

# African

# CONCORD

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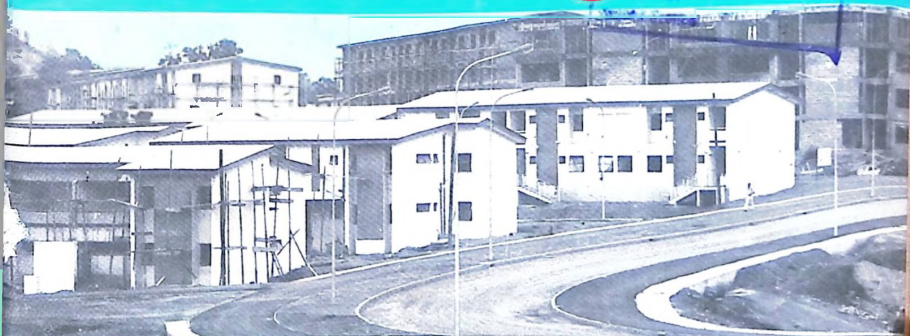


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## Abuja: COMPLIMENTARY

## Pains of settling down



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# African Concord

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## TOP OF THE WEEK



All eyes are now on Abuja, Nigeria's new capital city as two government ministries and their workers moved from Lagos. But how well is Abuja prepared to live up to the expectations of Nigerians ..... Pg



The wheat ban is one week away and bakers, flour millers are still in a quandary. An update report by our correspondents ..... P24

## Contents

Spanish monarch, King Juan Carlos and wife, Sofia took time off to visit Nigeria. But there is not much ado about the royal visit.



P 21

Newsprint crunch is now really biting and newspapers are trimming down



P 25

Gaddafi-Kerekou's romance is almost hitting the rocks



P 30

The scourge of SFEM has hit the police



P 36

### Other Departments

Letters .....	4
Publisher's message .....	5
World .....	35
Business Forum .....	37
Concord People .....	42

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# Building bridges of Pan-African unity

Excerpts of the speech delivered at Howard University, Washington DC, by Chief M K O Abiola, publisher of African Concord and Chairman Chief Executive of Concord Press of Nigeria.

Each time I visit America I am marvelled by the great developments that have been achieved here over the past two hundred years. I compare it to the African condition and wonder how Africa and her descendants around the world could achieve a similar feat.

What is the secret behind the success of the United States of America? The answer is contained in the word "United" which signifies a federation. The key to American power is its aggregation of a vast amount of human and natural resources under one federal umbrella. This, also, is the secret behind the Soviet Union's attainment of superpower status. The lesson from both federations, even though they have different political and economic systems, is that the basis for national power in our time must be increasingly based on size and resources. No wonder, therefore, there are Europeans advocating unity for Western Europe, as there are those yearning for a united Caribbean.

However, the question I always pose to myself and friends is: can Africans and their descendants achieve for themselves what the Americans and the Soviets have achieved for themselves? To appreciate the magnitude of how much work we have to do to rival these two superpowers, the reality today on the continent is that communication is extremely difficult. To communicate in most cases, to go through Europe.

But in spite of the monumental difficulties that face the continent, I am personally optimistic that, with deliberate efforts by us all, Africa can within the next fifty years or so attain a federation that can rival any superpower. We do not have to wait two hundred years for that. This is because we do not have to start anew to invent the scientific theories and technological tools necessary for development. A good number of them have been invented. What we must do is to conduct our own local researches into the diverse areas of our needs and to produce locally the important tools we need to fashion a modern-age African civilisation.

My optimism for an African federal union is based on no grand illusion. I am moved by historical precedents that it was mortals like you and I who founded the American and Soviet federations. These include America's founding fathers like George Washington, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, and the Soviet Union's V I Lenin.

As a newspaper publisher I keep asking myself what little contribution I can make in order to help bring about a federal union in Africa to which any black man or woman can return as a citizen — just as the world's Jews can return to Israel and claim citizenship. My experience in the field of communications has taught me the importance of the written or spoken word and its relationship to development. That was, in part, why I founded Concord Press of Nigeria six years ago — to use the press to promote harmony and development. Naturally, since charity begins at home, I took off with my country Nigeria. My first newspaper is known as *National Concord*. Its object at inception was, and remains, to help to bring the ethnic groups of Nigeria closer to one another. It was launched simultaneously with the *Sunday Concord*, then followed by the *Business Concord*, which is published bi-weekly.

Today, Concord Press of Nigeria has, in addition to these papers, three vernacular newspapers, *Amama*, *Ufokwa* and *Isokan*, published in the three main Nigerian languages as well as ten community newspapers circulated in the states. There will be nineteen of them in the long run. Finally, we have in the stable two editions of *African Concord* which is an international weekly newsmagazine on Pan-African affairs. It is sold here at Howard University and it is guided editorially by Pan-Africanism.

By Pan-Africanism here, I mean one indivisible Africa, which means that all peoples of African descent, whether they live on the continent, in North and South America, in the Caribbean, Europe or Asia, belong to the African nation.

By taking the above view, I am lending support to the position already taken in the past by such great black leaders as W E B Du Bois, Marcus Garvey and Kwame Nkrumah, all of whom reasoned that all Africans are one, regardless of their country of citizenship. Furthermore, I agree with them that the solution to the deplorable condition of the African race is unity. By unity here, I do not subscribe to its rhetorical use as applied by some of our leaders who only invoke it at public functions and addresses, while in practice they are only working for their own individual nations' interests, in fact personal interests in many cases.

By unity I mean a Union Government of African States, a federation to which every black person can claim a right of citizenship. But I cannot visualise Africa as a superpower without the input of her descendants scattered in the diaspora — in North and South America, the Caribbean and Europe. We must pool our resources internationally in the same way that the Jews have done. Without internationalism, Israel could not boast of atomic power which it now indisputably possesses. And without internationalism, the world's blacks cannot overcome their internalisation and problems of development. Apartheid in South Africa and racism in general are among these problems which we can speedily resolve by unity.

**By unity I mean a Union Government of African States, a federation to which every black person can claim a right of citizenship.**

The reason, therefore, for the establishment of *African Concord* is two-fold: to arrest the monopoly of dissemination of news and information by the developed nations, and to bring the blacks around the world closer together, by affording them a medium for learning more about themselves and for the cross-fertilisation of ideas necessary for our development. Why should we always allow others to report and analyse what is happening in the world, particularly on our own continent and in the black diaspora? Why can't we sense the initiative of telling the world about us or about our views of them?

Today, for example, you read and hear that the terrible disease AIDS originated in Africa. How do we know if this is true or false unless we investigate the matter ourselves? The *African Concord* team is now investigating these wild allegations about AIDS and its so-called African connection. The report will be issued in due course. But such is an example of what we must reflect on, and why it is important that we begin to take our fate in our own hands.

I hope that *African Concord* will evolve to become a powerful forum for all development-minded blacks in the world who share the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the imperative need for a Union Government.

My visit here today is therefore aimed at solidifying your views and ideas on how best to make a reality the goal for which *African Concord* was established. I shall return periodically to assess the performance of the magazine in this country. And I hope that all those I have not been able to meet with now, I will see next time around. Howard University is recognised as the academic Mecca of the world's blacks, an intellectual power-base which has an historic role to play in founding the New Africa I am speaking about. You cannot afford to fail, for such a failure can only lead to catastrophe for the black race. Thank you.

# Abuja: Is it worth it?

Abuja may well be a grand error unworthy of the huge investments.

Abuja, as Nigeria's political capital is gradually becoming a reality. No one in his right senses will contest this. Not after two Federal ministries shifted base from Lagos into the city. Not with the apparent Federal resolve to make the city ready for a full-tiedged Federal occupation by 1991. In a matter of few years, Abuja will be de-facto and de-jure, Nigeria's capital. That is Abuja's destiny, that is the role dreamed for it by its founding fathers 10 years ago.

But should Abuja have been at all? Is the shifting of the nation's capital from Lagos necessary at all? Is Abuja worth the more than N1 billion already spent on it? Examining these issues, against the backdrop of the present circumstances may be an exercise in futility, but the inferences are irresistibly invaluable. They are pungent lessons to guard against future mistakes. Abuja is a mistake, it is a gross error of judgment. Why?

The birth of Abuja came amidst a mass disenchantment with Lagos. As the dual capital of Lagos State (until 1976) and Nigeria, Lagos became patently over-burdened, almost breaking down. Much money was pumped into it, in the days of the petro-naira boom, but Lagos could not be re-invigorated. Traffic clogged daily; the telephones didn't work; power supply was irregular; population over-exploded burgeoning suburbs became, overnight, sprawling slums; piped water and housing were inadequate. And besides, Lagos had the disadvantage of not being a national city. It was dominated by the Yorubas, one of out of Nigeria's 300 Malay tribes.

And so began the search for an alternative capital that will be truly national, that will be bereft of the chaos of Lagos. The Murtala Muhammed administration gave the assignment to the Akinola Aguda panel. Kaduna, a melting pot of Nigeria's multi-ethnic groups, was suggested. It was rejected because Kaduna too is dominated by the Hausa-Fulani, just like the Yorubas hold sway in Lagos.

After much criss-crossing across the globe and within Nigeria, the panel came up with an ingenious solution: it chose an area geographically posited in the centre of Nigeria, an area sparsely populated by some minority groups, largely undeveloped. That was how Abuja was created — just by the stroke of the pen.

Work gradually began on this site — the architectural design was made, land clearing was begun and by the late 1970s, structures began to emerge. Building work was accelerated under the Shagari regime — and overnight the virgin land of Abuja became the contractors' Mecca, who thronged not to visit but to participate in the looting of the limitless treasures in the new city's bottomless pit.

The despoliation of Abuja now belongs to history. But would that plunder not have been averted? Should it have taken place at all? Was the enthusiasm to build a new capital city from scratch necessary? More important, is Abuja a better alternative to Lagos? These are the thematic questions here.

Abuja, it strongly seems, is a gross error. From the beginning when it was conceived; mid-stream when the caterpillars, bulldozers, contractors and labourers moved in. Abuja is madness, national madness. It should not have been.

The arguments that stripped Lagos of its status as the Federal capital were in retrospect, balderdash, not well grounded on logic.

Lagos, its antagonists said, was too congested. Why? This was one great question the Aguda Panel failed to tackle head-on with logic. No city just becomes clogged if it has no special allure that winks at everyone — the low and the high, the poor and rich, the desperadoes, everyone. Lagos has a bounty of such allure.

It is Nigeria's biggest commercial centre. More than 80 per cent of Nigeria's industries are in Lagos. And besides, it has the fortune (or misfortune) to host the Federal Government — Nigeria's richest institution. Nigeria's economy, the cake baking and sharing begin and end with the Federal Government. That is the institution that makes people, through the patronage of contracts, millionaires. That is the institution that, through laws and overwhelming powers, make or mar businesses. Businessmen need import licences from government, they need to be registered by government, they need all

**“More important, is Abuja a better alternative to Lagos? These are the thematic questions here. Abuja, it strongly seems, is a gross error. From the beginning when it was conceived, mid-stream when the caterpillars, bulldozers, contractors and labourers moved in. Abuja is madness, national madness.”**

sorts of papers from government and above all, they need to wheedle government to buy their products.

This is why almost all Nigeria's businesses are concentrated in Lagos. It is a concentration that was begotten by an acute understanding of Nigeria's political economy. Up till today, the Nigerian government is still the richest institution; it is still the biggest spender.

When the movement to Abuja is completed in 1991, will Abuja not become another Lagos? Will all manners of people not flock there and erect tents just anywhere, at least to get government's attention.

The other argument — that Lagos is dominated by the Yoruba, is too simplistic and superficial to have hoodwinked the entire nation into believing that Abuja will be a solution.

Pray, how does a nation cement its tenuous ties on the streets of a city. True unity is not built on such a basis. It comes out of a more genuine and serious effort. It cannot be achieved even through quota or the ethnic balancing in appointments. It comes only when Nigerians, wherever they are feel they are truly Nigerians; when their children are not discriminated against by school fees or contract jobs (reserved only for foreigners), when a Hausa or Ibo is rest assured that a Yoruba in public office will serve not a narrow interest, but the interests of all. These are the only paths to unity — not Abuja.

— Bayo Onanuga



Top: A market stall in Lagos. Bottom: A busy street in Abuja.

## Abuja: Pains of settling down

Abuja, the new capital of Nigeria, is a city of contrasts. On the one hand, it is a city of modern architecture and infrastructure, with wide roads and modern buildings. On the other hand, it is a city of poverty and slums, with many people living in makeshift shacks and struggling to make a living. The city is a microcosm of the country's economic and social challenges.

The city's location in the center of the country is a major advantage, but it also presents challenges. The city is surrounded by a vast, flat plain, which makes it vulnerable to flooding and other natural disasters. Additionally, the city's rapid growth has led to a shortage of housing and infrastructure, which has contributed to the development of slums.

Despite these challenges, Abuja is a city of opportunity. It is a city where people are working hard to build a better future for themselves and their families. The city is a symbol of Nigeria's potential for growth and development, and it is a city that is full of life and energy.

The city's infrastructure is still in the process of being built, and many of the roads are unpaved. The city's water supply is also a major challenge, with many people relying on private water vendors. The city's air quality is also a concern, with many people suffering from respiratory problems. Despite these challenges, the city is a city of hope and opportunity.

### Infrastructure challenges

At the heart of the city's infrastructure challenges is the lack of a solid foundation. The city was built on a soft, sandy soil, which has led to a number of problems, including sinking buildings and roads. The city's water supply is also a major challenge, with many people relying on private water vendors. The city's air quality is also a concern, with many people suffering from respiratory problems. Despite these challenges, the city is a city of hope and opportunity.

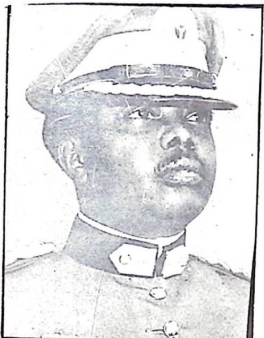
Another major challenge is the city's location. The city is surrounded by a vast, flat plain, which makes it vulnerable to flooding and other natural disasters. Additionally, the city's rapid growth has led to a shortage of housing and infrastructure, which has contributed to the development of slums. The city's air quality is also a concern, with many people suffering from respiratory problems. Despite these challenges, the city is a city of hope and opportunity.

The city's infrastructure challenges are a major concern for the government and the people of Abuja. The government is working to address these challenges by investing in infrastructure development and improving the city's water supply and air quality. The people of Abuja are also working to improve the city's infrastructure by building better housing and creating more jobs. The city is a city of hope and opportunity.

Development Authority (FCDA). The FCDA was mandated with the responsibility of planning and developing the new Federal Capital.

In design, Abuja is a very ambitious city. The idea from all indications was to give the country a befitting, modern capital city, comparable, if not in size, at least in beauty, to some of the leading capitals of the world.

When the FCDA commenced work on the eclectic territory now called Abuja, some ten years ago, the nation had enough money to match the grand ambition of the city's designers. The Federal Government on its part was forthcoming in providing funds to the FCDA. Abuja soon became a natural haven for both big and small time contractors.



*Muhammed: Appointed a panel of experts.*

Everyone who knows something about construction — roads, houses, bridges — came running towards Abuja. And their singular goal? To get a bite of the huge contract pie lying in the territory.

From a rocky savanna highland sparsely inhabited by eight of Nigeria's minority tribes namely the Koras, Gbagis, Bassas, Ganaganas (Nupes), Egboras, Gades and Giwandaras, Abuja soon became an artificial city, dug out of the rock. Physical construction at the new city in the past ten years reached a tempo between 1980 and 1983 when the country was under the civilian administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari.

The former president hardly disguised his desire to be the first Nigerian leader to move into Abuja and rule from there. Thus early in his first tenure, he altered the completion schedule of the first phase of the city. The master-plan provided for 1985 as the date for the completion of the first phase, but by a

presidential fiat that hardly got any applause from experts, Shagari brought the date forward to 1982.

In the ex-president's calculation, if more contractors could be engaged in the construction of the new city, the first phase would certainly be ready by 1982. Thus new contracts were awarded mostly to partisan NPN loyalists, some of whom were merely out to grab the mobilisation fees and disappear thereafter. Abuja thus became a place for all kinds of contractors who did anything but execute the contracts awarded to them. Thus, hundred of millions of naira were pumped into the construction of this futuristic capital city of the nation ostensibly to beat the new presidential deadline. But not much



*Aguda: "Lagos is inadequate".*

could be shown for it in terms of real development of the territory.

By December 1983 when the military booted out the Shagari government, Abuja had become a city in limbo, indeed "a monumental symbol of the national failure" as one Nigerian pointed out in a newspaper article. The city was literally deserted, contractors and all. Construction sites were abandoned, with many projects done half-way and others, at the foundation stages.

It was 1984. For a while, the idea of Abuja seemed dead. Few people showed enthusiasm. Even if there was enough enthusiasm, money was now short. Abuja was becoming something of a faded dream. Would it be allowed to become one?

The then military government of General Muhammadu Buhari thought it shouldn't. It did one thing presumably to reassure Nigerians. It ordered the arrest of all the contractors who abandon-

ed their projects in Abuja. The administration also appointed a Federal Minister for Abuja and reverted to the original date for the completion of the first phase of the city.

In what was seen at the time as a well-considered action, the Buhari government announced its intention to scale down on some of the original plans for the city. It also announced the extension of the schedules for the completion of the various phases of the project and the movement of the federal government to the new capital.

Today, Abuja has become the city of the hour. Two federal ministries have moved into the place and more are expected to follow from next year. So the natural question has been: how prepared is Abuja at the moment to assume the role being foisted on it?

Although Abuja has been playing host occasionally to the nation's various leaders, especially during such occasions as the country's National Day, the movement of the Federal Ministries of Trade and Internal Affairs to the new city has heightened interest in the affairs of the town. Despite these movements, Abuja today still retains its quiet, tidy ambience.

Along the splendid, flower-lined, dual carriage Festival Road, stand several notices bearing the exhortation: "Help keep Abuja clean and tidy." This is the last conclusive evidence that one is in Abuja, the new capital city.

Roaring sounds of heavy duty vehicles — caterpillars, graders and tippers — and the clangour of metal on metal, issuing from construction sites, till the air. Pedestrians, young and old, move back and forth the flower-hedged sidewalks along Festival Road. Everywhere has a distinctive Abuja smell — a blend of freshness, harmattan wind and dust raised from road construction sites.

Abuja mercifully lacks the rumbustiousness of Lagos. The presence of vast tracks of undeveloped land makes the city look like a wilderness in some parts. But the row of well constructed, line houses in the central part of Garki District symbolises the beauty and architectural accomplishment of the new city. Abuja is a sunken city with numerous bridges and viaducts linking the extremely low places with the elevated parts.

The central parts of Garki and Wuse Districts which at present are the most developed areas of the Federal Capital Territory hold out the promise of the new city. These are where one would find most of the beautiful houses in the



# RONCAGLIA OPR: SPACE AGE TECHNOLOGY FOR GRAIN MILLING

Ever-increasing energy costs compel the flour milling industry to give serious consideration to the daunting economic prospects involved in a new plant - buildings, full transportation and delivery.

In many instances, the returns associated with conventional mills do not warrant the investment because of the inevitable long-up or down for long periods. But now there is a solution that solves many of these problems. It is the Roncaglia OPR System - internationally patented.

As the world moved forward in the 1990's, the Roncaglia OPR System meets the challenge of this decade by giving the flour milling industry a concept of production enjoyed by many since 1953 that at the same time meets the need for space age technology. Roncaglia OPR mills can be part of an existing plant or they can be "turnkey" operations from cereal intake to final packing and bulk handling.

Roncaglia OPR mills can be housed with a minimum of loss in any simple building of 5 metres height. They can be producing flour from wheat or from maize, oat, barley, rice, rye, sorghum, millet, etc. A matter of months from first ordering the plant. Even mills as small as 200 tons of wheat per 24 hours capacity average only 12 months from inception to full production.

This speedy completion of the project is entirely due to the unique Roncaglia OPR Milling System.

The first consideration is the elimination of the blanchifier which requires large buildings with conventional installations. This need has been overcome by the patented air-sifter which uses air currents and a simple sieve. The air-

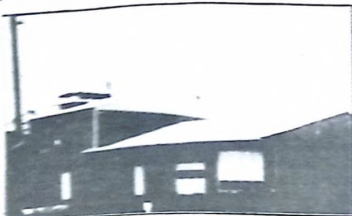
sifter overrules the need for the multi-storey concept, thus making economic considerations viable.

The Roncaglia OPR mill of whatever capacity can be housed in any simple building of five metres clear height. It is the only mill that can be built up from a small initial unit or can have a number of units running side by side milling different cereals. It is the only plant that does not need considerable

remodelling for changes in flour specifications. No other mill-building company can guarantee its products for 10 years nor can anyone assure a breakful life of as long as six to eight years without refuelling. It reduces maintenance to minimum levels and offers economies in staffing. The concept of large buildings inevitably means high energy and maintenance costs on top of the cost of the construction itself. Site selection and preparation can involve much expense and difficulty, especially if there are environmental considerations.

The Roncaglia OPR System eliminates many of these difficulties, not needing much more than a simple foundation for a portal framed structure that complies with regulations of planning authorities. In many instances, it saves up to 70% in capital costs.

Even, Roncaglia OPR System, whether large or small, includes electrical and commissioning expenses, and training of staff to operate the mill effectively. To ensure confidence in the investment, Roncaglia has a comprehensive after-sales service to achieve the highest level of production at all times.



Building capable of housing a Roncaglia OPR milling plant of any capacity.



Roncaglia OPR capacity 200 tons of wheat per 24 hours.

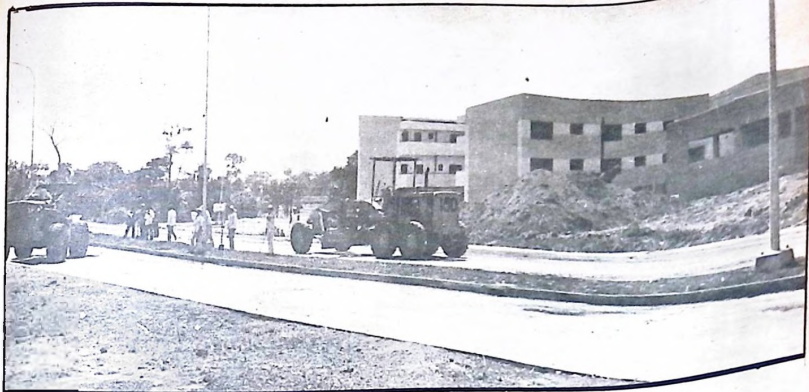
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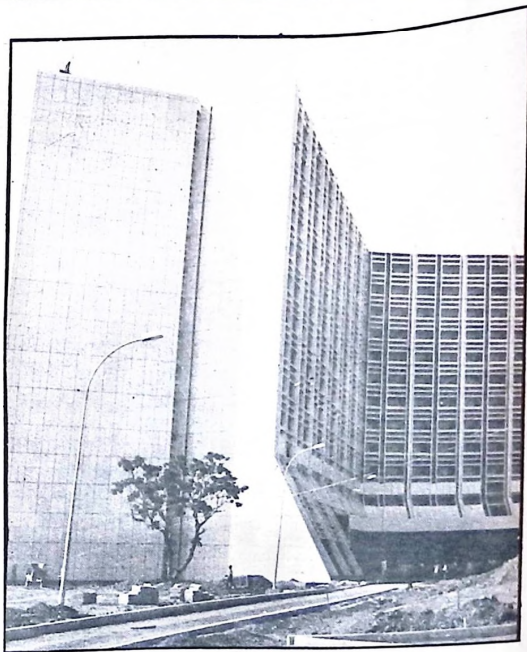
*A section of residential quarters.*

town and social amenities. Most houses in Garki are already completed, whereas in other districts of the city, such as Asakoro, Maitama and some parts of Wuse, two out of every three houses are yet to be finished. In a good many of these uncompleted houses, no further work is going on, a possible indication that they have been abandoned by the contractors. Many parts of Wuse which together with Garki form the residential spine of Abuja, are yet to start enjoying electricity. FCDA, however, provided such areas with electric generators which operate between 6 p.m. and 7 a.m.

One simple reason Abuja has often been referred to as a fragmented city is its numerous uncompleted housing estates. There are many of such in Wuse District, scattered here and there. But the Minister for the Federal Capital Development, Air Commodore Hamza Abdullahi says his ministry is applying its mind to the task of getting these buildings completed as quickly as possible.

With the planned movement of more ministries into the city early next year, the need for more houses is only certain. Abdullahi says the FCDA is making efforts to complete at least 10,000 housing units before the arrival of more ministries.

Meanwhile the FCDA claims it has been able to provide enough houses to the staff of the two ministries already in Abuja. It has allocated more than 5,000 housing units to the two ministries for their staff. Some of the houses are three-bedroom apartments while others are



*Hilton hotel.*

development, he said, is based on what he called "africanization of the city." The poor have a street, but no drainage — a common problem because of the dense nature of the shantytowns. The city's water supply is limited and uneven, and the shantytowns are often on the outskirts, far from the city's water supply. The water supply is often "unimproved" and "unimproved," meaning that it is not treated and is often contaminated with sewage. The water supply is often "unimproved" and "unimproved," meaning that it is not treated and is often contaminated with sewage.

But Commissioner Richard W. Murphy, in a temporary residential district that will be demolished, says that the city will be demolished. He says that the city will be demolished. He says that the city will be demolished. He says that the city will be demolished.

It is not all over, he said, if he will accept financing for a slum area. He said that the city will be demolished. He says that the city will be demolished. He says that the city will be demolished.

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## Another city, another ghetto

**W**ITHIN THE LAST FEW YEARS, the city of Lagos has become a major industrial center. It is now one of the largest cities in Africa. The city is now one of the largest cities in Africa. The city is now one of the largest cities in Africa.

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With their growing urban centers in the country, Nigeria's cities are facing a crisis in housing. In 1970, there were 10 million people in Lagos, and the city was facing a crisis in housing.

### HOUSING CRISIS

In Lagos, there is a need for housing. The city is now one of the largest cities in Africa. The city is now one of the largest cities in Africa. The city is now one of the largest cities in Africa.

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More of the Slaves of Nigeria by

Chasbukwa Hwang



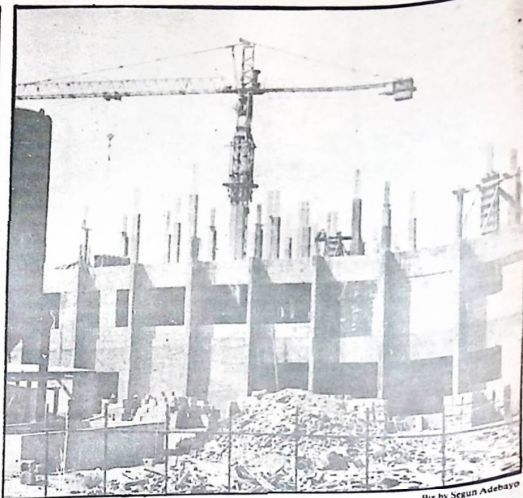
*Buhari: Ordered arrest of contractors*

one would expect in a situation of this kind."

Mr. Ndite said the houses provided are not too bad. The Internal Affairs Minister, John Shagaya re-echoed this when he addressed the press at the conference centre of his ministry in Abuja. The minister said that his ministry had no special problems. He pointed out that whatever problems that existed at all were normal problems that would disappear with time. When a reporter drew the minister's attention to the unreadiness of the minister's office, he argued that the observation was wrong. He jocularly asked the reporter to come over for coffee in his office to see whether it was ready or not.

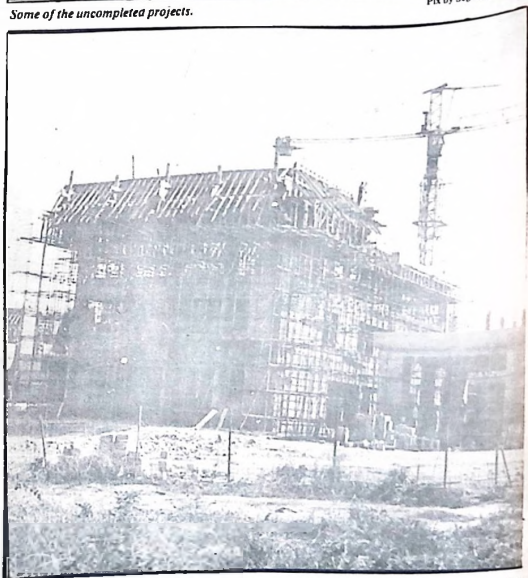
Some of the workers interviewed spoke well of the cost of food items in the town. Nearly all of them admitted that food prices were cheap enough. The city's food supplies come from Niger, Kaduna, Kwara and Plateau — the four states that border Abuja.

At the Wuse open market which holds only on Fridays, a tin of garri sold for N8, a cup of rice for 50k while a cup of beans sold for 40k. A large packet of Omo detergent sold at N11, a gallon of vegetable oil at N14, three tubers of yam at N2 while the large packet of Elephant Blue detergent went for N9. These prices compare well with those obtainable at



*Some of the uncompleted projects.*

*Pic by Segun Adebayo*





## Summit in Nigeria.

The Hyatt Regency Hotel which is 60 per cent owned by the FCDA is also an architectural delight. It has more than 750 guest rooms and suites and a mighty plaza for night clubs and cocktails.

Abuja has other ambitious public buildings some of which, however, are yet to be completed. These, combined with the city's numerous and fine network of roads to enhance the beauty of this potentially great town. The national mosque, a dignified super-structure, is located at the central area of phase one of the city. Standing on massive pillars with reinforced pedestals and semi-circular arches, the mosque has a rather imposing, gold-coloured minaret. It is expected, according to Commodore Abdullahi to be ready for use in early 1988. So far more than N15 million has been invested on the building and N10 million out of this came from the Federal Government.

The Federal Government has also set aside N10 million for the erection of a national cathedral. A piece of land has been allocated to the project. But the minister says work is yet to start on the cathedral because the various christian sects have not agreed on who should collect the federal grant. Commodore Abdullahi says as soon as the Christians reach a consensus and present the plan for the cathedral, the fund would be released to their trustees.

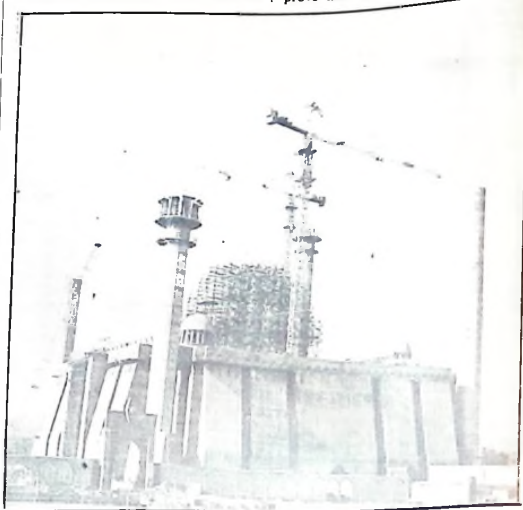
Meanwhile smaller churches by the various Christian denominations are springing up here and there in Abuja. The Catholic Church has one at Garki while the Anglican Church has another at Wuse. Both are still under construction, although Sunday services are already being conducted in them.

At the moment, Abuja has a population of not more than fifty thousand. Many areas of the new territory are not yet inhabited. As such, many of the problems associated with over-crowding are not experienced in the city. Traffic flow is free, a sharp contrast to the clogged roads of Lagos. Once you are lucky to find the transport, movement from one part of the territory to another takes a little time. The roads are good and many. But the means of transportation are inadequate. Taxi cabs painted in pin stripe green and white colours are the only means readily available. The few FCDA buses operate on schedule and along specific routes. In the mornings and after 3.30 p.m. when workers are going home from work, it is common to see topless heavy trucks that mostly belong to the construction companies,

loaded with human beings. FCDA officials acknowledge that transportation is a major problem in the city. But the minister says efforts are being made to get this problem under control.

FCDA buses ply mostly distant routes like Nyanya and Gwagwalada. Gwagwalada and Idu serve as the industrial centres of the Federal Capital Territory. The former is the location of

secutive days recently. Thus air travellers to the city had to fly first to Kaduna and thereafter proceed to Abuja by road. But the minister is promising an improvement of the situation. He says he has reached an understanding with other private airlines to increase the number of daily flights to Abuja. Efforts are also being made, he says, to improve the state of landing and safety



Abuja Central Mosque.

the Nigerian Bottling Company and the Nima Carpet and Furniture Manufacturing Company. The latter is the home of System Metal Industry.

The transportation problem of the city was worsened last week by a fuel scarcity which hit some northern cities including Abuja. The only petrol station in the city — National — did not receive regular supply. Even when it did, the queue of motorists desperate to fill their tanks was interminably long. Some motorists had to drive to Suleja, some 40 minute-journey from Abuja, in search of fuel.

Abuja, in the last few days, has not been accessible by air. The airport lacks the necessary facilities to make landing under a harmattan weather, less turbulent. The Nigeria Airways which operates the only flight to the city had to cancel its flight to Abuja for six con-

equipment, at the Abuja airport.

Abuja, unlike Lagos, is neat and tidy. The streets are provided with trash cans and, at intervals, there are stickers and notices admonishing residents and visitors to help keep Abuja clean, to help make the city the pride of the nation. The roads are laid out in such a way that even when the city hits its projected maximum population of 3.1 million people, traffic jam is not likely to constitute any problem. The minister says compliance with approved building plans is strictly enforced. The city is surrounded by a network of ring roads. At the central area of the city is a criss-cross of collector and arterial roads. Sewage disposal is planned to constitute no health hazards.

All the neighbourhood and District centres in the city are planned to have a health centre and hospital. At present



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- 4 Should African states, collectively or individually, pursue the attainment of nuclear technology, both for domestic and military purposes?
- 5 How can the relationship between Africans on the continent and their descendants in the diaspora be maximised?
- 6 Of all blacks in history, whom do you best admire and why?
- 7 Is a common language, European or African, imperative in forging a union of African states? Also, consider the feasibility of adopting a bilingual approach in conducting business in an African federation.

\* The essay should be between 800 and 1,000 words and must reach African Concord before 30th March, 1987.

\* Send entries to either African Concord, 5/15 Cromer St, London WC1H 8LS or African Concord, 42 Concord Way, PO Box 4483, Ikeja-Lagos, Nigeria.

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\* The competition is open to all African Concord readers except the staff of Concord Press of Nigeria and their relatives.

\* All entries must be accompanied by a slip of this announcement.

We seize this opportunity to thank Longman publishers, sponsors of our 1986 competition. For the 1987 competition we wish to thank Longman once again for their support, as well as Heinemann, Women's Press, Penguin, Faber and Faber, Helm, Hamish Hamilton, Yale, Allison and Busby, André Deutsch Virago and Pan.

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that there are many one-bedroom housing units meant for this class of workers. One thing people should also realise is that whereas in Lagos only officers of Grade Level 9 and above are offered housing by government, in Abuja here we offer housing to everybody — from messenger to cleaner and to the permanent secretaries.

**Q: What is the state of other social amenities such as hospitals, schools, recreational facilities and similar infrastructure?**

**A:** The city is designed on the American pattern. You have neighbourhood centre and district centre. And in every district there is supposed to be a kind of cottage hospital that would have facilities for about 80 to 100 beds. In the neighbourhood centre, there is supposed to be a health clinic. We are developing all these things. I have just commissioned one of such hospitals in Garki which has a capacity for 100 beds. There are two others under construction. We are also building a 300-bed hospital of the status of a teaching hospital which, I hope, will be opened by the middle of next year. It has gone quite a long way. The equipment is being installed now. The hospital would be compared to any in the world both in quality and size.

There is provision for a national mosque and provision for a national cathedral. There are two committees — that for the national mosque has come forward with a design and they have started building the mosque which is expected to be completed in early 1988. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), is yet to resolve who is going to claim the money for the cathedral because they are saying that there should be two — Protestant and Catholic Cathedrals. But as far as government is concerned, we are going to make provision for a national multi-denominational cathedral. The land allocated is there. There is provision for government to give a grant of N10 million.

**Q: Shouldn't the government have shared the money among the various christian sects that came forward with a plan, to avert the present stalemate?**

**A:** We are now talking about a national cathedral. That does not stop other denominations from building their smaller churches here and there. If you go round the city now there are many churches coming up. There is a district mosque in Garki, for instance. These are different from the national cathedral or the national mosque. When for instance there is independence celebration and there is going to be prayer for the na-

tion; these are where the exercise would be held for the respective followers.

**Q: It would seem as though the government is going it alone in terms of housing development in the FCT. Why is this so?**

**A:** Government is going it alone because of the attitude of some people who feel that Abuja is not ready. An average Nigerian doesn't believe in long-term investment. He wants quick returns and dividends. So since there was this uncertainty — whether Abuja be or not? — many people kept away and refused to come and invest. Thousands of plots have been given to private developers within the city. We have given about 12 organisations and companies land for housing estates but not one of them has come forward yet to build. We have given about 12 petrol stations. So far only one is functioning and three others are coming out. Where are the remaining eight? But now that they see that we are indeed coming here, they are rushing. We now have a multitude of applications for approval of building plans which are being approved. There is also a noticeable increase in private-developer activities in the city. We give them maximum encouragement. Government has provided the infrastructure, the demarcation of the land, the allocation, the roads, power and water supply and telephone services.

This is the best we could do, the rest is for private developers to do. If a company is coming here, it has to provide housing for its staff. Before now commercial companies preferred to hire houses from the F.C.D.A for their operation but we have now told them that we won't give them any houses again. If they need houses, let them come and build them so that government will utilise its houses solely for its own purpose. Private sectors should come and develop their own houses.

**Q: Talking about sabotaging the movement to Abuja which you alleged in Kano recently, why do you think anybody would want to do that? I want you to be specific, Sir.**

**A:** There are political and economic reasons, of course. Obviously a lot of people in Lagos would not like to see the movement go on. The economic or purchasing power of the civil servants is enormous and that is one possible reason. The other reason is of course political. Nigeria, as you know, is highly politically sensitive. There is normal politics, tribal politics, religious politics, inter-state politics and all the rest of them. But other than that, it anybody is thinking of Nigeria as a nation, I do not see why he should not be happy that in the long-term, this is the best thing to do, the best thing that ever happened to this country because it will improve a lot



Hamza: "I have no problem about the movement to Abuja."



## Royal visit: Not much ado

King Juan Carlos, the constitutional monarch of Spain, and his wife, Sofia together with their entourage, among whom were more than 20 businessmen, left Lagos last week with a renewed hope for stronger ties between Spain and Nigeria. President Ibrahim Babangida and his wife, Maryam, hosted the royal couple for three days. Scientific, cultural and economic interaction between both countries had never been low, although diplomatic relations have been fairly warm. There had not been any formal trade links between Spain and Nigeria.

Like Nigeria, Spain has an economy with heavy import content, so there had been scanty import-export transactions between both of them.

Spain expressed the intention of buying one billion naira worth of crude oil from Nigeria last year, but the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation had not been officially contacted as at September. Also Spain was one of those countries that declined to participate in counter-trade with Nigeria in 1985.

Like Nigeria, Spain has had its economy beleaguered for the last few years. Its debt obligation shot up to 34 billion dollars in 1984, but managed to climb down to 27.4 billion dollars early this year. Unemployment rate amounts to 22 per cent (about three million people) of her labour force and its inflation has been spiralling above its OECD counterparts.

Recently, however, the socialist government of Spain has been forced to keep wage costs down and to maintain tighter control on government spending. The country's investment capacity has also been redirected to the building up of the country's productive capacity and an increase has been observed in job availability.

Last week's visit by King Carlos was of double significance. It was a landmark in Nigeria — Spain diplomatic relations. The scouting for foreign investors by Nigeria too is likely to attract some interest among Spanish business community especially if those businessmen on the royal entourage were sufficiently persuaded.

Apart from this, Spain is a member of the European Economic Community and has sizeable influence among Nigeria's Western creditors. President Babangida described the monarch's visit as historic saying that it would be of in-

Spanish monarch, Juan Carlos visits Nigeria. But there is not much ado about the royal visit.

terest to Africa and the world. He said that it manifested the desire of peoples of Spain and Nigeria to strengthen ties,

foreign investors.

The president told his guests that Nigeria would not relent in its effort to build a sound socio-economic infrastructure which would act as a pedestal upon which a united strong and virile nation could be built. He said that the essence of the two-year structural adjustment programme was to reduce dependence on oil exports and on raw material imports.



King Carlos and wife Sofia: Arriving at Murtala Muhammed Airport.

Photo by Ezeiel Ojo

and was optimistic that the visit would open new areas of mutual co-operation between the two countries.

At the state banquet given in honour of the visiting leader, President Babangida did not forget to serve the visitors with some carrots from his structural adjustment programme. He told them that government would provide the necessary incentives to foreign investors to ensure favourable economic and investment environment — an indication that the 1987 budget has been constructed with the view to sufficiently lure

But he enumerated the major problems now confronting Nigeria among which, he noted, were the challenges of stimulating the productive sector, adopting a national tariff and public pricing policy for public enterprises, liberating trade and payment and reducing cumbersome administrative controls.

For the entire period of their stay in Nigeria, Queen Sofia and Nigeria's first lady, Maryam, stuck to one another, in heart to heart discussions while King Carlos and President Babangida exchanged views on state matters. They

## Nigeria

had a closed door session too.

There were no concrete proclamations from the Spanish monarch probably because he is not the Chief Executive of Spain. But he expressed his happiness about the way Nigeria was managing her economy. He said Nigeria's achievements had aroused special interest in Spain and congratulated her on the Nobel Prize recently won by Nigeria's Professor Wole Soyinka. He also praised Nigeria's stand on apartheid. President Babangida invited Spain to help intensify efforts against South Africa.

King Carlos and Queen Sofia went to Borno State with which Spain reportedly had cultural ties dating back to the 19th century. But the tie had gone into limbo for several years. They were escorted there by their hosts — President and Maryam Babangida. It was a significant call which the King hoped would rekindle the flame to form the basis of cultural ties between Nigeria and Spain.

Thousands of people cheered the King and his entourage as they alighted from the plane into the warm embrace of Borno State Governor, Abdulmumini Aminu. Traditional dancers treated them to a lively session. They witnessed



A gift from President Babangida.

the Grand Durbar and were entertained with a display of specially decorated horses. Horse riders gave them a thrilling performance. Later the Shehu of

Borno presented the visiting monarch with a special horse.

— Oluwambo Balogun

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# Gaol for NYSC official

Another NYSC official gets a 15-year jail term.

“No words are adequate to condemn the act of the accused, who in collaboration with others, siphon public funds into private accounts. Such acts negate the efforts of this nation to make its mark as one of the best gifted in resources.”

This admonition was that of Justice Roseline Omotoso last Wednesday while sentencing George Onigbogi, former deputy chief information officer of the National Youth Service Corps to a 15-year jail term.

Onigbogi was found guilty on four out of the five-count charge for corrupt enrichment and fraud totalling N1.4 million. He got a 15-year sentence each on three of the counts, and five years in the fourth. But the sentences would run concurrently.

In the three and a half hour judgment, Justice Omotoso said the Special

Military Tribunal found Onigbogi guilty of corruptly enriching himself to the tune of N302,000 by accepting the money as kickback from Olusoji Eweje on account of N15.7 million contracts awarded to Eweje by the NYSC.

Onigbogi was also pronounced guilty for accepting another N100,000 from Eweje as kickback by using a front, Georgian Funso Commercial Enterprises. His failure to declare his interest and asset in the company on the asset declaration form formed the basis of the fifth charge in which he was found guilty and jailed five years.

His two houses at Alagbado in Ogun State, which was the subject of the fourth count were to be forfeited to the Federal Government. The tribunal said it could not determine the value as an estate valuer was not called by the prosecution to give evidence. The houses

were built for Onigbogi by Olusoji Eweje at N92,438.

Onigbogi was absolved on the third count of receiving N32,000 being value of a Toyota Celica car from one Joseph Oladimeji. The car was judged by the tribunal to have been bought by Onigbogi's wife from Oladimeji.

Eweje, the tribunal said, was pumping money into Onigbogi's bank account and Onigbogi knew the source of the money to be the NYSC.

Unperturbed by the sentence, Onigbogi, a former journalist with the Sketch newspapers smiled and waived to fellow journalists as securitymen led him into the Black Maria and into Prison.

He had been in custody for the past two years and his case was among the ones reviewed by the Justice Samson Uwaifo Tribunal early this year.

Prosecution witnesses said Onigbogi's bank account in 1979 oscillated between N200 and N300. It shot up to six digits in 1983.

His conviction last week was the first by the reconstituted Special Military Tribunal, set up under Decree 3 of 1984 to try public officials for corruption.

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# Media crunch is here!

The media crunch has finally arrived and newspapers are trimming down by firing workers.

The chips, at last, are down! The prevailing newsprint crunch claimed its first set of casualties last week. Newspaper houses which have been groaning under the crunch for the last few months resorted to drastic cut in their staff strength. Both *Vanguard* and *The Punch* laid off a sizeable number early in the week. They told *African Concord* that the measure was inevitable because of their 'peculiar circumstance.'

The lay-offs came few weeks after some of the newspaper houses in the country had suspended a number of their publications as a cost-cutting

measure. The sack letter took effect from December 16 and about 80 workers were affected. The greater flush-out, however, is yet to come.

What *The Punch* is gunning for is a 50 per cent reduction in its present staff strength of over 500. But caution is being taken not to allow the exercise to cripple the Editorial department. Those sacked at *The Punch* were mainly from other departments. Punch Editor, Mr. Nojem Jimoh explained, "What we're really trying to do is to move nearer a break-even point." And Mr. Austin Chinwe, the Chief Accountant of

position to pay them any salaries. Said he: "What we're doing is to save the company from an imminent collapse. It is either we do what we are doing now or the situation will force all of us to abandon the building and the machines and go away."

Both the *Punch* and *Vanguard* are hoping that government would do something about the current newsprint situation. Said Mr. Chinwe: "Management is not comfortable with the decision. We love our staff and we certainly want to call them back."

A similar fate like that of the *Punch* and *Vanguard* now hangs on many other newspaper houses in the country. The President of the Newspapers Proprietors' Association of Nigeria, Mr. Segun Osoba, who is also the managing director of the Daily Times said recently that it would be difficult for newspaper proprietors to pay workers wages under the present newsprint situation. "All newspapers will collapse," he declared.

The increase in the price of newsprint from ₦560 to ₦2,925 per standard ton of 2.4 reels happened within the last one year. The Nigerian Newsprint Manufacturing Company (NNMC), Oku Iboku in Cross River State has been the sole source of newsprint supply to feed the newspaper houses since heavy import duty was imposed on imported newsprint. Production problems did not allow the company to roll at full capacity and it had to resort to allocation of newsprint on quota.

When the price per ton was ₦965, the NPAN complained that it was prohibitive. It had to announce that newspaper would be sold at 50 kobo cover price. But the same day that the announcement was made, the NNMC increased the price of newsprint by 30 per cent. That nailed the coffin for a number of publications. And more might now have to follow. According to Mr. Jimoh, those that would survive might just be one or two newspapers.

What the NPAN has asked government to do was to remove import duty on long fibre pulp, the main newsprint input now being imported by the NNMC. NPAN also wanted government to scrap the 30 per cent duty on spare parts used by the NNMC. It was the hope of the newspaper proprietors that the price of newsprint would climb down to the reach of most newspaper houses and newspapers would be sold at reasonable cover price if those steps were taken.

— Oluwambo Balogun



George Izobo, NUJ president

measure, but without success. It was as a result of the same newsprint problem that for two days too, the *Chronicle*, a state government publication, was forced off the street two weeks ago.

Last week's retrenchment at the *Vanguard* and *The Punch* was seen as one 'thin edge of a mighty wedge' which would invariably see more staff losing out of jobs. Many newspaper houses are also likely to crack down if nothing is done to solve the newsprint problem. Already, the decision of the Vanguard management is to prune down by 35 per cent. The goal is to bring down running cost to 80 per cent of what it is at present.

At *The Punch*, the terse letter distributed to more than 70 staffers last Monday read: "With immediate effect, your appointment with the Punch Group of Newspapers is hereby terminated." In the case of the *Vanguard*,



Aboderin, Punch publisher.

*Vanguard* lamented: "The decision is a painful one that had to be taken."

The situation at *Punch*, explained Mr. Jimoh, was like that of a pregnant woman with a still-born baby in her womb. "It is either you remove the still-born baby and allow the woman to live and have the chance of another pregnancy or you leave the baby inside her and let her perish with it."

Before it decided to sack some staff last week, *The Punch* was already owing them up to three months' salaries. Even, as the sack letters were distributed, the affected staff could not be paid their entitlements. They were asked to come back for the claims in March next year. It was an unpleasant news, but the alternative could have been shattering as well.

Mr. Jimoh said that even if *Punch* had kept those staff till that time, there was no hope that the *Punch* might be in a



## A mirthless Christmas

With almost empty pockets, many Nigerians are in for a mirthless Christmas. The mirthlessness may be portentous for Nigeria.

In many homes across the nation, there are no laughter and mirth. And yet it is Christmas. A Christmas without good things. For many Nigerians, the depressed state of the economy has certainly deleted "merry" from Christmas and receded the possibility of 1987 being a happy and prosperous new year.

The problems of an economy in recession, the high-level of unemployment, corruption, and crime and punishment have conspired to make this a mirthless Christmas. Throughout this dying year, efforts to solve these problems have dominated the public life of Nigeria and the private thoughts of many a Nigerian. However, the bewildering sense of being caught up in forces beyond anyone's control pervades the nation despite the premature exultation about IBH's quiet revolution.

Inflation is nothing new, nor is recession. But never before had Nigerians suffered through both of them simultaneously. A combination of culpable mismanagement of the economy, long neglect of agriculture, heedless self-interest and falling oil price has created the bleakest economic crisis the nation has known. Just about everybody in the country is hurting and one suspects the nation hasn't seen the worst of it yet.

**"Battered by the worst economic recession that has ravaged the nation, most Nigerians watch helpless as their living standards continue to decline. They are unable to go on strike because of fear of losing their jobs and of being branded as unpatriotic and subversive."**

Battered by the worst economic recession that has ravaged the nation, most Nigerians watch helpless as their living standards continue to decline. They are unable to go on strike because of fear of losing their jobs and of being branded as unpatriotic and subversive. Neither are they likely to take the streets in the manner of the Zambians in protest against the spiralling prices of such consumer items as meat, fish, baby milk, detergents, etc.

Change is painful, yet ever needful. Our present condition calls for structural changes in the economy. These entail much sacrifices and sufferings. And Nigerians on fixed incomes and those living in the rural areas hurt the worst in this process of change. The task of reviving the national economy is a painful process. However, must the economy be revived on the backs and the graves of poor Nigerians who are rapidly becoming experiment animals in the zoo of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP)? This is a moral question that requires an economic solution.

Those who gleefully point to the reappearance of consumer goods in the shops and markets as a sign that SAP is working, fail to take account that customers aren't buying because they

have less to spare and prices are rising daily. Rising prices are a problem that adversely affect all Nigerians, hitting the poor especially hard. Therefore, we cannot judge our economic successes or failures according to the plight of the poorest among us.

Already there are signs that the immediate costs of some of austerity measures are indeed grim. The yellow-fever deaths some states may not be unconnected with our economic measures to save foreign exchange by stopping the importation of mosquito coils and escalating the price of insecticide. We must not think too well of foreign exchange at the expense of thinking too ill of the poor. To save a couple of millions in foreign exchange is certainly not so important as to save a human life.

None enamoured by the uncertain but expected benefits of SAP should think there is no limit to the sacrifices and sufferings Nigerians can endure, without reacting. To be fixated on unproven economic policies and to be oblivious to the hardships these policies are causing is to invite disaster. As NISER's Director-General, Professor Dorun Philips has noted, Nigerians might have started reacting "not through violent public demonstrations, but through the more insidious form of declining productivity." And yet it is only in the steady expansion of the overall output of the Nigerian society can there be an increase in real income as opposed to paper income.

It is easier to say that we are a nation that does so little for the poor and the powerless. This is sad because Dives was buried in hell not because he hated Lazarus or cast him from his table or set the dogs on him, but because he did nothing. We must do more than a little.

In the months ahead, the test of our shared nationality is whether we provide enough for the many Nigerians who have too little. Indeed, these unhappy times call for a determined effort to help the forgotten Nigerians at the middle and the bottom of the economic pyramid.

Swarming our cities are men and women who, either through unemployment or under-employment, have lost their dignity and self-reliance. Who speaks for these people with growing bellies and hoe-tilled eyes waiting anxiously and willing to accept any a job, any job? None except their presence. If you are unemployed you cannot afford to be invisible.

Unemployment is a degradation of the human life. This degradation, in its ugliness, reveals the frightful plight and miseries of the unemployed who, when the times are sad, seem able to smile and joke to defraud reality. But, how can we justify such rape of potential and such monumental waste?

The first right of a man is the right to live by his own labours. A society which denies a man the right to live by his own labours is an oppressive society. Work sets a man free.

The battle we must wage is not for ourselves alone, but for all Nigerians. It is a fight to ensure an abatement of inflation, stable prices, jobs for Nigerians desperately trying to find work, and a self-reliant economic recovery which will bring some improvement in the economic situation of every Nigerian. All these are attainable without making most Nigerians the living dead.

# NIGERIAN NOTES



Gambo



Akanbi



Dikko

## NIGERIA

### SFEM hits police

The Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Market, SFEM — the whipping dog of Nigeria's season of hyper-inflation, has caught, yet another victim. It is the Nigerian Police Force.

SFEM has put the police into an embarrassment over its financial obligation to the Interpol, based in the Swiss capital of Geneva. Yearly, the NPF pays the Interpol 50,000 Swiss Francs, in hard currency, an equivalent of N30,000, before the advent of SFEM. But no thanks to SFEM, the naira equivalent has shot up to N98,000 and police authorities are licking their fingers why they did not send the money earlier — at least to beat SFEM.

It's an error the police would muse over for a long time. But could they not have avoided it?

They could, according to sources close to the police. Early this year, when naira still had much clout and exchanged for about Swiss Francs 1.50, the Police had the opportunity to pay the N30,000 — at least they had money.

But they allowed the opportunity to slip. Now, the Police are broke and can only afford N12,000, about 6,000 Swiss Francs. Would Interpol accept this?

The Nigerian Police must be learning fast — a stitch done on time, can save many thousands — for the Police, N60,000!

## AKANBI PANEL

### A split in the ranks

The Justice Mustapha Akanbi panel on the April May Students' crisis, national-wide, is having problems in putting together its report.

*African Concord* learnt last week that the panel is split as a result of which it cannot agree on a unanimous report.

Grapevine sources close to the panelists' abode at the Durbar Hotel in Lagos said the disagreement arose over whether to heap, wholesale, all the blames for the escalated crisis on the National Union of Nigerian Students and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

The sources said that a member of the panel who is also a former student leader is back-tracking from this course. He may come out with a minority report, the sources said.

The panel was set up last July, a sequel to the Emmanuel Abisoye panel which probed the Ahmadu Bello University Students' Crisis, the root of the national-wide crisis.

Meanwhile, the panel is already behind schedule. It was given eight weeks to dig into the whole affair when it began sitting in July. It asked for an extension and wound up in October. It is not very likely that the report or reports would reach Mr. President this month. Next January would be a more possible date.

## GUN MAN

### Robber or revolutionary

Remember the revolutionary gun-man who took over the PUNCH the other day, hectoring revolutionary slangs and announcing a revolutionary takeover of President Ibrahim Babangida's government?

Well, test you forget, the revolutionary is none other than the gangling Andy Atincano, Commander-in-Chief of all the forces in Africa!

He is now well locked in a police cell and policemen, *African Concord* learnt, are not in the least tickled by his revolutionary fervour.

Sources said last week that the Police are going to deny Andy the privilege of being treated like a coup-plottor. He will be treated like a robber, pure and simple. Andy's revolutionary guards, are you reading?

## FUGITIVE

### Dikko again!

Fugitive Umaru Dikko is in the news again, just when everyone thought the Federal authorities are no longer interested in bringing him home to answer several criminal allegations.

Last week, Federal Attorney-General, Prince Bola Ajibola disclosed that the government is exploring fresh diplomatic moves to get Dikko extradited from Britain.

That, for Dikko, must be a soothing news — at least, he is assured that he will not be haunted by another crating experience. The diplomatic moves he can find ingenious ways to sidetrack and remain a long-time guest of the British Government.

But Nigeria's authorities appear very serious to get him all the same. That seriousness could be gleaned from the circumstances at which the new efforts were disclosed — when British envoy to Nigeria, Mr. Martins Evans visited Ajibola.

But will the British Government co-operate with Nigeria, despite the new strategy of behind-the-scene hand-twisting and diplomatic niceties?

**LIBERIA-BENIN**

# Is the honeymoon over?

**F**ollowing the receipt of talks in London, the two West African leaders, who have been regarded as friends, are now in a more serious mood. The two men, who were once regarded as the best of friends, are now regarded as the worst of enemies. The two men, who were once regarded as the best of friends, are now regarded as the worst of enemies. The two men, who were once regarded as the best of friends, are now regarded as the worst of enemies.

Though the two leaders are in a serious mood, it is not surprising that they are still regarded as friends. The two men, who were once regarded as the best of friends, are now regarded as the worst of enemies. The two men, who were once regarded as the best of friends, are now regarded as the worst of enemies.

Relations between Benin and Libya were mostly unproblematic throughout the 1970s. The two men, who were once regarded as the best of friends, are now regarded as the worst of enemies. The two men, who were once regarded as the best of friends, are now regarded as the worst of enemies.

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**Fair-weather friends, Libya and Benin may soon end their romance. A correspondent reports on the possible parting of ways.**

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## Africa

vival of European societies, was undoubtedly ill-timed.

Furthermore, the European pressures came at a time when they were increasing demands from the Benin population and some top ranking officials that the government elect some control over the Libyan presence in the country.

The importance of Libyan assistance to the survival of the nascent Benin revolution following the 1977 mercenary attack can never really be over-emphasised. The Libyans stood by them and saw them through those most critical and crucial moments.

Having acknowledged the importance of the Libyan role to the very existence of the Benin regime, it is necessary to point out that the Libyans have never been ideal guests, and have throughout their stay been a constant embarrassment to their hosts. They have behaved more like soldiers on conquered territory than as comrades in arms.

At the height of their presence when the Libyan Ambassador at Cotonou was *primus-mer-paraes* with the Benin President, all Libyans in Benin enjoyed the right of extra-territoriality. Thus, being above the national laws of the country, they could neither be arrested nor charged to court. Drunk Libyan troops rampaging through bars and molesting the normally gentle Beninose was common sight. This privilege was only recently withdrawn after a threatened revolt of some military officers following an incident in which a top national security official and his wife were assaulted in public by Libyan Corporals.

Libya's Chadian misadventure has also been a major source of discord between Benin and Libya. The Libyans virtually imposed their Chadian proteges on Benin and Cotonou had served as the headquarters of the opposition components of the National Union Government of Chad — GUNT. Besides the offices of the GUNT and the residences of the various leaders, there are a number of transit military camps where troops recruited for the GUNT are assembled for onward transfer to Bardai in the north of Chad through Tripoli.

In the first place, the unruly GUNT troops are no better than their Libyan sponsors, *vis-a-vis* public conduct. They have been noted for noisy drinking sprees followed by rampaging through town. During the first week of last October, a group of these marauders went harvesting fruits from private farms. When the aggrieved farmers found them and ordered them off their farms, they started sword fights that ended up with

loss of lives. Two Chadians and four Benin nationals died.

Libyan intervention prevented appropriate legal action being taken against the culprits, much to the discontent of the bereaved families and some high party officials who think that they and their constituents have had their full of the Libyan presence and lording over their country.

Despite the many points of contention, Benin authorities have approached what is now known as their Libyan problem with tact and moderation. But this patience seems to have run out recently following the discovery that the Libyans have been secretly using Cotonou as a staging point and transit territory for various terrorist and destabilisation acts against sister African states and against some friendly Euro-



Muammar Gaddafi

pean governments.

It all started last August when Benin security services got wind of the fact that Cotonou based Libyan diplomats were involved in ferrying arms and ammunition to Togolese dissidents. They informed their Togolese neighbours and the Libyan paid couriers were intercepted at Lome with a fearsome arsenal of explosives. The couriers during interrogation pointed to Libya as their supplier and Benin as the transit territory. The Togolese government publicly thanked Benin authorities for their co-operation and President Kerekou made strong protests to the Libyans and warned against any such future incident.

As though this was not enough provocation, Benin authorities discovered last summer that the terrorists involved in the Paris bombings tied to the Middle East through Cotonou under Libyan diplomatic cover. The country was saved the wrath and vengeance of the right-wing French government of Jacques

Chirac by the fact that to reassure public opinion, the French government had hurriedly but erroneously gone public with the accusations against specific Middle East organisations unconnected with Libya. This was in an attempt to convince French people as to the efficiency of police investigations into the bombings.

Following a tip off from Western intelligence agencies, Benin authorities opened investigations which uncovered an extended organisation of terrorist activities through Benin and directed against a number of West and Central African States involving the use of desperate Chadian exiles residents in Benin and Nigeria to smuggle sophisticated light weapons (machine guns, grenade and explosives) to Ilogo, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon.

It is at this point that Benin authorities decided to act energetical not only to save guard its image but most importantly to avoid open conflict with its immediate giant neighbour, Nigeria.

The recent control of alien businesses in Benin, included for the first time those owned by Libyans or sponsored by the Libyan security agencies. Some very high ranking officials are even urging the government to take much stronger measures such as the closure of GUNT bases and offices in Benin and the expulsion of the plethora of dubious Libyan agents at Cotonou.

Though the Benin President has given notice to his Libyan friends that they should henceforth be of good conduct or risk estrangement, he can for the moment, only go that far. For although Libyan aid may have substantially withered, it remains a vital blood line for the survival of his regime, until Western powers effectively respond to his appeals.

There is also the fact that despite popular disgust with the Libyans, Khadafi still has a large clientele within the Benin military and security services. These officers and officials who personally benefit from Libyan largesse could well pull the rug from under General Kerekou's feet.

It can therefore be safely assumed that except something dramatic (such as a coup d'etat) overthrows the present regime or radically alters the balance of power within the corridors of power at Cotonou, the Republic of Benin will in the next few years remain saddled with its Libyan albatross. What is certain now is that, after a decade of idyllic honeymoon the Benin-Libyan marriage has lost its lustre and the marriage is being rocked on several fronts.



fairs to Major Jalloud, a long time Goukouni foe. Jalloud's first move was to make changes in his Libyan task force by pulling out Colonel Messaoud. This was followed by increased financial and military aid to the CDR movement of Alcheik Ibn Umar, who was until recently being held prisoner on Goukouni's orders. Meanwhile, the Libyans were all the while sending word to the other GUNT movements that Goukouni was not indispensable.

In August the CDR attacked Goukouni's FAP troops and with massive Libyan aid crushed them in battle after another. With the rope fast tightening around his neck, Goukouni had no other choice but to turn to France and to Chadian leader Habre through emissaries and finally through his release in Paris on October 16. That was just what the Libyans needed to make their final move against Goukouni. On October 30, an attempt to arrest Goukouni in Tripoli led to a shooting incident resulting in the Chadian leader's hospitalisation.

It can be reasonably assumed that Goukouni's October 30 arrest has brought to an end, his long career in the Chadian rebellion. Contrary to popular speculations, however, Goukouni's political demise should neither be taken as the death nail of the GUNT, nor as an event of any benefit to the Ndjameña regime of President Hissène Habre.

Goukouni's rallying to Habre is really of no significance because the recent fighting in the north of Chad had resulted in a near complete destruction of his FAP troops. Besides, what is left of the FAP is not necessarily going to follow Goukouni's instructions to cross over to Habre's side.

Rather than weaken the GUNT, Goukouni's exit is likely to strengthen it. He was not only an incompetent leader, he was a controversial one whose very presence, was a cause of constant conflict between its various factions. Already, following his arrest in Tripoli, the remaining organisations of the GUNT assembled at Cotonou where they are presently negotiating a new *modus vivendi*, and settling up a new chain of command. The opposition forces are likely to come out better organised and much stronger.

The latest crisis will definitely stimulate a more coherent Chadian policy from Libya. In the past, Libyan officers responsible for their countries relations with Chadian opposition movements were more interested in filling their pockets than with following up



Habre



Omar

developments closely. Some have even tried to use the Chadian crisis as a means of discrediting Colonel Khaddafi and eventually overthrowing him. Henceforth, the authorities in Tripoli will be following up developments more closely and supervising their underlings down south with greater care.

As for Habre's government in Ndjameña, it stands to gain nothing but a brief halt in hostilities. The spate of cross overs will definitely be halted for a while and he will have to face the problems of absorbing the groups he has won over in recent months.

The Southern leaders such as

**“Rather than weaken the GUNT, Goukouni's exit, is likely to strengthen it. He was not only an incompetent leader, he was a controversial one whose very presence was a cause of constant conflict between its various factions.”**

Djidmar and Djogo who have now joined forces with Habre will no doubt be asking for their share of the cake. In the absence of northern cadres who have elected to remain with the GUNT, Habre will be forced to increasingly rely on Southern expertise to run his bureaucracy and carry out whatever reconstruction foreign aid will permit him. This will no doubt put him into conflict with his semi-literate and il-

literate Anakaza and Goran brothers who now occupy all the high positions in his administration and who by necessity will have to be replaced.

And should he fail to find places for the Southern elites he will no doubt have to face a resurgence of opposition from the south against his minority regime.

There is also the fact that most of the Southern leaders who have gone over to Ndjameña have refused to join Habre's UNIR party that was created in 1984. This should create enormous problems should Habre organise elections as promised. The South constitutes 85 per cent of the Chadian population and Habre is bound to lose any elections in which the Southern leaders decide to field independent candidates. Any attempt to indefinitely postpone elections or to tamper with election results is bound to meet stiff opposition and to strain, even break, his fragile alliance with the Djogos.

The conclusion here is that Habre stood to gain more from a disorganised, divided and mismanaged GUNT of Goukouni, than from being united with a castrated and impotent Goukouni who neither has a great following nor any expertise to offer.

The Chadian imbroglio remains as complex and as volatile as ever.

The Chadian imbroglio remains as complex and as volatile as ever. The euphoria in Ndjameña will soon, if it has not already, give way to a more realistic appraisal of the odds against peace in Chad. The country has only just entered the tunnel and vistas of peace are still way beyond the horizon.



## Southern Africa

countries didn't recognise that Transitional Government.

**Q: So we are going through a cycle of events, repeating 1978 and the 1980s, when South Africa held internal elections?**

**A:** It is the same process.

**Q: The Transitional Government has said it is replacing AG8. Is this a sign of change?**

**A:** One shouldn't say the Transitional Government, one should say that certain groups within the Transitional Government have been trying to replace AG8. Other groups within the Transitional Government, especially the 'homeland governments', have been resisting.

### No common interests

**Q: The division is essentially the problem they have always had, isn't it?**

**A:** Yes, it is one good thing that is happening. They (South Africa) brought groups together who don't have a common interest at all. They brought blacks and whites together, whites who are racists, and blacks who are opportunists, who only want money. And this can never work.

**Q: Do you see a possible change in US-South African relations and will that affect Namibia?**

**A:** Well, the American Congress and the Senate voted in favour of our struggle but

it is also very clear that the Reagan Government is supporting South Africa, and therefore it is difficult to expect any major change in their approach. The other Western countries are following the Americans when it comes to southern Africa.

**Q: Looking at the overall situation in southern Africa, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa itself, doesn't it look as though Namibia's independence is a long way off?**

**A:** As fighters for justice and peace we believe that our independence is very near. This has been the attitude of the oppressed people all over the world. In the past you would hear the Jews say, "Next year in Jerusalem." In Namibia we greet each other and say, "Next year in Windhoek."

On the other hand, we are also realistic about the realities, the evil realities and the forces of darkness co-operating, and trying to obstruct our liberation. But nevertheless, we are going to work and fight for our liberation, with the hope which we don't want anyone to take away from us. That liberation is ours, and we expect it soon.

**Q: Would you agree to a referendum in Namibia over resolution 435?**

**A:** No. Let us go to the polls and let the Namibians say what they want.

**Q: Can you convey what Namibians are experiencing under the South African occupation?**

**A:** It is difficult to describe the more than 100 years of being kept hostage by the oppressors. What we are going through is a nightmare. It is an endless nightmare, and we want this nightmare to come to an end — a nightmare of oppression, of exploitation, of being regarded as less important than the dogs and cats owned by whites. That is what we are going through. And that is what we want to come to an end.

### Namibia's hope

You can't illustrate this with one single story in such a short time. It needs hours and hours to tell you what is happening. What we want is the end of each night. What we want is the end of apartheid and by those people, the end of apartheid and by those people, the end of racism, so that violence, the end of racism, so that humanity can be restored in our country and in southern Africa as a whole.

**Q: Finally, has the current situation in South Africa given you more hope?**

**A:** We have got hope and this hope is derived from the other African countries that have got their independence. The same question was asked about Zimbabwe, It is now Zimbabwe, not Rhodesia. Why is it impossible that Namibia should become the real Namibia one day?

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Sudan

## Church leaders in peace drive

The Church is trying to mediate between the southern Sudan rebels and the government. Report by Saad Ahmed in Khartoum.

Sudanese church leaders are engaged in a new initiative to bring the South Sudan rebels — the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) and its military branch the SPLA — to negotiate with their northern counterparts.

The effort seems to be taking off despite uncertainties as to the fate or whereabouts of the movement's leader Colonel John Garang. The SPLM radio station based in Addis Ababa was quick to welcome the talks with the priests — "provided they do not come as emissaries or representatives of the Khartoum Government."

Earlier in November an all-Sudanese Muslim and Christian commission was set up to seek new approaches for peace and to supervise the handling, storing and distribution of relief aid to war and hunger-stricken South Sudan.

The demands were spelled out by Colonel Garang at a nine-hour meeting with Premier Sadiq el-Mahdi during the summit meeting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in August.

Northern politicians argue that as a goodwill feature the SPLM/SPLA should come to the negotiating table without preconditions. But el-Mahdi insists that no talks will be conducted unless the rebels stop all acts of terror and prove that they are not under the control of the government of Ethiopia.

On his return from the Central and East African summit in Rwanda in late November, el-Mahdi said: "We are in possession of evidence that Ethiopia is providing the rebels with arms, diplomatic passports and other supplies."

Premier el-Mahdi believes the SPLA is to blame for attacks on civilian lives and property, including the 60 innocent people killed in the plane disaster. He says the Ethiopian Government has begun to use the Sudanese rebels to serve its own ends.

Ethiopia has accused successive Sudanese governments of supporting the Eritrean secessionists.

The el-Mahdi Government, like its predecessors, is still unable to resolve the vital issue of how the South Sudan region should be governed. Those southern political parties which are not at least publicly associated with the SPLM, are at loggerheads with each other over whether South Sudan should have one administrative system, as stipulated in the Addis Ababa agreement which ended a previous war after 17 years, or by three administrations — for Equatoria, upper Nile and Bahrel Ghazal provinces — as was the case during the military regime of President Nimeiri.

The dispute among South Sudan political parties over what system to adopt is partially motivated by tribal rivalries. Opponents of a single region for South Sudan are confined to the tribes of Equatoria province, who fear domination by the majority Nilotic tribes, including that of Garang, the Dinka.

This dispute is as alarming as the military confrontation because for three years now the region has been in a state of collapse. The innocent inhabitants are being destroyed by shortages of food and other essentials and a surplus of bullets and guns.

In the last weeks the government has made some progress in providing aid and reasserting control of the region, but improvement is extremely slow. Parts of the forestry zones and areas near the Ethiopia border are still out of government control. Most are in the hands of Garang's Dinka tribe.

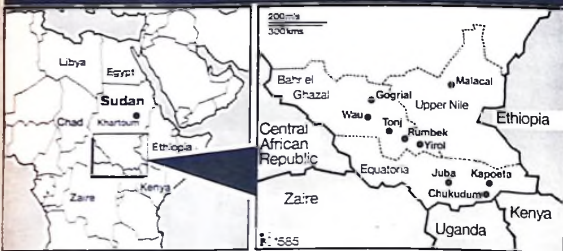
The fight also involves tribal militias which aim to protect their own people who are suffering from both sides of the conflict. Countless groups of looters are also active.

Several African and Arab States, Islamic organisations, Christian institutions as well as the big powers and international aid agencies are all deeply involved in the South Sudan conflict, further complicating the situation.

In some way the South Sudan conflict is similar to the Gulf War, lacking a clear sense of purpose and defined objectives. The difference is that Iraq and Iran are financing their battle from their oil process and what financial help they can obtain from allies, while the Sudanese are doing so from aid grants and loans.

Sudan, with a \$10 billion foreign debt, a huge budget and a million refugees from neighbouring countries, is spending more than a \$1 million a day just to keep its South Sudan war machine going.

## Sudan: the South



In the groups are two members of the ruling Supreme Council, Idris Elbanna and Dr Pacifico Luku; the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Khartoum, Sibril Zubeir; and the leading Islamic scholar and former Grand Mufti, Awadalla Salih.

Sources in Khartoum close to the SPLA say the government must heed demands the movement describes as basic before any realistic talks can take place.

Top of the list are the abolition of Islamic laws, abrogation of a defence pact with Egypt and a protocol on coordination with Libya, and totally new elections in South Sudan. Only partial polling took place last April for the constituent assembly in Khartoum. Elections were held in 31 of the region's 68 constituencies because of the security situation.

Some senior Sudanese officials are now saying that the SPLM/SPLA are bound to consider seriously any objective offer for mediation. This view, they add, is based on several developments.

The main one is the shooting down on 16 August of a civilian plane near the South Sudan city of Malakal — an event, they argue, which substantially reduced SPLM/SPLA credibility. They believe the moral and material support to the rebels will be greatly reduced.

Other factors are the continued successes being scored by government forces against those of Colonel Garang, internal differences among leaders of the movement and tribal conflicts between the SPLA fighters.

# Canada takes up 'Harambee' call

Clyde Sanger reports from Ottawa on a new help-Africa initiative.

Jomo Kenyatta made his political rallying call 'Harambee' (pull together) not only the motto for his newly independent country of Kenya but also an African slogan that reached many corners of the world.

Canadians seem to be answering this call today. Among the most generous relief donors when drought and famine afflicted 20 countries in 1984-85, several recent moves indicate they consider their part in the African recovery to be a long-term commitment.

These moves include the launching of the Africa 2000 campaign in May and, most recently, the appointment of two energetic ex-politicians to assignments involving Africa.

Stephen Lewis, who has made his mark as Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations, has taken on a wide-ranging job from UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in connection with the five-year programme of action for African economic recovery.

## 2000 means money

And David MacDonald, who coordinated Canadian relief operations for 17 months during the emergency, left Ottawa in October to become Ambassador to Ethiopia and the Sudan, although public relations tasks back in Canada are not normally given to a diplomat.

The Africa 2000 initiative was announced by the then Minister for External Relations, Monique Vezeina, in May. It amounted to adding \$150 million in money, goods and services to Africa in that year alone.

What was different about the initiative was that the money was focussed on village committees, local councils and voluntary agencies in Africa. The plan was to help start 2,000 small projects at this level before the end of 1987.

Lewis Perinbam, Vice-President of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), explained at the time: "This crisis has strengthened the realisation that Africa's most valuable resource lies in its own people. Only Africans can be the authors and architects of their own future, and only Africans can determine the solutions of the problems that beset them. The role of outsiders is to support African efforts, rather than try to direct them."

So the Africa 2000 initiative pursued three tracks. Half the £150 million is being handled by Canadian non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which have played a major part in raising \$60 million from the

public for famine relief.

Some 40 Canadian NGOs have formed Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) to collaborate in making links with and supporting programmes at village or district level.

The other \$75 million is added to the government's aid funds, although officials acknowledge they operate much less effectively at grassroots level than organisations like Oxfam-Canada.

## Some 40 Canadian NGOs have formed Partnership Africa Canada (PAC).

The third avenue was through the United Nations system. At the special Session of the General Assembly in May, Canada suggested that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) set up an international mechanism to provide funds and expertise to local communities for projects of their own choosing in the fields of fighting desertification, conserving ground cover and increasing food production. Vezeina said Canada would provide \$20 million over five years.

This scheme, which Perinbam saw as a network of NGOs linked to a small secretariat located in Africa, has had a slow start. Other donor countries have not come forward. But the UNDP's new Administrator, William Draper, set up a working group to push the scheme forward.

## Only Africans can be the authors and architects of their own future.

Meanwhile, Stephen Lewis had been catapulted into a highly visible position at the Special Session. When African delegates ran into difficulties with the draft document analysing Africa's critical situation and setting out the recovery programme, they turned to the Canadian ambassador and asked him to chair an ad hoc committee of all 158 member states.

They chose their man well. In Canada, Lewis is well known as one of the most eloquent and articulate people in public life. He inherited a gift of oratory from his father David, who emigrated as a boy from Poland, became a Rhodes Scholar and eventually the leader of the federal New Democratic Party (NCP).

Stephen led the Ontario wing of the NDP in the provincial legislature for most of the Seventies, afterwards turning his hand to writing children's books and skills to writing children's books and becoming a political commentator on

radio. He had also spent years as a teacher in Nigeria before starting into politics in Canada.

The experience of putting together the 19-page document which became the centrepiece of the Special Session was, according to Lewis, "the most fascinating five days of my adult life." A major ally in the work was Senegalese Foreign Minister Ibrahim Fall.

## Natural choice

With this diplomatic success, Lewis was a natural choice when UN secretary general Perez de Cuellar was looking for someone to act as liaison and adviser for him one to act as liaison programme. What was during the recovery programme. What was most unusual, if not unique, was to ask a working ambassador to take on the job.

Lewis says: "I sense that the response to the African crisis is giving the United Nations a new lease of life. The UN will have to move after a period to a broader scope and tackle the overriding economic issues of protectionism and debt. But the present concentration by the international community on African is giving vitality to the system."

David MacDonald also has a long acquaintance with Africa. As an opposition Conservative MP in the Sixties he flew into Biafra to see at first hand the extent of the famine and later co-authored a book on the Nigerian civil war.

A United Church minister whose wife Sandra is also ordained, he was in the short-lived Cabinet of Joe Clark but lost his seat in the 1980 election. When the Conservatives under Brian Mulroney returned to power in 1984, he was a less surprising choice for African emergency coordinator than Stephen Lewis, from a very different political party, was for Ambassador at the UN.

## Convincing

With a youthful, fresh-faced appearance MacDonald was a convincing spokesman for the relief programme. He ran into some criticism in Canada for accepting without apparent question the Ethiopian Government's denial that its resettlement programme of rural families from rebel areas had caused widespread hardship and deaths.

This will, no doubt, commend him to his Ethiopian hosts in his new post. But before arriving in Addis Ababa he also announced he would press the Ethiopian authorities to release 10 members of the late Emperor Haile Selassie's family who have been imprisoned for a dozen years.

His other task of persuasion will be back in Canada, to tell the Canadian public about the progress of the recovery programme and to urge their continued support.



Shultz



Lukman

has postponed the opening of the \$2 billion 250,000 barrel a day refinery without explanation.

Petromin owns and runs domestic oil refineries and has a share in three export refineries. It also controls the marketing of petroleum products abroad and their distribution within Saudi Arabia.

## AMERICA Now it's Reagan's Iraq-gate

Still trying to find a way out of the embarrassing US-Iran arms deal, President Ronald Reagan is in another trouble.

This time, it centres on US intelligence aid to Iraq, Iran's seven year old foe.

Secretary of State, George Shultz refused to comment on it, but other unidentified White House officials said the story is true in all material particular.

The officials said the purpose of the intelligence aid was to assist Iraqi bombing raids on Iran's oil terminals and power plants.

Guess where the new expose emerged: It is from the Washington post-master-murder of Richard Nixon's Watergate. Reagan's Irangate. Now it is Iraq-gate!

## URUGUAY

### Firearms runners fire cracked

A man and a woman trying to smuggle firearms into Uruguay were killed last week in a massive explosion after police shot at their truck.

The unidentified pair were carrying some 500 kilos (1,100 pounds) of contraband firearms from Brazil when police, who had been cracking down on smuggling from Brazil, gave chase near San Gabriel, 100 kms (62 miles) North of Montevideo.

The pair refused to stop and police began firing at the truck, setting off an explosion that completely blew apart the vehicle and damaged buildings as much as 500 metres (yards) away.

Police found the body of the woman some 100 metres (yards) from the scene of the explosion.

## OPEC

### Quota deadlock

OPEC 80th ministerial conference deadlocked again last week, over quota allocations, designed to raise prices to 18 dollars a barrel.

The stumbling block was Iraq which refused to accept the production quota given to it.

Oil ministers, including the OPEC President used the larger part of last week to persuade defiant Iraq to accept the quota which is less than Iran's.

Iraq Oil Minister, Qassem Ahmed Faq said Iraq would not accept anything short of what Iran has.

"That is our position and it is firm," Faq told newsmen in Geneva.

What Iraq rejected was the 1984 quota of 1.2 million barrels a day — Iran's quota is 2.3 million barrels.

With Iraq's intransigence, OPEC's hope to strengthen the oil market and increase prices will definitely be an impossible mission.

## ABLA Pilot

Saudi Arabia has set to announce the first of its oil tanker fleet. The fleet will consist of 10 tankers, each with a capacity of 100,000 tons. The tankers will be built by the Saudi National Shipbuilding Company. The first tanker is expected to be launched in the next few months. The fleet will be used to transport oil from Saudi Arabia to other parts of the world.



King Fahd

# CONCORD BUSINESS FORUM

When the Federal Government established two vehicle assembly plants in 1975, there was the high hope that the plants would stimulate the development of related sectors of the economy.

It was generally believed in government circles that within a decade, most if not all of the components of automobile will be produced in Nigeria, with the automobile technology also transferred.

But these dreams have today been replaced by the realisation that the assembly plants do not even use up to 30 per cent of local materials in the manufacture of their products. And the assembly plants are demanding that they be given more years to mature.

The managing director of Peugeot Automobile Nigeria Limited, Mr. Daniel Lange, said the vehicle assembly plants need 20 years to mature. He cited the examples of India and Brazil, where it took more than 20 years to reach maturity.

Lange made it clear that the assembly plants have always been prepared to use locally manufactured components, but regretted that these are not available in the right quantity and quality. He said his company wants to increase local value added and reduce imported raw materials to 50 per cent of finished cost in the next four years.

Lange attributed the low level of local content to the non-existence of some industries such as that metal and steel plants, press shop, petrochemical and machine tool plants.

During a recent media briefing organised by Volkswagen of Nigeria Limited (VWON) to ease the criticisms over auto

## Alibi by auto-assemblers

**Nigeria's auto-assemblers and component suppliers make a case for protection and explain the low local content in the vehicles assembled. Nimi Wariboko reports.**

pricing in Nigeria, the managing director, Mr. Klaus Von Bothmer attributed the low local content in vehicles assembled in Nigeria to lack of market protection. He argued that government has never kept its promise of market protection; as a way of encouraging the assembly plants to undertake the development of local content. He said: "Throughout the years, Finished Build Up (FBU) cars were allowed to enter the country. In 1981, for example, in only four months 34,000 FBU units of Panel Van entered the country, the overall imports were about 75,000 unit."

The stance of Bothmer is shared by Lange, who went further to argue that the present protection is negative. In some foreign countries where cars are also assembled, the effective protection is over 50 per cent, he said.

Another common stance between the two managing directors is that the development of local content is directly related to the volume of production in the assembly plants. They argued that the local suppliers of auto-parts can only generate the necessary funds to carry on the capital intensive investment when the volume of demand for their products is high. But if due to the importation of FBU, the assembly plants do not produce (or produce below capacity), the development of local con-

tent will be stifled.

The late issuance of import licence to local supplier of auto-parts in 1984 and 1985 has further dampened the use of local components by the assembly plants. According to Lange, the develop of local content depends on "continuos



*Akintunde, Industries Minister.*

availability of local components. In these years, the late issuance of licences, coupled with insufficient value of licences led to inadequate and irregular supply of local components.

In broad terms, vehicle assemblers have blamed the problems of the nation's automobile industry, especially in the area of local content development on the inconsistency of successive governments' industrial policy.

Participants at the "National Workshop on Linkages Opportunities in the Engineering Industry" held last week, said that the

new custom tariff regime which reduced import duties on Fully Built Up vehicles is a manifestation of the inconsistency in the nation's industrial policy.

Chief M.O. Akindele, the managing director of Gacol Limited, in his address to the workshop said: "The new tariff structure, by reducing import duties of Fully Built Up products to the point of indifference, has virtually knocked the bottom out of the local manufacture which with excise duty would invariably be more costly than pure imports."

Akinrele also criticised Nigeria's industrial policies as not encouraging linkage opportunities in industries. In his words: "In Nigeria for instance, we observe policies which seem to require the pin and the nail maker to set up a steel plant, the plastic moulder to set up a petrochemical plant, the brewer to become a big-time farmer and the auto assembler to make all the components, all in the name of local sourcing of raw materials. Considering the different technologies and expertise involved, it is easy to see that the doctrine of self reliance can become over-stretched."

The effect of this, he said is that many of the nation's giant companies are monolithic in the structure of their operations, with the resultant high product prices.

The managing director of PAN, Lange said that it is impossible for an assembly plant to manufacture all the parts — about 3,000 — by itself or even procure them locally. He said that General Motors (GM) of United States does not manufacture all the parts of its cars. He said that GM import radiators from Peugeot in France. In all parts of the world auto companies buy most of their inputs from a wide

variety of sub-contractors, he further disclosed.

The automobile industry, by its nature, comprises almost all the different technologies — air conditioning, foundry, machining, stamping, plastic rubber transformation, surface treatment paint, said Mr. Pierre Janni, general manager purchase and local content development at PAN. And it is because of this symbiotic character of the automobile industry that it operates as a stimulant of industrial growth.

Faced with dwindling foreign exchange allocation for the importation of raw material and the call for closure, the vehicle assembly plants appear to be making attempts to develop local content.

For instance, the automobile assemblers are pursuing the establishment of 8600 Wilson Central Press Workshop. If this happens, the importation of mechanical parts will be reduced by 50 per cent.

Also, VWON has entered into contractual agreement with AGIP (Nigeria) Limited and National Oil Company for lubricants; Berger Paints Limited for paints and Dunlop Nigeria Limited for tyres and tubes. In addition, current local producers of auto components are encouraged to produce the right quality and quantity for use by VWON.

PAN claims that it tops the list of local content development, and has the highest local added value among vehicle assemblers in

Nigeria. Presently, the company has 44 local manufacturers spread across the country, supplying about 375 different parts.

The company has also planned to reach the following level of local content: 30 per cent by the end of 1987; 35 per cent by 1988, and 40 per cent by 1989. To this effect, the company has identified 15 industrial projects to be implemented.

PAN gives financial and technical assistance to local suppliers, to increase their local inputs in the production of auto components. It is also in contact with over 20 prospective suppliers to develop various stamped parts.

In spite of these efforts, industry experts believe that local content development is still far from being

satisfactory. A crucial issue, observers say, is that although it may appear that the automobile industry is reducing import content of their vehicles, the reality is different. This is because the existing local suppliers depend heavily on imported raw materials.

More surprising is the fact that of all the efforts made by the assembly plants, none is directed towards the development of a Nigerian automobile engine. Thus the government's dream of producing a purely Nigerian automobile is still far from reality, and might even be an unfulfilled dream.

According to Lange: "To make a Nigerian car is not necessary. But what is necessary is to adopt what is specific to Nigeria."

## Naira's downward slide

Down, down and down. The Naira depreciates again.

The external value of the Naira last week recorded a depreciation against the dollar at the thirteenth bidding session at the Second Tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFBEM). It depreciated by three per cent at last Thursday's bidding. The naira was fixed at ₦3.30 to one American dollar as against the ₦3.20 to one American dollar last week. In real terms, the value of the naira has fallen from 31.25 American cents last week to 30.30 American cents.

The week's rate will be operative in the market till 8 January, 1987 when the next bidding will take place.

Thirty-nine banks submitted their bids for the U.S. \$75 million offered for sale by the Central Bank of Nigeria with 37 of them winning. Continental Merchant Bank and the New Nigerian Bank were the unsuccessful banks. The banks total demand for foreign ex-

change stood at \$52.235 million.

The marginal rate of ₦3.3000 was submitted by African Continental Bank which bid for \$1.5 million but went home with only \$1.015 million. The highest bid rate of ₦3.6500 was submitted by United Bank for Africa and the lowest was submitted by New Nigerian Bank. An important feature of the bidding is that — apart from the highest bid — they clustered around ₦3.60 and ₦3.20 to one U.S. dollar. And none of the bidders quoted a rate below the CBN imposed rate of last week. The CBN's rate for last week was ₦3.20.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Alhaji Abdulkadir Ahmed said that there were improvements in lodgements in the demerit accounts. He attributed this improvement to the introduction of SFEM and the new

guidelines on the movement of foreign currency.

The CBN boss said that a new balance of ₦98.6 million using SFEM was recorded in the accounts as at the end of October. In foreign currency, the net balance comprised \$23.4 million, \$1.54 million and Deutsche Mark 0.089, French Franc 0.052 million and Swiss Franc 0.013 million.

The governor also revealed that of the US \$594.4 million allocated to the banks as at the end of the 9th week of operation of SFEM, US \$488.2 million or 82.1 per cent went to the industrial sector.



Of this amount, raw materials accounted for US \$300.4 million or 50 per cent, while machinery, spare parts and CKD accounted for US \$187.8 million or 31.6 per cent.

Invisible item consumed US \$5.9 million or one per cent. While food got US \$29.8 million or five per cent, general merchandise accounted for US \$69.5 million or 10.96 per cent and capital goods accounted for US \$4.5 million or 0.75 per cent.

Imports for the agricultural sector got the least as it accounted for only US \$0.77 million or 0.12 per cent of the total allocation.

The buying rates fixed for the six other traded currencies last Thursday were ₦4.7174 (Pound Sterling), ₦1.6382 (Deutsche Mark), ₦1.9406 (Swiss Franc), ₦0.4958 (French Franc), ₦1.4473 (Dutch Guilder) and ₦0.0202 (Japanese Yen). The first tier has remained at ₦2.5964 to one US dollar in the last weeks.

— Nimi Wariboko

XMAS

The buying spree

Nigerians are buying up the local shops, a sharp contrast to the general belief that the economic down turn may spell an unexciting Xmas. What is the true picture?

In spite of the harsh economic weather, Christmas shopping is going on with heightening intensity daily as the big day draws nearer. Shoppers have been thronging the various shops and markets in very large numbers this past week. This trend seems to be at odds with the general complaints about worsening conditions.

At the UAC Department Store in both Ikeja and Lagos, shoppers kept trooping in and out with their varied purchases daily. A stone throw from there, the Kingsway Stores along Marina in Lagos was equally busy. Brisk business was going on too in the various other shops scattered in the area.

For instance, Bata Stores has not been short of customers. In particular, its shop on Broad Street has been getting a steady train of shoe buyers. Men, women and children could be seen trying out shoes, which many eventually bought. They were all taking advantage of the price discount by Bata. Other stores had discounts too to attract more customers.

At the nearby Cash 'N' Carry, directly opposite Kingsway, the place had the feel of an international airport at peak traffic period. The place was crowded. Business was moving quickly. Money was changing hands. Goods, electronic products particularly were being moved out to the homes of lucky buyers.

Balugun Market, popular for clothes and shoes amongst other things, was bustling with activity. People were buying ready-made clothes and shoes. The business for the home-made ones was booming. Yards upon yards of clothes exchanged for various sums of money. Tailors around had more work on hand than they could manage. Tailors all around town are

experiencing the same rush at Xmas period, a trend that usually shoots up the prices of sewing as has happened.

Aswani Market looked like the venue of a popular football match. Big cars that had disgraced privileged shoppers splattered about. Hawkers paraded and shouted their wares. The crowd of buyers and sellers was so dense that motorists who were unlucky to come there cursed their

overflowing with consumers buying foodstuffs such as chicken, cow meat, and rice.

Indications generally are that the shopping spree is not restricted to the areas surveyed. Indeed, it may even be a pointer to the trend nation-wide. What then could be the explanation for this spree amidst rising want?

In fact, the general feeling has been that this Xmas

the unemployed have since risen. Many companies have been laying off workers since the year began. For the unemployed and their dependants, the Christmas may even turn out to be an untimely occasion, a point where their deprived status may become severely accentuated.

The undulating pattern of general prices throughout the year hasn't helped matters. And with S.F.E.M, prices seem to have gone to the moon. With the usual big hike in prices at Christmas, the stage was set for something unpalatable.

It wouldn't have been too surprising given this general bleak background, said to be worse than the previous year, if Christmas shopping became much more reduced even if to a negligible level.



Shopping for Xmas.

gods as they swayed out the heavy traffic hield-up.

In Ikeja, shopping was going on as elsewhere. Well known centres like Juli Pharmacy and Stores have been getting their own share of Christmas buyers. Around Ikeja Bus Stop, the Christmas mood is evident. The shops around were not the only lucky recipients of shoppers' patronage. The market nearby was

would be gloomy. This gloomy expectation is not unjustified. Many workers have not been paid for months. For this group, Xmas bonus is out of question. The refunds from the Economic Emergency Fund was expectantly looked onto as a big booster for empty pockets this December. Delays in its release may yet mar that dream.

Moreover, the crowd of

But the shopping witnessed was not negligible.

Even at that, the level of shopping this year had a somewhat prominent feature. As one observer put it, "Most people now buy only Christmas cards. In fact, the line for cards are longer than for other commodities." Independent observations at UIC, Kingsway, other shops and roadside stores somehow

## Business Forum

confirmed this.

The observer, a worker in one of the government ministries who prefers anonymity, believed that Christmas this year is going to be worse than last year's. He attributed this to the rising cost of things. According to him, "Even Christmas cards put me off. When I saw the price of N3 per copy, it meant N6 to send one each to my two girlfriends. I had to go for cheaper ones with great loss in quality. As for clothes, like many other people, my budget for them has been greatly reduced: I can only afford the least costly. The shoes I have now will have to serve me until things improve."

At Halogun and elsewhere, sellers of fashionable wears appeared to be bearing the brunt of the above attitude. Most of the shop owners complained of poor sales. Compared to last year, they stated em-

phatically that business is not better. One seller, Mr. Sunny Jackson asked rhetorically when confronted: "Have you seen any customer come here since? Last year, even though things were hard, we had more customers. But this year with SFEM and costlier wears, people can't afford to buy much clothes."

One dissenting voice in the general view that things are worse, is Mr. Steven Obi. His shop is at 4 Market Street in Lagos. He sells men's wears. "This year is a bit far compared to last year. I have been having more customers than last year. I made N50 profit daily after selling between 10 to 20 clothes per day. My profit this year has been higher and I have sold more clothes," he said.

Mr. Obi brushed off the general disagreement to his contention thus: "If you

open the Central Bank and give large sums of money to everybody, people will still complain that there is no money. I stand by my side of the story. I am speaking for myself. I don't know about others."

Something else seems to give credence to Mr. Obi's contention. The management of the department stores contacted were hesitant about giving categorical statements on their sales this year as against last year. It would have helped to get a clearer picture on the situation. Sales persons, taking a cue from their management, kept mum on sales figures.

Even then, a discernible path can still be charted in the maze of conflicting information. The shop sellers who see a bleaker Xmas may just be playing to type. They may not want to give an impression that they are making huge profits from their wares which are sold

mostly at exorbitantly priced rates.

Furthermore, it was clear from the appearance of those embarking on the shopping spree that they were far from impoverished. Many of them are fairly well-to-do. They seemed unaffected much by the economic downturn. They are probably the type who could buy a Volkswagen Beetle for N20,000. As for the mass of impoverished Nigerians, the Xmas may mean a drastically slashed purchasing power.

But Xmas is one season where people go out of their way to celebrate. Saving all year round for it is not an uncommon practice. In fact, a major pointer that this Christmas may still have the traditional spark is the numerous plans for travelling home which haven't been shelved and for parties which promise to be as exciting as ever.

— Fredlitz Igbeare

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**C**laude Ake earns a living by teaching political economy, a subject of which he is a professor at the University of Port Harcourt. But his trademark is white jumper and a pair of brown sandals. He bestrides the Marxism-Leninism camp in Nigeria as a colossus. His latest book: "A Political Economy of Africa," is regarded both in Marxist and bourgeois circles as a classic.

Ake does not just write Marxism-Leninism for scholarship sake; he is also a consistent and committed socialist and wants Nigeria to adopt the socialist model of development.

In this interview with Nimi Wariboko, Professor Ake, now in his 40s, discusses the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the Babangida regime.

**Q:** How do you assess the measures instituted so far to restructure the economy?

**A:** The best thing that can be said for the measures instituted so far is that they make sense in terms of the structures of our system and its rationality and logic. Given the system we have now and given the historical circumstances, the measures are perhaps what we might expect. But whether they are what should solve our problems is another matter. In my opinion they rest on assumptions that are mistaken. First, the assumption that a move to a purer free market mechanism is going to help Nigeria, is not true.

One has to distinguish between the welfare of Nigerians and perhaps the welfare of few people particularly multinationals. In short the impact is going to be differential because the general significance of the operation of a freer market mechanism is that, it is going to make the strong, stronger. It is going to compound the inequalities, and for Nigeria as a whole it is going to confirm us in those things in which we have comparative advantage. Which in effect is comparative disadvantage since we specialise in the production of primary goods with very little processing. So making it freely competitive and leaving things to the free market will mean of course that we become more set in a particular division of labour that does not help us.

**Q:** On Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Market

**A:** I think it is an illusion to assume that changes in the rate of exchange can be the pivotal solution to a nation's economy. Even on capitalist prejudices,

## SAP is an illusion

that cannot be correct. Because we have exchange problems because of our pattern of consumption which is also a manifestation of our system of production. And unless we solve the question of production, then the question of imbalances of trade which the exchange rate addresses is a relatively secondary problem. Every Thursday we all wonder what the rate of the naira will be and we console ourselves that it is getting stronger and going well, and pin our hopes about revival and recovery on changes in exchange rates. I don't know any capitalist country in the world — America, Sweden — that reposes its hope on this sphere of operation. So, I think from that point of view one cannot have much confidence.

A final comment is, of course, that there are some hidden assumptions which need to be articulated to see that perhaps we might not be doing the right things. For instance, we are facing a problem of deficit and imbalance, hence the



Babangida: Missiles at SAP.

foreign exchange shortage. But what we are doing in effect is to borrow more, pretending that the naira is finding its level, we are in fact creating an artificial situation by putting ourselves in a position we are simply increasing our debts to be paid. And in fact the whole question of production is not being properly addressed, so that it is conceivable that when the debts become due and they surely will be, our problems will be compounded. So these are my reasons for thinking that perhaps we are to rethink these measures.

Although in fairness to the government, one should add that they have inherited a situation, a system whose logic does not leave them much of a choice, and to really expect them to do other-

wise is perhaps unfair. I don't think they can be fairly expected to launch the kinds of assaults in the forces which they could need to do if they wanted to do things differently.

**Q:** What are the plans of socialists for 1990. Is there a plan to form a political party come 1990?

**A:** Well I don't think that any person is in a position to speak for socialists, neither myself nor anybody. I think that we have a hegemonic class that is going to decide what is going to happen in 1990. And what socialists do in terms of their principles is not really a plan, not that kind of thing, but to monitor the contradictions as they develop and develop their practice according to those circumstances.

**Q:** Do you subscribe to the view that socialism cannot solve Nigeria's problems?

**A:** I cannot see how anybody can say such a thing. First, it is an idealist question. It is unscientific, because it is based purely on hypothetical situations: If we had socialism. But then what socialism? It may not solve Nigeria's problems? But what problems? That statement is too vague, too meaningless and too based on hypothetical assumptions to elicit any serious response. All that one can say is that the very essence of socialism is concrete democracy.

The fact that rewards and the burden of citizenship are shared with equity. The fact that people are mobilised to participate in the shaping of their lives, to accept responsibilities for their destiny, and it has to be if there is genuine socialism. It has to be better because more people will show commitment to the system. The system will have more legitimacy even if there are difficulties because the concrete interest of the generality of the people becomes the supreme law.

**Q:** What reforms should be introduced in the 1987 budget?

**A:** I don't think that one can talk of reforms, at least from my own point of view. I think there is a certain logic now in the way that things are going and we know of course that the budget has to get the blessing of the IMF and the World Bank. This means that we have a pretty clear idea of what it will be, and so if one had ideas of what it should be, those ideas really would be largely irrelevant. I would at least want to see some effort to control inflation and some effort to understand that the income of workers is to be increased in this situation.



Enyinnaya's impression of apartheid.

**H**e painted two white policemen firing machine guns. The caption is quite racist: "APARTHEID, a crime against humanity." And that artistic painting was Christian Emmanuel Eyi Enyinnaya. In the first prize in this year's Anti-apartheid Poster Competition organised by the National Committee Against Apartheid (NACAP). And of the prize—a new chance to study abroad — he says "It is to take me to America." Not only that, the people will relieve him of intra-campus walkouts.

An undergraduate of the IBEI, Enyinnaya, Iyi says he was initiated into the art of painting by his love for colours. And the use of colour has been his trademark. "It is a way of distinguishing my identity," he affirms.

Like any other trade, painting, as he views it, plays very vital roles in human lives too. Since he did not find himself in the art profession by accident, he keeps working towards achieving suitable opportunities through his chosen career. To him, the art, apart from giving human life, it educates the mind just as his painting on apartheid is. Moreover, Iyi says, "as an artist, you have to manifest feeling, particularly sober reflections through art."

For all the effort he injected into his anti-apartheid poster, he has a bicycle to show for it. Yes, he takes it (prize) with every imaginative delight as "winning the first prize is where the pride lies, not the

prize is such." Add with brush and paints, "I would march world," he vows.



Janet Nelson

**S**he's enigmatic and admits it. Her love-life and her career (the two passions of her life) continuously pull her in opposite directions.

Mrs. Janet Nelson, Admin. Personnel Officer, NEPA District Office, Jos says of herself: "I consider myself a career woman. My job is as important to me as my family. It's like being in love with two things at the same time. You have to compromise and in the process you pay a price."

Janet would not allow herself to be treated as second class because of her sex. "I consider myself a human being first and being female is just incidental." She believes that for a woman to get ahead in Nigeria, she must acquire all the education she could get and should be able to lift her head. "Most of the time, society makes you into something you're not." According to her, having been held back for so long, the woman should now realize that her proper place is anywhere where human beings belong.

A business administration graduate, Mrs. Nelson says she spent most of her adult life in the USA, "growing up and studying." She says she is proud of her Nigerian heritage. "Being a Nigerian woman is a credit to me." She feels this is one of the countries of the world where the woman would go and return in the fields to come back home and tend to the man.

She sees her job as very challenging

and feels that being seen as a woman, increases two-fold the expectations from her. This she says makes her more determined to prove that the woman can do better in most endeavours. Her ultimate ambition, she says with a wry smile, is to become the General Manager of NIPA. But that would not be possible, she concludes "because, I am not an engineer."

**H**e did not find fulfillment in literary science, so he quit and turned to book selling.

Now, Lanre Adesoyi, the Area Promotions Manager (North) of the University Press Limited, has a certificate from ABU, Zaria in marketing.

Lanre, who has an apostolic faith in man being the architect of his fate, says: "You can turn destiny, you can change anything. People should not sit down and expect miracles." He says a good mixture of honesty, hardwork and dedication would yield favourable results.

He aspires to own a publishing house one day because he is not satisfied with the current book situation in Nigeria. He says: "Knowledge derives from books, and with books placed under license, you are killing the chances of people to acquire knowledge."

He loves books, he says, and by way of selling published materials, he feels satisfied that he is contributing to the spread of knowledge in this part of the developing world. He has travelled extensively within Nigeria and says he is adaptive to changes. He thinks that Nigeria can survive "if we put our priorities right. People should stop thinking only of themselves." Should be a national consciousness." Above all, he is a committed Rotarian.

— Funso Ogunlade

— Dimeji Popoola



Lanre Adesoyi

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