

Revealed: Powers behind 'Area Boys'

TSM
The Sunday Magazine 

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EXPLOSIVE!!!

CAN splits over SDP

*Okojie, Idahosa,
Jatau in Cross-fire.

Peak of the pack



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COVER: Olubunmi Okogie, fiery, fire-spitting CAN President, is who always controversial on burning national issues. He has been called names by friends and admirers, as well as enemies and detractors alike depending on their perception of him, their understanding of his views and their personal perspective of what he stands for.

Okogie, though a Catholic Archbishop and CAN president, does not see anything wrong in having either muslim, christian or traditional religionist as president and vice-president of Nigeria.

Controversial, blunt, and irrepressible Okogie favours a God-fearing leader rather than religion-biased president. To him serious thought and consideration should be given to Nigeria's political economy rather than politics of religion or religious politics in the choice of either the president or the vice or both.

The unbridled reign of terrors unleashed in Lagos Island by the notorious, seemingly untouchable hoodlums called **AREA BOYS** has reached alarming and disturbing proportion.

They molest and harass people at will, dispossess them of their valuable property and priceless personal effects.

Everybody seems to be at their mercy as lives and property are constantly threatened by these nauseating gangsters. Worst still is the fact that the police, Lagos Island government authorities, and even the royal father of Lagos have ignominiously allowed an anarchic **AREA - BOYS - KINGDOM** to thrive.

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LAST two weeks was good for Nigeria. It held out fresh hopes. Nigeria put one foot forward in her gradual, if expensive, march towards the Third Republic.

The Third Republic has been long in coming - too long. Its preparation, at times, has been annoying. At times it has been a case of hopes raised and dashed.

But last two weeks was different. From the bowels of Option A4, emerged, without too much protests, two presidential candidates for the two political parties - NRC and SDP. Even the worst sceptics agree Option A4 was a pleasant surprise.

But just when we wanted to bask in the glory of the success, a new dimension emerged. Religious politics, which has always been there, but which Nigerians discreetly managed to push back most of the time blew up.

**Religious politics,
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time — blew up.**

It blew open innocently, courtesy of a congratulatory message sent to M.K.O. Abiola by the fire-eating Roman Catholic Archbishop of Lagos Anthony Okogie. Okogie had asked Abiola to pick a running mate with whatever religious background - Christianity or Islam. Since then, nothing has been the same for either Okogie or Abiola, for that matter.

Most members of Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, which Okogie leads are angry with him. They have inundated him with telephone calls and letters and press releases.

Abiola has been battling with the lists of Christian names sent to him by CAN (Northern Wing) just in case he runs short of candidates - to pick a running mate from.

For once, influential CAN members cannot agree on a sensitive issue. From Benue, Kaduna, Lagos, Ibadan, Ilorin, the reactions have been contrary. One claps at the other, begging an answer to the question - Is CAN splitting over SDP?

We followed it up. We spoke to Okogie, Ibadan and later all 850 - all influential CAN members. What we have here is a crossfire from all sides. It is a collector's item - worth more than our new cover price of N20. But we don't mind. It is our Easter present to you. Just flick through and see what a good ol' Steve, Yusuph and Malik did.

But that is not all. From Lagos here, a riot sprang up last week. Igbo traders at the Idumota spare parts market rose up in anger against the unabated harassment by Lagos hooligans popularly called "Area Boys".

The traders say another civil war may spring up from Lagos if the authorities don't do something urgent about "Area Boys".

Who wants another war - tribal or civil? Who are behind the "Area Boys"? For how long can the traders endure? Read our incisive report.

*From us, it is a wish of a marvellous Easter to all
of you out there.*

Comfort Obi



after his victory at the Port Harcourt Convention, Kusamotu declared in a gay voice, "for all I know, the vice-president of NRC presidential flag bearer will be a christian from the south."

With this statement Kusamotu looked like a clairvoyant politician who foresaw what big religious debate will surround the choice of the running mates of the two presidential contenders, Moshood Abiola and Bashir Tofa both of whom are moslems. Few days after the Social Democratic Party (SDP) peacefully elected newspaper baron, Abiola from Ogun State as its presidential flagbearer, finding a running mate for him from the North Eastern zone to which the post has been zoned by the party remained a thorny issue. More importantly, the rancour over the issue of Abiola's running mate has threatened to divide the Nigerian christian community as embodied by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).

About 24 hours after the SDP

caretaker chairman, Ishaya Shekari, a retired Air Vice Marshal affirmed in Jos the election of Abiola as the SDP flag-bearer, Olubunmi Okogie the Catholic Archbishop of Lagos and the head of CAN unknowingly flagged off what is now a controversy that reflected the divergence of opinions and interests in the body.

Okogie in his usual characteristic way of commenting on national issues had called a press conference where he congratulated the presidential flagbearers. In the course of that event, Okogie veered off to reflect on the issue of running mates for the two presidential contenders.

As if envisaging a controversy on the position he was about to take, Okogie reportedly pointed out that he was speaking as the Catholic Bishop of Lagos. He then dropped what became the nucleus of the entire parley: "It does not matter if a muslim or a christian is chosen by any of the two muslim — presidential candidates as his running mate," he was quoted as saying. The

Religious politics enters the fray

The issue of who become the running mate of MKO Abiola becomes not only a thorn in the side of SDP leaders, but he also introduced religion which, before now, was an ignored factor.

By Yusuph Olaniyonu



Oladejo Kusamotu, the newly elected national chairman of the National Republican Convention (NRC) must have realised the time bomb the issue of who becomes the vice-presidential candidate of the two parties could prove to be. At his first public speech



MKO...Ultimate decision lies with him

fiery prelate reportedly continued that, "what matters is that both the flagbearers and running mates should be God-fearing, righteous, fair to all men and lead by example."

Okogie who commented on several other national issues counselled that the nation should avoid receding back to square one by choosing the next occupants of the presidential villa based on political expediency rather than their ability to solve the nation's problems.

He further urged the flagbearers to shun religious fanatics who might take them away from setting Nigerians on the path of glory. Okogie's statement proved to be a bomb erupting and unearthing a lot of virulent reactions. In an encounter with *ISM* however (see interview) the archbishop posits that he was wrongly represented by the media.

But CAN's northern chapter mandated its secretary, Saidu Dogo, to fire a contrary position. It assembled and publicised ten names of northern christians who could be vice-president to Moshhood Abiola. Apparently, the entire statement on the running mate had been narrowed down to the SDP and Abiola's candidacy which faces the problem of how to get a towering, visible and popular Christian running mate from the North East which will reflect the party's regional and religious balance.

The list of names given to reporters by Dogo was targeted at erasing the impression that Abiola might have to settle for a muslim running mate in the absence of a credible christian from the North. The CAN list included names of prominent politicians who are either SDP members or politicians with progressive inclination like, Adamu Baiki, a professor and former vice chancellor of University of Benin, Ishaya Auda, also a professor and former external affairs minister in the second republic; Samuel Salifu, former SDP presidential aspirant, and the party's former chairman in Adamawa State who was defeated in the governorship election in 1991. Boss Mustapha. Others include, Emmanuel Njiwah, a one time commissioner in the old Gongola State, Gayus Yaro, a lawyer from Bauchi State, Istifanus Marga, a doctor and Mingo Gadzama both indigenes of Borno State. Ibrahim Savia Bangalu from Yobe State and Musa Moda, a doctor from Bauchi completed the list.

More than recommending names of possible christian running mate for the SDP flagbearer, Dogo hinted that



Atiku... May clinch the No. 2 slot

CAN was determined to ensure that not just anybody became Abiola's running mate but "a committed christian"

As it turned out, Dogo's reaction to Okogie's "forget about religion" stance was mild. Benson Idahosa, the archbishop of the Benin based Church of Mission International was more vociferous in his response. Idahosa, a fiery preacher given to a lot of gesticulation chose another news conference 48 hours after Okogie to throw dust in the Lagos bishop's arguments, alerted the SDP and NRC of the dangers an all muslim ticket will constitute to the fragile security of the nation. Idahosa declared emphatically, that electoral woes would befall Abiola or Tofa if any of them picks a moslem running mate.

Idahosa further marshalled his own statistics to prove that the nation would be at the brink of collapse if the christian section of the Nigerian religious divide is exempted from the third republic presidency.

He claimed that Nigerian christians constitute 62 percent of the populace and if by error they had allowed their moslem brothers who make only 48 percent of the population to produce the two possible successors of Ibrahim Babangida, another moslem, it is an error that would never repeat itself.

The Benin-bas J preacher further dismissed the statements of Okogie as a misrepresentation. On his own, the head of the Church of God Mission po-

sited that, "The Okogie I know believes that in this country, muslims and christians should work together in the interest of peace and unity."

The fact of CAN's apparent difference on the issue of the nation's vice presidency was further accentuated by the views of another outspoken CAN Chief, this time again from the North, Peter Jatau, equally known for his well informed views on current issues told *ISM* in a telephone interview that Okogie's statement was a personal view of the archbishop not that of CAN.

In his own view which, he said, "are borne out of my individual conviction rather than that of Kaduna CAN or the national body," Jatau regarded Okogie's suggestion as the ideal that is contrary to realism. "It is only fair when you have multi-religions, tribes and customs in the society, you make appointments in such a way that all the different sections, religions, states, and tribes feel they belong," Jatau said.

As if joining issues with Okogie's suggestion that the choice of vice president should be predicated on the man who is God fearing Jatau added defisively that "there are people who are God fearing in all the tribes and religions."

But one question arising from the controversy on the choice of vice president is that while the anti-Okogie position 5 group would easily claim

that the CAN president spoke for himself rather than for the religious body which Jatau contended had not met to take a common stand, it became pertinent to ask what the discerning line is between the opinion of a leader and the group he leads.

Idahosa is the only prominent religious leader from the south who has made a public statement attacking Okogie's position. But from Kaduna and other northern cities, the condemnation has been total and almost in unison. Jatau's statement to the effect that the Lagos Press fond of taking views from Lagos as representing that of CAN is another indication of the regional divide taking shape in CAN.

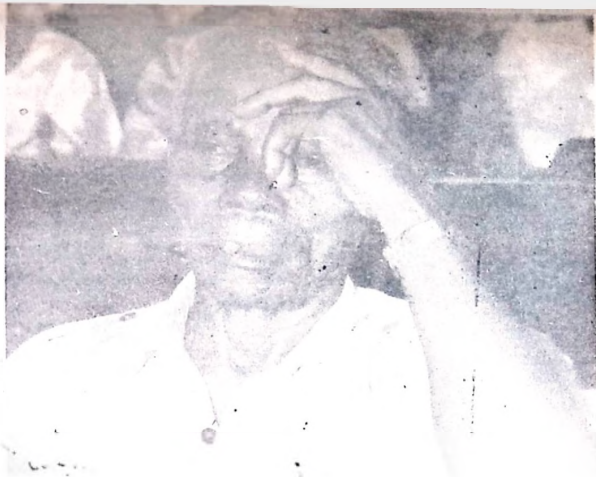
Last Monday, the coordinator of the Northern segment of CAN, Jolly Tanko Yusuf added his weighty voice to the anti-Okogie group when he described the statements credited to the CAN Chief as "highly regrettable."

Yusuf who was former president of Northern Christians Association, a position which conferred on him the headship of Christian fold across the North said "I consider it (Okogie's statement) highly regrettable in that it violates the basic principles of justice, fair play and equity which most regimes whether military or civilian, since independence have maintained."

The northern CAN co-ordinator further went on to christen the suggestion that religion should not be a prime factor in the choice of running mates as "statement by those who want to plunge this country into a serious crisis." The only voice from the northern CAN supportive of Okogie's stand is that of Oludare Joseph, the secretary of Sokoto Chapter. Joseph said Nigeria's problems transcend religious considerations. Rather than taking side based on religion, he wants Nigerians to pray "for a messiah, who will deliver us from the economic mess irrespective of religious leanings. But still Joseph who was quoted by the *Punch* is a southerner.

Despite the obvious implications of the ding-dong affair in CAN, Jatau still holds that "CAN is together and no individual or group will make CAN split." The divided opinions, Jatau told *TSM*, are manifestation of individual differences which peter out when a group decision is taken.

However, the attacks and counter attacks for the choice of vice president is not limited to the ranks of CAN alone, it is becoming a controversy percolating the rungs of the nation's ladder. Even in the Islamic fold, the reaction has been equally robust. Lateef Adegbite, secretary to the Nigerian



Solarin...Leave religion out of this

Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA) had in a statement issued a foreboding to CAN to steer clear of delicate political issue like that of who occupies public office in the nation.

Adegbite said the SCIA considers the CAN pressure represented by its recommendation of 10 names to the SDP flagbearer for consideration as running mates "unwholesome and dangerous." The SCIA further complemented the Lagos Archbishop's advice that religion should be immaterial since what the nation desires at this critical period are capable officers in every office whatever their faith.

A representative of the middle ground in the nation's religious divide and former chairman of People's Bank, Tai Solarin, a confessed atheist berated CAN for dabbling into politics. Religious or tribal inclinations, Solarin said, have nothing to contribute to the efforts to revive a nation presently nestling in a coma. In a chat with *Tribune*, Solarin said, "our problem is not whether a christian or a muslim — becomes the leader or vice, what we need now is political and economic transformation and this could be achieved provided all these religious sentiments are ignored."

The issue of religion as it concerns the choice of running mate has been a recurrent one trailing the campaign of Moshood Abiola since he declared his interest in the plum job in January. His arch rival, Baba Gana Kingibe, had fired a salvo at Abiola during the pre-

convention hot exchanges between the two that, "I will have no problem choosing a popular christian running mate from the West. Where will Abiola get an equally popular christian running mate from?" Though Kingibe's statement was mined in the heat of the stiff competition for the question still stares the entire SDP fold in the face.

For now the closest Abiola has gotten in answering that question was at a social gathering tagged *Gwano's Bite* at Niteshift Club. The SDP candidate said, "my running mate would certainly be a Nigerian. The person will be a Nigerian either male or female, a christian or muslim and will come from the North. It will have to either be a Northern moslem or christian." This is actually a very elastic characterisation of who the SDP running mate will be.

Last week Tuesday, when the SDP consultative forum met in Abuja, one of the key issues that was slated for discussion was the issue of the running mate. But at the end of the meeting, the chairman of the party's strategic committee which fashioned out the party zoning arrangement, Jerry Gana, a professor, said the issue did not come up for discussion. "We cannot impose a running mate on him," was his terse reply. It is however glaring that the disparate tendencies in CAN over the vice presidency issue is being replicated in the SDP. Different groups.

However, from what *TSM* learnt in Jos during the convention, it was clear

that the running mate issue will be the first major battle Abiola had to fight before the eventual one with Tofa for the nation's number one position. A meeting the SDP flagbearer had with Shclou Yar'Adua on the morning of Sunday March 29 before the final ballot for the convention, the retired general was said to have argued for the inclusion of an Hausa-Fulani moslem on the ticket before he could give the needed support for Abiola.

The meeting which was held at 10B Ibrahim Taiwo Road, Jos, residence of Yahaya Kwande, a member of the Yar'Adua group, where Yar'Adua held court throughout the convention period, told Abiola of the difficulty he would have in securing support in the North without an Hausa-Fulani man on the ticket. The same position was presented to another Abiola delegation including Olu Falae, Abubakar Rimi, governors Isiaka Adeleke, Segun Osoba and Kolapo Ishola who equally sought Yar'Adua support for Abiola before the second ballot.

Though, it is not clear what Abiola's reaction was which given the situation in which his arch rival, Kingibe also held similar meetings with Yar'Adua and also sent a delegation consisting of Emeke Ojukwu, Oluosara Saraki, Arthur Nzeribe and governors Ma'aji Lawan and Bukar Abba Ibrahim of Borno and Yobe States, Abiola is believed to have consented to Yar'Adua's condition.

It is further believe that though Yar'Adua was not specific on the choice of running mate, he is angling for Abubakar Atiku, the third placed aspirant whom he persuaded to withdraw from the race and make Abiola's victory more certain.

A pointer to the above fact was the statement made by a senator (name withheld) who was one of the pivots of the Abiola campaigns at the Convention and also a Yar'Adua acolyte. The senator, speaking to *INS* when the sorting of the first ballot was going on and the charge of betrayal of trust against delegates from the West was rife said, "I don't know why all this talk is cropping up. After all it is clear that even Abiola's sons are clamouring for an Abiola-Atiku ticket, should MKO become the presidential candidate." The Senator obviously is close enough to the two sides to know what the thinking is.

Apart from the horse trading at the convention ground, key members of the Yar'Adua group have not hidden their intention to ensure Abiola picks a northern moslem as its running mate. Weeks before the convention,

Members of the Middle Belt who constitute the largest advocates of the christian veepee in the SDP are of the opinion that the clamour for a Hausa-Fulani moslem running mate for the Concord publisher may be part of a design to ensure he is not elected president. Another example was cited in the Awolowo presidential bid in 1979 when he picked a fellow christian, Philip Umeadi as running mate and failed.

Mahmud Kanti Bello, a senator and close pal of the SDP godfather had drummed to all who cared to listen that the group will only support Abiola if he promised to make an Hausa-Fulani moslem his running mate.

Bello hinged this position on the preminence christians enjoyed in the sharing of positions in the National Assembly. The senate president, Iyorchia Ayu, and his deputy, Albert Legogie, Bennet Birabi are all christians. The speaker of the house of representative, Agunwa Aniekwe is also a christian. They are all in the SDP. The Hausa-Fulanis who are muslims point to this at every forum, charging that they are not yet well represented in the cake-sharing of the party.

A source close to Yar'Adua revealed that if his conditions are not adhered to, "he might stand aloof doing nothing to help Abiola's campaign." For a man who Chuba Okadigbo, a senator from Anambra State described as "the strength of the SDP in the north who is very critical to our survival, if he

leaves us, we will crash in the north," his apathy during the presidential elections may be fatal.

Still, there is no unanimous opinion of the choice of vice president among the Yar'Adua group. While prominent members of the group like Lamidi Adebidi would want Abiola to forget about religion and pick a running mate who will guarantee him maximum support from the north, some others like Okadigbo are insisting on "a balanced ticket reflecting all sections and religions in the country."

Okadigbo vowed to oppose any ticket that will produce two muslims or two christians. "That will be a mistake that will be the beginning of a lot of confusion that we cannot afford," he said.

In the north, the clamour for a christian running mate for Abiola is more pronounced in the Middle Belt, a zone which is bent on cashing in on its muscle within the SDP to create a distinct identity for itself. Last Monday, the Middle Belt Forum, an umbrella for some SDP leaders in Benue, Adamawa, Kogi, Kwara, Kaduna, Niger and Taraba States met in Lagos to screen aspirants for the number two post. It came up with a list having Pascal Bafyau, Chairman of the Nigerian Labour Congress; Bala Takaya, a former university teacher; Istifanus Marga, former chairman of the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital and Dan Suleiman, a retired airforce commander and former military governor of Plateau State.

Suleiman, now a businessman from Guyak Local Government area of Adamawa State was chosen by the forum which it urged to respect the conventional religious equation and the SDP zoning formula to forge a winning team. Suleiman has been one of the strongest voices behind the forum and its corollary, the proscribed Committee for Unity and Understanding (CUU) since 1991. Members of the Middle Belt forum are of the opinion that SDP's choice of a Hausa-Fulani vice president will not change the traditional voting pattern in the north which will be in favour of the NRC candidate, Tofa, who is an Hausa-Fulani man from Kano State.

The Middle Belt leaders have historical facts to back up their claims. In 1983, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) presidential candidate, late Obafemi Awolowo picked a Hausa-Fulani running mate, Mohammed Kura to shore up its support in the far North. The ticket did not make any impact in Bauchi, Kura's state or anywhere else in the north. The same fate befell

Nnamdi Azikiwe, the presidential candidate of the Nigerian People's Party in the 1979 elections when he chose Ishaya Audu, an Hausa christian from Kaduna State. Incidentally, Ishaya Audu is one of the names being touted as possible choice of running mate for Abiola.

But the political landscape has since changed from what it was in the second republic. SDP, a party with a little to the left ideological leaning, now controls substantial part of the Middle Belt areas of the old northern region.

The protagonists of the christian running mate further pointed out that the strength of SDP outside the western zone area is concentrated in the Middle Belt where the predominant religion is christianity. "To risk excluding a zone where steady support is guaranteed in exchange for a gamble for support in NRC-controlled far north is political suicide," one of them told TSM. The source further pointed out that with NRC governors in control in Kano, Bauchi, Sokoto and Kebbi States, SDP's chances of penetrating is truncated.

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With the Middle Belt's campaign to clinch the post of vice-president, the old arrangement which distributed the post of Senate President, Speaker President and Vice-President each to different zones may be affected. The senate president, from Benue may have his position threatened by the choice of another christian middle belt as vice-president. This probably explains why his name surfaced in the list of 450 names under consideration by Abiola for the number two slot.

In all the lobbying and scheming for the post of vice-president in the SDP, Abiola and the party are in a serious dilemma of how to make a choice without injuring its chances of clinching the presidency. Between satisfying the advocates of a balanced ticket, the spirit of earlier accord with the Yar'Adua group and matching the NRC strategy for strategy, Abiola has the provision of newly promulgated presidential Election (Basic Constitutional and Provisional) Decree 13 breathing down his neck. The new decree, among

other things, required the SDP and NRC to submit names of their flagbearers and the running mates not less than 30 days before the presidential election.

In the NRC, the choice of vice-president may not be as contentious as in the SDP but it is not a smooth sailing affair. Though the post has been zoned to the East, party zoning formula strategists did not give adequate definition of what the East means. Now, it is being interpreted that Eastern minority states of Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers and Rivers are free to compete for the job with the core Eastern states like Enugu, Imo, Anambra and Abia. It is also in the NRC that names of governors like Ada George of Rivers State, Ogbonnaya Onu of Abia State and Akpan Isemin of Akwa Ibom are being bandied about as contestant for the coveted post.



Ayu...His people wants more

Defeated presidential flagbearers like Joe Nwodo from Enugu State and jostling to run alongside Bashir Tofa for the presidency. The fever of vice presidential ticket has so penetrated the NRC that conflicting press reports are being sponsored by the various interested parties to promote their interests.

The NRC presidential candidate, Tofa and others had to profusely deny night indicating that Nwodo had been picked as the vice-presidential candidate.

These are sure signs of paranoia created by the eagerness to have a democratic rule. This may be why a body like CAN, SCIA and even the middle ground represented by Solarin, felt the need to thoroughly trash out the issue. Even, if it means disagreeing to agree.

QUOTELINES

"SARAH possesses the qualities needed in the presidency but she has two formidable obstacles to contend with. The first is finance. The second is her sex."
— Daily Times, March 22, 1993

"BECAUSE of the hardship they (the masses) are grappling with, our people are showing less and less trust in their leaders, in their institutions and in the political process."

— Bashir Tofa in his acceptance speech after winning the SDP presidential ticket

"I DO not owe Kingibe a kobo. I can vote the way I like."

— Senator Bola Tinubu, answering Senator (U) Akwuwani for not putting Kingibe's name in his ballot paper.

"WE decided to pay him back in his own coin for the sins he committed against us while he was the chairman of SDP."

— Abacha Mshel Landa, leader of Kano delegates

"WE can't build democracy unless these barriers (religious and regional barriers) tatter."
— Alhaji Abubakar Atiku

"OUR problem is not whether a christian or a muslim - becomes the leader or vice, what we need now is a political and economic transformation."

— Dr. Tin Solarin, social critic, while reacting to CAN's suggestion to Abiola on the selection of a northern christian as his running mate.

"There must be balance"

— Archbishop Benson Idahosa.

By Maik Nwosu



SYLLE and the Benson Idahosa, the archbishop and president of the Benin anchored Church of God Mission International Incorporated, certainly has both. The style is evident in the way the archbishop comforts himself, in his dress sense, in the manner in which he propagates the gospel. Perhaps that is why he has, in more than two decades of evangelism, catapulted his church into a niche among the world's 20 largest churches. Stop any well grounded taxi driver in Benin City and say, "Take me to Idahosa's," and the question will be, "His office, his church or his house?" You do not necessarily need an address. That is the practical index of the man's fame. And in the weekdays the man can be located at his Airport Road Miracle Centre, droves of people come from all over to consult him or to ask for his blessings. Besides the Faith Miracle Centre is the Faith Medical Centre, a measure of Idahosa's faith in supernatural interventions as well as his humanist realism. The testament of his belief in the grandiloquent is the big-dreams only plaque on his desk which enjoins, "Make no small plans here."

The fire is evident in the archbishop's expostulations and analysis of the Nigerian condition. Idahosa does not just make his point in a discourse. He wants it noted that the point has been made, hence his constant rhetorical enquiry: "Are you hearing me?" or "You dey hear me so?" His, thus, is not a mousy type of evangelism but the specie that invokes, if convinced of the need, a fire and brimstone doctrine. This, perhaps,

is part of the reason why the famous University of Cambridge recently honoured him with a recognition as one of the world's top 100 achievers of the decade.

The background to TSM's quest for an interview with the archbishop was the press conference he addressed in Benin on April 8, during which he called on the two presidential aspirants who happen to be Muslims to ensure that they select a Christian running mate. In the course of the conference Idahosa also reportedly vowed that this was the last time a Muslim president will emerge to head the affairs of the nation. Given Olubunmi Okojie's reported view that religion should not play a decisive role in this matter, Idahosa's call and vow

were certainly arresting testaments. In effect, TSM put him on the top list for an interview on the emanating religious undertones or reverberations on who becomes the nation's number two man in the Third Republic.

The interview was not easily accomplished. A weekend trip to Benin City did not actualise it as Idahosa had travelled to Lagos. When he returned on Saturday evening, it was only for some hours; he went for a crusade in Sapele the next day. On Tuesday, the appointed day, the interview nearly did not hold again because of the scores of visitors eager to see the archbishop some of whom he attended to in waves of 12 and other such relatively large numbers. When eventually the interview did hold, there were inevitable interruptions such as the archbishop having to see to three insistent phones at the same time or having to attend to callers, aides and numerous other such. It could have been a longer discourse but even in the fairly short span of time devoted, it was the quintessential Idahosa, baring his mind without let or hindrance.

Read



Idahosa... "You can't underrate my importance unless I permit you."



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Q: You have issued a call for a christian Vice President. But the thinking in some quarters is that a christian vice president from the North might jeopardise the Abiola ticket and in effect, cost the South this opportunity to produce a Nigerian president. Did you take this calculation into consideration?

A: Do you believe that Nigeria belongs to all of us? Then, it is wrong to suppose that there are limits beyond which people from one part of the country should not aspire, opportunities closed to them. Who set these limits? It is wrong to even begin to accept them. Nigeria is one nation. You can't say that one section should be the exclusive owners of the nation while the others become mere observers. I think that what happened in the former Soviet Union should teach us a lesson about national existence. What happened in Russia will happen in Saudi Arabia, in Kuwait, in Jordan. It will happen wherever individuals believe the nation is their personal property.

Q: Would you not attribute the state of affairs with respect to who presides over the nation to the fact that the South had exhibited a willingness to settle for the Vice Presidency?

A: Then there is a need for re-orientation. You and I who know the difference between light and dark, it is our duty to educate people that there is no position in-Nigeria that is too high for a Nigerian to aspire to. If not for the army which came in and created all sorts of positions, they won't possess all this power. The situation is no less than anarchy! (interjection by a Northern-based visitor: *No one who witnessed what happened in Zango-Kataf will ever suggest that the President, as well as his vice, should ever be moslems both!*) You and I should believe that we have a future in this country. We're born joint inheritors of this nation; we shouldn't sell ourselves off. You, for instance, should be able to contest in the future. It's no good to cancel yourself out, or accept to be cancelled out, right from the beginning. It's better to contest and fail and let it be on record that you contested. We should not sell our birthright for a mess of porridge.

Q: So why call for a christian vice president rather than a christian President?

A: Because the conventions had already elapsed by the time the (press) conference was held. I'm a voice that I want others to listen to, not just a baseless disturbance. But what is wrong we can still correct.



Archbishop Okogie.....

I'm not a complainer; I'm a corrector. If not for my universal assignment and position, I would have contested (for the presidency) myself and let me see who it is that can rig me out. (Passes on John H. Vaughan's *The World's Largest 20 Churches: Church Growth Principles in Action in which the Church of God Mission is listed*). If I wasn't called by God to do what I'm doing now, I would have contested myself. The truth is: We're not having elections here; we're buying votes. The highest bidder buys all. It's my prayer that this nation will reach a stage where people will be bold enough to do what has to be done. If we surrender before we fight, how can we win the battle? Every generation God gives them a prophet to correct the social ills. And Nigeria is bedevilled by these ills. That's why I'm here. At the moment, we are not trying to build but pulling down what has been in existence. We have become a nation of hired assassins, a nation of petty interests. Yet this was the same Nigeria that Zik could go from here to Sokoto. Awolowo could go from here to Kano. And he received. This was the same Nigeria!

Q: In advancing our religious preferences for presidential candidates and their running mates, are we not short-circuiting the stated goal of the transition programme: a man fit to do the job, irrespective of tribe and

A: Don't get me wrong. I'm not a religionist. If you want to know the truth, Abiola is my personal friend. We belong to the same age bracket. I've never met Tofa. He's a younger man than myself. Abiola, I know, is a gentleman and a successful businessman. Tofa, I have been told is a gentleman; Tofa, I have been told, is a successful businessman. My concern is not on religious grounds but your future and my future. That we do not in any way, by omission or commission, become half-citizens. I'm all for anyone that can do the job. One Nigeria should be headed by a Nigerian. But where you tribally think otherwise is what I'm against. Where I believe in you, you should also believe in me, in my existence. But where I believe in you and you don't believe in me, it's wrong. We should believe in ourselves, in Nigeria, together. You cannot underestimate my importance unless I permit you. And we should not permit that!

Q: Are you then instituting any structures to ensure the next Nigerian President would be a christian?

A: If you believe in this transition, as I believe, it'll be wrong for me to be asking for a christian president right now when the two parties have just chosen their candidates. I'll be in rebellion. I'll be seen as encouraging chaos. But while the first four years (of the nascent Third Republic) is on, we should be able to encourage our people not to surrender before the race is on. We should be able to re-orientate our people to believe that Nigeria is one nation under God, where East, West, North can all aspire to the highest position in the land. We have no other country but Nigeria, no other country to go. With all that God has done for me. I have the opportunity, if I choose to live comfortably outside Nigeria. But I will not do that. I will not abandon the nation because there is chaos.

Q: Let's be more specific. Are you grooming, or do you plan to groom, a candidate next time around?

A: Let the transition end first. Let them hand over and let the other one (the Third Republic) begin. Let them (the incoming civilian administration) do their best first of all. We'll be watching.

Q: What is your position on the apparent dissonance within the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), particularly the statement credited to Archbishop Anthony Okogie that the presidential candidates are free to choose running mates



Abiola.....

of whatever religious persuasion?

A: I still want to believe that he (Okogie) was misquoted. That statement could not have come from the Okogie I know. As I told the *Daily Champion*, the Okogie I know believes that in this country muslims and christians should work together in the interest of peace and unity. I've written him a personal letter to say: did you say so? You can't be the president of CAN and make such a statement: that it doesn't fit.

Q: Does this sort of hiatus not strongly suggest that christians are in a political quandary because they've not been as united as muslims?

A: What muslim unity? Two fighting christians are closer than two kissing muslims. You dey hear me so? Why are you talking about muslim unity when you don't have it? You must be aware of the several incidents of muslims fighting and killing muslims up north. Who was Maitatsine? Was he a christian? Have you heard of christians butchering one another the way muslims have done in this country? Look at Iraq and Kuwait: are they not both muslim countries? So, what muslim unity?

Q: Assessing the state of the nation, do you share the view that whoever comes after Babangida, whether Tofa or Abiola, will inherit massive mess that might cripple his ability to function and ultimately discredit the Third Republic?

A: The state of the nation is in perfect peace when the new man knows that he has to lay a foundation. We're believing God for a builder, a repairer. The army used to claim they are the messiahs; now, it has become clear that they are part of the problem. Do you think that Nigerians will ever troop out in the streets to sing hussana if there is ever a coup again? No way! The army has destroyed its own credibility. I'll encourage anyone coming in to know he'll start from the scratch. This is actually the best time for anyone who is a builder to take over.

Q: What is your candid assessment of the Babangida presidency?

A: He did his very best. Nobody could have done better, because he came at an unfortunate time. Everything he did he did well, in the best interest of the nation.

Q: Even the devaluation of the naira?

A: Yes, even that (later) you're a young man but I'm sure you're above 25 years and you know whether the right thing is being done or not.

whether things are unfolding the way they should. That's why I answered your question like that.

Q: And how do you evaluate the civilian governors and the legislators?

A: In what area?

Their relationship with the military government?

Our legislatures are waiting for guns to be sent back to the armoury and then they'll talk. It's not everybody that's so bold as to express his mind regardless of the circumstance. And governors, they're living at the mercy of the government. It's not equal power. The military has the power of the armoury and the power of cash. You must have heard what the BBC said of a presidential aspirant who earns \$75,000 per day, yet the oil comes from here. No southerner makes that much. And you think that God is just sleeping in all this? No, he is not!

The trend, more often than not, is that people make fiery observations, yet no one takes a pre-emptive action....

We are now re-trending. We have to.

The Movement of National Reformation (MNR), led by (Chief) Anthony Enahoro, has started calling for true federalism as the way out. Do you share this sentiment?

If you look at Nigeria well, the constitution needs to be rewritten.

Enahoro is talking from concern and experience. Enahoro is talking from maturity and dedication to Nigeria. Honestly, the situation is bad. What will be the permanent solution is the division of the country into two or more federal units based on termly appointment of presidents — that is, a rotational presidency, with the country divided into four zones. It's not the one you come with a gun and say to everyone: move!

What is your position on the oil subsidy issue?

Government is made of people. Government knows that the people they're governing have a say in their governance. The oil subsidy was supposed to have been removed on April 1. I don't think then will still do so. Unless you don't want the transition to go on course, then you remove oil subsidy. But if you do (want the transition on course), then you leave it for the next government to handle, to do it gradually. To you whose spoon, rice, milk belong to the government, you don't know what the people are suffering. The Lekwot case has not gone away. You were quoted as saying that Justice Okadigbo, who passed the sentence, should himself be tried.

If Okadigbo was right, he wouldn't have had the condemnation he's



Toja....

had — from judges, lawyers, scholars, everywhere. Which other sentence has attracted this much outrage in Nigeria? When he was going to pass his judgement, common-sense should have told him whether he was doing the right thing — and how to do the right thing. What is meant by the sentence (on Okadigbo warranting a trial) in *Don English* is that the man's judgement should be tried and let's see whether it'll pass the test.

Given the record of this regime for unpredictability or surprise, what if it goes ahead to hang Lekwot despite the vociferous outcries?

If government decides to hang Lekwot, it would be hanging the right person (Lekwot) in the wrong position (accused/sentenced for murder). But I know the government: they will listen to the pleas upon pleas that have been made by people from all walks of life. There's nothing — [else] anybody can do. I don't live in Abuja. I don't live in Zango-Katuf. But, Mr. President, in the name of God, in the name of A.L.L., which you believe in in the name of... (a catalogue of sacred names), please don't hang Lekwot. The knife is in his (the President's) hand. He can use it to kill or use it to save. In the Bible, there were midwives when Moses was ordered to be killed and they said: we have a knife we can use it to kill or use it to save. It is better to save than to kill.

How do you see the future of Nigeria, especially from the point of view of your position in society as a spiritual leader?

Nigeria is not a spirit. It is a natural entity, under a political diagram.

We can't spiritualise it, unless we're talking of visions and predictions. Nigeria is not ludo or *siki*. It is larger than that. The plan we lay today determines the future of today. The future is bright if the foundation will be built upon. Builders are needed. No nation is more naturally blessed than Nigeria. We're the ninth richest oil nation; there're no reasons why we should be the 13th poorest nation in the world.

What is your advice to the two presidential candidates as they warm up for the campaigns?

My advice to the flagbearers is:

test your popularity, not you cash. Have Nigeria at heart — to be built, not to be bought. My advice, in short, is: build Nigeria, don't buy Nigeria. To the voters: serve Nigeria and don't sell Nigeria.

Why the emphasis on mercantilism?

That is exactly what is happening. During the conventions, the government gave each delegate N10,000; the candidates gave N15,000. But, in all, Nigeria has a future. The Holy Spirit just told me that. It can be spoilt; it can't be ruined, not by any one man.

Archbishop Idahosa, style and fire

I speak for myself

— Bishop Okogie

Steve Raymond Ohakwe

ARCHBISHOP ANTHONY Olubunmi Okogie, Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, is a gadfly. He is a "saint or devil" depending on your personal perspective of him and his views. And he tells you that he does not care. But one thing he seriously cares about is: justice and fair play. And so when on March 31, 1993 national dailies went to town with reports that he okayed a moslem running mate for SDP presidential candidate, who is already a moslem, Okogie seemed to have lived up to his billing as controversial. He came under the fire line of his brethren in Christ. And when *JSM* met him face-to-face in his Lagos office Wednesday April 7, 1993, he was not apologetic but only advised that his brethren should not take his meaning superficially. He is however angry that Nigerians are not serious about their political economy and sees religious politics as detrimental to the choice of president. Excerpts on the interview below:

You were quoted in some national dailies that it does not matter if a muslim is a vice president, alongside a muslim executive president?

No! First of all we give certain conditions, that be he a moslem, christian or traditional religionist, that, first and foremost he should be the president, not a christian or catholic president, or moslem, president, must be God fearing.

But CAN has submitted 10 names for Abiola to choose its running mate. Does it mean that you have so much confidence in Abiola and SDP?

Point of correction, the report said "10 Northern States CAN," it's not the entire CAN that sent the names. As the president of CAN, they did not consult me. That's their own view. If I was consulted and party to the selection of the names, then I can talk. I don't know their criteria for choosing the names.

You see, when we do such things on the CAN level, the



Olubunmi Okogie

curriculum vitae of such candidates are tabled and we put them to vote. I don't know the criteria they used. I am not saying the men are not qualified. I am only telling you that I was not consulted. They have the right to their view. When I spoke to the press, I spoke as Archbishop Anthony Okogie, not as president of CAN or Bishop conference. I spoke as an individual, a Nigerian, controlling Catholics here in Lagos.

Does it mean you support a muslim president and vice president?

No. The report you read saying, "Okogie Okays muslim running mate" is wrong. That is not what I said. The paper just used the headline to sell. If you read the report, which is quoted, I said "what is important is righteousness, fear of God, honesty, fair play and one who will think about the people and not about himself, or his political leaning." What else do you want? Be he a christian or moslem, he must have these qualities. With these qualities, anybody can rule. I am not a fool. I know what I am doing. If you come and tell me half truth I will know. There is

nothing like double truth. Truth is truth. If he is not God fearing, righteous, honest, and no sense of fair play, well good luck to him. He will fail. He must of course distance himself from religious and political leaning because it's not the christians or moslems who put him there, it is there to serve the whole nation. This is what is spoiling Nigeria today.

We have had moslem president, and christian vice president, we have had christian Head of State and moslem deputy, what have they all done for the country? But if they had followed these criteria that I have given, the country would be in a better shape. When you are looking for a president, you don't look at the person's religion or political leaning. All you go for straight is that ability, the quality that you are looking for. Can this man do this? Otherwise we are going back to square one.

Don't you see that religion has taken a centre stage in Nigerian politics?

No. No. No way! It's the people that are making it, those who are the leaders. They are the ones making it. But in actual fact, it is not. Like me, all kinds of people come in here to see

me, I don't care about your religion, whether you are christian or moslem, I take you as the same. We are all children of God. If I can help you, I help you, if I can't I tell you. I say, sorry I can't help you, in a polite way. Now look at the country today. You are talking of religion that has come to play, what of tribalism. Once a man finds out that you speak the same language, he believes he has gone half way. He feels free. So if you are not from the same place you are useless. This is what we must learn to kill right now. And if we don't kill it now, the country will still be in a mess, in shambles.

You went to court because of OIC, why do you say religion is not a factor in Nigeria politics?

Because it's not good for the country. I did not go to court. I mean CAN now. CAN never went to court because it does not favour the christians, this is wrong, but because it is not good for the country. Look at Sudan, it is still burning, I have just received a letter from the Ambassador asking me to come and give a talk. I want justice and fair play. If you read the OIC Charter, you see all the absurdities that are there. A christian must not ride a horse like a moslem. I mean a horse now, a christian must be made to ride a horse in a certain way so that he must be different from a moslem. When a moslem prays he must be heard, when a christian prays, he must be silent. Will that augur well for this nation? Anywhere there is a church, there must be a mosque, which is something they are trying to do now. Go to Sokoto, you will find a good example of what I am talking about. If there is a church, there must be a mosque. And if you go to Bauchi, they packed all those who are non moslems to one part of the town. That is why when they want to burn, they go there to burn churches and the people. When they want to burn, it's so easy. But come to the South to burn Holy Cross Cathedral, and before you travel to Christ Church Cathedral, you are caught already. They will ask you what you think you are doing. And if you pick a moslem president on basis of religion and he picks a running mate and they come up with something like that, I can assure Nigeria will burn. There will be a religious or civil revolution because if you talk on religious basis, everybody has his own. You don't know the religion of each member of the Armed Forces and the police. They will not just open their eyes to see their brother christians or moslems murdered like that.

With OIC issue still hanging, don't you see that having a moslem president and



Benon Idahosa

vice president would compound the fears of christians? For instance, MKO Abiola, a moslem picks a moslem from the north and Abiola is the vice president of Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs?

Then that will not augur in his favour. This is what you must know. Some people know. Some people know the part he has played. It's clearly written. Those who reason will accept him with distrust, with a grain of salt. They self will not feel free, because they day when Adetokunbo died, the former Chief Justice, we were there with Ogun State governor, Osoba and Abiola came, we greeted. The next day his paper carried that he came for blessing. Any reasonable person will know it's a lie. Is that the kind of person you want for a president? This is why I said you must be truthful, and honest. These are qualities you look for in a leader. And you can see what came out of the papers today, that the two presidential aspirants would have to be screened. That's another issue. Why screen people after the election, why not before the election?

Now that northern CAN has issued a statement without consulting you, could that mean a split in CAN?

No, no, no, no, no, you are making a mistake. As I am talking now as Archbishop of Lagos, they are free to take it or drop it because CAN is not a church. It an association of churches and these churches are autonomous. I can't go to CAC and start ruling them because I am president, they will throw

me out. My power does not extend to that. I can't go to the north and start ruling ECWA or TEKAN. I can't do that, they'll throw me out. My power does not extend there. But when we all meet, I can now act as president. That is where my power is. So the northern CAN could meet, just as CAN in West can come together and make any pronouncement they want. Like the Lagos State CAN did their own on Lekwot, they are free. But it is when we go to the assembly, then we can say you made this statement, are you trying to implicate all of us or what, then they will tell you, sorry you have nothing to do with it, this is your own view. So they are entitled to their views.

As president of CAN, what is your view? I cannot just open my mouth. As CAN president I have an executive. If we want to make a statement, we make a statement. That's the way we move, and that's why we are strong, that's why the government is afraid of CAN. Like my Secretary, Mr. Williams has just left now, we have had our talk and he is gone. So if it is something that we feel is important, we just have to come out. Then both of us will decide: plan it and come out in the name of CAN.

What's the outcome of your meeting this morning (7/4/93) with the Secretary?

That's none of your business, it's mine.

What's your reaction to Jolly Tanko's statement about your view?

I don't react to what every one says about me. When people were talking about Okogie receiving bribe from Babangida, did I react? It does not touch me one inch. It shows you are not thinking. Any right thinking persons that do not take a bull by the cover and read this (the news report), as has been commended by so many, and as I have read it in so many paper that this is what Nigeria need. It is not religious flag bearer. He should be a president in the real sense of the word, patriotic, God fearing, ready to sacrifice for the nation.

Who among the names submitted by northern CAN has the qualities you have outlined?

I have not read their life history. It is only after reading their history that I can make a judgement.

August 27, is just around the corner. Your followership is looking up to you for political and spiritual guidance. You can't afford to allow them plunge into a mistake?

My dear brother, listen. You are making a big mistake. Everyone is entitled to his own opinion. If tomorrow I open my mouth and say vote for NRC or SDP, you are free to tell me, you are talking nonsense. They will ask me, why? That

is why I always give reasons when I do something. Don't you see the man you mentioned, Jolly Tanko, Yussuff, he is not considering all these qualities, all he is considering is what has been going on before. At least in Nigeria what we are used to having is moslem president, then vice must be christian. But how good did that policy work? It has not served Nigeria well. Look at Shagari and his aid, what is the outcome? We have another one, Babangida and his aid, what is the outcome? But, let me give you bad one. Look at Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon, they are both moslems. Did they agree? Of course not. You can't tell me that they agreed otherwise they will still be there today. Tunde was more or less looking for Nigeria's progress, like Murtala Mohammed, though I don't know if Murtala had stayed longer what would have happened. Tunde was bent on restoration of order, and he was more powerful. And people felt his impulse than the Buhari himself, because he was doing the right thing. Those who were lobbying, money seekers, power seekers who danced around Buhari, what is the outcome? Tunde wouldn't allow them do a lot of things they would want to do. So the next thing is, "let's throw both of them out." That is how you had the coup. So did they agree? One One is trying to follow my directive — honesty, fear of God etc. and they threaten him.

You are known to be vocal on national issues and at this crucial stage of the transition, one expects you to take a definite stand on this matter?

Listen my dear brother, Nigeria is sitting on a gun powder. You shouldn't be the one to light the match. All you have to do as a sensible leader and a God-fearing one is to try and direct the people in such a way that they will not destroy the country. And that is what I am doing.

But the nation is about to make a crucial mistake?

How do you know they are making a mistake? That's why we are now shouting, 'look ooh, it is not what you have been doing before, like Ambassador Yusuf is saying only those who want to cause trouble will go the way I am going. I don't care, that's his own view, and he is entitled to it. That is the principle before. But I am now telling you that it is high time you look at that principle from the other way. If I have been waking up everyday by 6.00 O'clock and it's not good for my health, and it's telling on my health, would somebody tell me before I change it? No body. The body tells you. So if they allow their spirit to tell them, sit down,



Abiola

think, no problem. I will be a fool to tell them to vote for Abiola or Tofa.

No, we are talking of choosing a running mate.

Again I will be a fool. You are now asking me to follow the pattern that didn't work. When Option A4 started, everybody condemned it. Now are they not praising Option A4? You see Nigeria? Are they not singing praise of Option A4 now? Go through the newspapers. Now is that the line you want to take? This is what you are asking me to do. I am not a fool.

If we sit down and you say Okogie said the next president should be God fearing, righteous person, honest and fair play, do I see these qualities in them? Look, they have been in politics. Are they spendthrifts, are they accountable? These are things you have to look for. Don't you see the American society or in overseas, any time they want to elect, they look for a proper candidate and the party brings the person out and subjects him to examination or test from every angle.

But we don't have that kind of society? No, it's because you don't want to do it. You want to be buried in your dirty squalor.

You are talking as if you don't have confidence in the transition?

Look, I, Anthony Olubunmi Okogie,

have told the world from the time they lifted the ban on politics that we are not serious in this country and I am still saying it. We are not serious. Look now, both the presidential aspirants and their running mates are to be screened. If tomorrow they now say Tofa you are disqualified, what happens? Or Abiola you are disqualified, what happens?

Now who are you tipping for the choice of vice presidency?

I have told you, my dear brother, that we are not serious. And I still repeat it. We are not serious in this country. Until that period when we are serious. You know I receive all sorts of people, Ambassadors, here. And their view of us is poor. Look at your naira, you think if Nigeria wants to make the naira equal to the dollar tomorrow we cannot succeed? You spend outside your budget, where do you get the money from? You are earning N8,000 a year and spending N16,000, where do you get the N8,000 from? And you expect naira to be on same parallel with those controlling their economy. It's not because we are not productive, as some people are trying to say. It's not it. If Nigeria wants to be productive tomorrow we have everything in our favour. And if oil is the only thing you have, you can still make it. There are

some countries who don't even have oil. They don't even have agriculture, they only have fish because they are surrounded by water, yet they are making it. Their monetary system is far better than our own. Where are we going to? Is that the kind of economy you want me to say today. I want you to be my vice president?

Now what do you think is responsible for the frequent clashes between christians and moslems. in the north?

My brother, let me tell you one thing. The problem we have in Nigeria is not religious problem as such. The problem we have up North is that of selfishness. Some people want to have everything to themselves. They don't believe that a non-northerner can come, stay and enjoy himself, except come, work and get out, even though people say Nigeria belongs to us all. If you look through all the troubles that we have been having, just as the "area boys" are doing here in Lagos, destroying properties of Igbos. If the Igbos were to retaliate, the world would shout, look ooh, the Igbos are killing Yorubas". But somebody started it first. And if a moslem is among those killed, they will say its a religious war. Or if they overpowered the "area boys" and some run into the mosque at Idumota and the mosque is vandalised, they will say, "see christians went and destroyed the mosque". Then, they say it's a religious war, and cover the main thing, buried it shield it with religion. That's the kind of thing that's happening in the north. So before anybody pronounces anything happening in the north religious, you just have to study the beginning properly. Look at Zango-Katat. It's not religious, not really, strictly speaking. But because some people want to lord it over those from the other side, they said 'no way'. They can't take it.

if what happens in Kano should repeat itself, what would you advise your followers to do?

The scripture said if they slap you on your right, you turn the left, but the scripture never said what will follow. So I too will not tell you what will follow.

three years ago I interviewed you on OIC controversy and you said Nigeria was lucky you were not the president of CAN when the military took us to OIC, otherwise Nigeria would have burned. Now we are going to civilian administration. Do you still...

if they do nonsense, my dear brother, if they try to impose anything on any part, even on moslems, that are for technical moslems, if they try it, be

they christians or moslems, it will be too bad for this country. I don't hide it. It will be too bad. You see me very skinny, don't take me....

Is true that you have withdrawn the case of Secretary to the Government with CAN from the court and agreed to settle out of court?

We did not withdraw any case. It was a question of misunderstanding. Again it's on the question of this 10 northern states CAN. We were just told that northern CAN has a case with government, and the Secretary to Government, Aliyu Mohammed, that the man is claiming some millions. We were surprised and didn't get the details. I was not told. I only read it on the pages of the newspaper, just as they could have read in the papers that "Okogie okays muslim running mate," and without reading the whole thing you can't get the kernel of it. So I happened to have an audience with the president and this gentleman walked in while we were busy talking. I didn't even look up. When he was about going, the president said 'Oh' surely you know this man," he said "Ah, surely Bishop Okogie. I know him." Then he asked me and I said "No, I don't know him." But the man insisted that he knows me. I said, where? The man said, you came to my office the other time.... I said ... Oh yes, yes, I am sorry, sir." Then I said, by the way, "Thank God, you are the one taking us to court, not us." He said "who are the us"? I said CAN. He said "No, no, it has nothing to do with you. It is with my brothers in the north. They are the ones slandering my name and they are people I

am suing. "Then I said "Ah, Mr. President, talk to your man. What will you gain." He said "No, no, no." I said, let's sit down and talk. In the long run, he obeyed the president on the condition that they sent in an apology. (that's northern CAN), and published it in one or two papers. Then he will instruct his lawyers to withdraw the case from the court. I thought I had done something good. I came down, summoned the Secretary and he came. I said write to northern CAN and tell them this is what happened and tell this is what I have done. So he too was very happy and praised me for the bold step. But when they got the letter, they were annoyed with me, asking "who sent you? You didn't ask for the facts?" And as I told you, as far as they are concerned, they are also autonomous. Because I was not sent by CAN national body. You see the difference? So they rejected it, they said they are not going to do it. So they wrote me a stinker and said next time I should ask them about the fact before I take any kind of step like that.

You see my own power is also limited. It is only when we are all together that I can now say, I am president. So when you ask me about the stand of CAN, I can't. I can only tell you about myself. I can't even tell you about the Catholic Church or the Arch diocese of Lagos. I can only say as far as Archbishop Anthony Okunribin Okogie is concerned, as an individual, we are not serious. I repeat it the fourth time, we are not serious in this country.



Jigawa generates only N200,000 monthly

— Governor

By Comfort Obi

 about only 32 years. Ali Sa'ad Birnin-Kudu, governor of Jigawa State is the youngest governor in Nigeria.

His problems seem too enormous for his seemingly young shoulder. Aside from the fact that his state is a new one, it had the ill-fortune of inheriting nothing from the former Kano State which gave birth to Jigawa.

For a governor's lodge, Birnin-Kudu makes use of the residential house of a former Kano State Deputy Governor. For his office, a secondary school which was turned into a secretariat serves the purpose.

The fact that Jigawa generates only N200,000 (Two hundred thousand naira) as a monthly revenue and depends on the monthly Federal Government allocation for 99 percent of its needs does not help matters.

Birnin-Kudu spoke to us recently on Jigawa's legion of problems. Excerpts:

On how it has been since he became the first civilian governor of Jigawa State

It has not been very easy and not very difficult. Before I came into office, I never thought I'd be the governor of this state. I never thought of it in the wildest of my imagination. And because I came into it when the state had a lot of responsibilities, a lot of problems, the position of a governor naturally, couldn't have been easy. The responsibility is so enormous that one really has to assess the situation on the ground and begin to see what it means to take charge of everything that has to do with education, everything that has to do with health, everything that has to do with agriculture, everything that has to do with administration and finance, everything that

has to do with the running of a government, it has not been easy. Because before I became what I am now, I was merely a lawyer and I was limited to only records and probably my office. To that extent it has not been easy.

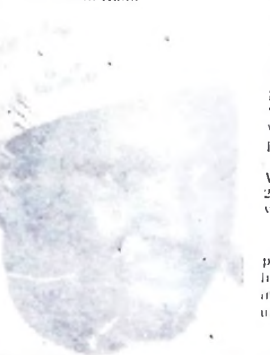
But it has not been difficult either because God knows that I can do this job, that is why He gave it to me. I see it as a challenge. It's like I'm going through a learning process. And it reinvigorates this desire in me to serve and to do my best as somebody who has been given the mantle of leadership to really lay a very solid foundation. So, to that extent, it has not been difficult.

On his greatest difficulty so far?

My greatest difficulty is that we don't have enough money in Jigawa State. We have a lot to do in Jigawa State because we are starting the place from the scratch. We generate a meagre, in consequential amount of N200,000 (Two hundred thousand naira) a month as revenue. And we depend about 99 percent on what we receive from the Federal Government. So, that has been our difficulty. By the time we are able to overcome this, and we are in the process of overcoming it, we'll be able to move ahead and forge forward.

On how he is coping with staff salaries with

Ali Sa'ad Birnin Kudu



only N200,000 monthly revenue.

You see, first and foremost, workers we consider as our allies. We identify with their problems and aspirations. And we also accept the fact that they go to a common market with all others in the society. So we share their problems. As far as we are concerned, payment of salaries or wages is an indispensable responsibility as long as one wants a government to move on.

For one, the art of governance is not done at our own level alone. You do this through these workers. So, with the increasing burden on us, particularly with the 45% increase in salaries it only means we have to prioritise our problems and probably cut here and there to save money to be able to sustain payment of wages and still provide social services to the people.

On his achievements so far?

I find it very difficult to blow my own trumpet. I'd rather always prefer whoever is asking to move to Jigawa to see things or ask people who have been there before the creation of Jigawa State and who are still there after the creation of Jigawa State because they'd be able to give an objective view and an objective assessment of what we have been able to do since we assumed office. They'll be able to distinguish between Jigawa before it became Jigawa and Jigawa after it became Jigawa.

On how he's been coping with accommodation problems?

This has been a major area where we have made serious impact because we believe we have to get a fairly reasonable accommodation to make one reasonably comfortable in one's working place. We have constructed 1,600 housing units for our workers under seven months. We did this without collecting any loan. We did it out of the much we collect from the Federal Government.

I don't think there is any government or private organisation that can successfully construct such number of houses in seven months without any loan. We'll continue this year by constructing additional 1,000 units. This will minimise the accommodation problem.

We've improved on water and light. We have electricity now in each of the 21 LGA headquarters. We've also provided about 17,000 villages with light.

On the greatest problem of Jigawa

Finance. Money. That is our greatest problem. Like I said, we generate very little. We depend on whatever we get from the Federal Government and we use it for everything.

On the viability of the state?

Jigawa is viable. It'll be viable. We have looked at

a few things that would improve our revenue generation base. We set up a committee a long time ago. It has submitted its report. But for the convention we went to in Jos, we would have released the white paper, detailing how additional revenue would be generated. We'll do that soon enough.

On the establishment of Media houses? We have Radio Jigawa already and it is on test-run and we want to provide electricity to as many towns and villages as possible after which we take

an assessment and we think of whether we should also provide a Television house and a Newspaper. We have decided not to do that yet because if you provide a Teevee house without providing electricity how will they even go to buy a television set when they have no light to put it on.

On why he has no woman in his cabinet and the reaction of the women to that?

I don't have any and they don't have any reaction. They believe in our ability and whatever we do is acceptable

to them. It is not that there should be a representation of women. There is nothing like a division of men and women in Jigawa State, we are all like a family. They have their own role to play which they are playing. You have them everywhere in government offices. And they also represent the government in various areas. It is not only when you have a woman commissioner that they will feel that they belong.

Go home, "Area Boys" don't want you

Lagos hooligans, popularly called 'Area Boys,' threaten the stability of the country, triggering speculations that there may be another civil war.

By Comfort Obi

With additional from Felicia Oamen, Emma Anyamele and Grace Onyegbula

It began quietly in front of

a shop in Idumota area of Lagos Island. But it has become one of the most — sensitive events in Nigeria this years.

Nobody knows exactly what triggered it off. There have been two versions to the story. At about 12.15 p.m. last Friday, said one version, two young men, both traders, one Igbo, the other Yoruba had a disagreement. This resulted in a fight. As they were fighting, a group of hooligans called *Area Boys* intervened. Seeing that the fight was between an Igbo and a Yoruba, they took sides with the Yoruba boy, accusing the Igbo boys in the market of wanting to lord it over Yorubas "in their father's land." Before long the Igbo boy reportedly lay stone dead"

through matchet cuts by the *Area Boys*.

The second version agrees with the day and time. But not with the story. Its version: A lorry load of fabrics stopped in front of a shop to unload. As they tried to unload the lorry, a group of *Area Boys* appeared, demanding for the sum of N3,000.00. An argument ensued between the owner of the fabrics, said to be an Igbo, and the *Area Boys*. Within a twinkle of an eye, the fabrics trader had been down by the *Area Boys*.

While we cannot say whichever version that is correct, the outcome was the same. As the Igbo boy lay dead, Igbo traders screaming blue murder took up positions around the area. But the *Area Boys* who had called for a reinforcement of their colleagues were ready. The traders walked into a sort of ambush — cutlasses, stones, sticks, etc.

They had no alternative but to lock their shops that Friday. But on Monday, they were ready, not only to do battle, but to present their grievances to Michael Otedola, Governor of Lagos State. They divided themselves into

Area Boys in Action



two groups. One group which armed itself with bottles, matchets and cutlasses ran round Lagos metropolis looking for the *Area Boys*. Singing war songs, some of which lyrics said "No more *Area Boys*, a civil war will break out again in Nigeria, and it'll start in Lagos," they sent the *Area Boys* scurrying into different directions. They never showed up again for the day.

The second group, about 5,000 in number, headed for Otedola's office. Waving green leaves, they marched on through Western Avenue. They were intercepted by the police at Iponri, close to the National Stadium. The police pleaded with them to reduce their number as so many people marching could trigger off panic in the state. They obeyed, reduced their number to about 500, hired buses and left to see Otedola. Most Lagosians who saw them quickly resorted to holding green leaves, thinking a riot was in the offing.

Reeling out their grievances to the Governor, they stated that about N15 million worth of spare parts and many lives had been lost to menace of *Area Boys*. Last Friday, they lamented, four spare parts dealers were feared dead, while property worth millions of naira were destroyed or looted by the *Area Boys*. The traders also complained that the *Area Boys* have continued to pose a constant threat to them while at least 50 traders have been matcheted in unprovoked fracas. They demanded for a new site, devoid of *Area Boys* adding that the Idumota spare parts market was too congested.

Otedola, sensing the implication of the riot quickly told the traders that a new site had already been mapped out for them at Epe, Otedola's home town. Epe is about 100 kilometers away from Lagos. The traders, however, expressed fears about Epe, arguing, "It is too far. The distance is not safe for our money. We want somewhere nearer to Lagos than Epe."

This is not the first time traders in Lagos, particularly at Balogun and Idumota will be rioting over *Area Boys*. In 1992, it happened three times, with grave consequences. Usually when it happens, it leaves in its trail "bad blood," destruction, death and a feeling that Nigeria is far from being one.

Clement Onyeanus, spokesman of the Idumota Traders Associations told TSM that the traders could no longer fold their arms and watch the *Area Boys* destroy lives and property. His words, "A major war is imminent in Lagos. We are now poised to prevent further attacks from the *Area Boys*. Will another civil war spring up? If there will be



Danbaba....How come your men are helpless

another civil war, it is going to start from Idumota."

When TSM visited Idumota on Monday, the day of the protest by the traders, the market was closed. Banks and other companies and offices around the market were also closed. No *Area Boy* was in sight. But on Tuesday when we returned there, they were back on their beat, ordering car owners where to park their cars, extorting money from everybody, getting away with it.

For the past one year, the problem of these hooligans called *Area Boys* has gotten out of hand. To the extent that the security of lives and property is being threatened. They pester Nigerians and foreigners alike. They scare people from going to the market. And at times, markets in Lagos Island are closed for almost one week, either on the orders of the *Area Boys* or by the traders to avoid destruction and looting by the *Area Boys*.

They move about in groups. Usually they are about the same age — between 20 and 35 years. They look dirty and unkempt. Their eye are usually bloodshot, courtesy of marijuana and other hard drugs which they take. They threaten people into giving them money. They organise fights in the markets to create an environment to loot. And before them, the police appear helpless.

It really was not as bad as this when the military governors were in power. During the Raji Rasaki era, it was nowhere near the tragedy that we are seeing now. Actually, nobody knows when the menace that has become the *Area Boys* started. TSM investigations show that it began

about four years ago when a group of school drop outs and other irresponsibles constituted themselves into pick pockets and brazenly snatched the — watches, necklaces and earrings, wristwatches of people, particularly women. Usually, at the time, they paraded Lagos Island streets waiting for hold-ups which afforded them the opportunity to snatch these things off women drivers and passengers. From the streets, they moved to the market areas, but never really went — into the markets as they are doing now. At the time, what they did was lay siege for well dressed men and women going into the market. As soon as one stepped out of one's cars, they swooped on one, snatching bags, wrist watches, necklaces and earrings. Dressing well to market was a crime.

TSM was told of a particular day when one man, well dressed, and who drove a *danfo* bus to Idumota market was dragged out of his car by the *Area Boys*. As soon as he was dragged out, they tugged at his wrist watch. He took to his heels. But they pursued him. He fell into the gutter, and became an easy catch. They pounced on him, taking away his shoes, wristwatch and bag.

Sometime in 1991, these boys made what they thought was a big catch at Idumota market. A well dressed woman, black and a little on the plump side had stepped out of her car, making her way into the market. They pounced on her and relieved her of everything she had on her. She calmly walked back to her car and drove off. The next day, she came back, dressing more extravagantly than the previous day. Again, they swooped on her. But this



Maria Soketu...What was the loan for?

time, they were not very lucky. The driver of the car, suspected to be an army officer, stepped out of car, gun in hand. He aimed his gun at one of the *Area Boys* and shot him point blank. He didn't stop at that one shot. He got to where the body lay and released two more shots into it. Sure that he was dead, he carried the body and put inside the booth of the car and drove off with madam. The others ran for their lives.

Even though official sources didn't confirm the identity of the woman to *TSM*, speculations were rife among the traders who spoke to us that the woman involved was one of Raji Rasaki's wives.

It was after the incident that the *Area Boys* disappeared from the streets only to reappear in full force again in the market.

Now they are more menacing than ever. They are uncontrollable. They are a law unto themselves. A trader described them as the *de facto* police force in Central Lagos. And the trader is right. They get away with virtually everything including murder. The police has no answer to their menace. Neither does the Lagos Island Local Government nor Lagos State Government for that matter. The *Area Boys* get more brazen by the day. They hold everybody to ransom. They threaten traders. They steal their things. They blackmail them into giving them money. They levy them at will and arbitrary in-

crease their levies, thereby causing inflation. But worse is that before Nigeria knows it, the activities of *Area Boys* may result into a civil war, probably a tribal war. For as it is now, the traders, especially the Igbo amongst them are alleging that the *Area Boys* are particularly after them for ethnic reasons.

The *Area Boys* operate with a style that range from the ingenious to the heinous. A typical encounter with an *area boy* goes like this: "Father," the *area boy* hails a supposedly well dressed gentleman. "Americana, American negro mistakenly born in Nigeria," he continues. "You no go born bastard like me. You go dey go, you do dey come. More blessing sir. Any bad thing we go happen to you make e happen to me." If the victim is a woman, it takes the same shape. The sir is substituted with *madam*. Tickled, the unwary victim dips his hand into his/her pocket, settles the *Area Boys*, thus buying his/her freedom.

If the *Area Boys* had stopped at this melodrama, their presence could have been tolerated, even if grudgingly. But they have gone to the extreme and have become increasingly violent and awe-some.

Their worst victims in recent times are traders, predominantly Igbo who are at Idumota and Balogun markets. These traders are faced with the grim prospect of losing their wares and money, and even losing their lives whenever the *Area Boys* come callin.

Nicholas Okonkwo, an executive member of the Idumota Market Association, told *TSM* that aside from levying them, the *Area Boys* now raid them monthly. And during each raid, he explained, the traders lose wares worth millions of naira.

The traders seem helpless. Nobody has been able to help them to either call the *Area Boys* to order or at least reassure them of the safety of their lives and wares. The traders allege that the police look elsewhere while the *Area Boys* operate. To the extent that the traders now feel that the *Area Boys* have the full support of the police. Each time they go to report, the police tell them (the traders) "to go and settle the *area boys*." *Settle* here means money.

The traders also don't have much luck with the Lagos Island Local Government. Each time they go to City Council, headquarters of the LGA to report, officials tell them to go and settle the *Area Boys*.

Adeniji Adele, Chairman of the Local Government has been most unhelpful to the traders. They accused him of deliberately ignoring their distress calls thus giving the impression of official support for the *Area Boys*.

Which is why the traders now feel that it is an all-out war against Igbo traders in Idumota and Balogun areas. Even though they are not the only traders there, they have their reasons for being apprehensive. For example, they told us that the *Area Boys* usually tell them that, "The Igbo are foolish people. We thought they were wise people. They are foolish. They come here to throw money around. When a shop is built, they pay as much as N1 million to take the shop. When a house is built, they pay so much money for rent. Now, the Yorubas have no place again."

Dan Chukwuocha, a trader at Idumota told *TSM* "As soon as any shop is rented by an Igbo man, the *Area Boys* bring Yoruba women to display their wares in front of your shop. And the wares are the same thing you are selling."

Another who pleaded anonymity told us, "The problem of the *Area Boys* became worse since the Federal Capital moved to Abuja. I think somebody somewhere must have told the *Area Boys* to run us (Igbos) out of Lagos."

And so now, with the allegation of official support which smacks of ethnicity, the *Area Boys* have become more daring. They demand and get N5.00 per truck of wares. They blackmail the traders into paying them every week. If your wares arrive, par-

ularly wrappers, they refuse that to unload until they are paid between N3,000 and N5,000.

The fear is that most people, particularly buyers which span the whole of West Africa may soon start boycotting both Balogun and Idumota markets. The traders don't want this to happen which is why they are insisting on a relocation. Otedola has obliged them to members of the Lagos State House of Assembly are opposed to the relocation. And with the Federal Capital out of Lagos, Lagos would be empty and lead business wise.

The Honourable members are right. Because once the markets move, all their women who run restaurants, fry akara and yams, and sell ice water to the traders will be out of business. But more tragic that the banks even would move. As far as the banks are concerned, their fate lies with the money spinning traders not with a city which cannot control its bunch of irresponsibles.

So, what are the authorities in Lagos doing to control the *Area Boys*? Nothing. But for the relocation, Otedola seems helpless. In fact, in some circles, the story is that perhaps some political foes of Otedola are using the *Area Boys* to embarrass his government.

Beyond a few words of reprimand by the Oba of Lagos, Adeyinka Oyekun, nothing much has been done by him. In fact, TSM gathered that whenever the

Area Boys are arrested and detained, the Oba is pressurized into asking for their release. Last Monday after the recent assault on the traders by the *Area Boys*, TSM went to see him but was told, "The Oba is not in and even if he was in, he would have no immediate comment."

The House of Assembly members seem to be more concerned about the business Lagos would lose than the safety of the traders. But if business must boom in Lagos, the safety of lives and wares must be assured. This is far from the situation now.

Beyond the condemnation last week by some of the Honourable members, they have since the past one year when began making laws, ignored the *Area Boys* problem while the boys wreak havoc all over.

Perhaps the greatest culprit should be Adele. The three times TSM went to his office to discuss the *Area Boys* issue, he bluffed his way through, indirectly supporting the allegation of the traders that the *Area Boys* have official support. Said one trader, "If the Lagos Island Local Government is innocent of the allegation, why is that each time we go to the City Council to report the *Area Boys*, they ask us to go and settle them?"

About six weeks ago, the People's Bank enjoyed a publicity blitz when it said it gave the *Area Boys* loan for their rehabilitation. Surprisingly, the onslaught unleashed by the *Area Boys* has increased, rather than decrease.

So, who did the bank give the loan to? Which of the *Area Boys* have been rehabilitated? And come to think of it, what is the problem of the *Area Boys*? They are not handicapped.

From TSM investigations, their problems seem to be drugs and more drugs. So, the question is, how does the People's Bank ensure that the so-called loan given to them does not end up on drugs?

As it is, there are only two ways out of the *Area Boys* menace. First, the traders could mobilize and resist their onslaught. This may be bloody but at least, it would show the hooligans that they are not untouchable after all. Perhaps when the resistance becomes too bloody, the government and the police would be forced to notice.

Second, the government and police should show Nigerians that the *Area Boys* do not have their backing by arresting and prosecuting them. When a good number of them have been put behind bars, others will find something to do — pushing barrows or carrying blocks for example.

Otherwise, the way the *Area Boys* are going they'll soon start besieging people's residences, holding them to ransom for money.

As it is, everybody no matter how well placed is a victim. A few days ago, the *Boys* held MKO Abiola hostage demanding a whopping N1 million. Now, can anybody beat this? The hooligans!

Otedola....What solution?



Adeniji-Adele....Who is behind Area Boys?



Make way, Baba Lati is coming

His words are law. Nobody disobeys him. Not the Area Boys. Not the traders, and not the police.

By Comfort Obi

HE has three specialities. And they are in this order: drinking, Women and Marijuana. But even in drinking, he is terribly choosy. He drinks Guinness Stout (big bottle) and Gulder. Nothing more. When it comes to women, however, you cannot use the word choosy for him. On that, anything in skirts or wrappers goes.

He is in his early 40s. His name is Yusuph. Nobody knows his surname. But he is commonly known as Baba Lati. Lati is the name of one of his daughters. It is just an assumption that he has more than one daughter. Nobody has seen any of them. Nor does anybody know where he is from. Or how many wives he has. One of his wives does petty trading along Eleko Street, Lagos Island. The speculation about his place of birth range from Mushin to Oshodi.

Baba Lati has no house. He has no home. He sleeps in any unfinished building. In the afternoon, you are likely to see him lurking around 64 Nnamdi Azikiwe Road. And the attraction: There is a bar there. The next place you are likely to find him is in front of Eko Bank, Lagos.

Baba Lati has no formal job. Nor does he have any credentials to recommend him for one. Recently, it was rumoured that he had been offered a job as a securityman at Eko Bank. But when TSM got to Eko Bank, his name was strange to everybody. Not even the security men knew him. One securityman admitted knowing him "from his activities" but swore, "he doesn't work with us."

But even without a job, Baba Lati has acquired an image larger than life. He is a Chief in his own right. He is fast becoming the Nigerian version of the head of Italian Mafia. He is an area com-

mander. He has an army of hooligans behind him. As far as the hooligans and the traders in Lagos Island are concerned, Baba Lati is the *de facto* Lagos State Police Commissioner. Even the police seem to recognise this!

He has a lucrative business going on for him as the *Oba of Area Boys*. As far as the *Area Boys* concerned, his words are law. If he asks them to kill, they kill. If he asks them to grovel on the ground, they grovel. And when he chooses, he flogs them silly and dismisses them from his employ.

Baba Lati became an *Area Boy* by accident. It was one Monday morning in 1990, along Nnamdi Azikiwe Street. One boy, simply called *Oba's son* was in the habit of collecting money from women who sold their wares in front of his family house. The boy's reason was that the women were occupying his "family's land."

But this Monday morning, he made the mistake of going to the street behind the family house to collect "levies" from the women there. He met Faba Layi, who until that day specialised in selling fried eggs and tea to the Hausa community in the area.

Baba Lati told *Oba's son* he had no reason to come to his "area" to collect

money. The boy was trespassing, he warned. A fight ensued. And after the fight, Baba Lati became the sole collector in the area. From being the sole collector he became an employer of hooligans whose specialities range from stealing to extorting money from people.

Baba Lati is treated like a king by most traders. In fact, ever since he became the *Oba of Area Boys*, he stopped extorting money himself. All he does now is to sit pretty at 64 Nnamdi Azikiwe Street and have bottles of Stout and Gulder for company, while his boys make returns to him. Each time they have problems with any trader, they call Baba Lati who asks the trader to settle them. The trader obliges.

But even more than obliging, traders contribute money and send to Baba Lati on weekly basis. In January of 1993 the traders stopped sending money to him in protest. They were protesting the new *Area Boys law* which stipulates that for every truck load of wares, a trader pays N5.00.

When Baba Lati's weekly contributions from the traders stopped coming, he asked why and was told. He got angry, fly with his boys. And so, he brought out canes that were meant to sting like bees, and flogged the boys silly, dismissing them from his employ, and asking traders not to "recognise them



Traders....Another civil war looms



Aliyu Atta: Is Police incompetent?

anymore.

The boys grovelled on the ground and begged. But the *Oba* wouldn't budge.

Baba Lati is an enigma. Even the police see him as such and they keep their distance even when he breaks the laws with impunity. He is erratic and



...kan....Call you "children" to order

carries this too far.

For instance, three weeks ago, Baba Lati did the unthinkable along Nnamdi Azikiwe Street. After a drinking spree, Baba Lati got it into his head that the scores of women trading along the street were blocking the flow of traffic. And so, he embarked on a destruction spree, kicking everything displayed on his way like football. These included breakable plates and bowls, glasses, mirrors and the lot. The women took to their heels while the police looked elsewhere.

That is not the first time the police would look elsewhere while Baba Lati embarked on a destruction spree. It is a usual event. In fact, on such occasions, TSM gathered, Baba Lati orders the police around, telling them, they cannot shoot him because "your bullets cannot penetrate my well fortified body." So, there is this mystery around him which gives the impression that nobody can touch him. That touching him meant death unto whoever.

But late last year, a young boy dared Baba Lati and demystified him. He had gone to the boy's shop, demanding this and that. The boy got angry and ordered him out. Baba Lati hit the boy who in anger beat Baba Lati blue and black. It took the intervention of an elderly trader to pacify the boy as well as Baba Lati who had brought out a dagger swearing he would kill the boy. In the end, Baba Lati got N120 from the elderly trader. They became friends.

In the wake of every riot sparked off by *Asa Dops*, the suspicion is that Baba Lati must be in the know.

And so last week, when the *Asa Dops* struck again, TSM went in search of Baba Lati. We were ready to give him his specialities — stout, gulder and money, to get him to talk. The five-hour — risky search which took us to all the smoking and drugs "joints" was in vain. Baba Lati had disappeared into thin air.

But this is not unusual. Traders testify that Baba Lati was in the habit of disappearing every now and then. He keeps away for about three weeks. When he returns, he loses a lot of weight. But the first morning of his reappearance is usually remarkable. Wearing loose trousers, we were told, he would clutch a bottle of gulder in one hand, a bottle of stout in the other, screaming blue murder. To celebrate his return to business.

[Continued from last week edition]

If we want democracy...

So, how durable are military abdications, and why? There are two types of military abdication: the ephemeral and the durable. Those of the first type are completed, a civilian government is installed, but things sooner rather than later lead the military to seize back power. In the second type, the military return to the barracks and stay there indefinitely. Of the military abdications considered in this essay, some were ephemeral (Ghana 1969-1972 and 1979-1981; Turkey 1963-1980; Pakistan 1971-1977). Of the others, though some are today approaching the ten year mark (Argentina 1983; Brazil 1985; Uruguay 1985), it is too early yet to declare them durable. After all, Peru (1980) experienced a serious coup attempt in 1992, not long after passing the ten year mark. And Turkey's 1963 demilitarization ended in anarchy and a coup 17 years later in 1980.

What distinguishes the ephemeral from the more durable? What factors encourage or discourage the military from attempting a return to politics?

A prima facie case could be made for the proposition that the more comprehensive and detailed the socio-political engineering which precedes an abdication, then the longer the demilitarization is likely to last, particularly if it includes a period of diarchy long enough to allow the reforms to take root under military supervision, and to get both the military and the civilians accustomed to their new roles. (Brazil's 11 years of reforms and diarchy; Peru's 12). Conversely, the more superficial or routine the engineering, the more ephemeral the demilitarization (Ghana's hurried abdications in 1969 and 1979; Pakistan's in 1971 in the wake of defeat in a war with India).

Since the durability of an abdication turns on military coup making, let us turn to that phenomenon. What encourages and tempts, or discourages and restrains the military? We shall consider three factors. But first we should note that constitutional provisions making coups illegal are pointless and childish. Moralists and legalists who thrill to this device naively forget that treason is treason only when it fails, and that constitutions that endure are those which codify a consensus or ratify a durable balance of power on the ground. The case of Guatemala should put an end to such inane notions. There, the 1945 constitution stipulated that in the event of a coup, it was legal for civilians to disobey the new illegal regime. Predictably, that clause failed its first test in 1954, as the "illegal" regime ruled and was obeyed.

Secondly, it is held that the doctrine of the supremacy of civilian authority, if inculcated in the military mind, can act as a powerful restraint on coup making. Such indoctrination makes the military uneasy, makes them feel it is not right to make coups, if it is imbued as an integral part of their training in obedience to superiors and respect for the chain of command. While this is largely true, this powerful psychological restraint does fail all too often. The occasions on which the military have gone against their indoctrination and made coups are innumerable. Why does it fail?

It should be noted that, in the Third World especially, there is a divide between the military professionals and the politicals. The professionals accept the doctrine that the only legitimate duty of the military is national defence, under constitutional civilian authority, against external enemies of their country. The politicals, in contrast, in their ambition to conquer the country they are employed to defend, are apt to stretch the notion of national defence to include defence against internal subversion and the breakdown of internal security. This extension is then used as an excuse to justify their repudiation of civilian authority and their intervention in domestic politics.

As a rule, coups are made by the politicals; the professionals acquiesce, either out of solidarity with their comrades in arms, or from fear of being purged or worse. Whether or not politicals make a coup depends on the opportunities they find in the political situation, and on their ability to rally sufficient support from malcontents



Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria

within the barracks. It is for these reasons that the three most important factors that encourage or discourage military re-intervention after an abdication are (1) the adequacy, in military eyes, of the abdication settlement; (2) the professionalism or political volatility of the military; and (3) the state of crisis or tranquility in the political arena.

The abdication settlement under which the military retreat to the barracks is most crucial. Unless the bulk of the military are satisfied with its terms, and unless these terms are honoured, the military will try to enforce or improve them by mutiny, rebellion or coup. One of General Acheampong's excuses for overthrowing the Busia government was that it had "victimized" the army and police by stripping them of their amenities. When Jerry Rawlings overthrew the Limann government in 1981, he focussed on the ideological rather than material aspect of the terms of the 1979 abdication settlement. He accused Limann of not honouring the obligation to continue with the "house cleaning" which he had begun before handing over to Limann. Similarly, in Chile and Argentina, attempts by civilian successors to deviate from the immunity and amnesty terms brought sharp reactions from the barracks.

In Chile, this took the form of outcries from the High Command, and its repudiation of the report of the government's commission on human rights violations during the military era. In Argentina it took the form of repeated barracks revolts which forced the government to stop the trial of officers, and to release the jailed leaders of the junta.

If the measures built into the abdication settlement to safeguard the military interests are honoured; if guarantees of amnesty and immunity are respected; if military emoluments are not tampered with, the barracks are made infertile for the ambitious politicals and the malcontents. In fact, if the bulk of troops are satisfied, they will have a vested interest in restraining the minority in their ranks who itch to invade the political arena. Thus, a general lack of enthusiasm in the barracks for political adventure is most helpful in keeping the entire military within its constitutional role.

The second crucial factor is the reprofessionalizing and depoliticizing of the military by weeding out the politicals. In Ghana in 1969, politicals like Acheampong were not weeded out, and they soon seized their chance to strike in 1972, making that demilitarization ephemeral. The Philippines offers a contrasting example where a

politicized military was successfully reprofessionalized. Now, why is the Philippines pertinent, even though it was not under military rule? Well, though the military, under civilian dictator Ferdinand Marcos, did not seize power, they had aggrandized their powers considerably under the martial law phase of the Marcos presidency (1972-1986). They were his political partners in government, with judicial and political roles added to their enlarged defence roles. Their retreat militarization by abdication.

In the crisis generated by the 1983 airport assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino, by his military escorts, a situation developed which permitted the ascendancy of the professionals over the politicians. Many retired generals demanded, among other things, a reform of the military to rebuild its shattered image and restore its honour. Pressure mounted from the USA for reform: the USA wanted the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) reprofessionalized so that, with improved discipline, morale, combat effectiveness and image, it could defeat the communist insurgency. In these circumstances General Fidel Ramos, a professionalist, was made acting Chief of Staff to work for these ends. Encouraged by these developments, a reform movement emerged in the military and made public its existence and aims at the 1985 graduation ceremony of the Philippines Military Academy. In their mimeographed statement of common aspirations, these alumni of the Military Academy from the graduating classes of 1971 through 1985, expressed a need for:

- (1) Maintain a strong and solid AFP that can uphold the sovereignty of the people and the state, support the Constitution and protect the geographical integrity of the country and at the same time extricate all divisive forces within and outside the organisation.
- (2) Cleanse the AFP of undesirables;
- (3) Maintain a high standard of discipline;
- (4) Effectively enforce the merit system;
- (5) Reorient training and education in the AFP;
- (6) Reorient the morale and welfare of every man and woman in uniform;
- (7) Restore camaraderie and *esprit de corps* in the AFP;
- (8) Rationalise the management of the AFP's limited resources; and
- (9) Align the concept and practices of leadership with the basic constitutional concepts and the tasks of the AFP.

This internal military effort at reprofessionalization would bear fruit in the military's role in ousting Marcos in 1986. In the disputed presidential elections, both Marcos and Mrs. Aquino were sworn in at rival ceremonies. The armed forces broke into pro-Marcos and pro-Aquino factions; and with the victory of the constitutionalist reformers — who were at one point shielded from attack by a massive human wall of unarmed civilians — the pro-Marcos generals were forcibly retired. The ascendancy of the constitutionalist professionals enabled the Aquino government to defeat a series of pro-Marcos coup attempts.

If the abdication settlement is satisfactory and honoured, and if the military are reprofessionalized, their capacity to break out of the barracks into politics is considerably reduced. This is borne out by the case of Venezuela. There, the military have, since 1958, been kept small and professional, with ample scope for pride in their area of professional competence. They have been rewarded with comparatively fabulous pay and conditions for accepting a non-political role in national life. They have received sufficient education to appreciate their own interest in defusing trouble before it flashes into violence. In other words, the military have been well and truly "settled." In such conditions, they see no need to get into government in order to get what they want. If anything, they find it in their corporate interest to support the civilian regime which takes such good care of their interests, to restrain any politicians and adventurers within their ranks, and to defeat them if they get as far as attempting a coup.

The state of crisis or tranquility in the political arena is the third vital factor which affects the behaviour of military politicians. These

are denied opportunities for re-intervention if the civilians whom the abdicators installed in power do not disappoint expectations; if they operate the system tolerably well, without bitter fanatical strife, without dangerous breakdowns or anarchy, and above all, if some faction or other does not go knocking on the door of the barracks, inviting armed intervention in civilian disputes. Similarly, if the civilian rule is acceptable to most of the society, and does not provoke some segment into an intransigence or armed revolt which the military are called out to put down (thus bringing them to do the job of internal security, as with Obote's use of Idi Amin and his troops to crush and depose the Kabaakal), then the politicians are denied the excuse that the civilians have made a mess of things, and that if the military must do the dirty work of cleaning up the mess, they might as well take on the job of ruling.

In other words, orderly and effective government is vital for durable demilitarization. But for that, the operators of a civilian democracy must, above all, understand and be prepared to play and abide by the rules of the democracy game. In other words, both the demilitarization and democratization processes must succeed if the transition to democracy is to succeed.

PART II: Democratization and its key aspects

Just as demilitarization is preeminently a job for military leaders to accomplish, even so is democratization preeminently a job for civilian leaders. In the transition process, these two leaderships are like runners in a relay, with the period of diarchy as their phase for handing over the baton. Having analysed demilitarization and what it involves, what about democratization?

There are four key aspects to democratization: The creation of proto-democratic politics; the democratization of the proto-democratic politics; the institutionalization of civilian controls over the military; and the fostering of a democratic society and culture.

Proto-Democratic Politics:

This phase of democratization is initiated by the military in their quest for suitable civilians to whom to hand over power. It is the aim of all the bans on politicians and parties; of the restricted and manipulated elections; of the constitutions and ad hoc laws for which the abdicating military are notorious. The political structures which result are, to the military mind, the stuff of democracy. Their conviction that such a democracy was probably best articulated by Turkey's President Kenan Evren, in the early days of his diarchy in 1984. Miffed by domestic and foreign criticism of the restrictions placed on politics and its processes, he took the view that there is

J.J. Rawlings of Ghana



democracy if there is a constitution, and a parliament elected by fair if not free elections.

Democratization of Proto-Democratic Politics

The political structures which an abdicating military put up are, at best, a proto-democratic skeleton which the civilians must amend and flesh out, and evolve in the direction of democracy during and beyond the stage of diarchy. That is what the politicians in Turkey did, under the shadow of military power in the diarchy; and what the Brazilian politicians did after their diarchy.

In Turkey, in the six years of diarchy between Dec. 1983 and the assumption of office by a civilian president elected in 1989, the civilians took the proto-democratic system which the military had clobbered together, and transformed it toward a full-fledged democracy. They did so under martial law, and under a catalogue of restrictive laws and regulations. Civilian Prime Minister Turgut Ozal, with an all-civilian cabinet and his Motherland Party, proceeded with administrative reforms, even ruling by edicts for a time. He continued with the economic policies he had begun in his days as Deputy Prime Minister in the military government. The members of the old defunct political parties had to adjust into the new ones sanctioned by the military. Several extra-parliamentary parties continued a shadowy existence outside the recognized political process. Opposition politicians and parapolitical organizations clamoured for faster democratization, and for restoration of full fundamental right. At one point, when in May 1984 the liberal intelligentsia sent a petition with 1,254 signatures to the President and the Assembly Speaker demanding faster democratization, proceedings were started against them under martial law. Dismayed at this irruption of opposition among the intelligentsia, many military hardliners began to regret the demilitarization.

What is significant is that, even under martial law, the forces for democratization (parliamentary, extra-parliamentary, parapolitical) pressed forward and took risks and bore such penalties as were meted out. While the military supervisors of the diarchy stuck to their time table and programme, the civilian democrats modified the process. The parties re-organised and realigned; four parties were recognised as parliamentary parties for the 1986 National Assembly election; seven for the 1987 elections; a referendum repealed the 1981 ban on some 200 politicians in 1987; local and presidential elections were held and finally, in 1989, Turgut Ozal was elected civilian president to replace his diarchy boss, Evren. Thus, through a six-year-long process, the restrictions of diarchy were loosened enough for Turkey to emerge as a democracy.

In Brazil, the expansion of the scope of democracy began as soon as the 11 year diarchy ended with President Sarney's inauguration. Within a month of his inauguration, Congress began lifting the restrictions on politics imposed by the departing military. It abolished nominated mayors; returned all elected offices to direct elections; created a commission on constitutional reforms; removed constraints on the party system, such as those on carpet crossing and on the requirements for the recognition of political parties. A constituent assembly was formed in February 1987 to write a new constitution, which was promulgated in October 1988. It abolished censorship, and transferred many powers from the president to the National Congress. In Nov. 1989 Brazil held its first direct presidential elections since 1960. Thus, after an 11 year diarchy, it took another four years to complete the transition to democracy in Brazil.

Institutionalization of civilian controls over the military

Just as political reconstruction is begun by the military, demilitarization is consolidated by the civilians: it is for them, as their confidence in power grows, to develop appropriate multi-institutional controls, political and parapolitical, for ensuring that the military stay



Sassaou Ngueso of Congo
in the barracks.

After the Benigno Aquino assassination in the Philippines, these controls were developed in various ways: by the press and the quality of information its greater freedom enabled it to provide the public; by the religious and human rights bodies which kept watch on military misdeeds; by lawyers' groups which gave assistance to those accused or victimized by the military; by the courts which began to restore their jurisdiction over cases of subversion, and especially the Supreme Court which became more independent of the executive and changed its habit of deciding most cases in favour of government; by the political parties through their role in approving military appointments in the National Assembly. As the civilian institutions, long paralysed under martial law, began to revive, a variety of controls on the military began to emerge.

Now, it is one thing for civilians to weave a multi-institutional harness for the military bronco; but it takes a dominant constitutionalist faction within the military to break the bronco and make it wear the harness. Fidel Ramos and his constitutionalists in the AFP did this. Pinochet and his commanders have held their military in check even in the face of barracks outrage against some of the measures of the civilian Aylwin government. In contrast, efforts by the Alfonsín and Carlos Menem governments to radically reform and control the military have provoked barracks rebellions in Argentina. Resistance to measures to weed out undesirables and prosecute them indicates the wisdom in allowing the military's own leadership to reprofessionalize the institution. Otherwise, civilian controls are likely to be ignored or shrugged off.

Democratic society and culture

Democracy is far more than a structure of political institutions and processes, consisting in the main of constitutions, laws, parties, elections and the like. It is a whole political plant which needs appropriate soil and atmosphere to thrive. That soil and atmosphere is a democratic culture. To create and maintain it is a permanent project without whose success democratic politics cannot endure.

A democratic culture, in which all are raised, is the ultimate bulwark for democratic government. And that is why education in democratic culture for everyone is the key to durable democracy. Both the politicians whose misconduct gives soldiers the excuse to extinguish democracy, and the soldiers themselves, are less likely to endanger democracy if, in their upbringing, they have imbibed democratic values, and value them to the point of being ready to defend the democratic way of life, even with their own lives. If, by the time they are 18, the average members of society have imbibed the democratic ethos, then all is well for democracy. For even the soldier starts life

and grows up as a civilian before becoming a soldier, and would have become a true-believing democrat before becoming a soldier. Thus, the key to an enduring democracy lies in education in democratic values, outlook and habits for all citizens.

Education for democratic culture would inculcate democratic values and democratic spirit; teach personal and social discipline and check propensities to anarchist behaviour; cultivate the sporting approach to politics; emphasize democratic ethics and the supreme importance of the integrity of the voting process; create a disposition in favour of stable constitutional administration; discourage the authoritarian style of leadership and cultivate that style which evokes public confidence and credibility. It would also encourage public spiritedness, civic consciousness, and a productive patriotism.

The task of building such a culture from the rubble of autocracy was the topic on which President Raul Alfonsín of Argentina addressed a conference on The Transition to Democracy in the Third World, in Buenos Aires, in August 1985. The scope of the task is here outlined in the words of a man who was in the thick of it at the time, as the first civilian, elected President of Argentina following the abdication of the military there.

It is necessary to undertake a gigantic cultural reform which will instil in us a general regard for a way of life that will guarantee civil rights and encourage tolerance and mutual respect; which



Blaise Campaore

will protect the freedom of the people and banish fear, coercion and disorder from our society. This cultural reform also includes necessary changes in the old forms of political activity. The responsibility of the modern politician is to initiate a closer dialogue with the people, to listen and learn from the ideas, behaviour and needs of others and to reflect the opinions and way of life of society as it really is. Politics can no longer be something that takes place behind closed doors, a one-way flow from the top downwards, but something which is open at every level through better communication and deep social bonds... The transition towards consolidation and strengthening of democracy is a complicated and risky process which inevitably calls for changes in political cultures, in the network of institutions and fundamentally, in the adaptation of the political class to the new circumstances and requirements... Democracy is not only consent but also dissent, and respect for the other person's view and for diversity. So it is not just a matter of attending to the mechanisms which generate consent but also of recognising -- not merely tolerating -- the value of dissent, acknowledging it as part of society's creativity. Consent and dissent are always important, but they are even more so in the transition to democracy which demands extreme flexibility and understanding.

The willingness of society to see democracy as a self-correcting system that can turn human aspirations into reality is not merely dependent on individuals and social groups; it also greatly depends on these political leaders presiding over the transition, on their ability to generate confidence and credibility, which means it depends as much on political parties as on civil groups... Perhaps we can discover the deepest meaning of these transitional processes in the change in thinking and attitudes of every man and woman who makes up our societies, a change from passive acceptance of their allotted place in democracy to active identification with and defence of the democratic system."

The short-run tests of success

From all the foregoing, it should be clear that a transition to democracy is an enormous undertaking in restructuring institutions and re-educating an entire elite and society. Civilians and soldiers alike have to learn new values, new attitudes, new skills, even new thought processes; they have to be drilled in new ways of behaviour, taught new codes of conduct, and acclimated to new institutional structures.

It should also be clear that in such an undertaking, there is no particular cut-off point from where the job is judged a success. While the ten-year point might be adopted as the Prof. Finer Success Test Point, it is clear that a relapse into bad old habits can occur in the 11th year. So, when do we decide that a transition to democracy has succeeded?

While we must go by the sensible rule that the longer an abdication lasts the better, there are some indicators of provisional success. One would be two or three successful handovers of power from one civilian administration to another, especially from one party to the opposition party, as has happened in Brazil, Peru and Argentina. Another would be the system's survival of a serious political crisis without the politicians resorting to seeking help from the barracks. Brazil's ability to go through the hazardous process of deposing and impeaching President Collor de Mello, without provoking a move from the military, is a sign of the durability of that abdication. These two tests, if passed, would be evidence of growing maturity in the political class. The third test is the survival of coups or barracks revolts by the elected civilian government, if any occur. This has happened in Peru, Argentina and the Philippines, indicating that the constitutionalists in the barracks are dominant there. And that is a sign of a successful demilitarization.



Mobutu of Zaire...

Tackling the security question

The Nigeria police says it is now ready to deal with hoodlums who harrass foreign missionaries.

representatives, strategies and security plans were devised. Some of these included strengthening security arrangements in residences, with armed police officers and motorised patrols. In addition, the security of embassies and High Commissions would be intensified and given new command status. Other protective devices still being operationalised involve the screening of unauthorised visitors and civilian staff, such as househelps.

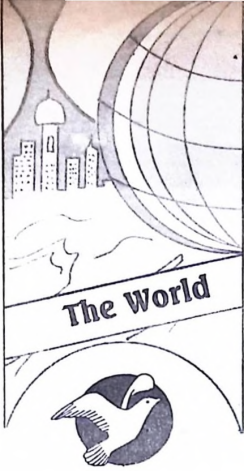
Since some of the more serious inci-

dences occur while diplomats are on transit, directives emerged on the measures to be taken when emissaries embark on interstate movements.

The diplomats are to contact the Commissioner of Police in charge of the DPU, and the Inspector-General of Police instructed various commissioners in places such as Port Harcourt, Kano and Kaduna where diplomats frequent, to provide similar security steps to that of Lagos.

In most of the embassies visited by TSM, the entrance gates are guarded by a handful of armed policemen and corporate security officers. But the Embassy of the Russian Federation is perhaps one of the most guarded, though this is not easily noticeable since the gate is unmanned. The Russians employ their own guards who look more like military personnel, stationed inside the building.

They sit at a vantage point watching the entrance gate which is electroni-



By Maik Nwosu & Joseph Umunegbu



VENTURE

into the unknown often leads to unexpected discoveries.

For the Nigeria Police, a series of routine investigations inadvertently led to possible clues on those behind the current stream of criminal onslaughts against foreign emissaries. This was revealed to TSM by the Chief Public Relations Officer of the Nigeria Police Force, Haz Iwendi, who enthused over the good fortune of not having nabbed suspects for entirely different offences altogether only to realise their involvement in a case which had initially baffled the police: the recent wave of armed robbery incidences against diplomats. "During the course of intensive cross-examination offenders who were picked up for a crime, confessed to having been involved in one or two robberies or attacks on diplomats. Our intention is now to find out whether the suspects acted separately or were members of a unified group", he said.

Iwendi also noted that a special anti-robbery squad has also moved in to help unravel the case: "The Diplomatic Protection Unit (DPU) is now poised to effectively foil any threats to the security of diplomats."

After meetings were summoned between the Assistant Inspector General of Police, police operatives, officials of the Diplomatic Corps and their repre-



Abur.....

cally operated and fitted with a tele-communications device. But the least understaffed is the Iraqi embassy. It is so sometimes even goes to the ambassador himself. But so far he has experienced no mishap. In the Israeli embassy, security officials exhibit a religious zeal. The state of the ambassador was certified via a personal check before the officials allowed a **ISM** reporter out of the embassy, after **ISM** had conducted an interview. One of the officials pointed out that this devotion is linked to the travails of the Israeli nation. In the German and US embassies and the US information service centre, searches aided by metal detectors are carried out.

When Chief Matthew Mbu, Nigeria's foreign Affairs Secretary delivered his maiden speech to an august gathering of the cream of the diplomatic corps on February 5, this year, diplomatic protection was top of the agenda. A number of armed robbery incidents against foreign diplomats, culminating in the senseless murder of Australia's Acting High Commissioner, last December, sparked off protests about personal security of emissaries. The envoys who were dismayed over the deteriorating safety and security standards provided for them, collectively made several representations in the issue.

After Chief Mbu assured diplomats that government had already taken action, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Samir Baker of the state of Palestine, praised government's intention to tackle the problem saying, "I thank you for the promises you have made on the security question and the measures taken, and we hope these will be enforced. We are happy about the beefing up of the police presence and we abhor the waves of attacks on diplomats in the past few months."

On that occasion, the emphasis on security was buttressed by some of the ambassadors interviewed by **ISM**. For instance, the Iranian ambassador, Hassan Alizadeh said, "the highlight of the meeting of Nigeria's foreign affairs secretary and the ambassadors is the security of diplomatic missions. This shows that the government of Nigeria has taken serious action to supply security to the missions, and we appreciate it." The South Korean ambassador, Myong Haing Cho reasserted the security question as the major impression borne out of the meeting with Chief Mbu. "The most pressing issue is the security and additional protection for the diplomatic community. This will be very good for

the smooth operations of the missions", he said. The Yugoslav ambassador, Ilija Sankovic also believes that the security of foreign diplomats in Nigeria should improve.

The DPU was initially manned by the mobile police as a full command status in view of the increased number

of embassies in the country. One of the major earlier crime wave began in the late 1970s when a series of burglaries took place. But the spate of thefts in chanceries and residences of foreign embassies and their personnel in Lagos is not peculiar to Nigeria nor out of proportions to what obtain in other world capitals.

African cooperation agenda

— Olusegun Obasanjo

Nigeria's former Head of State, Olusegun Obasanjo speaks to **CBN** on some major national and continental issues.



LUSEGUN

Obasanjo, a soldier by profession and a farmer by practice, appears to feel more at home with international affairs. By a twist of fate he was thrust into the limelight as Nigeria's leader in 1976 which exposed him to the terrain of international relations at a time the country's foreign policy initiatives were prominent.

World heads of states came knocking at his door at Dodan Barracks. Obasanjo felt at ease at some of the best known capital cities in the world. Yet he does not allow his romance with the Western system to cloud his African heritage. As a member of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, Obasanjo was well placed to give an interview to **CBN**, while on a trip to Southern Africa. Excerpts:

Q: The political scene in Nigeria is one man one vote. Does the system work well?

A: By and large it will give an indication of the feeling of people, if allowed. That is if it is unhampered, untampered and not manipulated.

Q: What you mean is so long as the people who are voting accept the fact that the election is fair, they will accept the government that follows?

A: By and large people will accept something they consider reasona-

bly fair.

Q: The Foreign Affairs Secretary, Chief Matthew Mbu, says a change in direction of Nigeria's foreign policy will occur due to the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of apartheid in South Africa?

A: I don't know what he means by that. I haven't read the quotation you have made. But since around 1975, Nigeria declared that Africa is the centrepiece of its foreign policy and I don't know if that is what secretary Mbu wants to change, because successive Nigerian governments more or less followed that line of thinking.

Q: I understood that he wanted closer cooperation with South Africa: Nigeria in the North, and South Africa in the South - as economic power-houses. And he might say there should be economic cooperation between the two. Do you agree with that?

A: Yes. When I met De Klerk about three or four years ago, he and I talked about an Abuja-Pretoria-Cairo axis. Then we said we did not know how far "North" Pretoria will



go or how far "South" Cairo will go and if necessary we could have Nairobi. But when I discussed with one of the African leaders, not too long ago, he did not like the word "axis". And so we talked about Abuja-Cairo-Nairobi-Pretoria

cooperation agenda. But we should be careful not to make people see this as excluding others. What I understand by this, is that these centres have certain amount of infrastructure. South Africa in the South, Nigeria in the West and Egypt in North Africa and Kenya in East. And as these infrastructures can be used as centres of development and cooperation for each concentric circles in a way that they do not compete or cut across purposes. They could complement each other.

Q: But the economies of Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa are in a bad shape at the moment. So the economic cooperation seems to be a bit premature don't you agree?

A: No. You cannot talk about the economic cooperation as being premature. It is like saying the South-South cooperation is premature. In fact, the reason why their economy is in such a bad shape is because they have not cooperated enough.

Q: I understand that in the Nigerian economy, the foreign debt is running at about 28 billion dollars (\$700 billion) and I don't understand how you can reduce it?

The debt may be more than that. But although the Nigerian debt is heavy in comparison with its capacity and in comparison with other countries, particularly Latin America and their economic strength - she still produces fairly substantially and we have an economy that earns well over \$10 billion (N250 billion) a year.

Q: It must be a difficult economy to live in because it has a 50 per cent inflation rate?

A: If 50 per cent is the official figure then that is an understatement and that is part of the problem. But it is not the debt itself. The problem is what you do with the debt. You have to sit down with your creditors and see which areas they can help you with. And they can only do that if you have shown fiscal and financial discipline, and not behaving like a drunken fellow.

Q: So you think the Nigerian economy has a hope of coming out of what appears to be a trough at the moment?

A: Yes. I think in matters of months rather than years, if it is well managed. There are other economies

that are much worse off and they bounced back.

Q: Some people are making money out of the Nigerian economy judging by the amount of *Porsches* and *Ferraris* you see in Lagos when you first land there?

A: Yes. This is the height of it. The general indiscipline which permeates the rest of the society. And the corruption does not help too much when you are trying to put your economy back on rail.

Q: 95 per cent of your country's export is oil?

A: Yes, about that. And in the foreseeable future, oil will still be required. Even here in South Africa, you need oil.

Q: In OPEC, the oil prices are fixed. Do you have much control over that?

A: We are a member of OPEC and we have a say in what goes on in OPEC and I think that is good enough.

Q: Nigeria is obviously an entrepreneurial nation. And from what I gather, the people work hard and use their own idea, without sitting down and expecting other people to do things for them. And so there must be considerable hope for Nigeria's economy?

A: Yes. I agree entirely with you, that Nigeria's economy, although in a bad shape at the moment, can be put back on the rails, in a matter of months, if shaken up. I believe that these are the views of those in IMF and the World Bank. What matters is how do we manage in the short run? The truth is that our handling presently and in the immediate past

have not given much hope.

Q: I understand that Nigeria wants to play a bigger role in the United Nation (UN) and it will be a good thing if there was an African nation playing a more decisive part in the UN. Would you have been in favour of the UN going into Somalia, the way it did?

A: Yes. The Somaliian situation is a human tragedy and one of colossal magnitude for Africa, particularly. And the international community could not have just sat by and watched the carnage, killing and destruction taking place without doing anything.

Q: The starvation is surely one of the main things in Somalia. But also there are other parts of Africa that might be looked at more closely by the UN, such as in Angola where a full blown civil war is taking place?

A: There is a slight difference, in that Somalia worked itself out of an effective government and governance. Whereas, in Angola there is still a government in position which needed assistance. And the international community wanted democracy and told it to drop its guns and go for the ballot. On the other side (UNITA) failed to do that, and went back to pick up its guns because it felt the ballot was unacceptable. I believe it now depends on the international community to enforce democracy. Once you allow this to go by the board in Angola, it may go by the board in many places.



"We need a National Food Culture Policy"

— Tonia Igjehon

essential to the development of a food culture that can go beyond international boundaries. Right now Nigerians are tribalistic in their choice of food. I mean, the ugly food you know is better than the one you don't know. Our food is not beautifully presented no garnishing, no colour, the fruit is not brought out nicely. We don't dine we wack. Neither do we eat together.

Do you see the popularity of foreign dishes like Chinese food as a threat to the development of national food culture?

It is not a threat at all. It is a challenge to Nigeria's food culture. And the pioneers of Nigeria food culture intend to meet this challenge in 1993. There is nothing really special about Chinese food. But you see they pay attention to presentation. Do you know that Chinese food is one of the cheapest in the world but it is the most expensive

in Nigeria. And we value it because it is well presented.

May be you should talk more on the issue of affordability of food.

Food culture is basically infrastructure. Transport and storage. We lose over 40% of produce due to transportation and storage. The board promoting Nigeria food culture and Aibtonia have said that we need to rely on refrigerated rail transport. It's the most reliable means of transport. This is not the responsibility of the federal government alone. But we lack the enabling environment which would encourage the private sector to invest in food production packaging and processing. We need favourable bank loans and lending rates. The insecurity of the economy does not help the banks either. The banks can't afford to make a loan to an endeavour that is



By Felicia Oamen & Grace Onyegbula

TONIA Igjehon, M.D. Aibtonia Nigeria Limited is the brain behind the increasingly popular All Nigerian food and beverage festivals. When TSN paid her a visit not too long ago, to talk on Nigerian food culture, a view she has been vigorously pursuing. Igjehon spoke her heart out portraying her vast understanding of the subject. "Nigerians are tribalistic in the food they eat. In Nigeria "we wack." We are not looking at proper dietary mixtures and aesthetics of presentation.

We do not find joy in eating. We eat only to fill ourselves. To get energy." You'll find Tonia Igjehon's interview, an eye opener.

What is food culture?

Food culture is the existence of an infrastructure which enables mass production of the packaging, processing of affordable indigenous foods. In Nigeria we have tribal food cultures. And until we have a national food culture our people will not be able to have adequate feeding. We don't have a distributive network. No reliable way of prediction what amount of food comes into the market at a time. Also we define feeding by our in-take of carbohydrate not protein or minerals. We seek to fill ourselves. Note, in Nigeria "we wack." Nigeria's food culture is basically survival. We are not looking at proper dietary mixture and aesthetics of presentation. These are

Igjehon... "We don't dine, we wack."



long term and farming is long term. These facts militate against the development of a food culture. It has also not helped farmers to produce affordable food to the masses particularly in the urban areas. The federal ministry does not have consumption data and production data which says who produces what. How then can you know what to grow. We must create food producing zones. The farmers can be encouraged by giving them incentives like seedlings, know how, high technological equipment. The government need to monitor the production and yields and study the problems with them. Include women because they are the majority of agrarian society in the country. In addition there must be a central body to handle food.

Where does Abionia fit into all these?

We organise promotions that feature Nigeria foods. We have been doing this for 4 years now. Nestle has contributed too. And so has Food Basket International. But Abionia consciously aimed at and achieved a multi sectoral approach to the problem of providing sufficient and affordable price of nutritious food. We agree that there must be a viable national food culture policy. We have been able to put awareness in some of the private organised sectors like the Association of Food, Beverage and Tobacco (AFBT) Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, Unicef, Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) the Nigerian Hotel Association, FIIRRO and other individual representation. The body would be the nucleus of a brain trust that we would tap for the evolution and eventual enactment of that food culture.

Do you see the present high cost of feeding as posing a threat to the realisation of a national food culture.

On the contrary. It is a food culture that will cause the prices of food to come down. The government imported about 11.5 billion naira of food last year. And if something is not done about the high cost of feeding we will see some food related disturbances that is going to make 1992 funeral rites look like beach parties. Workers are just struggling. The middle class has been ruled out of existence. Even the rich are not eating adequately. They only eat quantity. The average age of death has fallen from 48-50 to 30-50 years old. Increasing number of men are dying and its due to stress and poor diet. We are not cows to be eating grass everyday. In economies, the bottom line is food. Though America imports food, she has enough to feed herself and the rest of the world. We must be conscious of this food problem because a nation without its own food



garnished dish

culture can not lay claim to its own: national sovereignty. Once you depend on another nation for food, its people can pull the strings on you at any time. That is what happened to Soviet Union. She depended so much on America for wheat and see how America used it against her. Just by withholding wheat.

How long will it take for the nation to feel the positive effect of a national food culture if we adopt one now?

Well it all depends on political will. If the new government sees it as a matter of urgency we will soon begin to see results. We have the wherewithal

to produce these things. All we need to do is sit down and plan. The massive importation has got to stop. Food has to be heavily subsidized. We can't afford to leave food to market forces any longer.

It must be noted that the development of a viable national food culture will dramatically increase productivity in Nigeria, enhancing the spirit of nationalism so necessary and so lacking today. And giving room to a sense of loyalty which can only really come from that sense of fulfilment that a full stomach and freedom from fear of hunger and food boredom provides.

Beyond the poor

For most Nigerians, there is now a sharp line between living and barely existing; as the prices of food stuff soar

By Akaninyene Esiere
With Felicia Oamen & Grace Onyegbula

FRNEST Shonekan, a chief and head of government Friday April 2 wore an unsmiling look while addressing

delegates to the Post Economic Summit held in Lagos. Shonekan did not only look tired but also told the audience in falling tones his Transitional Council's helplessness in revamping a wobbling economy. He expressed deep concern on the state of the economy.

That air of despondency could also be found on the faces of most Nigerians beaten by a worsened economic weather. Long faces of hunger, malnourishment and melancholy greet everyone with tales of inability to feed properly, run-away inflation and plummeting standard of living.

The Nigerian nation seems to be progressing towards the state the South America nation of Brazil tucked itself in during the 1980s. Prices of virtually everything under the Nigerian sun are skybound. Most affected by the swirling inflation are foodstuff. There is no guarantee that the amount one spent on a given commodity in the morning will be same, on one's way back from office. Just like the Brazilian experience, price adjustment on commodities apparently take place on an hourly basis.

Lagos, a city threatening to burst, graphically represents a fertile

ground where the Brazilian experience is being experimented. The story is not so different for Abuja, the nation's nascent capital. Port Harcourt, Maiduguri and by extension the entire Nigeria. The spiralling cost of food items has made nonsense of housewives who had formed the habit of preparing shopping list with price tags. Family budgeting has been thrown to the dust can, while those who can, just survive. A bitter housewife told *TSM* that one needs a basket full of naira today to chase a handful of foodstuff.

Ifanyi Williams, a secretary, is one of those whose hope is fast burning out. "I feel I should wake up one day to find myself in another world (dead)," he told *TSM*, adding "I am really fed up with everything. Nigeria is really in for a terrible period."

He is not exaggerating. Nor does he premise exasperation on emotion. A trip to any of our common markets speaks volume for the hardship in the land.

Ironically, there is no scarcity of any commodity. Yam, garri, beans, rice, plantain, abound in the market stalls. But they are only for eyes, as prices erect a stiff barrier between the vendors and potential buyers. Those who can crack the price do so with tonnes of complaints and long haggling. Our reporter who attempted to haggle the price of a tuber of yam at Mushin market received a torrent of curses from the seller.

A price sampling of commodities compiled by *TSM* only confirms the helplessness of the Nigerian consumer. Sample: A 450 grammes tin of baby milk that sold for N60 in December last year and N80, three weeks ago jumped up to N150 last week when *TSM* reporters visited the market. Ditto for other beverages. A tin medium-size dry milk sold for between N70 and N90 at most markets visited by *TSM*, while that of evaporated milk cost N12.00 up from N9.00 observed a fortnight earlier. And since most Nigerians have long abandoned "luxury" foods such as beverages, the heat of price increase is now focussed on the bare necessary food types.

Garri, the commonest staple, is now gold; not to talk of rice, plantain, meat, beans, groundnut oil, sugar and other ingredients.

A 50kg bag of granulated sugar cost N670.00 two weeks ago, and as we were going to press, the commodity sold for N750. An attempt to itemize the prices of other commodities on the pages of weekly magazine would end up a futile exercise as prices keep on changing with the ticking of the clock.



Who's buying?

The only certainty is that no commodity has had its price stabilized, not to talk of an unimaginable price fall. The price of bread paints a vivid picture of doom. Before the lifting of ban on wheat importation, the price of bread stabilized for a while. When the ban was removed and price of flour plummeted from N830 to as low as N400 Nigerians thought the era of bread boom had returned. It was a forlorn hope as bakers and flour millers engaged in a cobweb of rhetorics that merely resulted in sending the price of bread over our roofs.

Stripped of all forms of luxury food, such as meat, beverages, egg and the likes, it would cost a modest family of four about N700 to put two square meal on the table each week. Those who cannot, simply survive on substandard food and live below poverty level, thus increasing the ratio of Nigerians crossing the vicious rubicon of malnourishment. Juliana Okereke, a trader who should know, told *TSM* the situation is grim. "Many people may start dying from now on because of malnutrition and starvation," she said. She has a supporter in Kudirat Adegbenro, another trader, who foresees a future

pregnant with uncertainty. "Things are so expensive that we don't know what tomorrow would hold," she wondered.

The cry in the land can not be explained away without situating it within the macro-economic policy of the Federal Government. Many have argued that the continuous devaluation of the Naira (a cardinal principal in the Structural Adjustment Programme) is the hob upon which high cost of foodstuff and other essential commodities revolve. The wrong valuation of the naira at the foreign exchange market they way has ignited a negative chain of reaction which has affected all strata of the society. In simple terms: when the value of the naira falls, industries that depend on imported raw materials and other inputs suffer as cost of production increases. The urge to pass the increased cost to consumers lead to high wage demand by workers which eventually forces retailers to hike the prices of wares. Same for agricultural produce. Outside mechanised farmers who depend heavily on Forex to run their farms, farm labour is also costly amongst the small-scale producers while the cost of transporting these goods from the hinterland is prohibitive. At Idi Oro market in Lagos, a yam seller attributed the high cost of tuber to transportation. She told *TSM* that it used to cost them 20 kobo to transport a tuber of yam from Benin to Lagos. Now they are forced to cough out N2, a 500 per cent jump.

Frustration involved in farming and massive smuggling of produce across our porous borders also add in jacking up the prices of food stuff. Inconsistency in government agricultural policy especially in relation to fertilizer distribution and land acquisition have combined to drive away genuine investment in the agricultural sub-sector, while corrupt security operatives abet smuggling of produce to neighbouring countries. A garri seller in Lagos told *TSM* that nationals of Niger Republic are involved in the smuggling of garri.

Curiously, government has taken a peculiar approach to arresting the high cost of food stuffs.

For the past two weeks, Uche Chukwumerije, Secretary of Information and Culture has left the cosy environment of his office for common markets appealing to retailers to force down prices of foodstuff.

While the majority of Nigerians grite and groan in hunger, it is hoped that what this government has left unsorted would be taken up by the succeeding government in grappling our food problem.



Salad is prone to poisoning

Food poisoning

GRACE, a young lady in her early 20s narrowly escaped death years ago, for eating mango, a favourite fruit of hers. Hours after she had finished eating the fruit, she began to experience stomach pains. She soon had diarrhoea and started vomiting. She ended up in a hospital bed and was only restored to her normal self after series of drips had been administered. The doctor later unravelled the seemingly mysterious illness to Grace and her parents as being food poisoning. Food poisoning according to experts is a result of eating harmful foods. The illness is characterised by stomach pains, diarrhoea and some-

times vomiting which develops within 1-36 hours after eating the affected food. Here are some causes of food poisoning, it is excerpted from the book *The Theory of catering*.

Chemicals.

ARSENIC: This chemical is used to spray fruit during growth and occasionally fruit has been affected by this poison.

LEAD: Lead poisoning can occur from using water that has been in contact with lead pipes and then drunk or used for cooking.

ZINC: Acid foods if stored or cooked in poor quality enamelled or galvanized

containers can cause poisoning. Certain plants are poisonous. For example, poisonous mushrooms or Fungi. Rhubarb leaves and the parts of potatoes which are exposed to the sun above the surface of the soil are also poisonous.

Bacteria.

Food contaminated by bacteria (*germs*) is by far the commonest cause of food poisoning. The commonest food poisoning bacteria are:

The staphylococcus group causes food poisoning because of large numbers of bacteria in the food.

Staphylococcus aureus causes food poisoning due to poison (toxin) production in the food.

Clostridium Welchii causes food poisoning due to large numbers of bacteria producing toxins in the intestines.

Foods That Are prone To Poisoning

MEAT: All made up dishes, such as meat pie need extra care. They must be very thoroughly cooked. Reheated meat dishes must be thoroughly reheated. Pork must be well cooked. This is because Pork may be affected by trichinosis which is a disease caused by a worm.

Meat should be handled as little as possible. Minced and cut-up meats are more likely to become contaminated

because of infection from the food handler or cook. Boned and rolled joints require extra care in cooking as inside surfaces may have been contaminated.

FISH: Fish is not often a cause of food poisoning except in reheated fish dishes. Care must be taken to reheat thoroughly such dishes as fish cakes, fish pie etc. Some fish such as Oysters have caused food poisoning because they have been bred in water which has been polluted by sewage. All shell fish should be used fresh. If bought alive, there is no doubt as to their freshness. **MILK:** Milk when used in custards, puddings unless eaten soon after preparation should be treated with care. If required for the following day, they must be refrigerated.

GREEN SALAD: Care should be taken with all green salads and other food eaten raw, especially with their storage and washing.

COCONUT: Desiccated coconut has been a cause of food poisoning and if used in cooking, it must be well cooked. It is not advisable to use it as a cake decoration on cream. Particular care is required in the handling of soups and sauces because bacteria multiply more rapidly in these foods.

Convert those waste to valuables

TIMES are hard. And thanks to market forces. It's swiftly becoming harder to have a decent meal on one table. More than ever before there is the need to be more creative with the most ordinary type of food. Out of those foods generally tagged as "left-overs," "spoil" "over-ripe," "stale" can come such a delicious and nutritive meals. Take some tips from us.

- Trimmings and bones of meat, could cooked and the water used for stock.

- Meat fat cooked or uncooked could be minced and rendered down from dripping.

- Bread crusts could be kept until dry, lightly browned in the oven or frying pan; then passed through a mincer to make browned bread crumbs which are fantastic for scotch eggs.

- About-to-go-stale bread can be used for bread pudding.

- Left-over cooked yam can be mashed and used for yam balls. So could wizened drying up yam tubers properly dried and ground into fine yam powder for "amala".

- Maize shaft can be dried and used as chicken feed.

- Maize shaft can be dried and ground with millet or dried cassava (elubo) to make a paste that tastes very much like Semovita.

- Yam peels can be soaked in warm water, dried and ground to make "Amala." To get a lighter and attractive colour, the powder is mixed with ground cassava (elubo).

- Over-ripe plantain could be to make a kind of plantain chips (Dodo Ikire).

- No need wasting your coconut chaff after extracting its liquid for coconut rice. Coconut chaff cooked with sugar and water will give you a yummy sweet.

- You can get cold, and refreshing fruit drinks out of over-ripe mangoes, banana, pineapples etc.

- Left over rice macaroni can be turned into mixtures for hors d'oeuvres with items such as chopped onions, tomatoes, cooked meat and a dressing of Mayonnaise.

- Egg or snail shell can be dried and ground into a smooth powder and used for washing blackened pots.

By Felicia Oamen



Sizzling suya

FOOD PRESENTATION: Seeing Is Eating

EVEN the best prepared meals could numb the appetites, when badly presented or served. No wonder caterers go to great lengths to see that foods are pleasingly presented.

Nothing can be more attractive in a room than tables clothed in clean crisp and well-starched linen tablecloths. But that is not just all there is to laying a table. We spoke with the professionals:

Table Laying

FIRST, collect the correct size of tablecloth for the table to be clothed up.

Stand in the correct position to lay the tablecloth adequately which is between the legs of the table. This is to ensure that the edges of the tablecloth cover the legs of the table and do not fall between the table legs.

Where you are to use an overlap (a different cover over the first), the overlap should be even all round the table.

The creases of the tablecloths should all run the same way in the room.

Varieties Place-Settings Of

PLACE-SETTING is the laying of tables according to the type of meal being offered. Broadly

Come dining with us

speaking meals can be classified under "la carte and table d'hote." The la carte cover is the normal place-setting found mostly in homes and even restaurants when the meals are not necessarily course meals.

A table d'hote cover is a formal place-setting normally laid in a good class restaurant, hotel and even in some homes in readiness for either luncheon or dinner for more than one course meals.

Placing Of Items

IN laying a table for any meal, these points should be considered in the placing of the items:

A flower vase when used should be neatly placed in the centre of the table preferably in low arrangement.

Cutlery and flatware must be laid from a service salver or service plate and placed in this order:

right just above the place setting.

The serviette is placed on the left corner, close to the side plate.

The pepper, salt and other seasonings are better placed at the top close to the flower vase.

TIDY KITCHENS: Healthy Homes

THE kitchen or "domestic

stored in the refrigerator, if it is not to be used immediately. This is because bacteria and algae thrive in warm conditions and found a home in your stored water, if not refrigerated.

2. Put hot water into a washing-up bowl or basin and add a little detergent. During washing wash glassware and cutlery first, and then the plates and utensils.

3. For clean sinks, dissolve



FOREIGN CUISINE

THIS dish may be of Italian origin, but the basic ingredients Rice and Peas are easily available here.

So why don't you add variety to your family menu by treating your family/friends to this easy to prepare meal made with rice and young sweet peas.

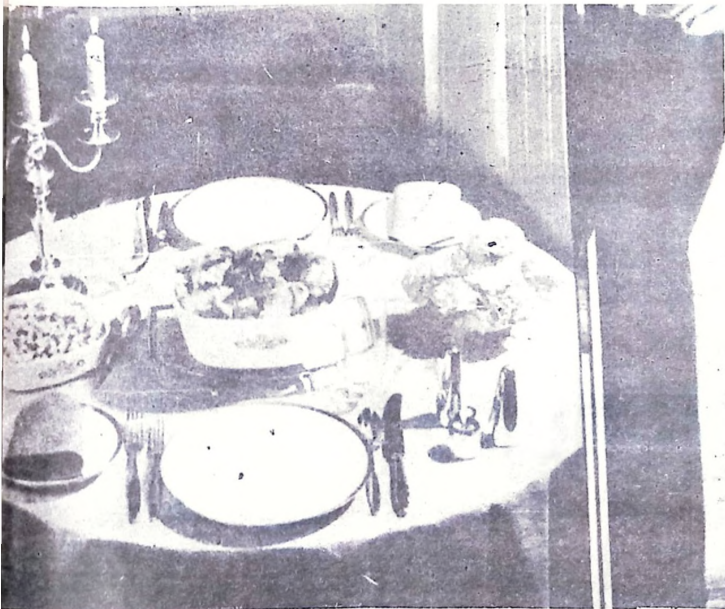
RISI E BISI (Rice and Peas) serves six

This is a Venetian speciality traditionally made with the earliest sweet young peas of the season. However, it can be made successfully with frozen peas if a well flavoured stock is used. If you do have fresh young peas wash and cook the empty pods in some lightly salted boiling water to make a stock. This dish is meant to be more liquid than a risotto; it should have the consistency of a dense broth.

9 oz rice, preferably Vialone or Camaroli
1-1 oz shelled peas
2 oz butter
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 oz grated Parmesan cheese
2 thin slices of bacon (optional)
1 qt light stock
chopped parsley
salt
black pepper

Melt half the butter in a large pan and add the finely chopped onions, bacon and parsley. After a few minutes add the peas and a cup of boiling water. If the peas are not young and sweet, add a pinch of sugar. Cover and cook for five minutes or a little longer if the peas are rather large.

Add the boiling stock and the rice. When the rice is cooked, stir in the remaining butter and the freshly grated cheese. Season to taste and add a little freshly ground black pepper before serving.



The fork(s), depending on the type of place-setting should be placed on the left side, the knives and soup spoon, placed on the right side, while the dessert spoon and fork are placed at the top opposite the dish with the pieces needed first on the outside.

The water jug containing water must be placed on the table just before the meal is served, while the water glasses placed to the

workshop" is the centre of all food preparation and cooking; therefore it should be well planned to save labour and increase efficiency. Follow these rules and make a healthy you.

1. Wrap all waste foods, and empty refuse bins everyday. Refuse bins should always be kept well-covered.

Whether filtered or taken from the tap, drinking water should be

some washing soda in hot water, and pour down the sink and down the outside drain once a week. Takes care of bad odour and leaves drain free of obstacles.

4. If possible, do not prepare food while suffering or recovering from illness, especially if the illness is infectious.

6. Dry pans and steel wares thoroughly to prevent rust.

By Grace Onyegbula



Hassan Oyeleke Gets An Award

HASSAN Oyeleke (Alhaji), *Offa* local government chairman, received an award recently at the presentation ceremony of award to 50 distinguished local government chairmen which was held at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Victoria Island-Lagos.

At the occasion, Air Marshal Ibrahim Alfa (right) presents the award to Hassan Oyeleke (right).

ECO Bank AGM

It was stock taking time recently for ECO Bank Nigeria PLC during an impressive AGM which tasked not only the intellect of the Board of Directors and Shareholders but also the patient and understanding.

For the year ended, September, 1992, the bank posted an after tax profit of N27,281,000, a remarkable improvement on its 1991 performance which was just N10,086,000.

Wishing the bank more bountiful earnings.

Continental Unit Trust Scheme

It was all cheers and glee as Continental Merchant Bank Plc recently launched its new product: the Continental Unit Trust Scheme. The launch which took place amidst pomp and ceremony was held at its corporate headquarters on Kingsway Road, Ikoyi.

The launch which attracted the VIPs, had Sanni Bello (rtd Col) as chief launcher. Over one million naira was realised.

TSM wishes CMB hearty cheers on this unique creation.



Apostolic Faith Choir And Orchestra Stages Easter Concert In Lagos And Abuja

THE Choir and Orchestra of the Apostolic Faith, Africa's single largest Orchestra, will stage Easter classical music concerts at the

Africa headquarters of the church in Anthony Village, Lagos, on Sunday April 11, 1993 at 6 pm, and at the Banquet Hall of Abuja Sheraton Hotel and Towers on Saturday, 17, 1993 at 7 pm.

Top government functionaries including members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, the organised private sector and other eminent personalities in the society are expected at the Lagos and Abuja concerts.

Be there!

Malachy Weds Ndidi

"Be mine till death do us part", seems to be implied in this disarming smile from Malachy Eneyibiri Okamea, Managing Director of Ukah and Associates (Nigeria) Limited, when he took former Patience Ndidi Obasi to the altar on Saturday 27, March, 1993 at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Coker Village, Orlu-Igannu, Lagos.

Unik Batteries

FOR Bonimas Nigeria Limited Aba, the only distributor of Unik Batteries in Nigeria, it has been "a forward ever, backward never" phenomenon since its inception. It recently took delivery of the batteries. And here is Ralph Anyaeze, Sales Manager, left, and a colleague, taking delivery of the batteries.



The Nigerian Link Magazine is Born

THIS magazine is a monthly with Dotun Israel as the Publisher/Editor. As the name suggests, it is aimed at linking Nigerians living in Europe with Nigeria.

It was set up with the view of projecting a good image of Nigerians, and trying to counter the negative publicity. And moreover, it reflects on issues affecting Nigerians in the United Kingdom and at the same time provide news about Nigeria in the Home news section.

The Zesty family says keep it up!

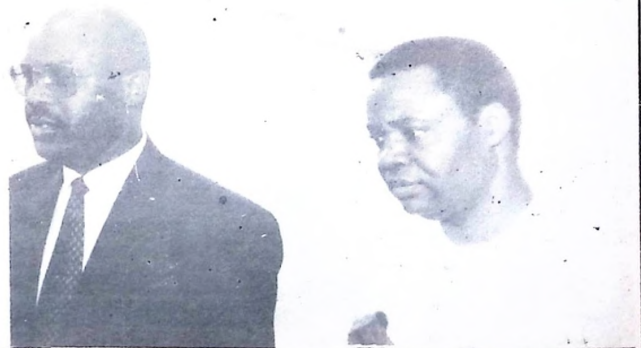


Nigeria To Host Global Youth Conference

REPRESENTATIVES of United Nations of Youth (UNOY), a global youth movement — an affiliate of the United Nations — recently paid a visit to TSM.

The purpose of their visit, said Maria Kooijam, the international coordinator of the body with its base in Netherlands is to acquaint — the house with preparations for forthcoming global conference of the organisation expected to hold in Nigeria in August. Kooijam said about 100 delegates from 60 countries will be attending the conference which has as its theme as "Our environment, our responsibility."

Kooijam — who was accompanied on the visit by Nigerian officials of the organisation is here exchanging views with Chris Anyanwu, TSM's Chief Executive on how youths can be more relevant to their environment.



Two Is Company

THE Crystal Bank recently held the formal opening of the Bank's new branch at Nnewi. Here's Zeb Abule (left) (Dr) with the Managing Director of Prima Garnet Advertising at the occasion.

Compiled by Grace Onyegbula

The story behind the story

The focus is on the story teller, that age old character who is as old as the universe itself and the significance of the story he tells.

it hit the stage of the University of Lagos Arts Theatre at 7:00 p.m.

Directed by John Martin, *Iyan Kabani* cannot be absolutely extricated from any of the plays in the absurdist tradition. The stage for the play was almost bare, save a number of musical equipment and artistic impressions on the stage wall forming the backdrop. This was also in conformity with the theatre of the absurd which does not concern itself with aesthetics and in which actors and actresses seem to have no business with costumes that appeal to the eyes. Infused with the philosophy of existentialism, there is thus the concern with the evolution of man and

the universe.

Without a profound *dramatis personae*, *Iyan Kabani* made an extensive use of traditional African and Asian aesthetics by employing folktales, riddles, dance, music and songs to make visual and intellectual appeals and also stimulate the audience's sensibility. The major characters could thus be described as consummate aesthetists and mythopoeist, given to the creation of extended effects and motifs. These performers "happily use a variety of techniques and skills, changes character with the turn of a body or hand and narrates the story neutrally between episodes."

Such stories as *A story of why there are stories*, *The Dancers*, *Story of creation*, *Stories to make you think*, *Why there is no rain*, *Mothers of*, are interspersed with such didactic qualities to really make a listener think. But why are there stories?

A story of stories and of tellers of stories answers the questions. Once upon a time, the story tellers were extricated from their pride of place. In a societal reordering of affairs and were eventually kicked out of the city since it was believed that they would no longer be needed in a new and modern dispensation of time. In the course of their new and civilized life styles, the people suddenly felt the pangs of discomfort in



By Emma Anyamele Jr.

In commemoration of its 50 years of association with Nigeria, the British Council, in collaboration with PAN PROJECT, decided to bring to the stage a play titled *Iyan Kabani* — *The Story of Stories* which traced the stage in such cities as Kano, Kaduna, Owerri and Port Harcourt, before coming to roost in Lagos. And on April 3, 1993,



Peter Bodejo and Mallika Sarabhai in action

the midst of comfort. Something was indeed missing, everyone concurred.

The missing item in the new agenda was discovered to be the story teller who with his bag of stories serves as a repository of history, religion, information and codes of behaviour. These roles were too important to be overlooked, so the story tellers were called

back again to continue doing what they knew how to do best. And now they're accorded the status of professionals.

But the main story tellers in the play, Peter Badejo and India's Malika Sarabhai warned that not every story teller tells the story the way it ought to be told.



Ortiz Wiliki and Majek Fashek... set for



the Badagry musical showdown

Check In And Have Fun

Are you a fun seeker? Then these might just be the places you will like to go to today and tomorrow.

In case you do not want to be caught indoors this Easter, then these places might just be the relaxation spots you are looking for. AIBTONIA is putting together a musical jam - tagged Badagry Blue Water musical concert featuring such artistes as Danny Wilson, Blakky, Majek Fashek, Evi Edna Ogholi, Shina Peters, Ras Kimono and many more. The show is scheduled for Easter Sunday and Monday from 10.00 a.m. until cockrow at the Badagry Beach.

The National Museum - comes alive in collaboration with Aaragon Gallery,

as it hosts a Special Easter Music and Dance Concert at the Museum Kitchen on Easter Sunday April 11 from 2.00 p.m. The show is expected to feature a live Afro Jazz music, cultural dances, acrobatic displays, informal symposia and Arts and Culture, chorale songs, food fair and mini art exhibition.

Courtesy of Coca-Cola, Sikululu the Warrior, a South African dance drama troupe of the Festac '77 fame, is set to hit the Nigerian cities of Lagos, Abuja, Port-Harcourt and Jos. But the Easter show which falls on April 8-14 is scheduled for Lagos at the National Theatre.

The NTA in conjunction with Leisureland Entertainment is also set to stage a musical carnival at the Lekki beach on April 15.

Eti-Osa Tourism Co. in association with S and J Service Ltd. is poised to make April 11-12, days to remember with an Easter musical jam billed for Mayeigun beach Lekki.

We wish you the best of the Easter holidays.

More and more...



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TSM

- the newsmagazine for the 1990s



STARDUST

The O.P.P. dancers

THEY walk in the shadows of *Naughty by Nature* a group noted for its award winning hit titled *OPP* and the group *Kris-kross* which is equally appreciated for its hit number titled *Jump*. The *OPP* dancers whose dance steps and body movements correspond with those of these groups are regulars at parties, concerts and shows of all shades to which they are often invited to add pep to these ceremonies especially at Apapa where they are based. Music used to be their first love and they wanted to concretise it by making an album, but the love of education has become too irresistible and so for now, it is education first.

The O.P.P. Dancers (from L-R) Jackson Fat Obi and Chikabala



Is Michael Jackson becoming loquacious?

UNCHARACTERISTICALLY Michael Jackson, the number one name in pop music and the world's number one entertainer, spoke at length at the last Grammy Awards where he won the Grammy legend award and the award of the best engineering for non-classical music album. He stated that if not for critics and detractors, he wouldn't have known how weird and bizarre he had become. But then he implored the audience to imagine what it is really like for somebody to grow up before a hundred million people since age 5. In essence therefore, what is being interpreted as weird on his part, might simply be something beyond the comprehension of the uninitiated. This came right in the heels of the interview he granted Oprah Winfrey which was the first in so many years. And like he stated in *Ebony* magazine in the aftermath of his visit to Africa: "I prefer my music to speak for me."



Bibiana's claim to beauty questioned

BIBIANA. I hope you're listening? If the polls taken so far are anything to go by, then you might go down in history as the ugliest Nigerian beauty queen. When the polling agents trailed you to the Gov'nor's carnival at Niteshift the verdict was still the same. Some people at Niteshift felt your arms are just too tiny, some felt you have a Chinese arse, some think you are just too tall while others thought you just don't have the face. Pray, what then are your assets? Well, they agreed unanimously that you speak very good English and many were also impressed by your style of dancing.

But if you ask me Bibiana, I think your predecessor in office set too high a standard, which you can't touch no matter how hard you try.

Now, Bibiana I never knew you are such a stylish smoker. Not too many people could take their eyes off you as you lit one cigarette after the other at the Gov'nor's carnival. Let us all therefore hail the smoking ex-beauty queen.

Okosuns confirms his romance with Olaudia Pepple

SONY Okosuns, a tried and tested philanderer confessed to the audience at Niteshift, as a sinner will confess to a priest, that he once had an affair with a one time female member of his band. He finally berated the audience for pokenosing and not minding is own business.

— Emma Anyamele Jnr.

MORTGAGE CONCEPTS:

Bank with the basics

If a graph were to be plotted now about the performance of Nigeria's banking sector, there will be a sharp, sad, sloppy curve. The honeymoon is over. A ragged, harsh time is here. But while a bunch of banks are belly-aching, a few others remain lush and robust. **Mortgage Concepts Sav.** and **Loans Limited** is one of the healthy ones.

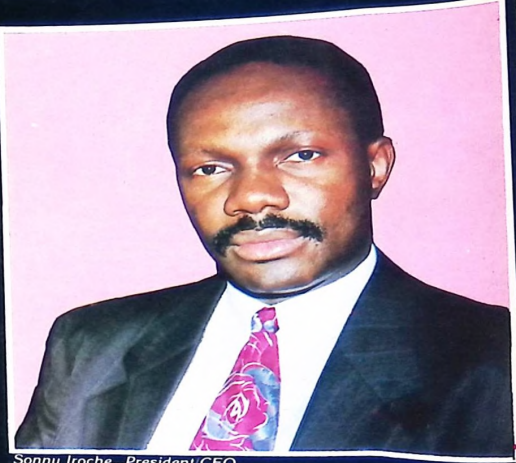
Bad still, managers of such ailing outfits are either engrossed with the riddle of bad loans or drowning in the sea of frauds and misdeeds.

The saddest thing is that failure of any bank has a ripple effect on individual and corporate depositors. The trend therefore calls for caution: know your banks, put your money where it is safest. This is one of the concepts in **Mortgage Concepts**.

The name sounds like a school. Perhaps that is what it is. Only it is much more. **Mortgage Concepts** is one of the few organisations that apply the basics in its operations.

While observing the decorum of a credible bank, the President and Chief Executive of the company, **Sonny Iroche**, and his team are equally tinkering on the intractable housing problem of Nigeria.

As man moves to the 21st century, housing has remained a throbbing headache. In Nigeria, radically varying birth rates and living standards have acted as "push" and "pull" factors



Sonny Iroche...President/CEO



Mr. Sonny Iroche...President/CEO Mortgage Concepts, Loans and Savings with Mr. John Johnson, President/CEO Johnson Publishing Inc. Publisher of **Ebony**.

putting excess pressure on housing. No one really knows offically how many Nigerians that are homeless. It is a problem the 1990s. And that very ubiquity makes homelessness the toughest crisis of this century. One of our national problems will be "housing for all by the year 2000." This is a major challenge.

With the high cost of homes, double digit inflation and

labour demands, owning a house in Nigeria appears only as a mere dream. But with the introduction of primary mortgage institutions, the dream is becoming a reality. Ever since, most major cities have witnessed rapid blossoming of mortgage institutions. Ironically such proliferation has created a crisis of quantity and quality. As a result, there are mortgage banks.

All mortgage houses are equal. But the truth is that some are more equal than others. Located in the vortex of Victoria Island business district, **Mortgage Concepts** combines all concepts of post-modern management. Chartered in August 1992, it has grown rapidly to symbolize the point of reference for mortgage institutions.

Just of late, some business gurus listed out criteria for modern business new thinking. The business gurus may have coined the terms but **Mortgage Concepts Savings and Loans** has fully implemented them. You hear of the learning organisation — a conceptual framework for the organisation of the future. This is the notion that learning is central to success as management needs to see the big picture to escape linear thinking and to understand subtle inter-relationships. When you come to **Mortgage Concepts Savings and Loans**, you hear of re-engineering — a term for a fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business system, organisational structures, and management systems where work is organised around outcome not task or function.

You may have heard of core competencies — the idea for organisations to identify and organize around what they do best. That corporate strategy should be based not only on products or markets, but on competencies that give a company access to several markets and yet difficult for competitors to imitate. If you have or, may be you've not, then come to **Mortgage Concepts Savings and Loans** where "customer care" revolution treats every customer like a King.

You hear of organisational architecture — a metaphor that forces managers to think more broadly about organisation in terms of how work, people, and formal and informal structures fit together leading to autonomous work teams and strategic alliances. The quality of management and staff of **Mortgage Concepts** has raised it a notch higher than others in the business. "The people are very important, staff have to be motivated. There is no point filling the place with computers if you don't have human beings to run the computer," the CEO, Mr. Sonny Iroche said.

As Nigeria moves steadily towards the 21st century, various professional cadres are emerging. We have at the apex, the military political class; the business-investment-banking cadre; the academic or intelligentsia; and lately, the religious groups. Each of this group is formidable. Very few people are remarkable members of any group. Only one percent of Nigerians could have careers that crisis-cross such a myriad spectrum. Sonny Iroche is one of them.

As a member of the first class, and as a seasoned banker from IMB, the Prudential in USA, Crown Merchant Bank, Century Merchant Bank and now **Mortgage Concepts'** CEO, Iroche is almost a banking octopus. He is equally at home in the academics. An alumnus of Government College Umuahia, University of Nigeria, and Roosevelt University, Chicago Illinois. His office is adorned with a pilgrimage certificate by the Mayor of Jerusalem and Martin Luther King whose pragmatic sense of vision and non violence he admires. Very few young Nigerians combine such inspirational and management

abilities.

Concepts also require visions, based on "strategic focus", in-depth knowledge and of expertise and experience in the financial market-place. Iroche combines flexibility, panache, and genius of post-modern management, making him another visionary dreamer like Martin Luther King.

In an interview that was educative as well as entertaining, Mr. Iroche bared his mind bluntly on the state of the nation's economy, on monetary and fiscal policies as they affect mortgage banks.

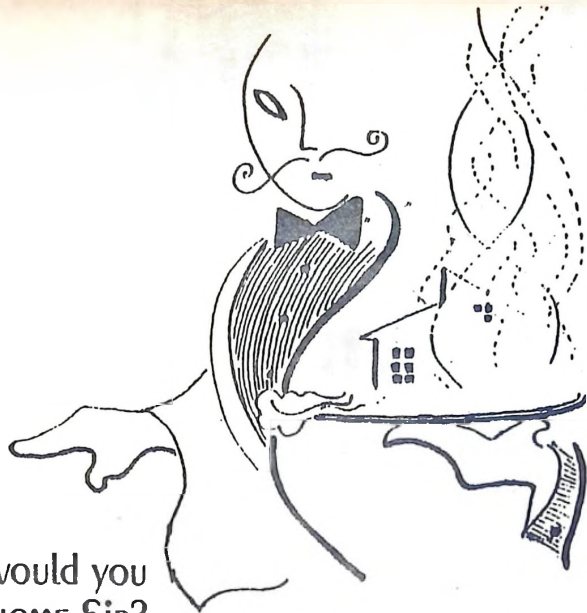
Contrary to widely held views, Nigeria does not rely any economic logic. The problem he said, "Is that we are either oblivious of demand, supply and pricing, and unperturbed by sound resources management. Our nation also places a high premium on mediocrity at the expense of meritocracy."

According to him, "a country that depends 90 percent on one source of revenue lacks vision. It's very myopic." To stimu-

To him, "Government should review the Land Use Act, and local government should be given the right to issue consent to mortgage." Similarly, to fully coordinate the activities of mortgage banks, "a new body staffed with trained personnel from the Central Bank and FMB should be created to monitor and supervise primary mortgage institutions. After all Nigeria is not a pioneer in mortgage finance," he argues.

late export, the creation of NEXIM Bank was formidable. Nevertheless, agriculture could play a prominent role if properly handled. "Farmers should improve on their products, a lot of research should be done on our crops to make sure they are the right quality for international markets," Iroche advised. He identified certain straitjackets on the whole mortgage banking system. To him, "government should review the Land Use Act, and local government should be given the right to issue consent to mortgage." Similarly, to fully coordinate the activities of mortgage banks, "a new body staffed with trained personnel from the Central Bank and FMB should be created to monitor and supervise primary mortgage institutions. After all Nigeria is not a pioneer in mortgage finance," he argues.

But back to the basics, **Mortgage Concepts** has a mission. And that is to restore hope, confidence, higher standards in the banking sector. To be relevant, others in the business should take the cue.



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Mixed fortunes for SMEs

Although financial assistance to small and medium scale industries records gradual improvement, facts on the ground do not show a bright future.

trialization, and by early 1970s, encouraged by large oil revenue, it included a strategy of public sector-led industrialization. But nothing concrete was achieved.

Of recent, however efforts have been made to uplift this vital sector as figures from the Central Bank indicate. According to the report, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) disbursed a total of \$39.364 million (984.1 billion) to the SMES through its 11 loan scheme

since its inception about four years ago. But this fell short of the estimated \$75.608 million (N1.890 billion) approved during the period. The low volume of disbursement was as a result of the former stringent measures of the bank whereby foreign companies were not allowed to benefit from the scheme.

Substantial part of the funds disbursed, the CBN explained, went to the manufacturing sector which at present has received a total of about \$22.813 million (N570.325 million) or 57.95 per cent. The agro-allied sector got \$3.858 million (96.45 million) representing 9.8 per cent. The agricultural sector received a total of \$1.79 million (44.75 million) while mining captured the next position with \$1.74 million (43.5 million) or 4.4 per cent. In addition, the printing sector got \$1.4 million (35 million) or 3.5 per cent while the quarrying sector is still awaiting its own allocation.

Economic analysts however, argue that the low amount so far disbursed to the agro-allied industrial sub-sector, shows the level of Nigeria's

Money



By Obinna Nwachukwu

TO a good number of Nigerians, the acronym SMES, which means Small and Medium Scale Enterprises is a strange word. And they may be right for it. Remove names of big industrial Conglomerates like UAC, UTC, PZ, Costain etc, which have become household sing-songs, many people hardly remember the existence of these enterprises. This is even more surprising when these things dot every nook and cranny of our country - at bus stops, higher institutions, in front of residential houses and even along major roads. You see young men and women of different ages and orientation either displaying or hawking their wares. Others flaunt it on your face, persuasively imploring you to patronize them.

Perhaps, one thing most of us do not seem to know is the importance of this sector to the development of our economy. And our ignorance in the past years to embrace the role small and medium-scale enterprises (SMES) play in alliance with other sectors of the economy such as oil and agriculture has made Nigeria to lose substantial resources. Although Nigeria adopted the five-year National Development Plan at independence with an industrial sector component, this plan failed to yield desired results. During the same period, Nigeria adopted an import substitution strategy of indus-



efforts to utilize most of the local farm produce for industrial manufacturers. And although the transport sector occupied third position on the list of beneficiaries, it is equally argued that it shows government's lukewarm attitude to solving problems of transportation which has often affected business activities. For the four years, the sector only received \$2 million (N50 million) which is about 5 per cent of the total sum disbursed.

It is, therefore, not surprising that despite federal government's assistance SMES are yet to be freed completely from numerous problems and constraints. At least Chris C. Nkwonta, managing director, Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB), Consultancy Limited, recognized this fact. He identified the causes of such constraints in the sector as lack of effective linkages and interdependence, which he said has contributed to high dependence on imported goods. The high technology inputs into some plants and process which are not domiciled in Nigeria is another factor which Nkwonta said, makes entry into these industries difficult for the private sector. Apart from these, the NIDB Consultancy boss, equally identified infrastructural deficiencies, rampant smuggling, distorted raw materials planning and working capital constraints as bedevilling our country's industrial development. Others are inadequate support services, and lack of diversification on manufacturing.

However, Timothy Olagunju, acting Director-General of Financial Institutions Training Centre, Yaba, Lagos blamed the poor state of SMES on the entrepreneurs. He said that although the federal government has been willing to help the SMES, the entrepreneurs themselves have not been cooperating.

According to him, the Federal Government in 1989 established the SMES loan scheme in the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) with a World Bank loan of \$145 million. The scheme, he explained was aimed at providing short, medium and long-term financing to viable SMES through participating commercials, merchant and development banks with the scheme having 138 projects spread over the then 21 states of the federation.

Olagunju further stated that it is the failure of target investors to meet the stipulated condition of financial institutions for allocation of funds that has delayed the disbursement of the recent 270 billion US dollar World Bank loan to Nigeria for on-lending to

SMES. The conditions which include the presentation of project proposals or feasibility reports to financial institutions, have hindered industries from utilizing the loans, which were targeted to make finance available to the productive sector of the economy and generate an indigeneous resource - supply and productive enterprises. "They also lack knowledge about appropriate source of plant and equipment, joint venture partners, competitive markets, financial plans and schedules, financial requirements of lending banks, and availability of technical assistance from external sources", he stressed.

The acting director general advised banks to provide free comprehensive advisory business services to customers in addition to their traditional functions of accepting deposits and providing loans as this will create awareness among customers and promote business ventures. Said he: "Researchers have identified inability of matching appropriately, business financial needs with their sources as the bane of the most bankrupt firms worldwide", adding that "the degree to which these problems plague institu-

tions depends very much on size, ownership structure and management", which he said the greatest culprits are the small and medium scale industries.

But whichever way it is looked at there seems to be an agreement between the Small and Medium Scale Entrepreneur and finance managers on the need to encourage this vital sector especially, the traditional technologists which abound everywhere in Nigeria. These include: blacksmiths, tinkers, welders, mechanics, spare parts dealers and their allies, road side sellers, and traders. They advocated a sub-regional and regional co-operation and integration to support SMES in the country should the government alone not be able to provide all the necessary impetus for industrial growth. And since a well propelled development of SMES will require an orderly flow of needed finances, it is therefore important that the relationship between SMES and the financial system be studied and streamlined if the hope of promoting the SMES as the foundation of Nigeria's industrialization is to be achieved.





Why I left Oil Producing Areas Commission

— Kokori

By Ademola Adedoyin

FRANK Ovie Kokori, 48, labour activist extra-ordinaire, politician and oil sector analysts did not find his appointment mid last year as the Administrative Secretary of the then newly established Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission strange. As an articulate and urbane unionist whose view is well respected among the rank and file of the nation's labour unions, the government had always had cause to call on him to do one thing or the

other. He was one of those appointed by the Babangida government to serve on the Constitution Review Committee 1987-1988, and was also nominated by the same government to serve as a member of the Constituent Assembly between 1988 and 1989.

A National Executive Council member of the Nigeria Labour Congress and the current Secretary General of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUTENG), his appointment to the powerful(?) post of administrative secretary of this potentially powerful commission, which according to the commission's decree, was of the rank of Director General in the public service was seen by oil industry watchers as a square peg in a square hole. It therefore came to many as a great shock when December last year barely five months after inauguration, Kokori suddenly resigned from the commission on "personal grounds."

Since that letter of resignation was

sent to Ibrahim Babangida, Army General and Nigeria's number one citizen on December 9th 1992, it had, up till now, been impossible to know the reason(s) why this unionist took that decision. Press enquiries had been met with brickwalls. And the man had avoided discussing his resignation from the commission with those whom he knew could leak it to the press. For this reason, oil industry watchers were left guessing on why the man from the heartland of Warri would have such golden opportunity to serve his people only to turn it down. If their guesses were wrong on most fronts definitely they were right on one thing; his resignation was a pointer to the fact that all was not well with the young commission.

But 'NV' was not satisfied with such generalisation. We resolved to find out the real problems with this commission from the man who should know. And after months of unrelenting work, our effort was rewarded: the man spoke.

Kokori, national financial secretary in the dissolved executive council of the Social Democratic Party and a Baba



Kokori...breaks silence on his dramatic exit

Gana Kingibe look-alike, shares many traits with the politician and ex-presidential aspirant of SDP: intelligence, sharpness, oratorical prowess and wit.

Kokori in this interview, for the first time revealed why he had to leave a commission he would have loved to serve so well.

Your resignation as the Administrative Secretary of the newly established oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission came to many people as a surprise. And your silence these past months has not really helped matters. Could you tell us the reason[s] for this unexpected decision.

Actually, my letter of resignation says it all. (Brought out a copy). The decision, according to the letter to the president, "is based purely on personal grounds. (Cut in while the reporter reads through) I've decided to leave it at that since then because there was really no need to start talking about issues that may evoke avoidable controversies. All your colleagues that came got nothing from me.

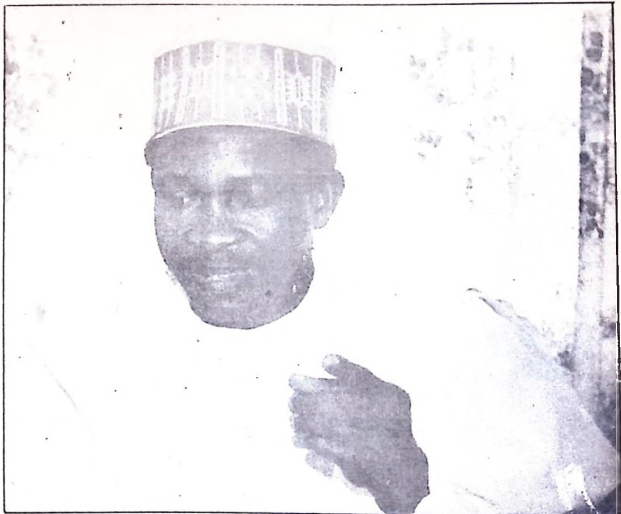
It's alright sir, except that we felt that as a young commission with a lot of potentials you'll be doing the public a great deal of good if they could know why you left which in essence may turn out to be one of the problems of the commission.

Well, the long and short of it all is that Decree 23 virtually reduced the position of Administrative Secretary to that of Administrative Clerk. And with a strong character like me, there was bound to be conflicts between myself who never had civil service orientation, as members there claimed, and very strong full time chief executive.

(Although Section 5(1) (a) and (b) of the Decree states that the Administrative Secretary shall "be of the rank of a Director General in the public service of the Federation," and "a full time officer," Section 5(2) which states that "the Administrative Secretary shall assist the chairman in carrying out the day-to-day activities of the commission and shall carry out such other duties as may be directed from time to time, by the chairman," really evokes into question whether the administrative secretary or the commission can even function like a Director-General.

To complicate matters, there were 10 full members who now assumed the role of commissioners and who by the interpretation of the same Decree are senior to my position. To compound matters, I was made a staff of the commission, in other words, a civil servant.

Actually my going to that place was a sacrifice, to help the oil communities, because when the job was given to me, I was the Secretary-General of NUPENNG, the national finan-



Kokori:...we deserve a better deal

cial secretary of the SDP. In NUPENG, I was already a chief executive of the powerful oil union. So I wasn't an applicant. To forgo all that and become a glorified administrative clerk was unacceptable.

I had to consult with my people at the highest level of government in Delta State, the Labour Union and the presidency through the NLC president of my intention to quit. And that was what I did.

I thought you saw the Decree before accepting the offer?

When you say Director-General, it was supposed to be number 1 or 2. But I was number 12. It was not specified in the Decree that the administrative secretary was below the commissioners. The chairman interpreted it so and I think he was right.

And I felt too that Delta State was given a raw deal and my people feel the same way. That if we cannot get the chairmanship, the headquarters should be sited in Delta. But Rivers has both. The two states are the highest producers of hydrocarbon-Rivers 52, Delta 38.

How far do you think this commission can go in solving the problems of the people of oil producing areas?

As a labour man, I thought I was going to run a secretariat that will, in collaboration with state offices of the commission, implement the objectives

and goals of the commission but as it is, bureaucracy becomes too large. I call it a bleated bureaucracy and that will take almost one quarter of the funds of the commission to run that place.

I think that was not the intension of those who agitated for the commission. The whole thing is well-intentioned but I think it will go back to where we came from, that is decentralising the commission. There is over-centralisation for now. And there is bound to be agitations by the various communities, which have started, of course.

Some people have suggested that those on whose land minerals are found should be the real owners paying taxes to the federal purse as it is done in some countries. Others are saying that the 3 percent allocation from the federation account to the oil producing areas is grossly inadequate. What is your own assessment of the Nigerian situation regarding the plight of the oil producing communities?

I feel that at this stage of our development, to give the entire control of the oil wealth to the community where it is produced will not be feasible for now.

But we believe that more could be done to the local government agencies of the oil producing communities. Ideally for now, 5 percent of the Federation Accounts will be okay but such

oney should be properly husbanded r the real benefits of the communities that suffer from this hydrocarbon exploration, not the middle ten.

Was the commission really set to work before you left?

Actually, most of the times, I used my resources for lodging. In fact there was no account purse before I left. And by the time the account was to be opened I was not to be a signatory. And in most commissions a real secretary and chairman are normally signatories to the account.

So you found functioning as administrative secretary almost impossible at the commission?

So much power is concentrated in the hands of the chairman. He is the alpha and omega of the place. But the decree gives him that power. The decree reduced the position of administrative secretary to that of a mere secretary. I will fail my constituency if I continued to work under that environment. And with my background I can never turn around overnight to be a bootlicker.

From the date the decree came out, they started seeing me as an administrative secretary that is too big for the commission.

But one would have expected that some

job specifications would have been put in place for the commission by the government.

The government did not prepare any job functions for anybody, so the chairman had all the power to create job functions for people and that was what he did.

Agitations for a better deal by oil producing communities is now becoming more rampant and, in fact, getting more disturbing by the day. How would you have gone about solving this problem if the commission had worked out the way you thought?

Actually the commission was set up to look into such problems but how far they will succeed I don't know since I am no more there with my labour background, my own strategy would have been people oriented, direct and immediate. But now that I am out, it's going to be bureaucracy all the way.

How would you describe the activities of oil producing companies in their areas of operation. You may want to take specific cases.

The oil producing companies when you meet them, they tell you they pay their dues to the government and anything they do is just on humanitarian ground.

But is that how it should be?

Under the laws in which they are operating yes. They will tell you it is the duties of the government to provide these amenities.

We agree that a law, even a bad one is a law. But the point is people have been clamouring for a review of the law, people have said that apart from the tax, a percentage of oil companies profit should be earmarked for the development of their areas of operation?

Normally every patriotic Nigerian say the oil companies should do more but it's unfortunate you can't cow them.

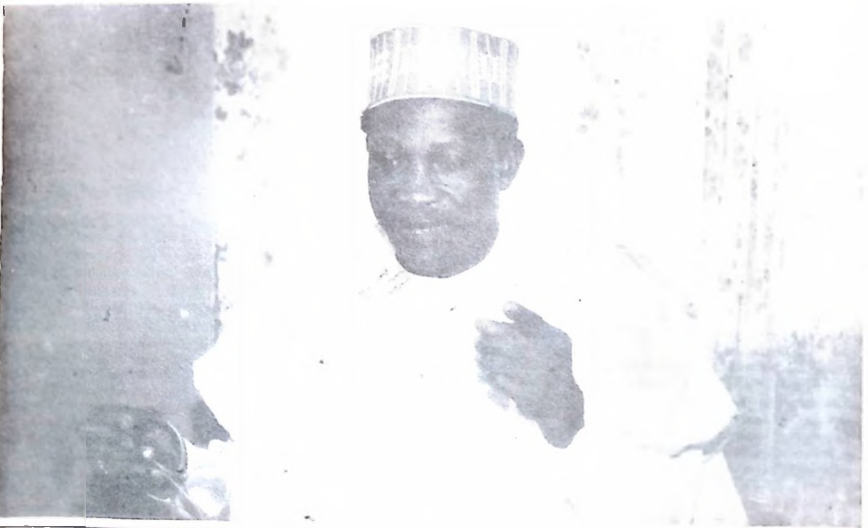
In fact those of us from oil producing areas will like to live like people in Kuwait because we are lucky to have oil, unfortunately things have not worked out that way. So obviously the struggle will continue for a long time to come.

At this stage we could only appeal to the government and oil producing companies to do more to these communities. If people are pushed to the wall they could do anything. Life means nothing to a man who has been brutalised and exploited.

Lastly, how would you describe the attitude of the people in the oil producing communities to the commission?

I won't comment on that. Passing a comment may mean that I am disgruntled and I am not because I have a more rewarding job which I now do.

Kokori...



AFRICAN INTER-CLUB VOLLEYBALL TOURNEY:




Tony...Uphill task

... two Nigerian clubsides, Delta force and Benue Queens prepare to do the impossible at the continental championship.

Tony Must Climb This Mountain!

By Isodi Dike

 Coach Tony Oghuma directed affairs amongst his girls, it became difficult to ignore him. Clad in white vest upon a knee-length short, he was finding it equally difficult to concentrate. No thanks, to the stadium 'Area boys' led by their 'chairman,' Obodo. For obvious reasons, they were shouting and generally kicking up a rowdy party. They had not been 'settled'.

But Tony had an uphill task to accomplish. One bigger than Obodo and his boys. He was preparing for the African Inter-Club Volleyball championship billed to start on April 12th, 1993 in Cairo Egypt. What with the curious mix of players that must be blended together for maximum impact. There was Lola Aina (just back from a pro stint in Cote d'Ivoire), who always wears lenses during competitions

proper but prefers to train without them; the fragile looking but efficient sisters, Shakirat and Taibat - Afolabi; Elizabeth Essel, the Ghanaian import who within a month has started for two clubsides, BCCL Crackers of Lagos and the present club; Bunmi Fawibe. (several times skipper) who until the game starts will always make you to wonder what business she has being there at all.

Or you want to consider petit Rikija Zakara who will insist on eating biscuits, meat, soft drinks to a solid meal of rice or Eba; Chizo Chimezie the deceptive looking Imo lady, who has always been there and the fair complexioned Rosemary, always aggressive and motivating during training but nevertheless manages to leave you wondering, just a little during matches and others.

All of them whatever their preferences have one thing in common. They are all members of the Delta Force Female Volleyball Club of Asaba. They

have worked hard to qualify for this championship, yet one cannot overlook the opposition.

Since the inception of the competition, Nigerian female clubs have not gone beyond the fourth position. That feat, if you will call it a feat, only happened last year in Kenya, courtesy of Benue Queens. This year, the Queens will lead the Nigerian assault, which was what Tony was all about that Tuesday April 6th at the Indoor Sportshall of the National Stadium, Lagos.

If Tony wins the African tourney, he will be in for the world series. Then he is sure to benefit something for at least participating but if, just if, he wins it he will come home amongst other things with three million dollars. The "ifs" continue. If Delta Force comes within the first three in Africa, Tony's consolation will be a ticket for next year's edition.

TSM Sporting just wondered aloud how both coaches intend to actualise the numerous "ifs". Benue Queens.

trained just before the Delta babes. They exuded a lot of confidence. It is not impossible. We have X-rayed our faults. Even though we came fourth last year, we lost five points from a walkover" says Natsyn T. Haaka, one of the coaches. "Our chances are very bright especially as our training is very agreeable with the players."

Eddie Adenirokun, the Volleyball Association boss agreed with him. "Both than before" he said. Despite this, the Queens were alleged to have refused a practice match slated for both clubs preferring not to mess around with any interference. "Much as we wish ourselves goodluck, since we are both going for the same competition on technical grounds, it is not right", noted Natsyn. "We are not even supposed to practice in the same area. It is better if both something might crop up during the practice match, and it might create problems."

Tony told *ISM Sporting* that his chances are as bright as anybody's own. "Most unfortunate thing however is preparing without relevant information. We have not seen the teams we are likely to meet in action either by films or reports", he said. "That would have enabled one to study weaknesses and plan strategies."

No matter, Tony intends to counter this defect by relying on, on-the-spot assessment of the other teams. "It's going to be a no-resting period for me"



Natsyn...It is not impossible

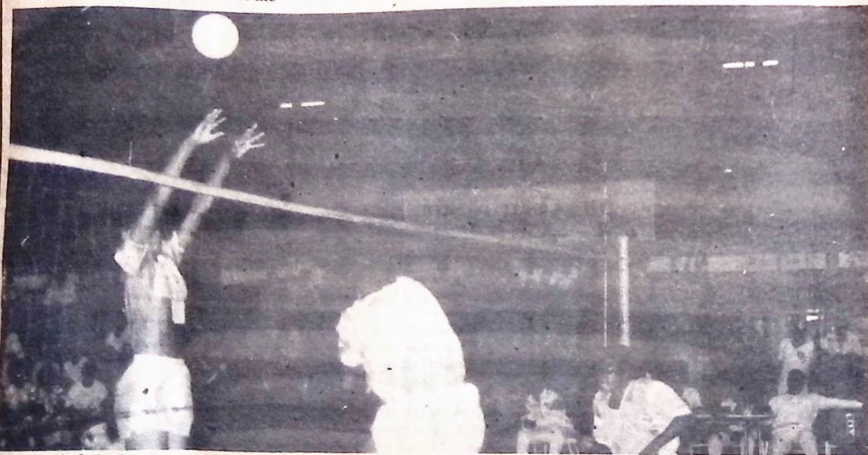
he noted. "I must stay awake and watch opponent's matches."

That too is Adenirokun's plan. To stand on his toes until Nigeria and African Volleyball begins to make the required impact, which is why the Inter-Club Championship this year means so much to Nigeria.

Tony Oghuma who played volleyball for Nigeria for 13 years (1971 - 1984) ten out of which he was the captain plans to encourage Adenirokun's efforts by winning the championship but he will have to contend with selecting the right players from his star-studded, curious mix of players.

The 1975 graduate from Bulgarian University of Physical Education Budapest says that will not be a problem with him. "As a man of God, I have been praying that there should be no earthly interference because being a star means so many things. Players could be stars on the field of play but may not be outside it. There are camp rules, discipline, ability to forego certain things during training etc" said the Etsako-born coach from Fuga in Edo State. "As a coach, the work goes beyond development of a good player. It also entails the creation of a good personality."

As the championship rolls off tomorrow, in far away Cairo, Nigerians expect Tony and his girls to break the strangle hold of African female volleyball power from the clutches of the Kenyan and Egyptian club sides. That as he well knows is a mountainous effort that must be tackled at the competition.



Take that!...Delta force player spikes at the BCCL classic



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