

ASIANS TAKE OVER RAILWAY AGAIN

FEB. 7 - 14, 1994. VOL. 5 NO. 6

# Citizen

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N30

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M. T. Babalola

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## BRIEFLY

The multi-million Naira Sultan Bello Mosque at Unguwar Sarki, Kaduna was declared open last Friday, February, 4 by the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, on behalf of the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki.

The ceremony was attended by thousands of muslim Umma across the country. Work on the mosque started about 10 years ago, but was only completed in 1993, with the help of a generous contribution by Alhaji Abdulwahab Iyanda Folawiyo, the *Baba Addini* of Nigeria.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

**I**f Nigeria is a Giant in the Sun, the North is a Giant Asleep. And it is very dangerous to wake up a giant — especially after having made him angry and putting him on the defensive. That precisely is what the rest of Nigeria is finding out. For long regarded as holding a national conference, the north suddenly began issuing the counter-charge. Caution, the traditional hallmark of northern politics was liable to be, and had indeed been, interpreted as political cowardice. The north decided it was time to abandon it.

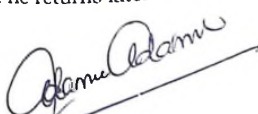
This forced some of its accusers to beat a hasty retreat and others to even question whether the conference should hold now that the north has begun asking for it. Is all this posturing for the conference or is the north holding an ace up its sleeve? **Mahmud Jega** tried to find out. His report is our cover this week.

A recent visitor to our Kaduna office observed that the editorial board of *Citizen* was

afflicted with a conspiracy of departures. At that time I was planning to leave for a one-year stay abroad. **Kabiru Yusuf** had already finished his visa formalities to South Africa. And just then the offer came for **Bilkiu Yusuf** to join Senior Executive Course 16 at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru.

**Bilkiu** has already reported at Kuru, and **Kabiru** now whiles away his time on the trail of Nelson Mandela. I am still here — of course.

For which reason I will double up as Editor until **Bilkiu** returns. **Tawey Zakka** goes to Lagos as Bureau Chief and will remain there. **Kabiru** resumes in Kaduna when he returns later in the year.



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## LETTERS

**Re: The death of SAP**

Sir,

The 1987 World Bank report, a year after the introduction of the dreaded SAP, showed that there was no evidence of growth and the country suffered a 16 per cent fall in Gross National Income (GNI), a three per cent fall in gross domestic products (GDP), 18.5 per cent fall in per capital income and a further 50 per cent drop in terms of trade. In short, the only achievement according to that report was a 35 per cent reduction in imports — which later changed.

Thank God for the death of SAP.  
Adieu.

Abbas G. Idriss  
3, Kanta Road, Kaduna

**On national conference**

Sir,

All the advocates of the so-called national question are misleading millions of Nigerians away from a genuine understanding of the solution to their problems namely indiscipline, corruption and underdevelopment.

The whole scenario, it seems, is a Yoruba strategy to hijack national leadership at all costs and by all means. This is buttressed by a Yoruba columnist who wrote in the *Nigerian Tribune* of December 22, 1993 "what the (Yoruba) people are saying is that God did not create Nigeria. That Nigeria was a creation of the British now hijacked by the northern interest groups to fend for themselves and their surrogates to the impoverishment of the rest."

The point must be made clear at this stage that the northern peoples have no fear of separation or disintegration of the Nigerian union in whatever name called. So as we approach the D-day we must bear in mind that our gain in staying together is mutual trust as our losses will be. In this regard, when and if the conference holds, no part of this country must be forced against its

will to remain as part of the federation. The south-west or any sub-nationality can be allowed to go if they so wish. This is the best path towards lasting peace and development.

Alhaji Usman Sani Sami  
Kaduna

**1993: A year to remember**

Sir,

What seems to be a surprise to most people especially those who are usually led by their noses is the appointment of key advocates of June 12 mandate in the cabinet of the present military regime, like Onagoruwa, Jakande, Iyorchia Ayu, Ebenezer Babatope and Alhaji Abubakar Rimi whose vituperative statements nearly caused chaos.

The political events of 1993 is a tragic-comedy play where opportunism triumphed over the suffering majority. The year finally ended with Chief MKO Abiola still weeping for his June 12 mandate that we already know is history.

Saka Raji Audu  
BUK, Kano

**Onagoruwa, the NBA and Nigeria**

Sir,

It pains me to ask, where are those confused, disgruntled and so called advocates of uprightiness and righteousness in the Nigerian Bar Association who claimed to be custodians of our great profession? It is a pity and indeed traumatic that such people have continued to keep mute and pretend not to know anything about the criminal records of Dr. Olu Onagoruwa both at the Nigerian Law School and the pending court case against him.

I am sure that had the attorney-general been a northerner or from any other part other than western zone; those who do not wish the NBA well using the media would

have called for his head at all cost.

Sodangi A. Danso  
Abuja

**Legacy of princesses in Zazzau emirate**

Sir,

The emirship of Ja'afaru is now history, but the curiosity of it is still abundantly around in Zaria, as since Ja'afaru's ascendancy to the throne only grand children were able to become emirs of Zazzau.

The current list of hopefuls to the Zaria throne is dominated by distant princes whose natural fathers were never emirs. Ordinarily, one would not have taken them seriously since female children in Hausa tradition of rulers seldom give birth to offsprings who aspire to be emirs unless their fathers are also of royal blood.

Palace watchers are now trying to concoct some historical analogy to suggest that the house of Bakwa, as the Zaria palace is known to the royalists, was destined to be occupied by decedents of the king's daughters. They also recall how a daughter of the king of Turunku Bakwa, Princess Zaria founded a new capital for her father and went on to build the city walls as well as the new palace. In appreciation, her father Bakwa named the new capital after her, and the palace she built for him has continued to serve as the seat of power in Zaria for many centuries. The glory of Zazzau, people argue therefore, is the heritage of daughters. The two adventurer-princesses Amina and Zariya must have prayed in favour of grandchildren and female daughters' children. If such a prayer were actually said and have now been finally answered, it would not be surprising if the seat of Zaria traditional rulership would continue to be the goal and achievement of many a grandchild of some royal parents.

Idris Abdullahi  
Zaria City

Letters to Citizen, carrying names, signatures and addresses, should be brief and to the point. They should be typed double spaced and addressed to Letters Page, Citizen, G.11 Unguwar Kanawa, P.M.B 2334, Kaduna. The Editor reserves the right to edit, publish or reject all letters.

## VIEWPOINT

## The north and others

**V**ery soon, if all goes according to plan, all sections of Nigeria will sit down and stare at, perhaps shout and throw a few punches at each other at the constitutional conference promised by Abacha regime.

As *Citizen* stated before, there is nothing wrong with the idea of a conference in the light of all the problems that have bedevilled the country in recent years and even threatened its continued existence as one entity. In fact, the conference may decide to entrench into the constitution something like a periodical national conference every 10 years, to review the state of the union in areas which are not normally covered by parliaments. This idea borrows a leaf from China, where a People's Political Consultative Conference is periodically held.

For many reasons, northern Nigeria and the positions it takes or doesn't take at the upcoming conference will go a long way to determine its overall success. Presently, the issue that promises to be the most contentious at the conference is the demand for a rotation of the presidency, which some groups allege is being "dominated" by the north. Within the north, too, some have come to see the far north alone as being the part that "dominates." The truth or otherwise of these assertions can be argued out at the conference. However, in the end, everyone will have to concede that the thing about presidents coming from different parts of the country is important in order to satisfy the psychological feeling of belonging in all groups.

As *Citizen* reported in this week's lead story, northern leaders were about to make an offer to southern political leaders for a

## Well, a trade fair

**T**he Kaduna International Trade Fair, a pioneer, is fast losing its aura. It started in 1976 as an avenue for local entrepreneurs to exchange business ideas and make contact. Three years later, it was expanded to include international businesses. Within a short time, the fair became

gentleman's agreement to rotate the presidency when the ING was suddenly toppled. It is to be expected that, perhaps after the early exchange of brickbats, northern leaders will return to that theme and work out a formula that, hopefully, does not have to be written in the constitution, but nevertheless has enough moral force to achieve the same results.

A southerner can, and probably ought to, be president. Whoever does so will, no doubt, need the support of, and must therefore reassure the north. Clearly, this can't be done with threats.

Again, as many northern leaders point out in the accompanying story, the fact that so many presidents and heads of state came from the north, whether by design or default, may have actually hindered the region's economic development efforts, and not enhanced them. Or even if it helped them, the same, if not more, can still be gained under a southerner as president, provided the political cards are played adroitly.

The only other issue worthy of collective northern attention is perhaps the issue of revenue allocation and, specifically, the desire of oil-producing areas for a higher proportion of revenue to be allocated according to the principle of derivation. The north should be able to support this desire of the southern minorities.

The north needs to compromise with others and within itself, for indeed there are several problems of coexistence between different communities of the region. Northern leaders must put their heads together to resolve these problems in order to ensure that a peaceful atmosphere reigns for the region's economic and social advancement.

such a roaring success that the federal government felt it justified to allocate it a permanent site on the Kaduna-Zaria road. That, unfortunately, was the beginning of its problems. Too many interests, most of whom are utterly selfish, became involved in organising the fair that in no time at all, it descended

into an all-comers market that reputable businesses had trouble participating.

The downhill slide was compounded by the emergence of more purposeful fairs and the economic problems Nigeria found itself in so that not even trade liberalisation under the context of an unbridled market economy could stem the decline.

It was no longer a trade fair. It became more like a trading outpost for all manner of people to display their wares at the end which a huge profit is declared and that's it. The original focus of encouraging the exchange of ideas on industrial, agricultural, economic and technological development and as an avenue for the opening up of business opportunities became lost in a barrage of mediocrity.

It was in the midst of this that in October, a simmering dispute in the house of the organiser, the Kaduna Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, blew into the open. Charges and counter-charges of fraud and mismanagement were made and these in turn threatened the holding of the just concluded 16th fair at the new site. Added to this was the boycott by most Western nations. Of the 20 or so invited,

only Germany was present. Poland and Argentina too had stands as did Algeria and Egypt. The boycott was informed of course by the lack of "democracy" in Nigeria, but the utterly ridiculous reason of the new site being dusty was given.

It was against this background that the fair was held, albeit poorly. Nevertheless, it was commendable that the fair held at the new site. The organisers had argued, quite sensibly, that dust or not, a start had to be made somewhere and the sooner the better.

The fair's theme of coordinating international and local efforts in financing and sustaining economic development and the promotion of economic and diplomatic growth therefore could not be more timely given Nigeria's current travails in both sectors. It is imperative that local businesses and industries find a way to attract foreign investment and create a better atmosphere for improved domestic production. A situation where our local entrepreneurs collude with banks to exploit the money market instead of investing in the productive sector is unfortunate. The fair provides an excellent opportunity to rub minds on how best to achieve our economic goals; which is why the original focus of the Kaduna Fair must be restored.

## It is ironic

As South Africa begins the countdown to the historic April 27 all-race elections, the campaigns and the future of the country is being threatened by the Freedom Alliance made up of the Inkatha Freedom Party and the ultra right wing Afrikaner Conservative Party which have resolved to boycott the elections and go violent if their separatist tendencies are not included in the new constitution. The CP has taken the extraordinary step of announcing that it would form an autonomous republic in South Africa. Inkatha's leader, Mongusuthu Buthelezi, too, has argued for more autonomy for his Zulu followers, arguing that a future South Africa could not afford to ignore the Zulus. The response of Frederick de Klerk's government and that of the African National Congress, ANC, to these grave challenges has been a deserving refusal to yield to blackmail and allow the imposition of parochial sentiments on the general populace.

The systematic dismantling of the

horific apartheid and the commencement of democratic processes brought a sigh of relief to many, but this is now being jeopardised by the anti-democratic tendencies of the Freedom Alliance.

Their disruptive antics surely is reactionary and cannot achieve a peaceful transition to majority rule not to mention democracy. The Freedom Alliance should note that war mongering and violence are antithetical to reconciliation and the reconstruction of a country which for a long time has been violently terrorised and traumatised. The way forward is for all the parties to submit to the supremacy of democratic principles. The country now needs the good will of all as it marches towards all race integration and democracy.

Inkatha must stop this black on black violence, it gives a negative image of the black man. The Afrikaners should also wake up to the fact of a rapidly changing world and the sober truth of the objective historical reality of the justice inherent in black majority rule in the whole of South Africa.

# ADVERTISER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

## Nigeria: The way forward

The history of this nation has witnessed a lot of changes and since the society is dynamic, these changes do occur in so many perspectives with different repercussions telling hard, in most cases, on the people.

Sometimes, from the year 1914 when three regions were amalgamated to form a Nigerian polity to date, the most part of its history has been that of political instability factors.

Indeed, the vast conglomerate called Nigeria has spent more than 30 years of independence, but few Nigerians, many of whom are a selfish bunch, have been having a field-day in determining who should lead the nation and how the polity should look like, how the people should live etc.

The issues of federal character, revenue generation, or confederation or all part of union or secession federation and its silent majority into the abyss of confusion and

in a country where percentage literacy is low (only about 40 per cent literate), educational standard generally poor, agriculture neglected, medical care almost everywhere, then it looks simply inhuman fear of insecurity at this stage of our national history, the further sufferings of civil war, God forbid!

But as I watch how things are now, I begin to think just like Abraham Lincoln said "a house divided against itself cannot stand." We cannot as a nation afford to mortgage our unity, peace and relative stability to the crude, archaic designs of the enemies of this nation. This category of people are deceitful, treacherous, mischievous and unpatriotically self-aggrandised.

The above notwithstanding, I feel we have a nation to protect, a people to foster into unity, peace and stability and a nation to build on solid foundation worthy of envy in the community of nations.

How do we then go about this? The answer is not as simple as it may look. For like I said earlier, there have been factors which constituted themselves into stumbling blocks against an enduring unity.

Let me attempt here to proffer some antidotes that may, if properly dispensed, counter the ills of the nation so that Nigerians may once again come to understand and respect one another. These I strongly believe, will determine whether we shall forge ahead or not.

Since we know virtually all the problems are fundamentally political and socio-economic, then we need to find the political solution first by way of an indigenous evolution of a democratic system that will not only stand the test of time but also be an acceptable one among the various ethnic, tribal or religious divides in the country.

This is to say, becoming a copycat of an imported political system would continue to re-perpetuate the existence of the polity.

And secondly, because no nation ever prosper without a sound economic base, prudent and accountable management of resources, the nation's leaders must then pool all their energies and selflessly too, together, towards achieving a viable economic system for Nigeria.

Thirdly, I must draw the attention of the government and people of Nigeria on the need to, in the next political arrangement, ensure that irresponsible and inexperienced new breed politicians must be done away with. Those who end, I strongly feel that, those vying for any elective posts must be persons of proven integrity while those who would even form parties should be responsible, mature persons.

On agriculture and industry, I know we have a lot to learn from the experience of Indonesia and Malaysia, two countries in the Far East that have given less attention to oil and more to agriculture and industry. They are now worthy of copying in the world.

On the international economic platform, Nigeria has of recent been faced with threats of sanctions and to a certain extent, the imposition of some. My understanding of this circumstance is that Western countries will perpetually subject our dear nation to economic dependence and by implication, a loss of political independence.

With this therefore, my suggestion is that to avoid leadership under General Sani Abacha is that to avoid (circumvent) more stringent sanctions in future and in order to re-energise our economy towards moving away from a single-commodity economic dependence (oil) to other economic potentialities, we must return to the farms with all the vigour we can muster.

Similarly, I must at this juncture appeal to the present military leadership to revisit the issue of building the Trans Saharan highway long stalled in conjunction with other sister African nations because of its perceived benefit to the Nigerian nation in particular, other sister African nations in general.

The idea of this highway mooted out by certain African countries along the route, was stopped during the Second Republic. No doubt the highway, when completed, will bring about a lot of benefits to Nigeria.

By and large, I call on all Nigerians to sink their differences so as to forge ahead towards the building of a just egalitarian nation.

**Alhaji Aminu Ahmed Maiturare, President, Kano Traders multi-purpose cooperative society.**



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**Alhaji Aminu Ahmed Maiturare, President, Kano Traders multi-purpose cooperative society.**



## MOHAMMED HARUNA

"The Malam," it intoned, "is our main problem and unless something is done physically and legally about him, Budget '94 will end up as a suicide pill." In case anyone had any doubt as to the strength of his feelings, he spelled it out categorically; "I repeat: The Malam is the problem," he said. And for him, (the author, that is), absolutely no punishment is too drastic in dealing with the situation. If the Malam

country is collectively held to blame for the mess in our financial system.

Double standards apart, it is truly amazing how anyone even barely literate in economics can blame the Malams for the crash of the Naira. According to Dr. Kalu I. Kalu, the finance minister, when he gave details of this year's budget, the Foreign Exchange Market (FEM) absorbed 2.2 billion dollars out of an estimated 2.4 billion. Anyone who thinks the Malam is to blame for the crash of the Naira vis-a-vis the hard currencies, should establish that the Malam cornered the lion's share of the 2.2 billion dollars. But we all know, don't we, that the big time players in the currency game — the UACs, the PZs, the UTC, the Asians, etc — do not source their requirements from the Malams. They may pay a premium over above the official rates, but it is still the banks that they go to.

In any case, a balanced and objective story requires of an editor to investigate the source of the Malam's goods. Discounting *African Concord's* flippant, if not libelous, charge that "Abacha and members of his cabinet are part and parcel of the trade" — the magazine offers no evidence — it quotes a black marketer elsewhere as saying he sources his supplies from "bankers, new returnees from abroad, and bureaux de change operators." The most casual examination of these three sources would reveal that the majority of them are hardly northerners.

Lest I am misunderstood, my defence of the Malam is not to justify his illegal trade. I am defending him only in so far as he is a creature of a hybrid of market forces and government intervention which seems to defy reason and which he is hardly responsible for. I am also defending him because there are far more monstrous villains of the economic mess we are in, but for some strange, though not inexplicable reason, you never get to hear about them or where they most likely come from.

## In defence of the Malams

In continuation of its unremitting campaign of demonising the north and northerners, the south-west press focussed its attention late last month on the foreign currency black market. The *African Concord*, for instance, put the issue on the cover of its edition of January 24. With a rider captioned "Black Market," the magazine headlined its story as "The Malams Resistance." Just to leave no one in doubt as to the nationality of these terrible Malams the graphics on the cover had several *babanriga* wearing fellows in long headgears typically worn by northerners.

The text of the story itself spelled out why the magazine believes government's ban on the Malams' labor was futile exercise. "In collaboration with some bank officials and oil companies," said the magazine, "they hold the Nigerian economy by the jugular, tightening the noose when they please." In case you still underestimated the Malams' power, the magazine made bold to assert that "Abacha and members of his cabinet are part and parcel of their trade..."

Definitive as the *African Concord* was on Malams as the leading economic villains, the magazine's story does not begin to compare with a piece in *The Guardian* of January 21 for the ferocity of its attack on Malams. Written by one Reuben Abati, the article went straight to its point.

proves stubborn, suggested Abati, "law enforcement agents should be instructed to shoot him at sight."

Reading the articles, it is obvious that the Malam is seen as the symbol of a north which is seen as arrogant, over-bearing, and virtually the sole culprit in the ruining of our economy. This can only be the explanation for the ethnicisation of the foreign currency problem. There is, of course, no doubting that the Malams dominate the visible end of the foreign currency black market. There is therefore no way a story on this issue cannot reflect badly on their nationality. However, from the way the same newspapers had treated similar stories, it is obvious that the currency story merely provided them with one more chance to demonise a section of the country.

Take the story about the collapse of finance houses and all these fly-by-night banks for instance. As at December last year there were over 66 commercial banks, the majority of them one-branch fly-by-nights located in Lagos. There were also 55 merchant banks, 200 "mortgage" banks and over 300 finance houses, operating and another 500 or so approved in principle. Going through their public records it is obvious which section of the country dominates them. Yet, in writing stories of their collapse and the fraudulence that riddles them, I have never seen where that section of the

COVER STORY

The north

# One big monster?

Southern media propaganda has placed the north on the defensive in the run-up to the constitutional conference. Now, the backlash has begun

since 1985, General Babangida. The southern politicians' charge of political domination appeared to yield dividend in 1989 when leaders of one of the then unregistered political associations, the Nigeria National Congress, NNC, reportedly agreed in caucus that their party, widely seen as a rejuvenation of the defunct National Party of Nigeria, NPN, would zone its presidential ticket to the south. During the Second Republic, the ruling NPN was known to have agreed to produce a southern president after Alhaji Shehu Shagari might have completed two terms in office in 1987. Chief Augustus Adisa Akindele, national chairman of the defunct NPN, told *Weekend Concord* in late January, this year, that the December 1983 coup was carried out by northern military officers in order to prevent a southern president emerging in 1987. The 77-year-old chief, who recently returned from 10

**J**une 12 was the watershed, the proverbial last straw in the long-simmering political confrontation between the former British protectorates of northern and southern Nigeria.

Early in 1989, when the regime of then President Ibrahim Babangida permitted the resumption of party politics in the country for the first time since 1983, ambitious young politicians from the south quickly took advantage of the many media outlets in Lagos and Ibadan and rapidly brought to the fore the issue of "northern domination" of the country. The evidence of this domination regularly cited was the presi-



Balewa: first northerner to call the shots



Shagari: in support of zoning

dency of the country; between 1960 and 1989, six out of the eight persons who headed the federal government of Nigeria were men of northern origin, namely the prime minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1960-66), General Yakubu Gowon (1966-75), General Murtala Mohammed (1975-76), President Shehu Shagari (1979-83), Major General Muhammadu Buhari (1983-85) and the then military president

agreed to produce a southern president after Alhaji Shehu Shagari might have completed two terms in office in 1987. Chief Augustus Adisa Akindele, national chairman of the defunct NPN, told *Weekend Concord* in late January, this year, that the December 1983 coup was carried out by northern military officers in order to prevent a southern president emerging in 1987. The 77-year-old chief, who recently returned from 10



Babangida: ruffled

year exile in Britain, nevertheless failed to provide proof of this charge, saying only, "when the time comes, I am sure details will be revealed. But spare me now not to give out the details I know."

It may or it may not be another northern conspiracy, but the NNC and all other political associations were proscribed in 1989 and the Babangida regime began, instead, its controversial experiment with two government-created parties, NRC and SDP. The previous agreements quickly crumbled and, in both parties, the regional jockeying for the presidency began at their first conventions at Abuja in July, 1990. By the time the direct, staggered, open-ballot presidential primaries were concluded more than two years later, in September 1992, politicians of northern origin were set to capture the tickets of both parties. Major General Shehu Yar'adua won the SDP ticket outright, while Malam Adamu Ciroma and Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi were to contest a run-off election in the NRC.

The outcome of the primaries in 1992 drew heated protests from defeated aspirants, who alleged widespread irregularities. It also drew heated protests from some groups who objected solely on the

grounds that northerners won. The Lagos-based *Guardian*, which claims to be liberal-democratic, nevertheless published an editorial in October that threatened a break-up of the country if the election results were allowed to stand. And in November, a ruffled General Babangida nullified the primaries and banned all 23 aspirants who contested. Included among them were all the great northern aspirants of the Third Republic.

The southern uproar over the 1992 primaries results was only the latest, as it were, in a long and increasingly bitter campaign to contain "northern hegemony" and "domination." Since the formal adoption of the principle of "federal character" in the 1979 constitution, many southern spokesmen have charged that the north has sent up unqualified persons into schools and civil service posts to fill up its quota allocations. In the eyes of many southerners, almost all northerners admitted to a school or appointed to a civil service post are not qualified for it. Thus, federal character was made in propaganda synonymous with mediocrity.

The north was accused of pressing political advantage in other ways. In 1986, for example, when the Babangida regime clamped a ban on wheat imports and instead introduced the Accelerated Wheat Production Programme, AWPP, Chief Anthony Enahoro charged that the policy was aimed to destroy southern-based flour millers and benefit northern wheat farmers. At other times, the "Hausa-Fulani," element of the north is singled out for attack, such as, over the Babangida regime's controversial entry into the OIC in 1986.

In the gradual development of the anti-northern campaign, it soon transpired that many southern analysts are puzzled and mystified most of all by the position of northern emirs and chiefs. Searching out for the probable centres of northern conspiracy, many thought they saw it in the elaborate courts and regalia of the emirs and chiefs. Thus, over

the last 15 years, the north was described first as "feudal," then as "oligarchic," and more recently as the "caliphate."

The Lagos media is especially sensitive to the activities and pronouncements of the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki. At the height of the impasse last year, the Sultan was widely reported in the Lagos media, erroneously, as having condemned the annulment of the June 12 election and urging General Ibrahim Babangida, "as a muslim," to honour the election results. A few weeks later, the Sultan drew strong condemnations when he publicly urged Chief Moshood Abiola to see the annulment as "an act of God."

The cancellation of the 1992 primaries and the banning of 23 aspirants was followed by the adoption of the Option A4 formula, which, in March, 1993, produced two new presidential candidates, Chief Moshood Abiola for the SDP and Alhaji Bashir Tofa for the NRC. It became clear that the banning of the 23 aspirants had severely hit the north; *Citizen* reported last May that the young Alhaji Bashir Tofa was unable to assert himself even in the north. Chief Abiola subsequently won the election, according to leaked returns. Then came the annulment.

From June 23, when the election



Okene: pro-Babangida

was annulled, the Yoruba-speaking south-west rose in revolt, the main charge being that the election was annulled to prevent a southerner from grabbing the presidency for the first time since 1979. The revolt continued even after General Babangida "stepped aside" last August and paralysed the last National Government led by Chief Ernest Shonekan. When General Sani Abacha seized power on November 17, he immediately promised to hold a constitutional conference early this year.

Initial northern response to the conference idea was understandably cool, for it was seen as a capitulation to the near-secessionist posturing of the "June 12 or nothing" advocates in the south-west.

There were other reasons for the initial cool response. Even though the north is often presented in the Lagos media as one hegemonic monolith, in truth, the old northern Nigeria has been riddled with internal conflicts since the death in 1998 of Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna Sokoto, the great politician who created and nurtured the idea of a "north" in the first place. The sharpest line of northern rupture since 1966 has been between the majority Hausa-Fulani and other muslim communities, on one hand, and the christian minority communities, on the other. Throughout the 1980's, this split took the form of confrontation between the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, led in the north by former regional minister Ambassador Jolly Tanko Yusuf, and the Jama'atu Nasiri Islam, JNI, nominally led by the Sultan of Sokoto. The communal-religious split led in recent years to three major clashes, at Kafanchan in 1987, at Tarawa Balewa, Bauchi State in 1991, and at Zangon Katari in 1992. Northerners belonging to the minority christian communities, especially of Benue, Plateau, Taraba and Kaduna states, apparently nurse serious grievances against the muslim far north. Last November, at a meeting of a committee set up

by the Northern Council of Elders for Reconciliation and National Unity, NCERNU, Mr. Chia Surma, a former commissioner in the defunct Benue-Plateau state, submitted for consideration a paper in which he said "the north needs to reconcile with itself more than with any other part of the nation." Chia Surma charged that "the action of Murtala (i.e. the 1975 coup) revealed the core north as having used Gowon only to achieve their aim." He said the execution in 1976 of Lt. Colonel Bukar Suka Dimka and 38 other plotters was "out of proportion" to their killing General Murtala Mohammed. "The core north," Surma also said,



Shonekan: his government was paralysed

"is favoured in federal appointments and contracts in total neglect of the southern fringes of the north." Finally, he said the removal of Dr. Jeremia Aya as senate president last November and his replacement by Senator Ameh Ebutewe was a far northern "divide and rule" game to play the Tiv against the Idoma.

Not only Chia Surma made these charges. At a meeting of the committee of concerned citizens (another name of the northern elders' forum) in Kaduna last month, Ambassador Jolly Tanko Yusuf circulated a paper which showered praises on the late



Dasuki: nominal head of JN

Sir Ahmadu Bello, but charged that the premier's "honesty, patriotism and compromise" have since been abandoned by far-northern leaders. Ambassador Yusuf condemned the statement attributed to Alhaji Yusuf Maitama Sule that northerners are "endowed by God with leadership qualities" and called for the rotation of the presidency between six political zones in the country.

Probably the most documented charge against the far north by a northern christian was the book *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, launched in Kaduna last December and written by Reverend Father Matthew Hassan Kukah, a well-known, centrist political commentator and writer on religious issues for two decades, nevertheless stated in his latest book that there is a distinct ruling class in northern Nigeria and it is Hausa-Fulani muslim in origin and essence. More so, he wrote, it imposes its old caliphate values and beliefs and asserts its hegemony in the region's politics, with the aid of religion, ethnicity and language.

The January meeting of the northern elders' forum, *Citizen* learnt, tried to resolve these problems by appointing a committee, under the chairman of Major General Muhammadu Igea, *Cireman Gwandu*, to

study the problem of unity in the north. The committee's report, which was discussed by the forum last week, reportedly traced the origin of communal tension in areas such as southern Zaria to the long history of migration and settlement in pre-colonial times, as well as to colonial administrative policies of resettling dispersed communities. Communal conflicts in the north do not always take the form of Hausa-Fulani versus others. In fact, by far the longest-running and most destructive communal conflict in the north in recent times has been the Tiv-Jukun and Jukun-Kuteb conflicts in Taraba State., which have continued on and off since 1987.

Last year, at the height of the June 12 crisis, northern political leaders began a spate of group meetings to address the problem, but their ranks were divided by far north middle belt, NRC-SDP, as well as pro and anti-June 12 politics. A Turaki committee, chaired by former President Shehu Shagari, *Turakin Sokoto*, was formed years earlier but the Northern Consultative Group, NCG formed in July, 1993 came to overshadow the Turaki committee. A vocal, pro-SDP middle belt forum was also operating. In November, the civilian governors of the 16 northern states reportedly initiated the formation of a wider council, the NECRNU. But when it met in Kaduna on November 6, no SDP governors were present. NECRNU elected General Yakubu Gowon as its chairman even though he was not present at the meeting, but it was Alhaji Shehu Shagari who presided over the meeting.

Soon, there were charges that NECRNU was dominated by allies of the former President Ibrahim Babangida. This charge was denied at the time by Alhaji Aliyu Muhammed, *Wazirin Jema'a*, who was elected to head NECRNU's secretariat (see box).

On November 17, last year, before the Abacha coup became known, a meeting took place in Kaduna of a committee set up by NECRNU to



Abiola: denied the job

"harmonise" with the NCG and other groups. Chairing it was Alhaji Liman Ciroma, *Ciroman Fika*. Present at the meeting were Lt. General Salihu Ibrahim, Alhaji Ibrahim Gusau and Dr. Olusola Saraki. Also present were Mr. Chia Surma, Senator Manassa Daniel and Alhaji Sule Gaya. On that day, *Citizen* learnt, this committee unanimously recommended to its parent forum to initiate contacts with southern political leaders and propose to them that, if they agree to hold another election in February 1994, the north will not contest for the presidency. That very evening General Abacha seized power and banned NECRNU, so the compromise offer was never made.

The argument that won the day, *Citizen* learnt, was that the north hardly benefited in terms of economic advancement, and some members even argued that the north will gain a lot more under a southern president.

This point of view is now widely held by northern leaders. In his interview with *Citizen* in London early last year, Alhaji Umaru Dikko said the northerner held the cow while others milked it. "Whenever the north was ruling," he said, "all that the north had was a title. No more. That's all-title. The real *de facto* power never was in the hands of any north-

erner that was ruling, right from First Republic... Even the civil servants as such." Dikko proposed a switch of roles; "If it is the title they are now interested in, no problem, we change roles. We give you the title, we take the benefit. We give you the cow, you hold the horns, like Hausa people say, then we take the milk." At last week's meeting of the northern elders in Kaduna, Justice Mamman Nasir, *Galadiman Katsina*, reportedly said that northerners have been holding the head of the cobra thus enabling southerners to eat the tail, and anytime the pain becomes unbearable for the snake, the northerner is the one within striking distance.

Even retired northern generals have picked up this theme. *Citizen* learnt that at one of the elders' committee meetings late last year, former chief of army staff Lt. General Salihu Ibrahim argued that the annulment of the June 12 election had created a very difficult position for south-western political elders, and that northern leaders must make the necessary compromises to bail them out from there own people. Besides, the general reportedly said, the north cannot continue to hold the presidency forever, especially since there is reason to believe that power has hindered, rather than helped, a northern effort to escape from economic and educational backwardness.

Not only the political leaders were active during the days of the impasse. On October 28, last year, the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki, sent out a memorandum on the formation of "peaceful coexistence committees." The decision to form the committees was taken at a meeting in Kaduna attended by the Sultan and 10 other northern chiefs, including the emirs of Katsina, Kano, Zazzau, Bauchi and Ilorin, the Tor Tiv, Etsu Nupe, Shehu of Borno and the Gbong Gwom Jos. The Abacha coup apparently ended these initiatives and brought instead the issue of the constitutional conference to the fore.

In recent weeks, the north appears to be awakening to the issue, and one by one, prominent northern politicians and intellectuals are responding to the charges of domination and hegemony. A Kaduna-based lawyer, Alhaji Halilu Usman Bida, said of the charge of northern domination, "Nigerians should reflect and think more of the group that is dominating. Since independence, the military has dominated this country. They are the real dominators." But surely they are northern cases, it was southerners who championed the call for military intervention. For instance, the June 12 crowd, literally installed Abacha. They did the same for Buhari in 1983, and for Babangida in 1985."

The most comprehensive northern answer so far in the run-up to the constitutional conference was the 38-page, remarkably coherent and lucid Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Lecture presented in Kaduna on January 22 by Alhaji Liman Ciroma. Of the issue of domination, he said, "It is convenient for some sections of our elite as well as the press to continually seek to obscure the fundamental issues involved by focusing

attention on the question of how many people, and for how long, from one section, tribe or religion have occupied certain high offices in the land." "Indeed," Alhaji Liman said, "the demagoguery involved in expressing such emotion arousing sentiments fails to focus attention on the counterpoint others may favour in completing the argument, which is that, various other levels and arenas in our public life which are critical to the exercise of power and the control and distribution of resources are the high profile public offices to which undue attention is drawn, are also occupied by others from different sections."

The two biggest northern worries in the event of a Nigerian split, it appears, are lack of oil and sea coast. Alhaji Liman Ciroma went to great lengths in his lecture to show the "essential interconnectedness and interdependence" within Nigeria. He reminded the audience that agriculture still contributes about 40 per cent of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product, GDP, compared to oil's 12.6 per cent contribution, and warned that the great manufacturing industries of Lagos depend "on the wider Nigerian economic environment, the

captive market" for it. Last week, at the Arewa House national seminar



Dikko: we only hold the cow

in Kaduna, Alhaji Tanko Yakasai addressed the other northern worry, of sea coast. He said even if Nigeria breaks up, territorial waters will have to remain "common assets" of the new countries, including the north, since "it was granted (to us) by our former colonial power."

## Butt of rumour

Last November, a day before the Interim National Government was overthrown, Alhaji Aliyu Mohammed Wazirin Jema'a and former secretary to the government of the federation, spoke to Mahmud Jega about the so-called hidden agenda of the Babangida group within the councils of northern elders. Excerpts:

**C**itizen: Sir, your own conspicuous presence within the northern elders' forum, as head of its secretariat, is already fuelling rumours that there is a plan by former President Babangida to control the group.

Mohammed: I don't know how that amounts to control. Personally, I was invited to attend the meeting, like

everyone else. It was during the discussion, people were being assigned to carry out certain responsibilities, and I heard my name being mentioned to coordinate activities of the



Many northerners were expressing similar views last week about the contentious issues. Alhaji Abdulkadir Shehu, a member of the defunct House of Representatives, suggested last week that oil-producing areas should be allowed to retain more of the revenue. However, he said, "they seem not to understand that other parts of the country made massive contributions to the development of the (oil) industry. Agriculture was sustaining the country's economy before oil was discovered," and "the money for oil exploration activities and establishment of refineries was found through proceeds from the sale of groundnuts and cocoa."

The issue of presidential rotation was the emotive force behind the early calls for a national conference, and last week, it was dramatised anew at a conference of traditional rulers from the Yoruba states in Ibadan. The Ayangburin of Ikorodu, Lagos State, Oba Oguntade Ayefusin, reportedly called for the "sanctity of the June 12 election" to be upheld as the only way to guarantee the nation's stability. "If June 12 is not revisited," the *Vanguard* quoted Oba Ayefusin as having said,

"we Yorubas will not support them in future elections. Any election that they declare either Hausas or Ibos (as winners) will not receive the blessing of the Yorubas." The *Ooni Ife*, Oba Okunade Sijuade Olubuse, also called at the meeting for dividing the country into six zones for the purpose of presidential rotation.

Last week, Ambassador Mahmoud Yahaya, chairman of the EMWAI Centre for Political and Economic Research, Kaduna, condemned the recent posture of the Yoruba chiefs. "The fact of the matter," Ambassador Yahaya said, "is that the call for a national conference emanated from the same June 12 worshippers. The government was seen by many as kissing up to them by promising such a conference."

Some northerners, sickened by the threats of a break up, have joined the calls for it. Senator Mahmud Kanti Bello said in Katsina last month that the north is ready to go on its way. Last week, Alhaji Mukhtar Ahmed Aruwa told *Citizen*, "if those (the south) who benefit most from the system want to go, I say let them go. If we break up, the north will look inwards and that will benefit us the more. Burkina Faso and Chad



**Bida: military dominates**

are surviving. The north has a lot of agricultural potential, so we won't starve. We also have mineral resources all over the place. We don't need Lagos. We can get to the sea through Cameroun."

Alhaji Tanko Yakasai went so far in his paper as to suggest the modalities for a peaceful break-up. He suggested that a referendum be held on the question of a one Nigeria, and if the majority vote for separation, then the country should dissolve into

secretariat (of the northern elders' forum). And I understand it, because I live in Kaduna, I am not working anywhere now, so it will be easier for me to interact with the Kaduna State government which is helping us. But I don't see it as a way for anybody to control. The question of control never cropped up between me and former President Babangida. IBB was not the only former head of state from the north who was invited to the meeting. Gowon, Shagari and Buhari were also invited. I don't know why anyone should single out one of them and start spreading rumours. I don't like talking about rumours.

*Citizen: Since the purpose of the elders' forum is to unite the north and then reach out to other parts of the country in the light of all these problems, won't your presence as the leading actors in the annulment of June 12 facilitate the reconciliation efforts?*

Mohammed: I don't know about that. I am not in the harmonisation committee (of the northern elders). I don't see what you are suggesting, really. I don't see the

annulment of the election as a northern affair. It was a decision of the federal military government, which is not northern.

*Citizen: But when you were in government, was there a concerted northern pressure to annul the election, as is being alleged?*

Mohammed: I don't know. I mean, I was an employee of the government. I was secretary to the government, so I don't know.

*Citizen: The prominent role you are playing in the elders' forum — is it a dress rehearsal for your presidential campaign, which is being mentioned all around?*

Mohammed: I told you I don't like to discuss rumour. I like to discuss things, but not rumour.

*Citizen: Is it possible you will contest for the presidency?*

Mohammed: I said I don't like rumours. The day you hear something like that from me, then you can take me up on it.

the original regions and "the present military regime should preside over the transition period which should not be more than two calendar years." Alhaji Tanko said commissions should then be formed to assess the country's assets and liabilities and "work out the modalities for sharing them."

But while the public argument goes on, northern political leaders are quietly preparing for the conference. *Citizen* learnt that the Committee of Concerned Citizens' meeting in Kaduna last week, which was jointly chaired by Alhaji Abdurrahman Okene, Justice Mamman Nasir and Ambassador Jolly Tanko Yusuf, discussed at length some constitutional issues with a view to



Shehu: it is a collective effort

harmonising the position of northern delegates to the conference.

Sources told *Citizen* that no firm agreements were reached at the meeting on major constitutional issues such as rotation of the presidency, federalism and confederalism, type of government, or revenue allocation.

Even though the meeting was well attended, by some 200 eminent persons from all 16 northern states, *Citizen* learnt that an important group of northern leaders did not attend the meeting because they see its chairman, Alhaji Abdurrahman Okene, as being too close to former President Ibrahim Babangida. Instead, some of these leaders played a prominent role in organising last

## Nigeria must stay united

Arewa House workshop communique

**F**inally we have come to the end of this very stimulating and hectic workshop on the state of the nation. By all standards, it was a marathon achievement and almost a miracle that so much could be packed into so little time.

And it should not be surprising that this search for the way forward generated a lot of interest. Public enthusiasm, as evidenced by the high turnout, valuable audience participation and the general high quality of the papers presented, is only indicative of the concern Nigerians have for the fate of their nation.

This was a concern that had always been great and was at one time sorely tested in a civil war. Unfortunately recent happenings in the country seemed to suggest that if we had learnt anything from that experience, we were trying our best to forget it. That, indeed, is something we cannot afford.

At the end of the workshop, which was a microcosm of the country with participants from all nooks and corners, a general consensus emerged. This was that Nigeria must remain one. Despite the plethora of problems emanating from the ascendancy of corruption as a way of life, the disruptive intrusion of the military into governance, feelings of marginalisation and charges of domination few saw the solution outside the Nigerian nation-state.

Many of the problems were self-inflicted; some were inevitable, but none of them would be solved by the disintegration of the country. This consensus, however, does not obviate the need to stop taking the indissolubility of the corporate existence of the country for granted.

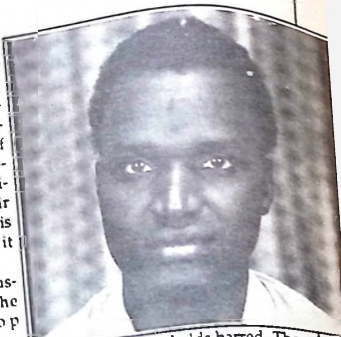
For some, especially from the far north and the south-west, the dissolubility of the union remains a possibility; their only worry is how to do it peacefully.

The discussions in the workshop were frank

often brutally so, as there were no holds barred. They touched on virtually everything, sometimes raising fears, and, at others, exciting hope. The following areas of broad agreement were reached:

There is need for a return to proper federalism to take care of some of the more serious differences between various groups in the country. Various groupings have been suggested and though none has been specifically endorsed, a possible restructuring of the country looks inevitable.

There was unanimity that unless something serious was done about corruption, there was little hope of finding the way forward. Leaders were called to lead by example and find ways of recovering embezzled public funds. Today the fruits of corruption stare at us in the



## COVER STORY

week's seminar, by Arewa House, where the former president came under a scathing attack from former head of state General Olusegun Obasanjo and from former commerce and industry minister Dr. Mahmud Tukur. Also keeping his distance from the NCCC was Major General Shehu Yar'adua, who nevertheless threw his weight behind a sovereign national conference at a press conference in Lagos on January 16. The general also asked the Abacha regime to lift the ban on political parties and quit power by the end of this year, a call that drew a veiled warning from police inspector-general Ibrahim Coomasie that the ban on politics is still in force.

Apart from the elders' meetings, similar meetings were being held at

many levels throughout the north to prepare common positions for the constitutional conference. One of these efforts, *Citizen* learnt, is a group called the Building Bridges Project, which held a meeting in Sokoto earlier this year. Made up mostly of academics, civil servants and some politicians, the group is presently led by Alhaji Boyi Dikko, former attorney-general of Sokoto and Kebbi states. The group concluded at its meeting that "the objective reality of the Nigerian situation is that the north is not the sole or even the biggest beneficiary of the continued existence of the Nigerian federation. Therefore, the group said, "the north should not be on the defensive and it should have no fear for any conference." What is re-

quired, the group further concludes is "a project to build bridges between different communities, sections and generations and between political leaders and intellectuals in the north, and then to do the same across the Niger." Last week, *Citizen* learnt, the group was still making contacts in order to hold a major "national conference of our own generation (of Nigerians)."

No one knows if, in the weeks to come, the various strands of northern leaders will overcome their present rivalries and present a common front. What is certain is that all of them will be branded as hegemonists when the constitutional conference convenes.

By Mahmud Jega

face while the perpetrators and beneficiaries mix with us putting on brave faces in the vain attempt to cover their tracks. The consensus is that these people be exposed.

On revenue allocation emphasis was placed on regarding wealth generated in the country as belonging to all. While some states in the southern parts of the country produce oil, the country depends on states to the north for its food security. The consensus was on regarding all parts of the country as interdependent constituent units.

Nevertheless there was broad agreement that the issue of the ecological degradation of the all mineral producing areas must be looked into again. This may result in drawing up a new allocation formula giving greater weight to the principle of derivation.

On religion there was consensus that religious issues cannot be solved on the floor of the National Assembly or any such forum. A change of attitude and honest leadership is what is needed.

There was consensus on the desirability for democracy and its attendant paraphernalia — rule of law, separation of powers and equality before the ballot box and the law. The workshop declined to endorse the methods of the Campaign for Democracy in achieving it, though. It advised the CD to turn into, or join, a political party to promote its ideas in a more civilised and acceptable fashion.

Though some argued in favour of adopting the principle of rotation of the presidency the consensus was that democracy is ultimately a game of numbers and instead of institutionalising such a non-democratic concept as rotation areas that wanted to produce the president were urged to strike the right alliances.

It was agreed that there was an urgent need for a general re-examination of all aspects of our national life

— education, health, agriculture, industry, public service, law and order and security, and judiciary; and a probe into the destruction of the country's major national institutions — military, political, traditional and religious. This was the *raison d'être* for a national conference and will almost certainly form its agenda.

The idea of a conference to discuss these issues most of which led to disputes, suspicion and threats of succession and to work out a better arrangement for our being together was generally welcome. And the consensus was on a national, instead of a constitutional, conference.

A significant opinion, however, held that any kind of conference was a costly diversion that is of dubious value.

On representation at the conference there was unanimity that delegates must be directly elected. Case however, was made for minority and interest groups like women and professionals. There was consensus that these representatives of the people at the conference should, as far as possible be men and women of high calibre and knowledge who would be informed and objective enough to deliberate for the general good of the nation, particularly the common man. In other words, every part of the country is expected — and urged — to send the best it can.

There was unanimity that Nigeria would come out of the conference strengthened. As one speaker said, there was nothing to fear for the future. He quoted someone who said, "The unity of Nigeria is like a Catholic marriage. It may not be happy but it does not break."

Dr. Abdullahi Mahdi  
DIRECTOR

## NIGERIA

## Nigeria

## Which way forward?

Participants at the Arewa House workshop on the state of the Nigerian nation deliberate on the way out of the national crisis

From the well tendered outside of the cosy and elegant banquet hall of the state House, Kawo, Kaduna, one could easily see that it was a gathering of class Mercedes Benz and 1994 model Honda Accord cars, the army of resplendent flowing gown wearing movers and shakers of the nation's politics and economy that alighted from these state of the art cars, the stern looking soldiers and smartly dressed security operatives that kept eagle eye watch at the entrance to the State House and drive way of the hall, betrayed the elitist nature of the

Rimi, minister of communications; Malam Adamu Ciroma, minister of agriculture; former ministers Professor Jubril Aminu, Dr. Mahmud Tukur, Alhaji Rilwanu Lukman, Chief Philip Asiodu, and Senator Ahmadu Ali. Former governors that also graced the occasion include Mr. Bamidele Olumilua of Ondo, Alhaji Dahiru Muhammed of Bauchi, Dr. Okwesile Nwodo of Enugu, Abba Ibrahim of Yobe, Dabo Lere and Balarabe Musa of Kaduna, John Oyegun of Edo State.

The two day workshop took a frank look at the failings of the nation since independence and rumi-

economy or the nation's social relations. For most participants, the issue was not whether there should be a national conference but the form it should take. Should there be a constitutional as opposed to a sovereign national conference? Whichever one is chosen, what should be the structure of government? Should Nigeria continue as a political entity? If yes, what should be the structure of government? Should it be a federation or a confederation? These issues raised and discussed almost at once appeared like a pre-conference agenda setting. The beauty of it was that participants who came from every part of the country were honest enough to confess that most of those who sat eminently at the high table were by their past acts of commission and omission, the architects of the nation's present crisis.

Olusegun Obasanjo in his 19-page key note address backed a national conference that will do "a general re-examination of all aspects of our national life; education, health, agricultural, industrialisation, public administration, law and order and security, and judiciary... and what tier of government will be responsible and be involved for what ends and with what means". Warning against the threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria because of perceived political and economic marginalisation, the former head of state contended that Nigerians will be better off in one big country than as separate nation states.

"... I would be more diminished as a citizen of Oduwuwa Republic than a citizen of Nigeria" he submitted, emphasising that those wishing to create tribal entities for themselves will be similarly diminished. He recounted the advantages of unity pointing out that disintegration would bring more impoverishment to the people as the attendant sense of insecurity and suspicion will impel dissipation of more resources on arms and armament. On the issue of access to political power, the re-



From left Mohammed, Shinkafi, Ciroma and Zayyad at the workshop assembly.

The occasion was mid last week workshop on The State of The Nation: Which way forward, organised by Arewa House, a centre for historical documentation and research. In attendance were the former heads of state, General Olusegun Obasanjo, rtd, who gave the key note address and Major General Muhammadu Buhari, who chaired the assembly. Others include Alhaji Abubakar

nated on the way forward. The blend of practised politicians, technocrats and academics provided a congenial atmosphere for an informed discussion of the political and socio-economic problems of the country. Specifically, the political crisis that has found expression in the clamour for a national conference and the redefinition of the basis of the Nigerian federation formed the theme of most discussions, be they on the

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tired general restated his advise against rotational presidency and posited that "a permanent solution (to this agitation) lies in the quality, calibre and orientation of our leaders, in the transparent pursuit of justice and fairness, and giving to each his due, not as a favour, but as a right". For him, the most important condition for unity and peace is justice.

Many others at the discourse were of similar persuasion with Obasanjo whose central thesis was that the main problem facing the nation was poverty of leadership. Muhammadu Buhari, who chaired the workshop apprehended corruption in government particularly in the last eight years as the bane of the nation. He admitted that the comatose economy breeds poverty among the people but contended that the situation would have been different if government officials were firm and forthright. He fingered the manipulation of the defunct transition programme by former President Ibrahim Babangida, as one major factor that compounded the nation's grave economic situation. Euhari said the perversion of the moral authority of the government was so serious that it became unable to govern effectively. He opined that the nation is now faced with chaos and disintegration because of the destruction of major institutions such as the military, political, traditional and religious organisations. Buhari's panacea was that decent people should no longer leave matters in the hands of irresponsible elements but meet regularly to discuss and solve national problems by producing ideas that may contribute to the agenda for the on-coming constitutional conference. By the end of the workshop last Thursday, it was clear that Buhari's advise was being adhered to as participants not only analysed the basis of the political crisis that has compounded the nation's socio-economic problems but sought to find solutions to them. It would no doubt surprise a sizable number of southern elites that the crop of northern intellectuals, tech-

nocrats and politicians are now smarting for the constitutional conference which they feel has become necessary in view of the strongly held but misconceived view in the south that the north has become an impediment to the progress of the federation. Most participants however called for caution and the need to root discussions in facts that will enable conferees to arrive at rational decisions.

In fact, some of the papers presented at the talks attempted to debunk the widely held view that one section of the country has been living fat on the other sections. Professor Ango Abdullahi, former vice chancellor of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, who was ubiquitous at the workshop, issued the most vocal refutation of this notion. He argued in his contribution that before the advent of oil, agriculture, the predominant vocation in the north, provided the foreign exchange with which the nation maintained its post independence economy. Even with the dominance of oil in the economy, Abdullahi contended that agriculture remains the most enduring basis of economic development of the country, arguing that without it, the economy will collapse like a pack of cards. Paul Unongo spoke in similar tone explaining that although the oil producing areas' agitations are legitimate, he advised against using oil as a weapon of blackmail. He in fact asserted that oil exists in the bosom of Lake Chad and River Benue basins and wondered why they are not being explored. For Bala Usman, a history teacher at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, the issue was beyond base sentiments. He was more interested in showing that the process of political and economic integration of the various peoples of Nigeria has reached a point of no return and therefore finds talks of disintegration particularly irritating. The trend in the world now, contended Usman, is not towards smaller nations but bigger nations as exemplified by North America and Europe that are working to-



Buhari: corruption is our bane towards the economic and political integration of their respective countries.

Even though there were many participants who showed more sentiments for a one Nigeria and pleaded for a shift in focus to the format of government, sharing of political power and allocation of resources, several spoke of the need to prepare for the possibility of a break-up of the federation. "What should agitate our minds now" said one confederalist, "is how we will

## Although the oil producing areas' agitations are legitimate, he (Unongo) advised against using oil as a weapon of blackmail

pull apart without bloodshed." But for some like Dr. Mahmud Tukur, general Buhari's minister of commerce and industry, the most important issue for determination is: What is the wish of the masses of Nigeria? So precisely what is it?

By Bolaji Adebisi and Idris Ndanusa

## Kaduna Trade Fair Not a mammy market?

Notwithstanding the harsh weather and economic downturn, people find time to attend the 16th Kaduna International Trade Fair

Contrary to earlier assumptions, the 16th Kaduna International Trade Fair which ended last Sunday, February 5, was a resounding success. Despite the harsh, harmattan wind and heavy dust not altogether unusual in the northern states at this time of the year, thousands of people including exhibitors/participants and businessmen/women thronged the hurriedly constructed but sprawling new Trade Fair ground along Kaduna-Zaria road. Indeed for the nine days the fair lasted, almost everyone was there. Beggars, hawkers,

for attention. For Lt. General Oladipo Diya, chief of general staff who flagged off the fair, it was an opportunity to explain the recent economic policies of the federal government. He pointed out that the re-regulation of the economy by the federal government is not a negation of SAP, but an attempt to create conducive environment for economic growth. General Diya emphasised the symbiotic relationship between the developed and developing nations, saying each needs the other for mutual economic benefits. Commerce and industry minister, Chief Melford

Okilo said government would encourage private sector participation in the proposed commodity exchange market to enhance local production, while a trade malpractice tribunal would soon be established to try cases of dishonest business practices.

The director-

general of Kaduna Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, Alhaji Kabir Umar lamented that the poor financial position of the chamber made it impossible for it to meet up with the construction of the permanent ground, adding that the chamber relied solely on federal government contributions and those of a few foreign countries.

Turning to the misconception about the fair, the president of Kaduna Chamber of Commerce, Alhaji Mohammed Sani Aminu explained that the Kaduna International Trade Fair or *Kasuwun Duniya* was not a mammy market, a market

so called and patronised in the military barracks where goods are sold and bought, but a forum through which manufacturers and businessmen make contact at international level to facilitate trade and exchange of ideas.

Apart from the general discomfort caused by lack of essential facilities for conveniences, and the dry wind, the fair went on smoothly. Almost every sector of the economy, ranging from manufacturing, banking and other ancillary services were present. The National Directorate of Employment showed a heavy presence, and in nearly all the pavilion one could find something by an NDE graduate. Chief Samuel Ogbemudia, the minister of labour and productivity and Chief Chuku Wachukwu of the NDE thumped their chests with satisfaction that Nigerians now employ themselves. Asgerians now employ themselves. Assorted materials such as key holders made from cow horns and rings, bangles, lamp holders, flower vase and different objects for interior decorations, including cow tails, animal skins were delightful to behold. Wahab Alebiosu, a beneficiary of NDE and wood carver told *Citizen* that after his training he was given 6000 Naira and tools worth 3000 Naira by the NDE adding that it is now paying off. The work of Engineer Lewis Udongo, from Lagos was cynosure of attraction. Udongo's artwork won the national productivity merit award in 1992. A graduate of University of Lagos, Udongo read civil engineering but his interest in artistic designs got the better part of him after a short stint as a staff of NDE. Today, prices of Udongo's work range between 5,000 Naira and 100,000 Naira. The collections on display include Ramadan festival, Golf scene, *mairuwa* and slave trade. The ministry of Federal Capital Territory reiterated the reality of Abuja and called on investors both local and foreign to come and invest in the FCT.

States and local government were not left out. Nearly all the states had their special days, and the state military administrators and their of



Bank of the North: also at the fair

almajiris, pickpockets and even lunatics all had a field day. The security at the gates was very inadequate, the policemen highly overwhelmed, abandoned crowd control to the overzealous members of vigilante group, who brutalised almost everyone in sight. Apparently this paid off handsomely as cases of pickpockets reduced substantially by the end of the fair.

Expectedly, the fair provided another opportunity for participants, business men and organisations to exchange ideas on commerce, joint ventures and latest technology, as firms, buyers and visitors competed

ficials used the opportunity to woo investors to take advantage of the rich potentials in their states.

The leaders in banking industry were not left out, they include Bank of the North, Union Bank, Allied Bank, Airbank and UBA. National Board for Community Banks, NCB was also at the fair to create awareness to community banks in their localities. All of them were there to render services or promote their products. Service organisation including the Nigerian Telecommunications Plc, the Nigerian Communication Commission, MG Communications System Limited, ABG and Harka Air also participated. Others were National Economic Recon-

struction Funds (NERFUND), National Maritime Authority, Nigerian Ports Plc, National Electric Power Authority NEPA — to enlighten the public on their services.

In oil and manufacturing sector, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, and its subsidiaries were represented at the fair. While AP introduced its Apicide insect killer, manufacturing companies like the Cement Company of Northern Nigeria and NAFCON also participated. The giants in Automobile industry at the fair include PAN, Niger Motors, ANAMMCO and Leventis.

How do the people assess the fair? Colonel Musa D. Kano, Rivers

State administrator said the chamber has to "improve its environment to look more friendly", Abdulkareem Popoola, a manager with CFAO Motors spoke in similar vein. To him, the fair ground "is not an ideal environment to create market", pointing to inadequate convenience such as toilet at the fair ground. Others however found ways to keep the incessant dust in check by donning a nose and mouth mask like doctors at operation theatre.

By Abokoye Sulciman with additional reports from Tola Sunday, Yekini Abdullahi and Abu Mommoh

## PAN

# In the cold

### Junior workers are sacked for demanding higher pay

The industrial action by the junior staff of Peugeot Automobile Nigerian Limited, (PAN) to press home their demands for improved welfare pay reached its peak last week when the management decided to sack all of them. The dismissal letters dated January 31, 1994 and signed by the managing director, Mr. Jacques Manlay stated that the management took the action because the workers have adamantly refused to call off the strike.

About 1,100 junior staff were affected. The management has however given the workers interested to re-apply. Before the sack notice, the junior employees had barricaded the gates leading to the company's commercial section, chanting abusive songs. They also prevented people's movement into and outside the company's premises.

The striking workers also indicted the management for its reluctance to heed their demands. They were irked by the lowly 45 Naira monthly medical allowance they enjoy.

Some of the junior staff alleged that "some of the management staff

have outlived their usefulness in the company. They have converted PAN into their private property. The solution now lies in their leaving this company" they said.



Tumaka: not witch-hunting here

Prior to this development, the workers circulated a nine-point demand. These include six to six working hour for the security staff be cancelled henceforth, free medial attention in place of 45 Naira allowance, and that three day salary cut by management during nation-wide strike last year, be paid without delay.

A source who claimed to be secu-

rity staff stated that "We refused the request of the management because it is clearly an exploitation and before this action we gave our condition that if we are to work on Saturday it has to pay us 200 per cent of that day's pay."

In the commercial section when *Citizen* sought the opinion of some car dealers, they disclosed that the problem in PAN is degenerating, adding that the reaction of junior workers was justified.

*Citizen* also gathered that, the public relation manager, Mrs. Lami Tumaka who was on leave was immediately recalled to mediate between management and the workers.

When *Citizen* contacted Mrs. Tumaka, she contended that "the crux of the matter started when the management asked the junior staff to pay back 10 working days that accrued when they boycotted their work during last year's nation wide strike either in form of salary cut for period of five months or continue with Saturday's work to replace the last 10 days." She also told *Citizen* last 10 days." She also told *Citizen* that management has no time to that management has no time to witch-hunt any of its junior staff.

Other reasons adduced by the workers, *Citizen* learnt include personal emolument and an improvement in the workers' condition of service to cope with inflation.

By Yabagi Kolo

# State of the nation: Obasanjo proffers solutions

**FC**

Being excerpt of his keynote address at a workshop organised by Arewa House on February 2 and 3

If a government out of lack of confidence in itself fails to re- pose confidence in us by telling us its programme and how long it requires to implement that programme, why should such a government ask for our confidence and understanding? And if it does, why should we give it? After all confidence begets confidence. Time also imposes discipline and checks on a leader. For its leaders not to be subject to the discipline of a party, a parliament, a legislature or time is one of the worst situations that a country can be in. And how seriously should anybody take the idea that the constitutional conference that has no hand in voting in the military government should determine its agenda. For us to take such idea seriously, the outcome or decision of the constitutional conference should be binding on the military government.

Corruption on any scale is bad; so is mismanagement on any scale. But given the events of the past eight years, it is clear that the civilian politicians of the Second Republic were far less rapacious in their corruption compared to the military who succeeded them, and far less degenerate in their social and economic management.

But the greatest danger that military governance poses to our polity lies in the failure of the military to break the vicious cycle of succeeding itself. Unless Nigerians stand up against this trend, it may continue indefinitely.

Invariably our leaders have failed because we have allowed them to fail us. Then we scamper for solutions to problems that should not have arisen. Those leaders or erst- while leaders sit down and enjoy and laugh waiting for another opportunity. What a tragedy for a na-

By  
General Olusegun Obasanjo

tion! Since independence, Nigeria has not been able to unite behind one non-military political leader, I believe we can unite behind one political issue. It is democracy.

In 1985 we were mesmerised with the debate on the IMF loan and later in 1986 with the political bureau debate. Most Nigerians, including those who set us on the IMF debate, understood little or nothing of the



Obasanjo: we must put our house in order

operations and policies of the IMF. In the end the two debates served the purpose they were meant to serve; to provide a diversion. Now, we are warming up to another diversion, and a more dangerous one called the constitutional conference. I will say more about this presently.

Meanwhile, I would like to draw another parallel between the present administration and its predecessor in the use and abuse of the press. It is common knowledge that the last full military administration hired hack writers to mislead the public, assassinate the character of innocent persons and to create the impression which the government wanted, however misleading. Editorials were sponsored and planted. These practices were acknowledged at the highest level of government. The present administration has embarked on the same method and the same practice

especially to justify and explain its inconsistencies as evidence that it is bowing to the wishes of the people. How are the wishes of the people determined without the elected representatives of the people and without an election or a referendum?

For as long as our leaders and sponsors of leaders lead and sponsor for personal, ethnic, geographical, sectional, religious and purely economic interests, for so long will the problems remain with us, no matter the sophistication of our constitution or how we provide a change. How do we provide a stake in Nigeria for every Nigerian if Nigerians from one part of the country can be told that God has ordained people from another part of Nigeria for permanent political leadership of Nigeria and the others for followership? I would not have made reference to this unfortunate statement but for the fact that the person to whom it was attributed could jolly well have been voted in as the president of this country. There has never

been a disclaimer. But more importantly, no responsible voice from up-country has publicly made statement that leadership material is not limited to only one particular section of the country.

Times such statements from such quarters do great disservice and harm to our nation. I recall some time ago, a social critic from the west wrote to say that the north has no culture. I was incensed because if culture is the total way of life of a people, it is like saying the north has no way of life — how ridiculous. This gentleman was promptly called to order and he never made such a silly statement again. For as far as I know there is no section of Nigeria that is not endowed with people who can provide good leadership. In most cases it is a matter of opportunity.

I have had the fortune of work-

# RUM

ing with distinguished individuals from every corner of

our country. Let me single out two of such men from the north for mention here, one worked immediately above me, and the other below me. I am of course referring to my immediate predecessor, the late General Murtala Muhammed and the secretary to the federal military government and head of service for the substantial part of my administration, Malam Liman Ciroma. They are by any standard accomplished leaders. Men and women like them abound everywhere. Let me say here that the argument that if a section of the country is comparatively poorer, that situation should entitle that section of the country to continuous production of political leadership may not be helpful. Unfortunately, it reinforces resources distribution syndrome rather than production mentality. It encourages corruption and injustice. And if you are going to be there to improve the condition of your own poor possibly to the neglect of my own poor, or you cannot trust me to do justice to your own, why should I and my own poor repose confidence in you as our leader.

At this juncture, let me pay tribute to those who stood against the diabolical and destabilizing role that Radio Kaduna played during the Babangida-created crisis of June/July/August last year. I do not listen to any Nigerian Radio let alone Radio Kaduna. But some of my northern friends who listened to Radio Kaduna alerted me and urged me to assist in giving hope, confidence and assurance of peace and security to Nigerians wherever they live. It was that alert that partly made me call a press conference to urge Nigerians to remain calm in their places of abode and to ensure them that the crisis would not lead to civil war. Unfortunately some mass media in the south replied in kind to Radio Kaduna. I say unfortunately because two wrongs don't make a right. But rather than Radio Kaduna which is

paid from public funds being brought to order by the government, the media in the south that replied in kind were either banned or closed down. This was deliberately playing the north against the south for personal interest.

I have always maintained that I would be more diminished as a citizen of Oduduwa Republic than as a citizen of Nigeria. I believe that those who might seek solace in the Republic of Dan Fodio would be equally diminished. The same goes for those who sought solace in Republic of Biafra. But more importantly and as experience in other parts of the world would show, we would be further impoverished if we disintegrate, as we would have to spend an increasing part of whatever resources we have on arms and armament, if only to assuage the consequent feelings of insecurity and suspicion.

There is a grand falsification and misperception going around that the presidential system is expensive and therefore we should opt again for the parliamentary system. The question is: expensive for what and for whom? Of course, corruption is expensive and destructive. And most of the expenses people talked about are expenses on corruption and waste and not the direct expenses on operating and running the presidential system. After all, the late Mallam Aminu Kano contested and ran on the presidential system in 1979 winning two of the 19 states. No contestant or aspirant could be more financially modest than Mallam Aminu Kano, nor could any political party be more austere than PRP. But by the standard of 1993 elections, he would not have raised enough money to contest in his ward.

The greatest advantage of the presidential system is that the country is the constituency of the president. He is obliged to know the country and to seek support across the country. Even if he is a tribal baron, his horizon and outlook will be broadened by the end of a nationwide campaign. In 1979 two of the presidential contestants confessed to me that the country-wide campaign

tours provided a great education for them. The campaign time may be the only time that a president visits some parts of the country during the term of his presidency. They are gains that we should not lose the altar of corruption and waste being regarded as expenses. The system in which one person controls the executive and the legislative bodies concentrates more power in that person than the one that separates the executive from the legislative. What is important is openness: accountability, transparency, freedom of expression.

Manipulation of the judiciary in a way that undermined its credibility, independence and effectiveness is one of the greatest disservices of the last full military administration to the country. To destroy the judiciary is to throne anarchy. Independence of the judiciary must remain sacred. It is in the best interest of the people to ensure this, otherwise there will be no honest and credible arbiter between citizens and between the citizens and the government especially one that is full of mischief. The judiciary also needs to save itself and enhance its worth, by jealously guarding its independence.

We must never be tired of demanding that any government should chasten itself and give us the foundation and the example to propel us forward. We must demand that any government should deal honestly with us and level up with us. We must have the programme and the timetable of any government to be able to assess its performance. We must have accountability and transparency that we are not getting now. If any administration is turning evil we should spare no efforts or no sacrifice to remove it.

Nigeria has a responsibility to the black race to put its house in order and show that the race is not doomed. We cannot afford to fail because of our responsibility to ourselves, the rest of Africa and the black world. We owe it as a duty to future generations not to misuse the God-given resources to all Nigerians — past, present and future.

## Railways

## Return to the past

After several years of inertia, will the Nigerian Railway Corporation, NRC move forward under the management of Indians as Chief Ebenezer Babatope, transport and aviation minister, unveils plans to reinvite them?

If the uncertain future of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, NRC has inflicted agony on the psyche of the Nigerian populace, its lost glory is being bemoaned by the corporation's army of pensioners. One of them is 81 year-old Pa Sule Owolabi who joined the railway on July 4, 1933 as a clerk.

Asked by *Citizen* to compare the railway of his days with what it is today, the old man paused a while to cast a reflective look into history. And, as he nodded with deep thought, he charged: "Nobody, nobody would have dreamt in those days that the railway could ever become a mere shadow of itself."

"Ever since I retired on November 23, 1968," he emphasised at the Ebute-Metta, Lagos headquarters of the NRC, "I cannot see any significant improvement on what we left behind." But Pa Owolabi found an exception in the Indians who managed the corporation briefly in the early 80's. "Heh! the Indians," he exclaimed. "Just like the British, they (the Indians) were very good," said Pa Owolabi as he went on to highlight their achievements on operations and administration.



Babatope: the Asians again?

Therefore, when Chief Ebenezer Babatope, transport and aviation minister dropped the hint in Lagos last week of the plan to reinvite the Indians, Pa Owolabi viewed it as a welcome relief. But not so for top management staff of the beleaguered corporation whom *Citizen* gathered may step up lobby to abort the plan. This notwithstanding, it does appear Chief Babatope will not give in

**When Chief Ebenezer Babatope, transport and aviation minister dropped the hint in Lagos last week of the plan to reinvite the Indians, Pa Owolabi viewed it as a welcome relief**

easily. Said he last week: "The Indians did well when they were here and what I want to see is a rail system that does not only move our people (and) solve our problems, but a rail corporation that is able to meet the present challenges." However, the minister's sentiments may not be

misplaced. Nigeria's first direct experiment with the Indian rail managers was in 1979. That year, the RITES, a consortium of rail experts, was invited to help resuscitate the Nigerian rail-tium system that had begun to show signs of decay. With a life-line grant of about 800 million Naira from the Shagari administration, the country's rail system was indeed brought back to life.

Within three years, recalled another pensioner, the NRC had become so buoyant that the government was told to withhold further subsidies. "The corporation was not only self-sustaining," said the middle-aged man who pleaded not to be named, "it was lending out money to even the city council." But the expatriates were believed to have been sent packing in 1982 on the strength of lobby from politicians and big time contractors.

No sooner had the Indians left that the rot set in again on the NRC. In the Act of Parliament of 1955, three broad objectives were listed for the NRC. These were the carriage of passengers and goods in a manner that will offer full value for money, meet cost of production, improve market share and quality of service; to ensure safety of operations and maximum efficiency; to meet social responsibility in a manner that will meet the requirement of rail users, trade, commerce, industry, government and the general public."

Not many watchers of the railways would stake a bet that the NRC has achieved most of these lofty objectives since the Indians departed in 1982. But fewer still believed that the mere recall of the Asians is the ultimate panacea for the ills facing

the country's railway system.

The new development has now become the subject of measured discussion among top management staff of the corporation. But other categories of staff were generally indifferent except few who viewed it as a good omen. The apprehension of the top management staff is understandable.

*Citizen* gathered that the plan to invite Asians was actually the first official indictment of the NRC's management over the near total collapse of the country's railway system. And the implication, according to an insider, is that many top officials would be removed.

Although, *Citizen* was informed that the NRC has not been officially notified of the development since it did not recommend such a policy, Mr. David Ndakotsu, its imagemaker, said NRC cannot question the ministry. Said he: "We are a parastatal that implements government policy decisions."

Railway watchers, however, expressed fear last week that unless solutions to the problems of NRC are coordinated, the government may have embarked on another wild goose chase. Since 1984, official attempts at salvaging the railway, had been based on an illusion of its "over-bloated staff strength." And between that year and 1993, no less than 23,000 staff of the corporation have been retrenched.

The president and secretary-general of the Nigeria Union of Railwaymen, NUR, could not be reached when *Citizen* called recently as they were said to be out of Lagos. But the union has noted in a recent policy statement that "such retrenchments and staff rationalisations are no panacea for the ills of the NRC. The problems, noted NUR, has to do with the dwindling fortunes of the corporation in the last one decade and the "ostentatious tendencies" of the management staff.

NRC's Ndakotsu, however, dismissed the allegation of ostentatious living as unfounded. "Every expenditure we incurred was within the provisions of regulations," he

stressed. He expectedly agreed that the NRC was grossly underfunded. A situation, railway watchers believe was responsible for the virtual collapse of necessary infrastructures.

Between 1955 and 1963, the NRC could boast of 307 locomotive engines made up of 250 steam and 57 diesel. This stock had, between 1964-78, been reduced to 219. And worst still, by 1986 when passenger traffic had risen to 9.9 million and goods to 0.9 million tonnes, the NRC had only 61 locomotive engines. This had been depleted to just 35 in 1989 until additional 10 were bought in 1990.

*Citizen* investigations, however, revealed that the gory tale of neglect depicted by the NRC was at variance with expressed determination of successive governments to fund it. When former President Babangida visited the railway infrastructure on October 4, 1989 he was quick to identify the problem of the NRC. Said he in the visitor's register: "My visit this morning has more than convinced me that given the necessary support this organisation will surely move the world."

But when the government agreed to a three-year revitalisation programme estimated to cost 2.6 billion Naira, between 1990 and 1993 the money did not flow smoothly. In-

stead, only 400 million Naira was released before the balance got stuck in the ministry. Some of the NRC top official, *Citizen* gathered, were being tantalised that given the present handicap, "even the Indian rail magician" would not find it easy if indeed they are to return.

On the eve of their departure in 1982, the Asian rail experts handed a terse warning to the government on how best to keep the country's rail system on track. "Unless," they predicted, "the government took serious steps to provide new diesel locomotive engines, wagons, coaches and spare-parts before it was too late, NRC services and operations would grind to a halt." Watchers of the Nigerian railway, however, expressed dismay that if this warning had been heeded, the country may not after all need the services of Indian railway managers.

Mr. Ndakotsu, agreed this much when he told *Citizen* that the country cannot afford to allow the railway to die. Said he: "Sir Siaka Stevens, late ex-president of Sierra Leone described his only regret in life as his decision to close down his country's railway system."

By Moyo Akoshile

## Education

# Unending woes

Students who failed 1993 SSCE examination are finding it difficult to re-enrol as principals in Lagos demand outrageous sums

**A**nxiety occasioned by the late release of the 1992/93 Senior School Certificate Examination result turn into fear pennultimate week as candidates besieged their centres to check their result.

Indeed the results were anything but good. According to a statement signed by WAEC spokesman, Igna-

tius Apeh the candidates performed poorly in the science subjects, while only 19 per cent of the entire candidates passed the English language examination. Mr. Apeh told *Citizen* last week that the result was the worst ever recorded in the last five years of the examination.

Commenting on the students performance in the 1993 SSCE ex-

amination, Gabriel Falade, national secretary, Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) told *Citizen* last week that the poor performance in the SSCE examination was as a result of lack of incentives and encouragement for teachers. These have led to low productivity on the part of teachers. "Teachers have not been receiving their salaries regularly, they are treated as second class citizens, so they don't put in their best," he said.

Buttressing Falade's argument, Professor Aladesanmi Ayeni, of department of education administration, University of Lagos told *Citizen* last week that "the Nigerian government has to reorganise its priorities; and give education its right of place. Every developed country in the world knows that education is the first factor in development. Some of the money wasted through mismanagement and corruption will have to be rerouted into the educational sector. Nigerians are enthusiastic about education because we all see it as the only way to get to the top. If you consider the increasing number of students who sit for SSCE and other public examination you discover that those who are joking with the educational sector are toying with the hopes of millions of Nigerians," he said. Many Nigerians are concerned with the deteriorating performance at the yearly SSCE. Babs Animashaun, chairman of the National Parent Association of Nige-



Ayu and Falade: why the delay?

rian has expressed concern over poor performance. He blamed the incessant school closure for the poor performance. He said NATAN is worried and very seriously concerned about the falling education standard and the poor treatment of teachers.

Already many of those students who failed the 1993 SSCE examination and wanted to re-enrol for the 1994 SSCE examination have started falling victims of undue exploitation as many school principals have started cashing in on the opportunity to collect outrageous fees from them despite the fact that WAEC

charges only 500 Naira for its examinations. *Citizen* sources revealed that many school principals are collecting as much as 2,500 Naira from students to get them re-enrolled for the WAEC examination. Omowunmi Oloidi, a 19 year old pupil is one of those who were lucky to have been able to pay 2,000 Naira for her re-registration because her parents could afford it.

However, many others were not as lucky as they could not afford to pay the amount demanded for the examination. Miss Ngozi Eruk, told *Citizen* last week that she was unable to re-register for the examination because her parents could not afford to pay for her.

*Citizen's* efforts to know why the school principals are demanding huge fee from students was met with resistance, when Mr. Alade Israel, the principal of Ojota Grammar School declined comments on the issue. Said he: "I am a civil servant, I don't talk to the press."

However, an official in Yaba headquarters of the West African Examination Council, WAEC, told *Citizen* that it is illegal for any principal to have collected an amount exceeding 500 Naira from any student.

By Samson Ojo

**If you consider the increasing number of students who sit for SSCE and other public examination you discover that those who are joking with the educational sector are toying with the hopes of millions of Nigerians,"**

Health

VVF

# Every man's war

## Seminar on VVF advocates more education to end the scourge

**T**he National Council of Women's Societies of Nigeria, NCWS, is waging a determined war against Vesico Vaginal Fistula, VVF, for which an estimated quarter of million women are afflicted nationwide. Late last month the council held its second national seminar on the vesico vaginal fistula programme in Daula Hotel, Kano. Incidentally, Kano was the largest concentration of the VVF cases was chosen for the pilot project.

The two day seminar allowed participants to review progress made on the pilot projects and further sensitise governments, members of the public and the international community on the need to prevent the scourge. The council noted with satisfaction progress made in the treatment and rehabilitation of the victims. It stated that between 1984 and 1993, the number of surgical repair of vesico vaginal fistula increased from 89 to over 1000, but noted that about 150,000 other patients are still on the waiting list. Consequently, the seminar urged governments to ensure that primary and secondary health centres are strengthened to recognise high risk cases, establish new centres throughout the country, intensify training of health personnel and social workers for improved care and rehabilitation of VVF patients. While calling for more seminar/workshops on VVF to be conducted in the state and local government areas, the seminar argued that there is urgent need for research, documentation, maintenance of data base, publication and the application of findings relating to VVF. In the light of these, the council enjoined the media, all the relevant ministries, and other non-

government organisations to provide sustained information on the disease.

The seminar, however, strongly contended that the only way to eradicate this scourge is through prevention. To this end, it called for intensification of public enlightenment, the expansion of maternal health services and cooperation of all the people.

Consequently, the seminar enjoined government to provide facilities for free and compulsory formal and informal

**The seminar, however, strongly contended that the only way to eradicate this scourge is through prevention**

education for all girls up to secondary school, to be backed with legislation. To broaden the programme, membership of the National Council of Women Societies' task force on VVF, is to be expanded.

Recognising the need for a firm financial base, the seminar has also recommended the setting up of a

NCWS/VVF fund while January 24 each year is to be observed as the National Vesico Vaginal Fistula Day. The seminar recommended that the week preceding January 24 be designated as VVF fund raising week, while NCWS/VVF one Naira should



Dalhatu: health minister

be established at national state and local government levels.

In addition, it called on the ministry of communication to issue a commemorative stamp on Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF) to raise awareness both nationally and globally.

The VVF scourge is usually attributed to early marriages among women, who while on delivery develop complications because their system is not developed. This often results in tearing of the bladder and permanent leakage of urine. In most cases, such women are abandoned by their husbands. The surgical operation to repair the vaginal takes up to one year or more, largely because of lack of experts and medical personnel. A large percentage of VVF victims are found in the northern states

By Abu Mommoh

## BUSINESS & ECONOMY

### Banking

# Shrinking dividends

The recent closure of two merchant banks by the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN in conjunction with the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation, NDIC raised the question of how far the regulatory authorities can go in their effort to bring sanity to the beleaguered financial sector of the economy

**W**hen the axe fell on Financial Merchant Bank Limited and Kapital Merchant Bank Limited and they were promptly sealed up for good recently, most watchers of the financial industry were not surprised. In fact, if there was any surprise, it was that only those two tasted the sharp edge of the CBN/NDIC's axe.

And while the regulatory bodies have been dangling the axe in the direction of the banks, many had concluded, rather prematurely, that the authorities did not have the heart to go any further.

Now that they have gone for the jugular there is likely to be a reassessment by the analysts and the banks especially those that seem destined for the slaughter house. In recent years, the banking sector, had as a result of the deregulation drive of the Structural Adjustment Programme enjoyed an unprecedented boom. The boom however had been more apparent in the number of new banks that came into being than boost they gave to the economy.

As Dr. Ibrahim Ayag, a one time managing director of Continental Merchant Bank observed in our story on banks: *The big rip-off, Citizen* vol. 5 No. 2, the number of banks that came into being from 1986 to date is more than those that existed in Nigeria from the colonial period to 1986. As their number continued to rise and eventually peaked at 120, there was cut throat competition for deposits, rise in interest rate and lowering of professionalism as mobility of labour became the vogue in the industry. Contrary to the image they have created, the bankers were

neither alchemists nor magicians. For many of the banks what sustained them, according to analysts and supported by events when it dried up was the foreign exchange allocated to them under the various foreign exchange allocation schemes of the CBN. With the wide difference between the official rate and that of the parallel market it was quite easy for the banks to make ends meet. It was therefore no surprise that many banks like the two liquidated recently never bothered to open a single branch apart from their headquarters. This situation left them open to the accusation of being glorified bureau de change.

With such clear dependence it only required a measure as that which changed the manner of foreign exchange allocation to disorient a number of banks. Other shortcomings that added to their woes include mismanagement, and board squabbles. There was also the mismatch of funds such that short term funds were used for long term lending.

When all these problems began to take their toll, many of the banks experienced liquidity problems which gave rise to default in payment to depositors. As the situation deteriorated, the CBN and its offspring, the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation, NDIC had to step in to protect depositors and restore sanity in an industry gone haywire. Over the last three years, the regulating bodies have adopted various measures to prevent the affected banks from going under. The measures included loans to the affected banks restructuring and the imposi-



Ogwuma: how many more to go?

tion of holding action, a punitive measure to closely monitor ailing banks. In spite of all these measures, the overall picture of distress in the banks has not changed as more and more came to fall into the category. Sometime in 1993, the CBN mandated the NDIC to take over the management of five state owned banks namely, Pan African Bank, New Nigeria Bank, Cooperative and Commerce Bank, Mercantile Bank and African Continental Bank. These banks will remain under NDIC approved interim management boards until their situation improves.

For banks like the National Bank owned by the states that make up the former western region, years of



Osayemeh: bankers' boss

being NDIC's sick baby had one little to change its chronic distress. It is now said to be restructured with the disposal of some of its assets and the cutting down of unviable branches. Sources within the CBN, NDIC and the banking circle however indicate that all these measures may come to nought as the bank to all practical purposes is dead. *Citizen* learnt that the millions pumped into the bank got easily dissipated as depositors promptly called for their deposits.

It was probably the case of the National Bank which promoted the assumption that the regulatory authorities will continue to play the role of Santa Claus to the banks in spite of their continued failure to mend their ways. The recent closure of the two merchant banks however indicates that the apex bodies have resolved to deal with the erring banks. Indications of what was to happen came through the NDIC when two days to the event, its managing director went public with a call to the CBN to close down banks with only one branch. With the announcement of Friday, January 22, 1994 it was clear that Mr. Ebohdahe was only preparing the public for a decision that has already been taken.

As the other one branch bank in distress await their fate with trepidation, depositors of the two liquidated banks have something to lessen their loss. The deposit insurance company has indicated that it will, after establishing the genuineness of their case, pay depositors up to 50,000 Naira. Those deposits higher than that and who are likely to be many will be the ultimate losers in the debacle of the banks' closure.

Until the review of the provision that came with this year's budget, the minimum deposit for merchant banks was 50,000 Naira. It is against this background that one top banker who prefers anonymity called on the NDIC to raise the amount it pays to depositors in the event of a bank failure from its present level to 500,000 Naira. The banker further



Ebohdahe: holds the axe .

argued that given the unreliable nature of the information banks provide their depositors, the depositors should not bear the brunt of the bank's misdeeds. It is interesting that even as the CBN and NDIC ordered the closure of Financial Merchant Bank and Kapital Merchant Bank, they were less forthcoming on the action, if any, to be taken against the directors and management of the two banks. The feeling in the banking circle is that unless a deterrent is established other promoters and managers of banks would just continue with business as usual.

With the existing legal framework CBN and NDIC cannot take legal action against erring bank promoters and managers without referring to the already clogged office of the director of public prosecutions. *Citizen* learnt that the regulatory bodies prefer a situation whereby they could directly prosecute the erring banks or their agents in the many causes of fraud and mismanagement that bedevil the financial industry. For now whatever the regulatory bodies may say on the matter it is likely to sound like an excuse for their own shortcomings. Perhaps if they had been less accommodating of the excess of the banks, matters may not have

reached the present state.

Meanwhile, as the number of banks in distress continues to rise only urgent measures in line with restructuring, merger or acquisition could limit the number of hopeless cases that cannot be rescued. A banker who is conversant with the situation on the ground summed it up thus: "If the closure of the two banks is the beginning of the exercise, it is good as it could restore sanity in the industry. If, however, it ends with the two banks then not much will come out of it."

#### The two failed banks and their directors

##### Financial Merchant Bank Limited

1. Otunba W.O.O. Ajayi (Executive Chairman)
2. Alhaji Magaji Dambatta
3. Prince Adejare Olateru-Olagbegi
4. Roman M. Slawinski

##### Kapital Merchant Bank Limited

1. Dr. O. Odogwu (Chairman/Chief Executive)
2. Alhaji Mustafa A. Wushishi
3. P.M. Mbanefo
4. S.A. Kufeji
5. S.E. Emiowele

##### List of one office banks

1. Triumph Merchant Bank
2. Societe Bancaire Nigeria Limited
3. Prudent Merchant Bank
4. Peak Merchant bank
5. New World Merchant Bank
6. Midas Merchant Bank
7. FSB International Bank
8. Magnum Trust Bank Limited
9. Abacus Merchant Bank Ltd.
10. Citi Trust Merchant Bank
11. Comet Merchant Bank
12. First Interstate Merchant Bank
13. Fountain Trust Merchant Bank
14. Group Merchant Bank
15. Hillcrest Merchant Bank Ltd.
16. Indo-Nigeria Merchant Bank Ltd.
17. Investment Banking and Trust Co. Ltd.
18. Lead Merchant Bank
19. Marina International Bank Ltd. (Merchant Bankers)
20. Afrifrank International (Merchant Bankers)

By Manuir Dan-Ali

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

## Amana Community Bank expands lending services

**A**mana Community Bank is expanding its lending services to agriculture in order to promote local farming and help improve the Nigerian economy. Attempt is underway to tap the grassroots by occasional visiting of small scale enterprises and selling their products to them. Plans are also underway to introduce lending

interest of 50 per cent to small depositors against the coming Sallah celebration.

This was stated by the manager, Mr. Owen O. Alale who said that the bank has raised enough deposit to meet the L.C.B. guidelines of lending not more than 70 per cent of total deposits.

## Union Bank assets hit 31 billion Naira

**U**nion Bank of Nigeria Plc's total assets stood at 31.7 billion Naira with a total deposit of 17.1 billion Naira as at September 30, 1993.

The managing director/chief executive of the bank, Alhaji Mohammed Yahaya disclosed this at the long service award and pensioners dinner held in Lagos. According to Alhaji Yahaya, the bank has

also recorded an enviable networth of 1.4 billion Naira and savings account balances which stood at 6.1 billion Naira.

He revealed that the bank had so far expended over 6.9 million Naira on scholarship scheme. He also disclosed that over 2,000 staff from all categories were promoted since the last long service award ceremony.

## NEPA's new leaf in Yola

**I**n order to improve its services, the Nigerian National Electric Power Plc (NEPA) Yola spent a total of 72.5 million Naira in acquiring new transformers and upgrading existing ones from 2.5 MVA to 7.5 MVA.

This was made known

## CAC expands, speeds up registration process

**C**orporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in a move to extend its services to all parts of the country has opened new offices in Port-Harcourt and Kano. This was dis-

closed at the on-going 16th Kaduna International Trade Fair by Mr. Rowland Nwachukwu, the commission's public relations manager.

## Rescue plans for the solid minerals sector

**P**lans are underway to revitalise the mineral resources sector of the Nigerian economy. The plans were unfolded by Engineer Ibrahim Ali, secretary of state for petroleum and mineral resources in his maiden meeting with chief executives of mineral resources, parastatals and subsidiary companies in Lagos last

week.

The highlights of the plans include the drawing up of a national minerals policy and the revision of the minerals Act 1946 and Allied Regulation. Others are a development plan for solid minerals in Nigeria and mineral resources sector parastatals and objectives.

## KTL makes 93 million Naira profit

**K**aduna Textiles has continued to wax stronger following its successful turn around by Churchgate Industries which took over its management two years ago.

The company made a profit of 93 million Naira and a turnover of 425 million Naira last year. In addition to the good results, all the debts being owed by KTL before Churchgate took over which stood at 108 million Naira have been fully repaid by the managing agents.

These facts were made

known during the board meeting of the company held recently at KTL premises in Kaduna.

According to management, the labour force had increased from 2,200 in 1991 to nearly 3,000 by last year thereby creating more employment opportunities.

Before Churchgate took over as investor managers of KTL, in 1991, the composite textile mill had gone through bad times and had been operating at a loss for more than a decade.

## Adetiba takes charge at LINTAS

**M**r. Dele Adetiba has been appointed the new chief executive of LINTAS, Nigeria's oldest advertising agency. He took over from Mr. Sylvester Moemeka who retired voluntarily after 20 years in the position and about 31

years in the company. Mr. Adetiba who has served as the company's managing director for the last six months took charge on January 1, 1994.

By Yakubu B. Bityong,  
Tola Sunday,  
Manir Dar, Ali and  
Timothy Ekwebelem

## AFRICA

## Burundi

## It did happen

Ethnic violence claims more lives despite clear warnings

**I**t is no longer news that fresh violence has erupted in Burundi. From the day the government dissolved the constitutional court which tried in vain to fill the leadership vacuum created by the assassination of president Melchior Ndadaye, 40, a Hutu, it was only a matter of time for violence to resume. It wasn't long in coming; the government position was broadcast at the weekend. By Monday, 30 people laid dead and 40 others seriously wounded. Some reports even put the figure of deaths at 100.

The fighting began when supporters of radical opposition parties demonstrated against the government's dissolution of the court. Gangs of youths from the Tutsi tribe blocked all main roads leading into the city and overturned buses outside the capital, Bujumbura. Police fired shots into the air to disperse them without much success. For the next two days, Bujumbura was turned into a dead city. Workers stayed home and most government offices and businesses stayed closed. Diplomats said they were unable to go to their offices because of the marauding gang of youths who had erected barricades and threw stones at passing cars.

Signs of trouble were evident soon after the government announcement when the leader of RADEZ, a radical opposition party, Joseph Nzeimana protested strongly the government's decision to dissolve the court which was considering complaints that the election by Hutu-dominated parliament of former agriculture minister, Cyprien Ntaryamira, as new president was unconstitutional. He also said that the decision of the court would be opposed by all means at the party's dis-

posal because the government had acted unconstitutionally.

The court had deliberated the challenge for over a week when it was unofficially revealed that it was about to rule against the nomination of the new Hutu president, a decision which would have pleased radical Tutsi politicians. However, two Hutu judges on the court resigned amid suspicion that there was a straight Tutsi/Hutu split on the bench. In between, an attempt was made on January 20, 22 and 29 to swear-in the president-elect without success. The government said the court was biased and had lost credibility, but these words could easily be taken as code for the fact that Tutsi judges were making a decision against a Hutu government. With the court's dissolution, the legal and



Salim: what now?

political impasse became complete.

The complex legal and political tussle taking place over the naming of a new president is in essence a reflection of deep political and ethnic animosity between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes. The mainly Hutu government was elected last June, but a coup attempt in October by the Tutsi-

led army caused an ethnic bloodbath. The government managed to hang on to power albeit without President Ndadaye, who, along seven of his ministers, speaker of parliament Pontien Kariswani and his deputy, Giles Bimazubiute and deputy prime minister Bernard Giza, was assassinated in the coup attempt.

That October 20 coup attempt, staged by paratroopers of the 2nd division as Burundi's fifth coup since independence in 1962 and led by chief of army staff Jean Baptista Bagaza caused a massive bloodbath. Ndadaye's election, the first democratically and which remarkably shifted power away from the powerful minority Tutsi tribe was widely acclaimed as a worthy example in Africa.

When the coup failed, due mainly to international pressure, the assassinated president's Hutu tribesmen who far outnumber the Tutsi were incensed and started killing the Tutsi who in turn used the army which they dominate to exert revenge. Tens of thousands of civilians have died or fled from the ethnic terror. It is estimated that about 750,000 people fled from Burundi to escape the inter-ethnic massacres. Tribal violence in Burundi has been a re-occurring issue; there were such mayhem in 1966, 1969, 1972, 1988 and 1991.

Eleven heads of state of the Organisation of African Unity, OAU, at their mini summit in Cairo in December, two months after the killings, sent a 200-strong troop to "restore trust." That has not helped in averting the latest violence.

Government sources said the people behind the latest clash were the same as those behind the failed coup. "They are just trying to frustrate the democratic process". The UN secretary-general Boutros Ghali said the world body is trying to organise talks between opposition parties and the Front for Democracy Party.

By Mohammed Bono  
with agency reports

South Africa

# Rough road to democracy

Crisis looms large as the Inkatha and Afrikaner parties boycott elections and threaten war

A historic all race electioneering campaign took off on a shaky start in South Africa last week as bilateral talks between the government and the parties broke down. While the government and the African National Congress (ANC) seemed to share the same principles on the conduct and modalities of electioneering and arrangements in post apartheid South Africa, the Freedom Alliance of Inkatha Freedom Party and Afrikaner Peoples Front (APF) stood in opposition.

The government and ANC wanted a unitary South Africa and single ballot elections. The Freedom Alliance wanted federalism and multiple election systems. Inkatha is bent on protecting its hold on Bophuthatswana Republic, a misnomer created solely for the convenience of apartheid South Africa, and the right-wing Afrikaner, is keen on Volkstaat in Western Transvaal. Government spokesman Rocco Meyer declared that the ANC and the Freedom Alliance cannot find each other. Veteran communist party leader, Joe Slovo also said that there is little hope of settlement that would persuade the right wing to abandon their boycott of the country's first all race elections in April.

With this latest developments, the count down to the April 27 elections began on a sour note. Mongosuthu Buthelezi of the Inkatha who rejected the draft constitution said only a miracle would make his party participate in the elections, while General Constand Viljoen of the ultra rightist Afrikaner threat-

ens war if his separatist tendencies are not fulfilled. He stated that violence is already high and "if we don't get Volkstaat it will go to the ceiling."

Dr. Mandela of the ANC has appealed to the right wing not to talk about violence so easily. He said "we know what war means." He also campaigned for calm among races, most especially between Xhosa his people and the Zulus. He also called on his supporters to exercise patience and allow free and fair campaigns for all, that contestants should not be harassed and intimidated. He said he does not want other parties to criticise the results of the elections on grounds of intimidation. The manifesto of his party, ANC, says it recognises that the



Mandela: appeals for calm



Buthelezi: up in arms

country is in a mess, and that the way out of the problem lies in cutting taxes, spending more government finance on infrastructure, housing and education, the provision of more jobs and to redistribute lands especially to the blacks.

According to the ANC, all these measures were designed to achieve social justice for blacks after years of apartheid. In response, President De Klerk charged the ANC of irresponsible rhetoric and promises; he wondered why the party would secure the finances with which to execute its promises. He claimed that his party is now a national party that represents the whole of South Africa and not a section of it. The international community is also worried about ANC's economic policies which seems to be a radical departure from present economic policies. There is also the fear of a repeat of the Zimbabwean example, where after independence the ascendancy of whites was curtailed. President De Klerk has also deployed troops to townships to stem the violence, the police were withdrawn because they were accused of complicity in the violence. About 14,000 people have died in the terror that gripped South Africa since the democratic process began.

By Shoyebi Abayomi  
with agency reports

## WORLD

## Bosnia Herzegovina

## More talks, more chaos

France calls on NATO to launch air attack on Bosnian aggressors

Unremitting violence and the savagery of Serbian and Croat forces have increased the need for an intensive air strike against them in Sarajevo and Srebrenica. France last week called on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, NATO to bomb Tuzla Airport to free it for the resumption of humanitarian aid flights. This may, however, depend on the decision reached by the UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros Ghali.

At NATO's last summit meeting, the alliance reaffirmed its willingness to make use of whatever means to break the Sarajevo siege and at the same time embark on measures like the use of air strike to clear the main airport of Tuzla and allow the intermittent rotation of troops in Srebrenica.

President Francois Mitterand, stressed that "it is high time for this decision to be carried out, because innocent people are dying everyday in hundreds."

Despite earlier pledges, there has been no consensus within either NATO or UN for air strike in this way. UN commanders in Bosnia have said the purpose of ensuring constant supply of food and other relief materials is becoming impossible, because all ways to constantly get in touch with UN food suppliers have proved abortive.

Similarly, the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) which guarantees aid distribution for the government temporarily stopped relief supplies when British aid driver, Paul Goodall, was murdered at Zenica in Central Bosnia. Goodall and two of his colleagues were attacked. Two managed to escape. A day later, Goodall's suspected murderers were arrested



Mitterand: for air attack

but the three were shot and killed by police at a road block in an exchange of fire. This infiltrated the minds of some Britons employed by ODA on its convoy operations in Bosnia and other parts of former Yugoslavia. According to them "we are now ready to go back home, we are tired of seeing dead bodies everywhere," adding that the "crisis is deadlocked."

The outgoing French commander in Bosnia, General Jean Cot had described the peace keeping operation in Bosnia as a sham, riddled in crisis and blamed the UN's "fence sitting" posture especially on its failure to concretise its own resolutions which at the same time degenerated and made the work of the military commanders cumbersome in Bosnia.

Pierre Lellouche, a member of the French national assembly and the international affairs consultant charged that "three years and 200,000

dead after the start of this war and with massacres continuing, I think it's important to ask why we are still there, why are young French men being killed or wounded today?" He also said France with 5,000 men in Bosnia alone, has more troops than any other country in the UN protection force in former Yugoslavia and lamented that "western democracies are being ridiculed."

Meanwhile, a vigilante group which stationed itself in villages near Tuzla and Zenica hijacked a car conveying some men to the outskirts of Zenica and shot them. The driver narrowly escaped. According to the spokesman of the UN High Commission for refugee, Mr. Ron Redmond who was speaking with French journalists in Zenica, vindictiveness by some unscrupulous terrorists was uncalled for, adding that investigation is on to fish

out those terrorists.

Reports also said Bosnian Croats dwelling around Zenica attacked and killed Italian journalists. The Italian foreign affairs minister, Beniamino Andreatta, condemned the Croats' action and called for immediate investigation of those involved. "It is inhuman, clearly a man-laughter and those involved must be punished," he said.

But, Russia's Liberal Democratic Party (RLDP) chairman, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy last week, debunked all the allegations stated against Serbs and Croats and warned that any attempt to launch air-attacks on them by alliance would result into another serious war against Russia. He, then advised foreign troops in Bosnia and UN peace keeping forces to leave Serbs and Croats to resolve their crises and determine their domestic problems.

By Yabagi Kolo  
with agency reports



## BILKISU YUSUF

scripts on time) will be off your neck for 10 months. Ofcourse you will edit the magazine and that means you'll not be able to travel on impulse. It will then be your responsibility to harass others. Have fun"! I added gleefully. I did not wait to hear his response but he was still talking when I dashed out of his office. His friends, used to my habitual taunting of the *Mullah* (as I nick-

seized the opportunity to campaign for the "no school" option. Fortunately, it didn't work because Mohammed told him that it was a nomination I should not miss. It comes once in a lifetime.

And for this once in a lifetime opportunity I gave up a proposed trip to Cape Town in South Africa. I was scheduled to attend the 43rd annual general assembly of the International Press Institute which was slated for February 13.

If it was alright to tease *Mullah* about having to subdue the urge to travel home — Azare — every weekend, I soon discovered on arrival in Kuru that I also had to give up the nomadic life I was used to. The course is an intensive affair covering diverse areas such as policy and strategy, defence and security, science and technology, regional studies (local and international) and contemporary domestic environment. Every day of the 10 months participants would spend at the institute had detailed programmes drawn up and participants require special permits should they have a good reason to be absent!! And who are these "students"? They are 44 drawn from all walks of life, professors, brigadiers general, navy and airforce captains, ambassadors, directors-general, colonels and police commissioners. The sprinkling of private sector participants are nominated by professional associations.

We have since been divided into four syndicates and lectures have begun in earnest. I miss *Mullah's* sulking face and I am relieved that he has not disappeared as he threatened to do should I dare come to Kuru. To Bomo! my closest companion in the production hassle who insisted to the last minute that he would only believe "this rise about going to Kuru" after I am gone. I say take care of my reporters and my collection of badges, the two treasures I left in *Citizen* for safe keeping, because Kuru is real.

# Back to school

**T**here was nothing unusual about that production day, reporters and editors were pre-occupied with beating the deadline. For me, production routine was however laced with the excitement of the good news I had just received. Two weeks back I was informed by the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) that Nigerian women were offered one seat at the 16th Senior Executive Course organised by the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru. I was among those women asked to submit their curriculum vitae. I responded, waited and kept the secret to myself.

That afternoon when I was told that I had been nominated for the 10 month course scheduled for January 29, I went cautiously upstairs to break the news to Adamu Adamu, the executive editor (North). Partly because I could predict his reaction and also because he had some friends with him, I dropped the nomination letter and forms on the script he was writing. I watched his face. "You must be joking, who will edit the magazine in your absence? I wanted to go to school last year and Mohammed didn't let me. Now you want to go to Kuru ko? No way!" I was enjoying his pretentious tantrum and goaded him "you should be glad that the slave driver (Adamu resents my harassing him to turn in his

named him) laughed heartily.

The second obstacle was Mohammed Bomo! the general editor. When he breezed into my office I told him without looking at his face that I was planning to go to school. Surprisingly he disappointed me. He said nothing. It was too good to be true I thought. Then I added "now I must complete these forms and send them to NIPSS, Kuru because time is short" "What! you're not going to that bourgeois enclave. We won't recognise you when you return." I expected that outburst and when I told Bomo! that I had taken his initial silence for acquiescence he confessed that he had no objections to my going to school to fulfil a long term ambition of learning Arabic. However, going to NIPSS was something else.

It was obvious from the opposition that Mohammed Haruna's support would be the deciding factor before the issue could be tabled before the board of directors. I made no secret of my intention to lobby Mohammed who was in Lagos for an official assignment but Adamu retorted that Bomo! and himself would waylay him at the Kaduna Airport and sway Mohammed to their side. As it turned out, Mohammed called from Lagos in response to my earlier telephone message. Unfortunately, I was out and therefore unable to "lobby" him. Naturally, he asked for Adamu who

# DAME HALL OF FAME

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## PRIVATE EYE

## On June 12 we eat

It did not come as a surprise that all US companies that have been lifting Nigeria's gold of the moment—crude oil—on term basis contract have been dropped. The surprise is that the 23 European companies that applied, including Total, which has displaced old relictracts starting from March 1. The surprise is based on my assumption that the US companies were banished because of the limited sanctions Uncle Sam unleashed on Nigeria in line with The Bashoroun's express request that it must do so. If that is so, the EC, especially The Colonial Master, which has been the most strident in garnering support for EC sanctions, should also be given the cold treatment.

Altogether 30 new term contracts were given out by the oil ministry,

which is not unusual except that the new faces are causing a big splash in the oil industry; most of them can hardly tell the difference between crude oil and mashed *amala*!

A German firm, for instance, has no previous record of oil trading and two trading companies, Nova Greece and Nova Petchem are owned by, surprise! a Greek investor. Not only that, there is no evidence of investment or meaningful business by the companies, a necessary condition for the lifting of oil.

The real meat of the new allocations however is the expected news that the champion of June 12 has himself been settled with a barrel-full of contract to shut up. Not that he has, but the point has been made that ours is largely politics of poverty. Many have profited from it. In the words of ABN chieftain, Chief



Arthur Nzeribe, for some especially the more noisy ones, "on June 12 we eat"! The only person who has not been favoured with a contract is the loser of June 12. I hear the allottees have decided that they can do without him. There are two other persons who benefited from the new contracts at home. One is a perpetual presidential candidate; the other I'm trying to find out. May be readers can help out. I'm looking for the THIRD MAN. Who is he?

## A task what?

When government initiated an avalanche of probes, it might not have occurred to the authorities that it has to one day wage in to halt it!

Soon, newspapers were replete with reports of detention of former civilian public office holders. Much were made of one former governor who sits on a hill overlooking a hilly city who vanished with a government Pathfinder, (not the one used in Geography class) under the pretext that it was his own and another who just could not part with his new status symbol—a cellular telephone or the one that carted off five cars or the one that stashed away a mere half a million Naira or the one that desperately wanted to do deal with a six million pound loan... or...!

Civil servants, state and federal legislators were not left out. They carted away official vehicles, tractors, phones, loans, insurance, furniture; you name it, they took it. In Kaduna State, for instance, it was reported that a band

of civil servants had hit gold in the form of ghost workers and made away with roughly 62 million Naira between January 1985 and and December 1992.

However, when it looked like the political class is further being strangulated, some of them began to speak of harassment by soldiers and investigators. Moses Adasu, it was, who incredibly said that the harassment was unnecessary because when he assumed office in Benu State, the military guys who were there did the same thing; he only chose to be silent about it!

Though tongue in cheek, this seemed to have fired other aggrieved politicians to "speak out" against "harassments and molestations." Apart from legal actions, such as the one instituted by Kaduna legislators, great pressure was brought to bear upon state and federal governments to relax the detentions and harassments. So, it came to pass that the governments buckled. Oladipo Diva issued a statement in which he

said among other things that state administrators should desist forthwith from molesting and forcing legislators to pay back to the public what they unduly took. Talk about the meeting of minds!

I do not know the intensity of the pressure on other governments, but I do know that of Kaduna State. It transpired that two powerful civil servants close to ears of power and a powerful former federal civil servant put pressure for the discontinuance of the arrests and detentions. Like many things in Nigeria, this was not done in the public good; it is so that certain past shady deals stay that way. The task force that is recovering looted public property had to do battle with these men to recover government tractors! I do not know if the administrator is clear about the goings-on, but it is common knowledge that he duly empowered the task force to use the law to recover public property and this sometimes means arrests and detentions. But a soldier does not know the policeman's job now, does he?

## POETS' NEST

## Crown of knowledge

**I**t is an adornment of those who acquire it. Knowledge lightens the path to progress. So important is knowledge to human endeavours that we are supposed to pursue it from cradle to the grave. And to those who impart knowledge, their reward is in heaven because teachers are poorly paid and rewarded on earth.

**Teachers' pledge**

As we teachers teach with seriousness  
Our students learn with eagerness.

As we teachers teach by no chasing  
Our students learn with much ease.

As we teachers wish our students well  
Our students wish us same as well.

As our students ask of so many quests  
We teachers answer all the requests.

As our students know of what they need  
We teachers give them when in need.

As our students take us seriously  
We teachers teach so vigorously.

As our students see us as parents  
We teachers show we are tolerant.

As our students learn by obedience  
We teachers always give guidance.

As our students are not so pampered  
For we teachers show we are mangled.

Adamu Muhammadu Nababa

**Knowledge**

Knowledge is the greatest gain  
Wealth  
Glittering gold  
All worldly riches

Are shortlived  
They come and go.  
But  
Knowledge is the greatest gain  
That does not even perish  
It remains forever  
To guide the people  
Like a torch of candle that splutter light  
It's a peerless jewel  
Which never tarnishes  
And the best legacy  
To be transferred on.

**Education**

Education is a treasure  
Most precious  
Boundless  
Safe from the swindlers  
As no one can steal it  
It is a pride  
A ladder as well  
To ascend the greatest heights.  
Mrs. Shabih Zehra Husaini

**Success**

Success  
Sweet in the tongue like maggi sauce  
Bitter in the outlook like bitter leaf  
Success the expected one.

In examination  
Anxiety fights frustration  
At last success settles the dispute.

Success  
Like flower in the garden of Eden  
Shining brighter than the sun  
You choose your friends  
Make me your friend forever.

Success  
Your friends are pound of you  
Like a prophet you save the soul  
On matriculation day  
Your sweet name is pronounced  
On convocation day  
The vice-chancellor congratulates  
the lucky ones  
On their success.

poets'  
nest



EDITED BY Bilkeesul Yusuf

Success  
You are mine  
Success I envy you  
You are sweeter than sweet  
I wish myself a success  
I wish you all success.  
Mukhtar S. 'Wakeel

**Success**

It has different routes  
Not for only those in front row  
Nor those at the back bench  
But whoever can sit tight  
To endure in their labour  
With time, shall one day succeed  
And everyone will laugh with happiness  
O the man has arrived!  
Victor Offiong

**School days**

Side by side we step  
Out of the lecture room  
Hugging books on our chests  
Laughing, talking  
Making future plans  
With the ones we adore.

Examinations over  
And there's no place like home  
The juniors welcome with joy  
The unfortunate friends greet with envy.  
And murmuring  
"Wish I were him."  
Danladi Garba Tal

## BOOKREVIEW

# The Tiv dream

Title:  
No of pages:  
Publisher:  
Author:  
Reviewer:  
Year of publication:

*Tiv politics since 1959*  
254  
Mandate International Limited  
Mwendaga Jibo  
Rufai Ibrahim  
1993

**T**his book, as its title suggests, is about the politics of the Tiv people of Benue State since 1959. In this 254 page book with 12 chapters, the author, himself a Tiv, steers the reader through over three decades of Nigerian political history, chronicling and telling the story of the political struggles, triumphs and failures of the Tiv, analysing the factors that give character and colour to their politics, assessing the role of individual Tiv actors, and others alike whose decisions, or lack of it, had a bearing on Tiv political fortunes, and giving suggestions about the future.

The study is divided into different periods, the chapters appropriately titled to correspond chronologically, with the political developments and changes in the country in the period covered (1959-1993).

The author's choice of the 1959 federal elections as the book's take off point is most appropriate. The 1959 elections were most critical for Nigerian political future. Most critical because they were the pre-independence elections and on their outcome depended on who, among the many jostling and competing groups and forces, was to inherit, from the departing British colonialists, the state structure and power.

In a marked departure from earlier studies on politics, especially those based on the holistic approach, which the author faults for their tendency to "blur or render indistinguishable the peculiarities which inform the behaviour of the various Nigerian people" the author identified, and analysed, a peculiar Tiv

trait which he describes as "one of the major motivating factors in Tiv political behaviour." This is *lyuhe* (jealousy, in English). There are two types of *lyuhe* — The crude type in the family, which, in Tivland, is mostly polygamous. Children are taught by their mothers to view the children of the other wives or wife as competitors who should be opposed at every turn. The author argues that *lyuhe*, though a common human trait, has a prevalence which is unprecedented in Tivland, and that it finds practical expression in the urge the average Tiv man has to pull down another Tiv man, whether in politics or in business.

*lyuhe*, the author argues, is at the root of, and the "basis of much of the intra-personal and intra-clan fight" now rampant in Tivland and which poses a threat to the realisation of Tiv dreams.

Reinforcing *lyuhe*, according to the author, is a trait or principle, namely "*Ya na angbian*" (in English "eat and give to your brother to eat too.")

This trait or principle, argues the author, discouraged the building of an enduring political career that may see one in top leadership position. These two traits, the most important, of course, being *lyuhe*, but working together and re-inforcing each other explain, according to this argument, much of Tiv political behaviour.

In chapter one, captioned "In the First Republic", the author deals with the ways in which the Tiv, but especially their political elite, tried, in the face of many odds and limitations, to assert themselves politically, and

change in Tiv's favour, the power equation in the country. The Tiv fought the 1959 elections from a highly disadvantaged position. Tivland lacked industries and amenities. Tiv sons were not adequately represented in the power equation. But the biggest drawback of all were, a psychological problem of (low self-esteem foisted on the Tiv and a reputational problem of a negative image — "acquired" largely as a result of the Tiv revolts and the opposition of the UMBC to the NPC — as "war mongers" "trouble makers" or even "betrayers of the northern cause."

All this notwithstanding however, the Tiv, according to the author, managed, on balance, to record more gains than losses in this period. This is not just in terms of placement in the power structure (the Tiv clinched two junior ministerial posts). More importantly, the Tiv — both the broad masses and the elite gained, as a result of their participation (90 per cent voter turn-out in 1959) sacrifices and struggles, in terms of increased political skills and a better image as fighters of justice. Beside, their struggle and demand for a separate region which survived the collapse of the First Republic, paid off in 1967 with the restructuring of the country that year by Gowon and the creation of Benue-Plateau state.

In the military era (1966-1979) the Tiv made significant gains. The re-structuring of the country, first in 1967 and the 1976 put them in states in which, by virtue of their population (now about three million) and the educational attainment of their elite, they have not just solid leverage but hold the trump card.

Part of the credit, of course, goes to the military. But the author notes, quite rightly that the military on balance, and especially in terms of political development, created more problems that it solved. The military in his verdict, was a set-back, a hindrance, to the development process.

But this period of Tiv political

## BOOKREVIEW

development is particularly interesting in that it provides more than ample evidence of *Iyube*. It was in this period that Godwin Daboh swore to an affidavit, alleging specific acts of corruption against J.S. Tarka, then federal commissioner of communications. Then there were the squabbles, most of them personal and petty, among the Tiv political figures especially (between Tarka and Unongo, between Tarka and Chia Surma).

Daboh's affidavit, according to the author, put the credibility of the Tiv as a people to question — a development only re-inforced by the affidavit sworn later by the late Aper Aku (former governor of Benue State) against the late J.D. Gomwalk (former governor of Benue-Plateau state). Within Benue-Plateau State, the author argues, the Tiv were viewed as bad neighbours, by specially the Plateau people, and nationally, in a corrupt-ridden polity, they were feared and seen as "unreliable" business partners. Even more important for the Tiv, the affidavits seriously and fatally hurt Tarka's presidential ambitions.

The Second Republic period was, by the author's reckoning, the Tiv's golden age. The Tiv made huge political gains in this period. They, most expectedly, produced the first civilian governor of the state in the late Aper Aku. Politically, they called the shots in Benue state. Nationally, Tiv politicians made significant impact — in particular, Tarka, Unongo, Shaahu. The civilian administration of Aper Aku addressed itself to the many problems facing the Tiv, recording some appreciable achievements in providing some solutions — especially during his first year in office — giving priorities to the areas of education, industrial development and provision of amenities.

But the Aku years also showed *Iyube* at work. Aku himself, after just over a year in office, began to change from being the listening governor who consulted widely before taking decisions to being the leader who listened to gossip and saw a com-

petitor for his job in every of his associates. Soon, he was running a one-man show.

In the end he too became a victim of a sworn affidavit alleging corruption against him. And even though he won the NPN ticket, and the actual election for a second term of office, the wranglings within the party, which became intensified with Tarka's death in 1980, weakened his position. Thus, although the Tiv — for whom, according to the author, politics is essentially a one-issue affair — had in this period pitched camp with a mainstream party in Nigeria (NPN), political squabble and wranglings, especially over the issue of who would take Tarka's place as Tiv leader, affected the capacity of the Tiv leadership to unite and pull resources together in the pursuit of common goals.

The return of the military in 1983 worsened the situation. Even though some of the military governors had some solid achievements to their credit, the military rule, on the whole, proved to be a set-back to the developmental process in Benue. According to the author, it is mainly to Babangida that the credit must go for the positive aspects of the military rule (1983-1993) especially in terms of the Babangida regime's big investments in the physical development of the Tivland and the appointment into the power hierarchy of Tiv elite. In spite of this, however, the Babangida-Tiv relationship was, for the most part an uneasy one — largely because of the involvement of Tiv officers in the Vatsa and Orka led coups.

But it was in the short-lived Third Republic that the Tiv made its greatest mark in national life. Not only did another Tiv man become the Senate President — the third highest political position in the land, this time around, unlike during the Second Republic, the Tiv had pitched their tent with a left of centre political party.

The election of Dr. Iyorchia Ayu as the Senate president meant that the Tiv had occupied every political post in Nigeria with the exception of

the presidency. This, as the author says in his conclusion to this study, is a remarkable achievement, especially given the odds and many difficulties which the Tiv had to contend with from the onset. In business and commerce, as well as in the public service, the story is the same: the Tiv have made a remarkable impact nationally.

But what about the future? The future? The future, argues the author is bright — but for *Iyube*, which still constitutes a serious problem. It is not just that it makes the average Tiv man not to patronise a fellow Tiv businessman, or the Tiv public officer (as was the case with J.S. Tarka) to prefer to patronise businessmen of other nationalities to his fellow Tiv businessman. It is also because *Iyube* breeds senseless violence in Tivland, setting brothers against brothers, clans against clans and leaders against leaders.

More disturbing for the future is the fact that, so far, the one response to the *Iyube* problem, namely the *Mzough U Tiv* — an association aimed at uniting the Tiv — has failed to curb the menace. Founded by the late Tor Tiv, Dr. Orshi, the *Mzough U Tiv*, dogged from its onset by credibility problems and partisan politics, has remained largely a cultural association. One way to solve the problem, the author suggests, is for the church, especially the NKST to lead the campaign against *Iyube*.

Obviously, this study will come under criticism from some quarters for the absence in it of a definition of politics, and a social theory around which the analyses and arguments are anchored. Also, it seems that for the most part, the Tiv are seen and treated in the study as one homogeneous social formation in which there are no class division and class conflicts worth mentioning and analysing as one way of understanding what Tiv politics is all about and why is it the way it is.

But, as said earlier, the author has chosen a different approach of sending across his message. And he has done so admirably — in good, clear, well-written prose.

*With our signature...*



*...we take responsibility!*

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## WORLD OF SPORTS

**F**ootball: A drab match for the Champion of Champions Super Cup between BCC

Lions of Gboko and Iwuanyanwu Nationale ended predictably in a stalemate. The deadlock was broken by a penalty shoot-out which the Lions took full advantage of. Sam Pam and Okechukwu Waobikeze lost their kicks and it looked like the Gbokoside had lost out, but Nationale's Joe Emagwuna, Casmir Mbachuan and Mba Agbai wasted this opportunity. It was left to Tunisia-bound Edema Fuludu to turn victory to the Lions. The game went the full 90 minutes without a score and then into extra time. The expectant crowd at the Enugu Temporary Stadium waited in vain for action, none came.

The professional league is to take another look at the professional arrangement to get the highest and the best in 1996. The premier league is expected to be made up of 12 clubs in division one. It is also expected that the clubs might have to meet certain requirements before being allowed to compete in the league. At the moment, there are 17 teams in division one; therefore, three teams would be relegated at the end of the season and two promoted from the second division leaving the division with 16 clubs to make way for the professional league division three to start off next year. The division one fixtures released by the board shows that 3SC of Ibadan would open the season with a match against Concord at the Lekan Salami Stadium in Ibadan. NITEL Vasco is pitched against Iwuanyanwu National, Ranchers would face Udoji, Julius Berger against El-Kanemi, BCC Lions against Bendel Insurance, Plateau United against VIP, Sharks would face Enyimba and Rangers are drawn by. The second division would start this weekend with Stores home with NITEL and NEPA against NPA on February 11 and 13.

**BOXING:** American Frankie Ran-

dall staged one of the biggest upsets in boxing by defeating Mexico's Julio Cesar Chavez to cart away the World Boxing Council, WBC, super lightweight belt. Randall who was 15 to 1 underdog against one of the best fighters ever, earned a split decision after knocking Chavez flat with a right to the head in the 11th round. The former champion got up quickly but was wobbly and stayed away from the challenger. The fight could have gone either way to the other right up to the end with one fighter landing punching combinations and then the other coming back with sharp punches of his own. Randall, however gave notice that he was not going to give up when he landed 18 punches in the eighth and opened a cut on the Mexican's nose.

"Undefeated Felix Trinidad of Puerto Rico has retained his interna-



Shuaibu: champion of champions

tional Boxing Federation, IBF, welterweight title with a 12-round unanimous decision over former world champion Hector Camacho who had held the WBC super featherweight and the lightweight titles between 1983 and 1986. American Leonzer Barber also retained his World Boxing Organisation, WBO, light-heavyweight title when he beat Briton Nicky Piper.

\*Simon Brown of the US squeezed out a majority decision over a very tough Troy Waters of Australia to retain his World Boxing Council, WBC, welterweight title. Brown,

making the first defence of the title he won by stopping Terry Norris in January, beat Waters by consistently leading combinations to the head throughout the 12-round fight.

CHESS: Hungary's 14-year old Peter Leko has become the youngest chess grandmaster in history by finishing third in the elite Wijk Aan Zee Grandmasters Tournament. Leko, born in September 1979, broke the record set in 1991 by another Hungarian, Judit Polgar, by 14 months. Only Polgar and a former world champion Bobby Fischer of the US have become grandmasters at the age of 15

HANDBALL: The handball season is expected to kick off on February 19 with the national open championship in Lagos. All the states are expected to participate. The winners of the championship and the runners-up would represent Nigeria in the Africa cup winners cup which comes up in Tunis in April.

TENNIS: Pete Sampras consolidated his world NO 1 ranking when he swept aside brave Todd Martin to win the Australian Open title in straight sets. His ambition to be mentioned among the greatest names in tennis thus moved further. The 22-year old Sampras overcame the determined Martin 7-6, 6-4, 6-4 to become only the third player to win at Wimbledon, the US Open and Australian Open — the fourth grand slam he has not won is the French Open at Roland Garos — consecutively. Don Budge in 1938 and Roy Emerson in 1965 had performed such feats. His triumph ensured that both singles titles at this year's Australian Open went to the top seeds, following Steffi Graf's victory over the world NO2 Arantxa Sanchez Vicario. Gigi Fernandez and Natalia Zvereva retained the women's double title by defeating Patty Fendick and Meredith Mcgrath 6-3, 6-4.

ADAMU ADAMU S

DEFINITIONS  
IN HUMOUR

A judge was pointing out to his court that a witness was not necessarily to be regarded as untruthful because he altered a statement

"Hold on," said the captain, "where are you getting all your anchors from?"  
"From the same place you are getting your storms, sir."

**Army headache**

A new volunteer at a national guard encampment, who had not quite learned his business, was on sentry duty, one night, when a friend brought a pie from the canteen.

As he sat on the grass eating pie, the major sauntered up in undress uniform. The sentry, not recognising him, did not salute, and the major stopped and said:

"What's that you have there?"  
"Pie," said the sentry, good-naturedly. "Apple-pie. Have a bite?"  
The major frowned.  
"Do you know who I am?" he asked.

"No," said the sentry, "unless you're the major's groom."

The major shook his head.  
"Guess again," he growled.  
"The barber from the village?"  
"No."

"May be" — here the sentry laughed — "may be you're the major himself?"

"That's right. I am the major," was the stern reply.  
The sentry scrambled to his feet.  
"Good gracious!" he exclaimed.  
"Hold the pie, will you, while I present arms!"

**Undiluted trouble**

The recruit on manoeuvres for the first time, heard the sound of an approaching horse in the darkness.  
"Halt! who goes there?" he challenged.

"Commanding Officer," came the reply.

"Dismount, sir, and advance to be recognised," called the recruit.

The officer did so, and the recruit saluted smartly and said: "Proceed, sir."

As he mounted, the C.O. asked, "By the way, who posted you here?"

"No one, sir," said the recruit. "I'm just practising."

**Battle of outwits**

**H**al ha!! ha!!! He! he!! he!!!  
Ahem, I had just come out of a hall where a lady politician was speaking about the philosophical emptiness that had enveloped the nation, giving rise, as if you didn't know, to a cultural and spiritual void that is difficult to fill. I always laugh when I see people planting a tree and disliking its fruit. A secular materialism breeds nothing other than spiritual despondency. Have a laugh from my 10,000 Best jokes:

**Fractional justice**

A lawyer was defending a man accused of house breaking, and said to the court:

"Your Honour, I submit that my client did not break into the house at all. He found the parlour window open and merely inserted his right arm and removed a few trifling articles. Now, my client's arm is not himself, and I fail to see how you can punish the whole individual for an offence committed by only one of his limbs."

The judge considered this argument for several moments, and then replied:

"That argument is very well put. Following it logically, I sentence the defendant's arm to one week's imprisonment. He can accompany it or not, as he chooses."

The defendant smiled, and with his lawyer's assistance, unscrewed his cork arm, and, leaving it in the dock, walked out.

**Irresistible Enticement**

he had previously made. "For instance," he said, "when I entered this court today I could have sworn that I had my watch in my pocket. But then I remembered that I had left it in the bathroom at home."

When the judge got home that night, his wife said: "Why all this bother about your watch — sending four or five men for it?"

"Good heavens!" said the judge; "I never sent anyone! What did you do?"

"I gave it to the first one who came; he knew just where it was."

**Soldier-man**

Two soldiers were engaged in trench digging practice. It was a very hot day and both felt pretty tired.

"Do you remember the big posters saying, 'Enlist and see the world,'" asked one.

"Yes," replied his companion, "but why?"

"Well, I didn't know we had to dig clear through it in order to see it."

**Naval headache**

A young naval student was being put through the paces by an old sea-captain. "What would you do if a sudden storm sprang up on the star board?"

"Throw out an anchor, sir."

"What would you do if another storm sprang up aft?"

"Throw out another anchor."

"And if another terrific storm sprang up forward, what would you do?"

"Throw out another anchor."

## CITIZENS

**S**a'adatu Bello made her career very early in life. As an impressionable young girl, she wanted to follow in the foot steps of her father and be a diplomat. With her eyes fixed on that, she was



somewhat disappointed when she gained a place at the University of Maiduguri to study English instead of the French she preferred and which will enhance her career choice.

It was therefore with-

out qualms that she abandoned the course in her final year when the opportunity of pursuing her dream came in the form of a foreign posting for her dad. Sa'adatu got her chance at that Fount of French Culture, the elite Sorbonne University where, for five years, she imbibed the language as well as the culture of the Gauls that was compatible with her background. Unlike fairy tales, Sa'adatu's story did not end with her as a roving diplomat. Over the years, the novelty of that line of duty had worn off, so she settled down at Elf Petroleum Producing Company as an administrative officer, ministering to the welfare of the company's many expatriate staff. Getting along with people comes naturally to the personable Elf ambassador who still manages a smile as she shuttles to keep up with her demanding schedule.

In spite of all that, Miss Bello, as she is known in the office, does not hesitate to say that her family will come first in case of a conflict between that and her career. *Oui, Mademoiselle!*

**F**ew people climb the ladder of their profession as fast as Abdulrahman Shu'aibu, financial controller, Frenchies Limited, Victoria Island, Lagos. The 1987 accounting graduate of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria started as assistant accountant and achieved the feat of his present post through the dint of hard work and the kind of financial savvy that has kept Frenchies smiling all the way to the bank. Aside from his accounting degree, Abdulrahman learned the ropes of the profession at the feet of a master, Mr. Sigaud, a former managing director of Alraine and an acknowledged workaholic.

In his position as financial controller, the upwardly mobile accountant oversees both the administrative and accounting concerns of the company whose annual turn-over is conservatively put at 60 million Naira. In appreciation of his commitment to the fast food processing company, Abdulrahman was recently made



one of its directors, the youngest of the lot. Aside from the ambition of taking Frenchies to greater heights, an issue close to the heart of the 29 year old director is to climb to the highest point of his profession. If the past is any guide, that will not be a tall order.

**U**ntil three years ago the Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANCLA) was virtually unknown. Then suddenly, Alhaji Sani Kamba took over as president; a lot about that body has since changed for the better. The association was re-registered, a body of trustees set up and chapters were formed in all the ports. Today, its clout as a pressure group for customs agents is not in doubt; when it sneezes, its landlords, the Nigerian Ports Plc catches cold.

Recently, the ANCLA brought out its own monthly publication *The customs agents*. So what is Alhaji Kamba up to next? He is throwing the weight of his or-

ganisation behind "Inside the ports," a reference point television programmes directory/fact book of the same name. For a hyperactive president, that may not be the last word on his tenure.

By Mannir  
Dan-Ali



# quartz 5000

## Total Sludge Assault



Total Assaults its assault on sludge with the new ultra 5000 performance surge technology. Quartz 5000 multi-grade motor oil has the 5000 advantage by not slugging, burning, thickening, and clogging.

With a high level of detergency and dispersancy, Quartz 5000 has an anti-oxidant, anti-wear, anti-rust and anti-foam ingredients. Quartz 5000 operates with 200,000 kilometers to provide a clean and efficient performance for engine in all seasons.

quartz  
5000 ...total sludge combatant