any concession to get that ceasefire. "It is the only one point we will not concede," he was quoted as saying. UNITA wants the elections to take place in May 1992, while MPLA says there be a three-year gap between the ceasefire and the elections.

However, sources close to UNITA, said the group may compromise if the government accepts to hold elections in the next 15 months.

In the last six rounds of talks between the two sides, the Angolan government has demonstrated a lot of flexibility by approving a number of changes. These include the transition to multi party democracy, abolition of one party rule and a draft constitution for a free market economy.

**The curfew was imposed by the government as a stability measure following an attempted coup d'état in 1977 organised by a member of the MPLA's political bureau, Nato Alves. It has remained so until a few weeks ago.**

Luanda and Husambo.

He consequently directed his officers to conclude a formal ceasefire agreement when they meet with government representatives and mediators from the United States of

capital Luanda. Angola's Home Affairs minister, Francisco Paiva said the curfew was abolished because the condition that brought it about no longer existed. The curfew was imposed by the government as



Dos Santos: Peace at last?



Rebel Savimbi: American lackey.

By Abu Mommoh

Citizen, March 25, 1991

## WORLD

## Iraq Saddam or the Shi'a?

The defeat of Iraq has led to the emergence of several opposition groups. Can they unite against Saddam?

Having lost the "mother of battles", Saddam Hussein is now the loneliest orphan in the world. While he defied America and its allies, muslim masses everywhere stood up to cheer. But his defeat has stirred up serious internal rebellions, the loss of his few tentative allies and the occupation of the southern part of his country by foreign forces.

Few countries know the strength and weakness of the Iraqi regime better than its Persian Gulf rival, Iran. As the uprising against Saddam's government continued unabated, Iran took the pulse of Iraq and delivered its verdict on the highest level: "Saddam Hussein", said President Rafsanjani "must bow to the will of his people." What is the will of the Iraqi people as they absorb this catastrophe, with the vital infrastructure of their country destroyed, no light, water, fuel and even the air they breathe polluted?

If you listened to Radio Baghdad which can be monitored in the region, all is well inside Iraq. Between normal programmes, the radio plays songs paying tribute to Saddam and his admirable leadership. Occasionally news broadcasters mention "conspiracies" against Iraq, which are however being countered as more and more people clash with forces loyal to the regime. It is hard to confirm the state of affairs inside Iraq: Saddam Hussein, who tolerated the presence of some 40 foreign journalists during the war, expelled them all from the country last Friday "for ten days". There are however, two other sources about events inside the country, but they are decidedly partisan: Iraqi refugees crossing into Iran at the border towns of Khorramshar and Ilam and opposi-

tion groups based in Tehran, Damascus, and Riyadh.

Ahmed Bashir, an Iraqi refugee who said he was from Basra crossed into the Iranian town of Khorramshar with his family last week. He said they reached the border with great difficulty after the Iraqi government ordered the military to suppress the uprising in the country's second largest city. Bashir said the Iraqi forces "have not achieved any success so far" and in recent clashes in the southern towns of Basra, Tabair, Tamuna and Ammara, many "Republican Guards and Iraqi officers" surrendered to the people". Abbas Jamil, another refugee from Tamuna said the town was under the control of rebels after the people in the south had received "reinforcements" to either surrender or ...."

Haidar Ahmed, who crossed into the south western Iranian town of Ahziv merely reported heavy fighting around Basra. A barber by profession, Ali said several people were killed or wounded while preventing army tanks from entering the city.

To enter Basra - Shalamchah area, he said, in a bit of entertainment, is "insecure" At Iran's western border, a Tehran daily reported refugees from the Kurdish area of Iraq liberating more prisoners at the town of Sulaimaniya. "They claimed that Sulaimaniya, Sadiq Darbandikhaz, New Halabja (the old Halabja is of the poison gas fame) Tavaileh Biyareh, Kormal, Dojireh, Cham-chamal, Kalakifri and Banjwin have been taken over by the local people". The refugees said the people they left behind were in high spirits, all they lacked was "foodstuff and fuel."

Political groups opposed to Saddam's rule make much wider claims



Iran's Rafsanjani

about their successes. There are at least 25 known groups opposed to the Iraqi regime, as a "unity meeting" in Beirut, last week, showed. From liberals to Communists, nationalists to "fundamentalists", they are united by only one thing: dislike for Saddam Hussein. Two of the most powerful and effective of the opposition groups are based in Iran and they are ofcourse Shiites whose constituency is the predominantly Shia population of Southern Iraq (some 60 percent of the total population). Eight years of the Iran-Iraq war has resulted in at least a million Iraqi Shia refugees crossing into Iran.

The Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI) modelled like that of Iran, is in fact more or less a shadow government in waiting. During the eight-year war each Iranian advance heightened SAIRI's expectation of setting up an Islamic Republic of Iraq. This did not come to pass, but now the war has provided yet another clarion call to arms. SAIRI's cadres are behind much of the uprising and to underscore that its leadership did not bother to join the other Iraqi opposition groups in the Beirut

talkshop. One source told *Citizen* that there are at least as many Iraqi refugees crossing into Iran as the number of Iraqis going back inside to sustain the uprising. Iran, of course, keeps asserting its "neutrality" and its border with Iraq is officially closed. But it is hard to imagine Tehran restraining its protegee from going for the jocular vein of their common foe.

**I**n Tehran, I met Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, who denied reports of Iranian involvement in the Iraqi unrest. "The Islamic Republic is against Iraq's partition and against intervention of any country in the internal affairs of Iraq, believing that it is only the Iraqi people who should decide their own fate". This does not, however, mean that Iran is not among the regional and non-regional hawks (Syria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, U.S.A.) eyeing the throne of Saddam Hussein. But unlike all these foreign powers, Iran alone can rely on its internal allies, who are in the majority, to do the job. President Rafsanjani made no bones about this in an address to local *mullahs* three days after they had bluntly "advised" Saddam Hussein to resign. After deploring the killing of innocent people by the Iraqi government forces, he expressed the hope that "development" taking place in Iraq would eventually lead to the "sovereignty of the Iraqi people and work to the benefit of the Iraqis and Muslims."

"The greedy eyes of the world" (Iranian code name for America) "is now fixed on Iraq... (but) if it is a divine dispensation to see the coming to rule of His religion, then none shall be able to stand against Him".

SAIRI talks as if it has passed this junction and well within its destination. An unnamed spokesman told *Tehran Times* of March 9, that claims by an American officials that Iraq government forces have regained control of Basra were rubbish. "Popular forces are in control of Basra, the U.S. officials as well as foreign reporters can visit the city

and see it for themselves". The SAIRI official claimed that in addition to Basra, Al-Amara, Al-G Sanjar, Talafar, Nasseriya, Khannain, several other towns and cities in central and northern Iraq are in the hands of the masses. Faced with an unpalatable short victory "we predicted the west might repeat its mistake of supporting Saddam Hussein. It is their problem and they should find a solution to it" the spokesman added. The Islamic Action Organisation is the second most powerful Shiite group opposed to Saddam Hussein.

Also, Tehran's Ayatollah Taqi



*Hussein: powerful in defeat?*

Mudarissi is a strong rival to SAIRI's leader, Hojjatolam Baqer Hakim. While Mudarissi was in Beirut meeting opposition figures, his spokesman in Tehran reported great advances by their revolutionary forces. This includes the seizure and repair of Basra Radio Station (damaged by allied bombing) and massive defection of several units of Republican Guards. In the Shiite Holy City of Najaf, the spokesman said 10,000 soldiers deserted en masse to join "the popular forces". Beker Fattah, spokesman of the Patriotic Union of Iraq's Kurdistan the smaller Tehran based groups fighting on behalf of the Kurds, also claimed "80 percent" success in the north-eastern province of Erbil, and there is complete rebel control of Su-

laimaniya Province" while 60 percent of the oil-rich Kirkuk Province has been taken over by popular forces".

Which, if you put all this claims together leaves Saddam Hussein in control only of Baghdad and its environs (some related groups claimed it has started an uprising in his home town and even taking it!) How come then Saddam Hussein is still put despite all these set-backs?

An Arab diplomat who has not hidden his sympathy for Saddam Hussein told *Citizen* that despite all the claims of allied victory, the Iraqi army was intact "not defeated because there was no war". Despite the massacre of thousands of his soldiers retreating from Kuwait, a good portion of Saddam's army is still intact and he is using it to suppress the uprising. Equally, the Americans, whose forces are still in Southern Iraq, are more worried about the coming to power of Shiite "fundamentalists", than of a chastened Saddam hanging on for some time. "The U.S. wants an Iraq weak enough not to be a threat in the region, but strong enough to keep some sort of power-balance".

Saddam will go, but America will much prefer a coup that will replace him by a general who will maintain the status quo", added our source.

Whether the Americans will have their way depends largely on the Iraqi opposition and on Iraq's neighbours, Iran and Turkey. In the discontent of defeat, they have ignited an uprising that is still raging. But the opposition is divided and distrustful and there is a serious danger of balkanising the country. The Beirut meeting ended with the decision to form a cabinet of all opposition members after toppling Saddam Hussein. How easy it will be to translate this into a policy remains to be seen. Meanwhile Saddam Hussein is still in power and the largest opposition group, which has the blessing of Iran, did not even bother to attend the meeting.

By Kabiru Yusuf, *Tehran*.

## Soviet Union Peace on the wane

Sunday's referendum on the union question leaves the relationship between the Kremlin and the republics more confused than ever before.

When late last year the Soviet president, Mikhail Gorbachev resorted to a heavy military clamp down on disident republics vociferant in their campaign for independence, notably Lithuania and Latvia, the growing instability of the Soviet Union could no longer be concealed. Last month, Gorbachev, in a desperate attempt to hold on to the reins of power and maintain the system began an intense campaign for a referendum which in simple terms would ask the Soviet people if they still wish to remain one united country.

On March 17, therefore, the president led his people to a ballot which 6 of the 15 republics boycotted although 200 million people were reported to have voted. Mr. Gorbachev was expected to gain a majority on the issue of preserving the union as "a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics". But available results of the ballot reveal that nothing more has been achieved than a more confused Soviet Union, with Mr. Gorbachev's credibility increasingly questioned.

To begin with, the questions asked in the referendum were said to have been vaguely phrased, thereby, conning voters into not answering whether or not the republics want to be independent of Kremlin and its policies. In some cases, different questions were asked on the ballot and voters were compelled to discern two messages; (i) that they were in support of the union but (ii) not the kind of union Gorbachev wants. In the Russian federation and Ukraine, the two most populous republics, the people were in support of two different proposals aimed at creating a greater local autonomy besides the union question. Thus, in Russia

there was a second question which proposed directly electing the Russian president. Results indicate that on this, Boris Yeltsin, the Russian president and Gorbachev's chief political rival, clearly won a major victory. In Ukraine, the other question asked; "Do you favour a Ukrainian sovereignty which is based on Ukrainian sovereignty?" And here there was also a huge majority support. However, some foreign monitors of the referendum believe that Sunday's result "may be good while the final result "may be good enough to allow Gorbachev claim victory at a short term," the ballot "has done nothing to help him with the difficult process of redefining

premarked "Yes" were discovered in polling stations. These critics are strongly against passing the referendum since doing so, they argue, would mean "a renewed crack down made firmer with the Soviet military ordering that the referendum gives it a legitimacy". So, although the referendum was not a vote of no confidence on Mikhail Gorbachev, opinion observers, the ambiguousness of the result points to variances in idea between the centre and from the points of view of pro-democracy reform activists on what the situation should be. To the latter, the referendum is Gorbachev's attempt to "utilise democ-



Gorbachev, losing out?



Yeltsin, waiting.

the relationship between the Kremlin and the increasingly restive republics".

Yet, Mr Gorbachev is not only witnessing a growing loss of faith in the Soviet Union and all Perestroika stands for, but in himself as well. Some independence activists have, among other accusations, described the centre as "fraudulent", condemning what they see as a "cynical attempt by the central government to retain power". They charged that soldiers voted many times over and voters were bribed at the polls. They alleged too that some voting cards

for the benefit of the perpetuation of totalitarianism". The referendum, therefore, should be nullified.

In the final analysis, remarked an analyst of Soviet politics, Sunday's ballot does not offer Gorbachev a tremendous help on the one hand and on the other, "it does not resolve the situation clearly". All it could be seen to promote is the political struggle between the Kremlin and the republics, and in particular, between President Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, with peace and stability relegated.

By Delia Nzekwu



## BILKISU YUSUF

ruption and upholding accountability, the acquittal was as sad as it was confusing. One needs no lessons or tutorials in patriotism to know that a pardon under whatever disguise for proven cases of theft is no virtue. Coming shortly after the fifteenth anniversary of General Murtala's demise, the ac-

tirement, the same fate that awaits their upright and dedicated counterparts. Where then is the incentive to remain honest and upright? But the president, General Ibrahim Babangida apparently has a different approach to the issue of combating corruption. He told the gathering of

# Sanitising corruption

*"Those who don't study the past will repeat its errors, Those who do study it will find other ways to err".*

Every regime claims it abhors it. Its key officials then outwardly busy themselves with various ways of combating it. But all the efforts hardly reach fruition stage before war-weary lieutenants surrender to the enemy of all times — corruption. The first major offensive on corruption was launched by the General Murtala Muhammed administration. In 1975 when it came to power, a probe panel instituted to investigate the military officers who served under the Gowon administration found about 10 of them guilty of corruption. They were promptly dismissed from the armed forces and their illegally acquired assets confiscated.

The decision to punish the convicted officials was viewed as an effective method of checking the excesses of public officers thereby setting a precedent for future leaders.

Recent reports however indicate that these military officers have been pardoned, their dismissal converted to retirement and they are now free to wear their ranks. What is not clear, in the face of government's unhealthy silence over this issue is whether their accumulated pension and gratuity will also be released to them along with their confiscated assets. It also remains unclear just where and why the agitation for their pardon began. To all those committed to fighting cor-

ruption becomes all the more painful. It cannot but be interpreted as an attempt to sanitise corruption, a social cancer his regime was determined to eradicate.

Indeed, the Buhari/Idiagbon administration carried the purification baton a step further by jailing all corrupt politicians of the Second Republic. Most of these have had their cases "reviewed" and they are now free men. All these point to the fact that corrupt officials can continue to view public office as the easiest way of making money. Even when the possibility of being probed and punished cannot be ruled out they will eventually celebrate a giddy hour of triumph and live happily everafter to enjoy their loot. After all they live in a society where an individual's sources and methods of acquiring wealth are rarely questioned.

In no decade in Nigerian history has corruption been scrutinised and condemned so frequently yet promoted so openly. Our present leaders seem to have an affinity for shock tactics and humiliating u-turns when it comes to attacking corruption. For every laudable step taken to eradicate corruption, two other retrogressive ones are also taken to nurture it. We now know, courtesy of Vice President Augustus Aikhomu that embezzlement of public funds and its misappropriation are two different offences that should attract varying responses.

The distinction ensures that the only punishment corrupt officers get is re-

ministers and bureaucrats in Abuja recently that there will be no shield to protect them from the searchlight of probity. General Babangida said "Indeed you may be recalled at any time after leaving office to account for the actions you took during your tenure. And God help you. Furthermore you will be made liable, if circumstances so dictate, for the monies voted for your ministries. This in respect of your portfolio cannot be delegated".

With this "recall" clause, accountability could not have received a better elevation. An eminently sensible way to nip corruption in its bud. Knowledge of this clause is expected to deter public officers from dipping their hands into the money pot. Yet cynics would scoff at its expected effectiveness. If our leaders' handling of past cases of corruption is anything to go by, the public officers will be recalled to throw light on dubious deals and other corrupt actions, detained for a while then released by some magnanimous president and life will continue as if nothing happened.

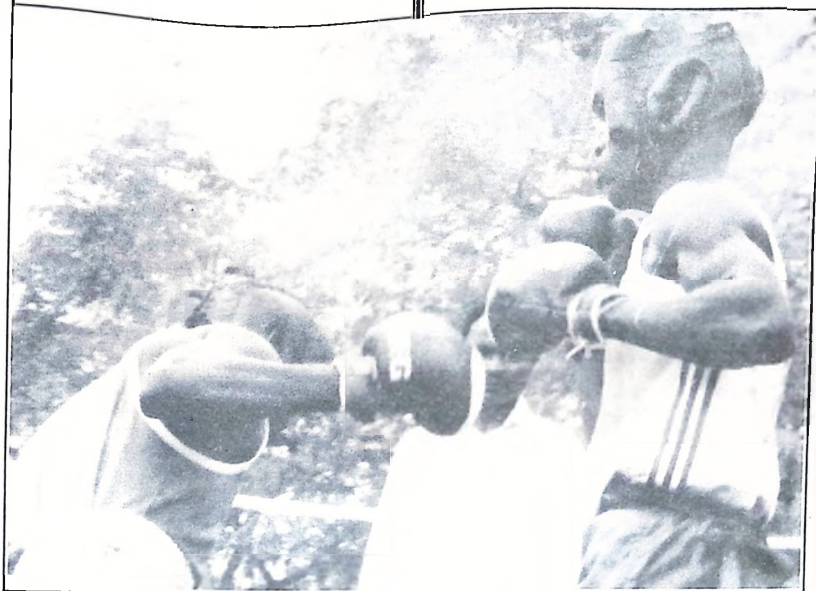
It is obvious that until government's faint hearted handling of corruption gives way to consistent reprisals, the cancer will remain with us while we pay lip service to its eradication. The outlook does not bode well for us as we move into the Third Republic when the temptation to privatise corruption will be even greater.

# Citizen

All the news in perspective

## SOCIETY

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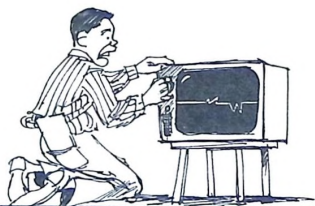


*Kano and Katsina boxers trade punches during the festival. Page 40*

# Citizenship

WHAT ELSE?/  
MOVE OVER!...NEXT!!

NO SIR!...I BOUGHT THIS ENVELOPE  
FOR PERSONAL USE!...IT'S WHITE  
AND EMPTY. SEE?? YOU GAVE OUT  
BROWN!...I'M NEXT SIR!



**AH!...JUST IN TIME!**



PRIVATE EYE

## Fall outs of drug scandal

Sometimes you wonder how the oppressed people of the world suddenly become the oppressors when they liberate themselves from bondage. It is happening with Jews in Israel and also here at home. The wise sage said that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely". The distinguishing hallmark of a sage is to be able to make generalisations that can stand the test of time. Not too long ago one of our colleagues in this pen pushing profession from the stable house of the custodians of "conscience is an open wound,....." made a name when the draconian Decree 4 sent him to jail. Along with a fellow pen pusher, both of them became the martyrs of journalism.

We all shouted ourselves hoarse campaigning for their cause. The Buhari—Idiagbon administration turned a deaf ear to our pleas. Then came the human rights regime and both got a presidential amnesty, and they returned to the fold, making and selling news.

A few months back, one of the martyrs landed a "gofmeat job" in the inner corridors of Dodan bar-

racks as the image maker of the number two man.

Abacadabra! Gunmen and blazes! Holy cow! the pen man changed so rapidly those who knew him in his mellow days could not recognise him. He became over protective of his bosses, and over—reacted on simple procedural issues. Nobody will believe that power could get into his head, but it did. And the result? Well, he flexed his newfound muscles and descended on fellow journalists!! Incredible? But it happened nowhere else but our own NTA, the doyen of 30 million viewers. The power drunk pen man sent belated directives to NTA newscasters that the firing of Mr. Oyakhilome should be included in the network news. The guys refused insisting that the proper channel of communication should be followed. The image maker wasn't amused. Why should wretched journalists refuse to bend rules for his mighty self? So he blew his whistle and the two diligent journalists got fired just for doing their work. How's this for a thriller on the dangers of absolute power that corrupts absolutely?



experiences since gaining freedom from the military boys.

All Barons — Hear! hear! Begin with yours.

**Baron Nanene** — When I arrived home I discovered that my bride had absconded from her matrimonial home during my painful sojourn in prison. She is still at large. Can anyone help me in locating her? It is painful to lose such a gem after paying a 500 Naira dowry and incurring other innumerable marriage expenses. You know the marriage was not even consummated because the soldiers snatched me from her on the day her parents brought her to the bridegroom. Poor me.

**Baron Nagogo** — (Who hails from the same town as Nanene) — Do not waste our time over trivial personal matters. We are to discuss serious issues and loss of wives has no relevance to such issues. Your loss is a gain to the new husband or partner. It is indeed a relief to the young girl to marry a youngman of her age—not an old crony like you. Why should a man in his late fifties marry a teenager—because he has money and influence?

**Dauda Baron**— You are absolutely correct. It is high time these medieval customs die out. Why should old people go on a wedding spree, marrying a girl now and again—girls that are the same age as their grand daughters.

**Baron Maiyasin** — Why not. It is in the hadith (traditions of the Prophet SAW) that marrying a virgin is considered a virtue. And good muslims are enjoined to copy the Prophet (SAW).

## The barons

Hear them.

**Baron Maitasbi** — Let us open the meeting with prayers as usual and thanksgiving to Allah for His infinite mercy in getting us out of the clutches into which the ousted military rulers put some of us. Baron Maiyasin - Please offer prayers, I mean special prayers for the auspicious occasion.

**Baron Maiyasin** — In the name of God, most gracious merciful. Gentlemen, please permit me to recite the whole of Surat Yasin. This Surat is considered to be the heart of the Qur'an as it concerns the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the revelation which he brought. It is appropriate to recite it on this occasion. It con-

tains 83 verses only which I routinely recite several times.

**Baron Malsaje** — It is too long. Why not select a few of the most potent verses, say 10 to 15 and recite them?

**Baron Na Bisije** — Even that is too long. Two or three verses plus the Fatiha (opening Surat of the Qur'an) will do.

**Baron Maitumbi** — No. Na Bisije had not been to prison, hence his lack of seriousness on matters relating to salvation.

**Baron Maitasbi** — (in the chair). I hereby decree that 40 verses should be recited. Baron Maiyasin did as commanded.

**Baron Maltasbi**—(counting the beads constantly) thundered, "the floor is now open."

**Baron Nanene** — I suggest every one of us present should recount his

## RECIPE CORNER

# Staple foods

From inception, this column has concentrated on bringing you African dishes. Tasty mouth watering recipes from the continent have graced this page. Our selection of recipes shall come closer home with assorted Nigerian dishes to enrich your collection. As from this week extracts from the book (Nigerian Cookbook) by H.O. Anthonio and M. Isoun will ensure that exciting recipes are featured to keep an adventurous cook busy.

### IMOYO EBA

Indigenes of Lagos serve Imoyo Eba with stews. It can be served with any soup or stew and adds considerably to the food value of the garri.

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Metric</i>
Garri, finely sifted	150 g
Margarine or best grade palm oil	20 g
Fish or shrimp stock	435 ml
Salt	1.5 g

Boil the stock margarine or oil and salt. Pour in the garri little by little, stirring constantly. Cook for 2 minutes turning constantly. The consistency should be firm to the touch and not sticky or too soft.

### CASSAVA FUFU

Peel and soak the whole cassava in a clay pot for 4-5 days. Grate, sieve and allow to settle. Pound the starch residue (raw cassava paste) in a mortar for five minutes to bind. Place in boiling water in fist-sized balls. The balls should cook for five minutes without breaking up in the water. Remove and pound for 3-4 minutes. Drop the pounded cooked cassava balls into the same water again and boil for another ten minutes. Remove and pound until the cassava fufu leaves the sides of the mortar and forms a lump. Eat as other thickened carbohydrate foods.

### CASSAVA STARCH

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Metric</i>
Wet starch	60 g
Palm oil	1.5 ml
Water	140 ml

Starch as sold in the market is usually in solid chunks which are not completely dry. If dry starch is used, more water will be required. Dissolve the starch in water. Rub oil over the bottom of a thick skillet. Pour in the starch and water mixture and turn on the heat. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until the starch forms a soft mass. The mass will be opaque at first, but with continued cooking and pressing, it rom inception, this column has concentrated on bringing you African dishes. Tasty mouth watering recipes from the continent have graced this page. Our selection of recipes shall come closer home with assorted Nigerian dishes to enrich your collection. As from this week extracts from the book (Nigerian Cookbook) by H.O. Anthonio and M. Isoun will ensure that exciting recipes are featured to keep an adventurous cook busy. will become partly translucent. Cool slightly before eating. Use a wet finger and thumb to 'cut' the starch into bite-sized portions which are then dipped into the accompanying soup or stew.

### DRIED CASSAVA AND MAIZE

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Metric</i>
Grated dry cassava	100 g
Ground dry maize	125 g
Water	570 ml or more

Use ground dry cassava (lafu) purchased in the market. This is not garri as the cassava is not soaked to prepare it. Mix the cassava, maize and water in a pot. Cook, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon until well thickened. Continue for a few minutes more when it will draw away from the sides of the pot. Cool partially and



serve with okro soup or a leafy green vegetable soup. (Dried cassava and maize already combined are sold in some markets; prepare with water as above.)

### MASHED COCOYAM

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Metric</i>
Cocoyam	250 g
Palm oil	85 ml
Dry fish, flaked	230 g
Onion, chopped	190 g
Salt and dry red pepper	

Scrub and bake or boil the cocoyam in its jacket. Peel and mash. Add salt, pepper, palm oil, flaked dry fish and chopped onion. Place on the fire and stir for 10 minutes, turning to prevent burning.

This could be served with a salad or cooked vegetable as a complete meal.

### BOILED COCOYAM CORMS

The very young, small (10-15 cm) secondary corms of a variety of *Xanthosoma* are collected and cleaned well. Dry them in the sun for three days. Place the unpeeled cocoyams on a thick support of elephant grass or raffia in a large thick pot. Add water to just reach the cocoyam and cover the pot tightly. Steam for four hours, adding water as necessary to prevent the cocoyam from scorching. Pour off the water and allow to stand overnight. In the morning, add a little water and reheat by steaming. Serve unpeeled with pepper soup or prepared pepper. Each person peels his own cocoyam and dips it into the accompanying dish.

This is a very traditional seasonal treat said to be a favourite of certain Ijaw gods.

# Dignity in labour

**T**hose who take pride in their jobs derive pleasure from their toil. Every job has its exciting aspects and of course its hazards. So the teacher loves his students as he teaches what he loves, and the nurse dislikes the trauma that hospitals provide to patients. But the shephard watches his flock as the faces of nature reveal itself while the goats and sheep are oblivious of his care.

## I am a teacher

O my God you are the Master  
You've sent me with a duster  
Amid toddlers who cluster  
Some on wounds they have plaster  
I have my call as a teacher

It is my duty to master  
All the skills of the incubator  
For hatching these eggs for a roaster  
Who is waiting in a coaster  
For trading in my cluster

I am expected to cater  
For the little ones with adapter  
Keeping the flocks in the centre  
People are watching the meater  
Always admonishing the teacher

Teacher is never a master  
For the ones who call him the master  
They themselves have nothing to master  
When they are holding the sceptre  
They themselves will play the master

Teacher is administrator  
He is also stamps collector  
He seldom meets a contractor  
He is for morals a booster  
No one calls him collaborator

Teacher is just a navigator  
Ships are voyage vessel floaters  
Goods are owned by shoddy characters  
Whether tanks or heavy tractors  
They are passed by the inspectors

Teacher a poor navigator  
His crew mischievous drifters  
Even goods have few guarantors  
All are handed to some characters  
Owners' accredited collectors

Teacher a wretched navigator  
His pupils in trambulators  
Other goods are to reach the rotors  
Each item goes to escalators  
Teacher having finished the quota.

Teacher a commendable creature  
Even though he draws a vulture  
It is only a caricature  
Helping his pupils to capture  
The common sense of the real picture

Teacher responsible character  
He is never a job deserter  
For he has young ones to nurture  
Sober, never a drinker  
He has moral battles to conquer

No one needs to pity the teacher  
He is serving the Creator  
Who is ever able greater  
He Himself will reward the teacher  
With medals in the-here-after  
**Abdulkadir Babajo**

## A student nurse's prayer

LORD,  
Today I've laboured,  
And I come unto you  
Because  
I am tired of the  
Everlasting tidying-up  
Of the wards,  
And the smell  
Of disinfectants;  
Tired of pills and  
Tablets and  
Spoonfuls of stuff;  
Tired of sights  
Of dressings,  
Of unsmiling patients,  
The faces of pain  
Upset of the dead . . .  
Tired of eternal calls  
The 'nurse,'  
Tired of nursing sisters'



Constant insistence  
On perfection,  
On total nursing care;  
Tired of temperatures . . .  
Pulse, blood pressure,  
Lord, I am tired.  
Take this tired  
Empty shell that is  
ME,  
Fill it with interest,  
Your love,  
Vigour, inspiration,  
That tomorrow  
I may be ready  
To give myself to  
The patients that  
I've given my pledge  
To nurse,  
To love,  
Again and again  
Help me,  
Lord

S.A. Jegede

## Goats and Sheep

Goats and sheep  
are gamboling  
on the highway,  
free of worries,  
impervious to the threats  
of the "Yellow fever"  
controlling the traffic.  
They go their own way,  
in a wave of woolly hair,  
and a concert of noisy bleats.

They have passed, they have gone,  
the goats and the sheep,  
into the high grass of the bush,  
leaving behind  
a cloud of dust.

Pierre Meunier

## SPORTS

# Zone six sports festival New rule sparks off controversy

A new rule introduced into the country's sports festivals has stirred up a serious controversy among athletes, sports administrators and coaches.

**F**or two days, March 15-16, Kano township sports arenas wore a competitive and colourful aura of thrilling excitement as the cream of athletes from Kaduna, Katsina and Kano, the three states that made up zone six of the federal ministry of Youth and Sports, converged there for the second intra-zonal sports festival.

By the time the festival in which 21 events were competed for came to an end, Kano state once again enhanced its growing reputation as centre of sports excellence, by emerging the over all winner with 76 gold, 28 silver and 11 bronze. Kano state which won the maiden edition held in Kaduna last year with similar number of gold gave a distant gap to the young but upcoming Katsina state came second with 25 gold, 32 silver and 10 bronze. Kaduna state, the political giant of the north took the rear with 14 golds, 21 silver and 25 bronze, although its athletes competed in only seven of the 21 events featured in the festival.

Unlike the maiden edition held in Kaduna last year, the Kano meet was unique in that it was being used to select athletes who would represent the zone at the 9th National Sports Festival coming up in Bauchi next month. But of more significance was the fact that this year's intra-zonal festival was conducted with a rule deliberately inserted to give young and upcoming grassroots athletes more room or chances to express themselves. The new rule which has been ratified by the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports and would now apply in all the intra-zonal sports festivals in the country forbids any athlete who has either represented the country twice in international competitions or has

taken part in three national sports festivals, from taking part in the intra-zonal festival. The rule is to be strictly applied at the next month's national sports festival which used to be an all comer affair.

There was however strong arguments over whether or not any deliberate rule devised to blossom the potentials of young and promising

future of the country's sports development and greatness lies with the upcoming athletes was fired by the chairman of the festival's main organising committee, Alhaji Abdul-lahi Ibrahim. His fear is that banning those he described as star athletes from competing for honours alongside the green horns could be counter productive for the country,



Kano and Katsina boxers trade punches during the festival

athletes and encourage their participation in major national sports competitions and festivals, would be of any good to the country at long run. It was little surprise to see that while the athletes from the three states carried on their feverish jostle for medal glory in their various events, sports administrators, coaches, officials and even star athletes who bubbled into the festival with great enthusiasm, but got silenced by the new competition's rule, were locked in hypertensive sessions of controversy over its (the new rule) implications for the future of our sports.

The first salvo against this rule that seems to be saying, in line with the current sports policy, that the

because it might affect the athletes' morale and lower the standard of intra-zonal and national sports festivals.

"Personally, I believe the decision is not the best for the country. I don't see how the standard of our sports can improve if budding athletes have no stars to compete against", said the chairman in an interview with *Citizen* at the end of the sports festival. Every athlete, he explained, attains greater height in his sporting career as he strives hard and aims high to beat somebody who is better than him. Alhaji Ibrahim who is the chairman of Kano state sports council expressed doubt about the successful application of the new rule at the national sports festival slated for

*Citizen*, March 25, 1991

Bauchi next month.

The new restriction also received sharp condemnation from a veteran athlete who happened to be one of its first victims. He is long distance runner Yohanna Waziri from Kaduna state. The new condition of eligibility imposed on the intra-zonal is wrong according to him because the young and upcoming athletes, no matter



Waziri: condemns the rule that made him ineligible to compete at the festival.

how well endowed, would not be able to aspire to beat older athletes.

Instead of a complete ban on certain athletes, Yohanna wants the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports to classify zonal and national sports festivals into junior and senior categories so that every athlete will be able to take part. The three-times National Milo Marathon champion who could not compete in Kano predicted that even after the Bauchi festival where our team to the September All—Africa Games in Egypt is to be selected the country sports officials would have no choice but to fall on the skills and experience of old athletes by the time the final trial for the Cairo contingent is to be held. "If they insist on using only athletes picked at the national festival in Bauchi, Nigeria would perform

badly at the All—African Games", he predicted. Yohanna Waziri based his argument on what he called the poor standard exhibited by many of the athletes who competed in Kano. He backed up his claim by the time of 32 minutes returned by the winner of 10,000 metres as against 30 minutes returned by the winner last year in Kaduna. Kaduna state track and field coach, Charles Yayock also agreed with Yohanna's claim that there was a drastic fall in standard in Kano festival as against that of Kaduna. Coach Yayock however did not believe it has anything to do with the ban on older athletes. He said the athletes did not strive hard at the competition because they felt there was not much at stake, since some of them were told that the festival was meant for selecting those who would represent the zone at the national sports festival in Bauchi. "But I believe the condition banning certain athletes does not go far enough. The Federal

Ministry of Youth and Sports should have excluded all athletes who have competed once in the national sports festival. That is the only way you can bring grassroots athletes to limelight", said Yayock.

The coordinator of zone six, Malam Tijjani Yusuf stoutly defended the new festival rule. Since the focus of the zonal sports policy is to groom athletes from the grassroots, there should be a deliberate policy to encourage those athletes, protect them and bring out the best in them, he reasoned. The old or stars athletes, he said, are not threatened because they would have chances to compete in the series of Amateur Athletic Association of Nigeria (AAAN) classics and other competitions where they could qualify to represent the country in international

competitions. Malam Tijjani also dismissed the argument that upcoming athletes would not meet up to the standard expected at international competitions if they were given preferential treatment. The newly discovered athletes, according to the zonal co-ordinator, would be exposed to the necessary experience, skills and high standard of their older colleagues who would still be eligible to compete side by side with them. "The new rule will not create a vacuum any where because the young athletes have something to aspire to. The rule only affects athletes who have participated in three sports festivals and have represented Nigeria in international competitions twice".

The zone six coordinator sparked off another controversy when he described Nigerian track and field coaches as lazy lots who want to make names with ready made athletes. Any coach worth his salt, he explained, should be able to groom athletes from the grassroots and turn them to stars.

The coaches however rose to defend themselves. Charles Yayock, while admitting that some Nigerian track and field coaches perform far below expectation, said majority of them are hampered by lack of necessary facilities to work with. Some of them, he said, are underpaid and were expected to produce fantastic result with little or no material and financial backing from their employers.

By Joe Olajuwon



Tijjani: supports the new rule.

ADAMU ADAMU S

DEFINITIONS  
IN HUMOUR

# Holy day

**F**irst, a brief lesson in etymology. From *etymologia*, itself from *etymon* meaning the literal sense of a word; while *logy* means the study of. Of course. Now then holiday. From *holy*, meaning sacred and *day* meaning day. People are not supposed to work on *holy days*? Yes, they are. The sabbath is a thing of the past, isn't it? But whenever you go on holiday, that's exactly what you are doing — not working on days that are secularly holy. What I am just trying to tell you is that I am going on a holiday this week to some where in particular called Nowork. It is a small, quiet, lovely, nice place.

Give the space to Mr Mawabu Baga and Mr. Ibrahim sheme. Neither is a stranger; one is the collead, the other the poetist.

## From Mawabu Baga

**Civil Service Reform** — A deformed service with legs but no head — Evil Service Deformed.

**Rolling Plan** — Roaming plan, subject to the whims and caprices of the leader in power.

**Merit** — "May writ" — writ acquired in May through exams leakage and certificate racketeering.

**Accountability** — The ability of accountants. And we all know what that is — embezzlement.

**Publisher** — He who pays the piper dictates the tune. (Or better still, he who pays the paper dictates the news). Now that there are too many publishers around, you can't know which is the tune or which is the right paper.

**Press Freedom** — Praise freedom. Need we add anything?

**Mediaman** — Sounds like a madman? Well, the difference is small. He is a watch dog paid to praise sane policies and bite madmen.

**Press** — The praise. Praise corrupts, absolute praise corrupts absolutely.

**Newspaper** — A daily sheet that makes you glad or mad. If glad you keep cuttings; if it cuts you it is a good floor mat.

**Sub-Editor** — *Sob-Editor*, the powerless creature with nose, often bloodied, kept to the grindstone on the sub desk, and he sobs.

**Sports Editor** — The joker in the media pack.

**Night Editor** — If birds have the owl, journalists should thank God — they have the Night Editor.

**Roving Reporter** — He roves for news — he doesn't always get it. He robs for brown envelope — and

**Director General** — A non-uniformed general who directs directors and is himself directed out of office.

Eureka he finds it.

**Brown envelope** — The special communique given to the reporter by anxious PRO's who want their events publicised. The larger the envelope (and greener its contents), the longer the story — and the more incredible!

## From Ibrahim Sheme

## From abroad

**Norman Lamont (UK)** — If the pound depreciates during my chancellorship of the Exchequer or the poll tax cost the Tories a re-election, why I'll lament.

**James Baker (US)** — He's baked the cake which they are now sharing.

**Pierrre Jokes (France)** — De Gaulle would have disapprovingly said, "there goes Peter the Joker"

**Gulp** — The alliance wishes to gulp the Gulf. The US says it wants Saddam out of power. Good! So what stops them from toppling him? Self-interest. The alternative is Khomeini. Phew!!!

## Maladies

**Policilytis Repeatatis** — This is a deadly disease that affects the policy making jugular of the government. And it repeats what it did last year and the year before last. What it most often repeats is the failure to keep to a good policy. No cure in sight.

**Statisticus Irregularitis** — This is the malady that eats away records of every type. In cases of severe infection it takes away the patient's ability to even keep the records in the first place. Figures can't be relied upon. Its other variants are *ensis irregularantis*, *electoralitis riggitatis*. Cure possible only when tribalism disappears.



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