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ONCE again, there will be ceremonials: a march-past, release of pigeons, a large-hearted speech from the 'throne' and perhaps a show of prerogative of mercy. But there will be hardly much to celebrate. In 28 years, Nigeria has proceeded only a little further than flag independence. There is yet to be a psychologically integrated unit of accession as a acutely primordial fratricide, even after a 30-month civil war that was an essential assault on the First Republic.

In effect, even the political kingdom that the legendary Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana recommended to his African brethren as a necessary precursor to everything else, has only partially been achieved, and at that, on precarious terms where neocolonialism threatens the very foundations of visual freedom. Economic respectability is thus still very much a mirage, or at best a subject of a truncated thought-process and confused missionarising.

In all those years, there have been only two brief experiments, 10 years together, of constitutional management. The rest have been lost to partly the indiscretion of elected leaders and partly the greed and gratuitous messianism of ambitious soldiers.

The fabrics of social engineering are in disarray. There is great groping, throwing up charlatans and opportunists direly unequipped to help chart any way forward. The economy is in a shambles, underlined as it has always been, by a plethora of self-serving designs and programmes bereft of an identifiable ideological focus.

So we are 28, and it's hurray! In this Cover Choice, we look at several departments of endeavour and provide you reason to smile or mock.



Andy Akporugo
Editor-in-Chief

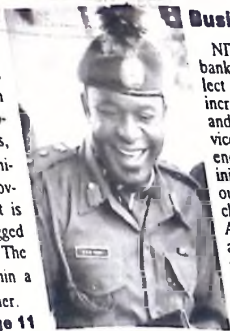


International

Burma and Haiti belong to different continents and far flung. But, other than sharing the status of so-called Third World nations, they have the striking similarity of toppling their governments through what is now commonly tagged "people's power." The coups also came within a few hours of each other.

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Business



NITEL, has paid banks the mandate to collect its debts. To increase the size and enhance coverage. But there are ends in David's initiative. Man out what in choice of the And some of agree with the procedure function, less the take-off.

DEPARTMENTS
Letters
On Record
Andy Akporugo
International

THE AFRICAN GUARDIAN

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Cover design: Tomi Mayowa
Cover photo: Kola Ade-Ode

dogmatism and fanaticism.

Rev. Fr. Uba John Ofei
Ivua, Bendel State

Keeping vigil

Vigilante was produced at a cost of N700,000 — local and off-shore financing — not on a "misericord budget of N10,000", as you erroneously stated (September 5).

At no time did the film director, Adedeji Adesanya, or myself, the producer, ever confide in your reporter, any information about the censorship of *Vigilante*. Your reporter, in fact, did not interview either of us before going to press. On two different occasions, his requests to interview us were granted but he never kept either of the appointments.

Alotabi Adesanya
Ajaja, Lagos.

Malabo malaise

I refer to your write-up titled Malabo Malaise (August 29) which contained an important error. It was written inter alia: "Moreover, the regime with little regard for the Geneva Convention which protects the sanctity of diplomatic facilities and personnel, has unleashed terror on Nigerian Chancery in the Island of Bioko and the Embassy in Malabo."

The name of the city appended to the same Convention as is customary in international arrangements, is not jurisdictionally correct. It should read: "Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations..." The same Convention was adopted in 1961 and it entered into force on April 24, 1964.

Anyakwo S. Nsimovwo
Apapa, Lagos.

What soured the human rights fruits?

In your story, "what soured the human rights fruit" (August, 29) in which you made reference to me, I wish to state that I never used the words in quote "the conspiratorial silence" of The Hon. Attorney-General Minister of Justice, Prince Bola Afolabi.

Hudru A. Balogun,
Lagos.

Address Letters to the Editor, typewritten double space, with writer's name, address and, if available telephone number, to: The African Guardian, Rutam House, P.M.B. 1217, Oshodi, Lagos Nigeria. Letters subject to editing.



Better life for convicts

THE wheels of administration in Nigeria grind slowly, no doubt. But whether, in the final analysis, they will grind exceedingly well is what the numerous convicts, overflowing Nigeria's few prisons, will have to await as the Federal Government attempts to reform the penal system. The *African Guardian* has learnt that the Ministry of Internal Affairs, worried by the increasing national focus on the deteriorating conditions of the country's prisons, has commissioned a consultancy firm of experts, the African Health Consultancy Services (AHCS), to prepare a study on the living conditions of convicts and the welfare of prison staff.

The consultants will, among other things, study the disease patterns of inmates, the prevalent illnesses, their duration, and the facilities available for treating these ailments. The firm which has three months to complete the assignment started work on August 25, and has visited several prisons: the medium and the maximum security prisons, Kirikiri, Lagos; and the prisons in Maiduguri, Abuja and Kano.

In trying to gather information, the AHCS, it is understood, has apparently come against a brick wall: bureaucratic hold-ups and communication hitches between the ministry and the prison officials. Consequently, the firm, according to sources, has to request for an extension of time.

But while the wheels of prison reforms are moving slowly, the estimated 53,000 convicts in Nigeria are wallowing in congested cells. The Kirikiri Maximum Security Prison built to accommodate 956 persons, for example, is currently housing 1,565 convicts while the Kano Central Prison has 1,570 inmates approved to the 690 persons it was meant to cater for.

Another look for police

THE image of the Nigerian policeman has undergone quite drastic changes in recent times. Only last April, the police force changed its uniform to a present fast fading sky-blue one. That made the glamour of the uniform to a very one wash and one wear. It was said that the uniforms were literally "washed out". Again the police is changing uniforms to a dark ash attire why a "washed out" source believe will do a better job of improving the image of the police force.

But this is not the only area the changes in the image of the police force noticed. It is now on record that the force has started a gradual replacement of the cumbersome Mark IV rifles for more modern arms. Last week the relations officer at the force headquarters, Assistant Commissioner, confirmed the planned change of arms. But come to think of it, the image of the Nigerian policeman without his abiding Mark IV? What?

Tourism board Bauchi bounded

IT now seems the movement of federal ministries and parastatals out of an unexpected decision, the federal government last week ordered the relocation of the headquarters of the Nigerian Tourism Board from Lagos to Bauchi state capital. The supervising ministry of the board, the Ministry of Tourism, is now in Abuja. The posting, which is to be with immediate effect, is effected without the inconvenience allowance of N10,000 for each member of the board, a privilege enjoyed by officers of other ministries and parastatals being moved from Lagos to Abuja. The Board will not be allowed to have a liaison office in Lagos.

Already, senior government officials are wondering what information the Bauchi has no airport, has only two five-star hotels and is hardly serviced by travel agencies and banks, all of which are necessary for a tourism function properly. It was learnt, however, that government officials' resignation, apparently yielded to the increasing pressures of the tourism industry to have the Tourism Board in their state capital.

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Andy Akporogo

Beating about the bush

■ sympathise greatly with the analyst. He takes a veritably casual, even innocuous statement and vests it with a significance that is often grafted from the official standing and not necessarily the wisdom of its author. Then he subjects the otherwise contemptible assertion to the length and breadth of his profound learning, in an effort to convert what should be a feeling of pity into needless exercise in erudite hair-splitting.

In the end, the official receives more than he deserves: an undemolished of the tongue is thus elevated to an item of venous controversy. Yet, to ignore such statements may also inadvertently confer an exaggerated impact on them. It seems then that making sense out of the mistake or nonsense of rulers is an inevitable privilege they enjoy, no less than it is a sentence which the commentator must serve by his own volition.

On the question of the ban on old politicians, for example, it's been a hell of a diatribe, and some of the most ridiculous trifles in official pontification. The entire scheme is actually based on the erroneous conception that a machinistic exclusion of some persons, however branded, is by itself a salutary invention, on the altar of which all our headaches for the future vanish.

No attempt is made, as a matter of intimate philosophical concern, to install a compulsive essence to propel the whole of the population forward. Rather, there is the lazy proposition that reversing the political process for the so-called new breed, *per se*, has a magical tonic, and ought to inspire totally new visions of a humane and just polity.

To compound the problem, government's definition of the new breed is somewhat nebulous. It would appear that what qualifies many for the categorisation is not age or impetuosity, but a string of past political failures: not proven integrity or probity, but a lack of opportunity to have been tainted or vilified. For instance, a man who was successful enough to get elected into the Senate for the first time in 1983, and happened, as part of his winning streak, to be committee chairman, is, by the warped logic, banned for being so lucky.

On the other hand, a thug from the First Republic, soiled in the murky wa-

ters of intemperance and a 'kill and divide' culture, but was never so well placed to get his party's nomination for an elective office, or was such an ass, anyway, he couldn't get elected, is now a 'new breed'.

In another situation, he could have been a financier and one of the great pillars of the now discredited parties, only that he was overly discreet about it and barely escaped being loudly associated with his wards.

So there is a way in which it may be said that the surrogates having been banned, it's time to contend with the real hands. However, we make a fundamental error in even attempting the differentiation. The politician is after all anybody actively, not always visibly, involved or associated with group struggle for power. The instructive word is

"There is yet no law, Decree 19 or whatever, barring even indicted past office holders from belonging to political associations or parties. They may not hold formal offices but nothing says they may not make available such bland patronages that are capable of influencing the political fortunes of their friends"

"actively" and that includes the most clandestine of forms on which invariably are founded the real structures of the soap-box show by only a few populansers. You see, we are talking of a massive human activity. Efforts to delineate precise lines of individual responsibility in this patiently voluntary enterprise, belong really to the realm of naive prefecture and self delusion.

If we make the universe narrower and speak specifically of old public office holders as opposed to old politicians *vis-a-vis* the new breed or aspiring office holders, the case for isolation would still be unfeasible even if it was justifiable. Drawing a most inappropriate analogy recently, the Chief of General Staff said that because "new breed" military rulers have not had to depend on retired officers, their aspirant civilian counterparts should similarly be able to stand on their own steam.

If Vice-Admiral Aikhomu was talking about responsibility for the coup that

brought this group to power, we certainly cannot argue with him. But we can imagine that because it had been necessary in the past for a new military leader to see his outfit as a continuation of a previous one, it was not altogether impossible to presume on the support of some retired officers in some cases. Because a coup is generally an illegal act, its methods are shrouded in utmost secrecy and in any case, a moral evaluation of them is a roundly idle exercise.

Incidentally, an abrogation of the civilian process, which a coup represents, shares a certain Machiavellian streak with that process itself. The end ever so often seems to justify the means. And the politician suffering none of the special inhibitions of the coup plotter feels entitled to seek the widest possible leverage. After all, the Nigerian voter, still very illiterate, rural and poor, is hard to get on the strength of virtuous proclamations and grand manifestos alone. He is accustomed to 'materialising' his support in very practical ways, and is usually more willing to deal with the 'devil' he knows. In a damning way, he stands quite far off from the uninitiated new-come who should need an old 'bridge' of association

By the way, freedom of association continues to be a cherished heritage. There is yet no law, Decree 19 or whatever, barring even indicted past office holders from belonging to political associations or parties. They may not hold formal offices but nothing says they may make available such bland patronages that are capable of influencing the political fortunes of their friends. I think there has been a great deal of beating around the bush by all manner of government spokesmen quite so simply obsessed with a phobia for 'old' politicians that they may have unwittingly unleashed an unfair amount of intimidation into the system.

I submit that our greater concern ought to be that nothing distracts us from the transition programme. Where there is proof that a 'disused' politician is involved in disruptive activities, there should be enough courage to single him out for sanction, in the same manner that any other person without a 'tag' would be punished under the relevant decree.

UNITED STATES

Race in sleepland

Campaigns of US presidential candidates fail to excite voters

SURPRISINGLY, the Democrats do not appear quite eager to capitalise on the heaps of damaging information about the Republican ticket being dug up by the press. In fact, between Michael Dukakis, the Democratic flag-bearer and his running-mate Senator Lloyd Bentsen, there seem to be a somewhat tacit agreement to steer clear of new controversies raging over the Republican candidate, George Bush and his running mate, Dan Quayle.

It was reported last week that the Vice-President and his business associates at the Houston, Texas-based Zapata oil company, duped the Mexican government in 1960, using local frontmen. According to reports published in *Barons*, a financial newspaper, they had teamed up with prominent Mexicans to hide from the Mexican authorities the five per cent American involvement in the firm they set up in Mexico. The idea of using Mexican frontmen was apparently to make the authorities believe that the firm was 100 per cent Mexican-owned.

Barons further claims that some documents relating to the shady deal, kept by the US Securities and Exchange (SEC), were destroyed a few months after Bush became Vice-President in 1981. In other words, it suggests that in an attempt to cover up their tracks, Bush and his business friends committed yet another crime — abetting the destruction of government's vital trade documents.

Serious allegations; indeed particularly, given the stature of the principal suspect — US Vice-President for eight years, now a possible president. Expectations, therefore, were that the Democrats would try to drum innuendoes, misgivings and the generally bad publicity arising from the accusations, in the bid to score some campaign points. So far, this has hardly been the case. This also largely explains the general attitude of Democrats towards the controversy-prone Republican Vice-Presidential candidate, Dan Quayle. The 41-year-old Indiana Senator has been in and out of no fewer than three scandals since he was surprisingly picked as running-mate by Bush early last month. The latest was the allegation

that Quayle, born into upper-class privileges, fraudulently got into the law school of the Indiana University in 1970 through a special programme designed for people with low marks.

A fortnight ago, therefore, despite



• Dukakis Shying away from controversies



• Bush: Clouded by stinking scandals

Quayle's claim that he "got into law school fair and square," there was widespread clamour that he publish his high school and college records. He has not done that. And fortunately enough, the

current allegations that his family pulled strings to secure a place for him in the Indiana National Guard to take him away from combat duties in Vietnam, also seem to have fizzled out. Previously, reports were also that Quayle had "doctored" his curriculum vitae to show that he had spent two years, between 1970 and 1971 as "chief investigator" in the Indiana State Attorney-General's office. He later admitted that he actually spent just two months at the post as temporary staffer, blaming the mix-up on his personal staff. But, he stiffly denied other reports had it that he was involved in a sex escapade with a common prostitute.

Dukakis and his running-mate, Bentsen, have been luckier. There were past unsubstantiated allegations of emotional instability on the part of Dukakis (he was said to have gone for psychiatric treatment after the death of his elder brother). And more recently, reports that he was not getting along with his much older running-mate. But these, on the face of it, are quite insignificant, compared with the thick cloud of controversy that has continued to trail the Bush-Quayle ticket.

Latest poll results in five key states — California, Texas, Ohio, Missouri and New Jersey — show that most American voters still have trouble deciding who to support throw their weight behind — Bush or Dukakis — come November. Most voters also showed very shallow attachment to either candidate who, they insist, have more similarities than differences, and do not, as such, present themselves as clear alternatives. "They're both wimpy, and it's a shame," complained one of the interviewed voters who claimed that "neither of them looks a national leader."

The survey further revealed that in November, most voters would go to the polls to vent their dislikes rather than their likes. They are confused by the fact that neither Bush, nor Dukakis is making firm promises to reduce the federal deficit, which many see as the most critical problem facing the next President. The voters even disbelieve Bush's firm promise and Dukakis' stated intentions not to raise taxes. And neither of the candidates, they say, has been able to convey the "sense of strength" that can reassure voters. Sure enough, while Dukakis' image, to the electorate, remains somewhat fuzzy, Bush's still strikes them as that of "a good follower" not a national leader.

By Emanika Okoro

LATIN AMERICA: THE CARIBBEAN Gale of agony

Hurricane Gilbert takes high toll

AFTER the powerful winds, came the agony. Mexicans were having to dig through heaps of rubble just to count the dead. Thousands of natives of the Caribbean were left homeless. By week end, the degree of havoc wreaked by Western hemisphere's worst hurricane — *Gilbert*, in nearly two weeks of furious pummeling of towns and villages in Latin America and many Caribbean Islands, was still difficult to estimate.

Survivors in Monterrey, a northern Mexican city waded by the gale, were still looking for some 200 neighbours buried among sprawling debris. One hundred and twenty lost their lives in the country's Caribbean islands. On the Yucatan Peninsula, 950 kilometres (590 miles) east of Mexico City (capital city), some 1,000 people were officially estimated to be homeless. Twenty thousand of Monterrey city's 2.5 million residents also lost their homes.

The eye of the storm caught the city as hundreds of lowland dwellers in surrounding areas — counting on its (the city's) high elevation to serve as wind-breaker — converged there to seek refuge. With torrential rains following the 280 kilometres (175 miles) to 320 kilometre (200 miles) per hour winds, the Santa Catarina River, (in the busi-



ness district), burst its banks and swept away four buses carrying 160 passengers. Only eight were rescued. The hurricane also touched off a short-lived tornado in neighbouring Texas (United States), killing two. Ninety-eight people died in Cayman Islands, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

Material damage was far more extensive. Although buildings destroyed in Monterrey were few, the impact of the hurricane on the Yucatan's tourist oriented economy was devastating. Islands there, had no drinking water, food, medicines and electricity for a week.

Jorge Martin Angulo mayor of Cozumel (one of the islands), said it would not be until December before the situation is rectified. Cozumel has 10 five-star hotels with a total of 2,600 rooms. Closure of business is definitely going to mean millions of dollars in lost earnings.

Operators are, in fact, afraid that a

good deal of the loss cannot be recovered. "It will be difficult because insurance companies will find 'butts', so they won't have to pay for damages", said one Cozumel owner. In Cancun another tourist resort 80 kilometres (50 miles) north of Cozumel, what was left was a ghost town where there had been a bustling fun retreat, normally hosting 10,000 tourists. Overall, some 12,000 of the islands' workers including hundreds of waiters, bell boys, cooks, dish washers, cleaners, janitors and cashiers are jobless. Long-term impact on the economy is also expected. Tourism is Mexico's third most important source of foreign exchange, following oil and manufacturing concerns around the border with the US.

Gilbert is the second natural disaster to hit the country in three years. In 1985, an earthquake tore through Mexico City, killing 35,000 people. Fifty thousands were injured. Twenty-eight thousands persons were missing.

By Chukwumeka Gahle

NIGER

Kids in brothels

Teenagers take to prostitution

AMONG problems causing sleepless nights in Niamey these days is the increasing wayward life style of the country's teenage girls. Prostitution is way up among the girls, the long tradition of Islamic moral rectitude, notwithstanding. Reasons given by some of them (who are as young as 14) for turning to the swinging fad, include desire for financial "independence," unconditional freedom, and needs to escape a "hopeless" future.

There are dozens of these girls each night prowling the streets for clients in bars and night clubs. The going rate in Niamey, sources disclose, is 3,000 francs (10 dollars) to 10,000 francs (33

dollars) a night. Reports say the situation has defied measures from the authorities and attempts by parents aimed at bringing it under control.

Recent operations by the Niamey vice squad however resulted in the arrest of 60 women, who were later released and sent back to parents by officials. Police crack downs on the practitioners of the infamous trade, sources add, are otherwise yielding little results as apprehended girls unwillingly go back to the streets once released.

Observers believe that the persistent natural haves in Niger Republic are mainly accountable for the whorish fad among the girls. On account of growing economic crises, the latest overriding philosophy of many Nigeniennes is gradually becoming that of survival by whatever means. Against the background of severe deprivations brought on by natural woes like drought, desert encroachment, locust invasion, and

subsequent shortage of food prevalent in the Sahel for sometime now, otherwise strict mores morals have not been able to deter desperate attempts by the people to survive. The government is in fact, still helpless in the face of the growing problems that continue to tax its resources.

At a time, government (for reason of being unable to come up with a meaningful solution to the various problems) all but openly encouraged its drought-stricken citizens to migrate to nearby countries. Thousands of Nigeniennes have since found their way into neighbouring countries. Nigeria accommodates quite a sizeable number. That is to say that teenage prostitutes now flooding bars and night clubs in Lagos and other towns are likely to include daughters of Nigeniennes that crossed over to Nigeria to escape harsh conditions at home.

By Abraham Ogbode

Gun verdict

Soldiers oust Haitian, Burmese regimes

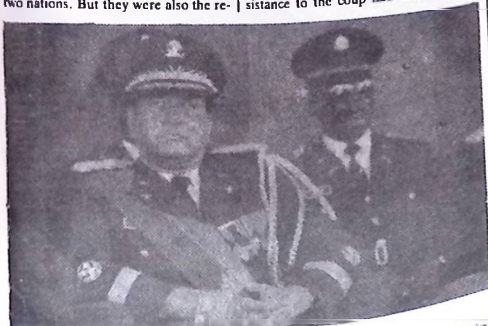
ACROSS two continents, in two troubled nations, plotters ran into luck again. They rolled out their tanks in Haiti and toppled the three-month old government of General Henri Namphy. Then, they stormed out of their barracks in Rangoon and dismissed Burma's socialist government.

The two coups d'état, coming hours within each other, just as the week was about to begin (Sunday September 18), clearly marked the triumph of the only type of "voting" known to work in the two nations. But they were also the re-

sult of the organised efforts of ordinary people. The intervention in Burma followed months of students' and workers' inspired popular uprising against socialist rule; while the takeover in Haiti was masterminded by sergeants and other footmen, angered by the corrupt life-style of the top brass of the army.

Open rebellion against commanders continued in Port du Spain, Haiti's capital city, days after the coup. Sensing danger, new leader Lt. Gen. Prosper Avril, 50, promptly caved in to the sergeants' demands and retired eight generals, including two former ministers of defence and the army chief. He reportedly had little control over the troops, initially. Worse still, workers went on strike and joined the soldiers in pressing for a thorough house-cleaning. Both groups roamed the streets, killing members of the notorious secret police, the *Tonton Macoutes*.

Later, spokesman of the sergeants Joseph Heudreux, a 27-year-old medic in the presidential guard, presented Avril with a 19-point memorandum calling for a return to democratic rule. It was slightly different in Burma. The military under new strongman, General Saw Maung, 59, was far more in control. And by September 20, protesters' resistance to the coup had considerably



• Namphy. Forced to join "Papa" and "Baby Doc" in exile

been overcome. Arrests were being made and the main roads in Rangoon, capital city, were being cleared of barricades.

Protests against the coup were quick and bloody. Diplomatic sources said more than 400 were killed in the protests, with some of the soldiers. The bloody clashes, with some of the protesters actually firing back at soldiers with bows and arrows. Hundreds of the protesters roamed the premises of Rangoon General Hospital, their rallying point since August, but soldiers did not attempt to move inside. They, however, opened prolonged fire on a park near the United States Embassy.

Elsewhere in the city, troops were

shooting directly into marching crowds. By Wednesday, the situation was under control.

Saw Maung said he and the ruling Organisation for Building Law and Order took over to "halt the deteriorating condition on all sides all over the multi-country." He promised to hold multi-party elections once peace returns, and abolished all political parties (including the BSPP), the people's congress, council of state, and other organs of state power.

A 19-man military junta was set up, with Saw Maung in charge of the defence and foreign affairs portfolios. His deputy, Lt. Gen. Than Shwe, is described as a ruthless field commander "more feared than respected by hisordinates."

Figures behind Avril (the Haitian leader), on the other hand, are still largely unknown. But it was immediately obvious that the crack Jean Jacques Dessalines battalion in Port du Spain, led by Col. Jean Claude Paul, played an active role in the coup. Col. Paul wanted in the US for drug charges, and in fact with Avril when he appeared on television to announce the army chief. Later, government denied reports that Paul had been very close to the former leader. It was he who helped arrest Leslie J. Augustus, last June coup in which President "Baby Doc" Jean-Claude Duvalier negotiated a second coming (the first was in February 1986 when fleeing his friend "Baby Doc" Jean-Claude Duvalier negotiated for a junta to be headed by Namphy quickly thanked the army for a promotion to the rank of a colonel. Observers cite the closeness between both men as the reason why Avril refused to condemn the coup. Avril said the Dominican Republic and Haiti had easily approved to go on a two-year interim government but was later dropped from the slate of riots and strikes. "Baby Doc" retired him from the army. He had been his aide-de-camp, clashed with Roger Lafontaine, *Tonton Macoutes*. It was Namphy brought him back in 1986.

Strangely enough, Avril has been so close to the Duvaliers, widely believed that he was the one who oversaw their theft of military.

By Chukwu

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current allegations that his family pulled strings to secure a place for him in the Indiana National Guard to take him away from combat duties in Vietnam, also seem to have fizzled out. Previously, reports were also that Quayle had "doctored" his curriculum vitae to show that he had spent two years, between 1970 and 1971 as "chief investigator" in the Indiana State Attorney-General's office. He later admitted that he actually spent just two months at the post as temporary staffer, blaming the mix-up on his personal staff. But, he stiffly denied other reports had it that he was involved in a sex escapade with a common prostitute.

Dukakis and his running-mate, Bentsen, have been luckier. There were past unsubstantiated allegations of emotional instability on the part of Dukakis (he was said to have gone for psychiatric treatment after the death of his elder brother). And more recently, reports that he was not getting along with his much older running-mate. But these, on the face of it, are quite insignificant, compared with the thick cloud of controversies that has continued to trail the Bush-Quayle ticket.

Latest poll results in five key states — California, Texas, Ohio, Missouri and New Jersey — show that most American voters still have trouble deciding who to support throw their weight behind — Bush or Dukakis — come November. Most voters also showed very shallow attachment to either candidate who, they insist, have more similarities than differences, and do not, as such, present themselves as clear alternatives. "They're both wimpy, and it's a shame," complained one of the interviewed voters who claimed that "neither of them looks a national leader."

The survey further revealed that in November, most voters would go to the polls to vent their dislikes rather than their likes. They are confused by the fact that neither Bush, nor Dukakis is making firm promises to reduce the federal deficit, which many see as the most critical problem facing the next President. The voters even disbelieve Bush's firm promise and Dukakis' stated intentions not to raise taxes. And neither of the candidates, they say, has been able to convey the "sense of strength" that can reassure voters. Sure enough, while Dukakis' image, to the electorate, remains somewhat fuzzy, Bush's still strikes them as that of "a good follower" not a national leader.

By Emenike Okoro

Who's next?

Choosing of a new president runs into a political impasse

THE Syrian strongman, Hafez Al-Assad does not make pretences about his desire to enthroned, or at least have an upper hand in the installation of the next president in Beirut. If anti-Syrian Christian Deputies (parliamentarians) had not sabotaged his move mid last month, he would most likely have successfully had his close friend, former Lebanese president (from 1970 to 1976), Suleiman Franjieh, endorsed for another six-year-term as leader. The Christian Deputies, however, boycotted the parliamentary session of August 18, leaving the assembly without a quorum, and unable to vote on a successor to outgoing President Amin Gemayel. Franjieh lost.

What is worse, the electoral crisis has become even much more complex and multi-dimensional, involving not just the Syrians but the Americans and even the Soviets and the French. A 60-year-old lawyer and

parliamentarian from the northern region, Mikhael Daher, is being jointly sponsored by Syria and the US as a new compromise candidate to succeed Gemayel. But this time, the opposition is two-legged. Lebanese Christian leaders as well as the military are against the choice of Daher — for a variety of reasons.

On the face of it, the Lebanese Christian community ought to have supported Daher as president. He and Franjieh are Christians. The nation's constitutional arrangement reserves the presidency for Maronite Christians, the premiership for Sunni Muslims and the position of the parliamentary speaker for Sh'rites. Diplomatic sources, however, believe that in rejecting Franjieh and Daher, the Christian leaders were particularly influenced by the alleged strong ties be-

tween the candidates and Assad in Damascus. It was Franjieh, for instance, who as president in 1976, invited Syrian troops to Beirut to help maintain order at the outbreak of civil war.

For Daher, allegations from the Christian community have been even more crippling. He is said to have secretly pledged to implement a reform

package put together by Damascus if he is made president. The plan, diplomatic sources told *The African Guardian*, may not be unconnected with the constitutional reforms being urged by Muslims and leftist groups to reduce the political power of the Christian community, particularly that of the presidency.

Unlike the Christians, however, the Lebanese Army's opposition to a Syrian role in the selection of the next president is rooted more in patriotic considerations than in the fear that such a role will result eventually in the depletion of its influence. The military top brass announced in a communique last week, that they would not endorse "the principle of (foreign) nomination because only parliament can choose the president."

Even so, indications early last week were that Christian parliamentarians had planned another boycott of the parliamentary session set for Thursday to decide the fate of Daher. This, analysts say, would leave President Gemayel no choice than to name a provisional government since his six-year term ends the following day (Friday, September 23). It is the fact that pro-Syrian factions are against the idea that is making it difficult

for the present stalemate to be overcome.

Analysts say, however, that whichever way the political impasse is eventually resolved, the next administration will still be faced with crises. Daher promised, if made president, to bring about national *entente* and reunification of the army so it can no longer be used "for personal ends". But such a consensus, it appears, is unlikely to hold as long as problems raised by opposition to foreign involvement in the elections are not addressed. Assad, in his drive for regional influence does not seem ready to leave. So are the Americans in the belief that the eventual political situation (stability or otherwise) in Lebanon would among other things, have direct effect on neighbouring Israel — their key ally in the Middle East.

By Emenike Okorie



• Amin Gemayel: Search for a successor



• Assad of Syria: A thorn in the Lebanese

Danger still looms

Delays in Ogunpa channelisation project cause nightmares

FOR the second time in eight years, Madam Risi Abiliju who lives at Kudeti, close to the Kudeti, Ogunpa, and Oshun streams in Ibadan has experienced the nightmare of the Ogunpa flood in Oyo State capital. For her, the rainy dawn of September 3, was a replay of the misfortune that befell her in 1980 in which the river overflowed its banks, claiming 150 lives. This time, she could not help recalling that "promises of help have continued to come from government, but we get nothing". In Bode, another part of Ibadan, a civil engineer, Solomon Akinbileje, estimates he lost property worth N25,000 to the floods which claimed four lives. He says "my precious books and journals, furniture and electronic gadgets were damaged, not even my car (a Peugeot 504 saloon) was spared".

Floods resulting from the overflowing of the Ogunpa river and its tributaries each rainy season have become the bane of Ibadan, reputed to be the largest city in West Africa. Experts have estimated annual losses of N2.3 million from flood disasters. With the recent disaster, it is estimated that the amount might triple. Residents of Ibadan believe that such huge losses during the rainy season can be avoided if the state government accelerates the channelisation project of the Ogunpa river.

But it appears that little work has been done on the multi-million naira project that was commissioned in 1978. At the time, N12.4 million was approved as costs for the first phase of the project. Investigations showed that of the 61 kilometres of the river that needs to be channelled, 31.5 kilometres has been identified as very urgent. This covers the lower, middle, and upper parts of the Ogunpa river. While work on the first phase which spans three kilometres has already begun, the actual cost of the entire project is still unclear. The Oyo state government has earmarked N100 million. But Alhaji Yakim Adebayo, Chairman of the RCF construction company handling the project fears that real costs may be in the region of N150 million. This, he attributes to the "increasing high costs of construction materials and equipment in the open market."

While charges of delays and foot-dragging resulting from incessant halt-

ing of funding of the scheme has been laid at the door steps of government, Fola Aderoju, the Oyo State commissioner for Special Duties who is responsible for monitoring work on the channelisation site, puts the blame on the periodical heavy rains. According to him, it is only in the dry season that

the floods to the continuous dumping of refuse into the river. According to him, though the state government has established refuse collection centres in different parts of the city and has commissioned radio and television jingles to advise residents on waste disposal habits, the dwellers have continued to throw refuse into the river. Residents on their part, castigate the state government for not providing basic infrastructure such as adequate refuse disposal vans for transporting refuse to the collection centres.



• Devastating effects of recurring Ogunpa floods

appreciable progress can be made on the scheme.

As a result of these delays, areas such as Kudeti, Alarafa, Isale-Bode and Odo-Ona amongst others will continue to experience floods, more so when only 1.4 kilometres of the scheme has been certified completed by the government. But other reasons have been recognised as contributory to the disasters Kunle Bolarinwa, chairman of the Ibadan Metropolitan Planning Authority notes that a major factor is the stalling of the law governing building along the river bank. Promulgated as far back as 1962, the law, Bolarinwa states, requires "people to leave at least 150 feet to the river, but instead they build their houses close to the river banks."

Aderoju on the other hand attributes

Temporary measures to stall the periodic floods have, however, been embarked upon by the government. Dredging and widening of the river banks are currently going on at a cost government source, put at one million naira. But it is still uncertain whether these measures, which are being carried out at various spots along the river, will serve the purpose of stopping the floods. While the construction site of the channelisation project remains a beehive of activities, Pa Imoh Olabode, another resident of the Bode area of the city who saved his children from drowning during the flood of September 3, says the channelisation of the Ogunpa river "is a matter of hope."

By Omatayo Afolabi

Storm in a test-tube

Medical association rages over transplant baby feat claim

ORDINARILY, Dr. Femi Olatunbosun, a gynaecologist at the St. Nicholas Hospital Lagos, would as a matter of daily routine like to have his morning coffee and go about his business unannounced. But all that was to change three weeks ago when at a press briefing, he told a group of newsmen that the hospital had successfully delivered a baby through the Gamete Intra Fallopian Transfer (GIFT) process. His quiet life was not only disturbed, but he immediately became a celebrity and what he did was no longer just his business.

At stake is the issue of whether or not his hospital had, for the first time in the country, delivered a baby through surgical transplant of reproductive cells. The other issue of whether the baby which was delivered to an anonymous couple can be referred to as a "test-tube baby," a term that had been used by the press to describe the St. Nicholas claim, is less contentious. Medical experts, for one, say that the GIFT method which involves the transfer of the female eggs and the male sperm into the fallopian tube, cannot result in a test-tube baby since fertilization takes place within the body (In Vivo) as opposed to the process of In Vitro fertilization, (IVF), where the eggs are fertilized in the test-tube.

For Dr. Olatunbosun, who led a four-man team in the GIFT experiment, the question of nomenclature is irrelevant so long as he achieves results. He says: "I will refuse to get involved in a controversy because nobody has defined what a test-tube baby is. All I owe anybody is to describe what I have done."

What he has done is what the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) says should be probed. According to the Secretary General of the Lagos Chapter of the medical body, Dr. Oladeran Ayodeji, the Federal Ministry of Health should send a team of technical experts to ascertain the facilities on the ground and evaluate the personnel at the command of the hospital. He stressed that much as he would hate to question the integrity of the proprietor of the hospital, Dr. Moses Majekodunmi, there was still the need to establish, scientifically, the technical ability to accomplish such a feat unaided. The findings of the panel, he added, would serve as guidelines in the future should the claims be

trued.

At the national level, the NMA's Secretary General, Dr. Mike Ekpo, sounds out a similar note. Said he: "If it (the GIFT baby) has generated controversy, there would be the need to investigate the claim." Not one to be harried, the Health Minister, Professor Olikoye Ransome Kuti, does not feel obliged to. He explained last week that as long as the feat of performing a successful "test-tube baby" experiment



• Dr. Olatunbosun: "I will refuse to get involved in a controversy"

was within the skills of the proprietor of the hospital, Dr. Majekodunmi—a doyen in medicine and a one-time health minister—there would be no need to question his abilities. In a tone a little higher than normal, he queried: "Why should we doubt his skill?"

But medical critics believe that the Minister's position is rather biased and likely to set a dangerous precedent that will render him morally weak to question similar claims in the future. Moreover, when the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) had its claim to the IVF feat investigated in 1984.

The problem begins to assume a wider dimension against the background that in 1984, Dr. Ernest Ugo's claim was thrown out as "spurious" by a federal ministry of health panel, on grounds that Ugo is a homeopath and as

such has no business in the complex terrain of IVF. Dr. Ugo, whose team comprised a medical doctor and a laboratory scientist, had argued then that neither Professor Paul Chuka nor Dr. John Oli, chairman and secretary of the Enugu chapter of the NMA had inspected his laboratory before they made press statements that he lacked adequate equipment. Even Professor Kuti's defence that he was not in office when Dr. Ugo was probed contradicted his later statement that "Dr. Ugo played on the ignorance of people since as a homeopath test-tube baby isn't one of his expected skills." Perhaps the Ministers' arguments would have settled well if he had not made it seem like the thin line between truth and untruth was merely a question of professional calling.

Appalled by Professor Kuti's rigidity, one of the doctors said that with such wide room for manipulations, any allopath (a medical practitioner) could come up with a false claim. The Minister he said, had a duty to protect the gullible in the populace. Unimpressed, the Minister said if the NMA had anything against the procedure used at St. Nicholas, it had a right as a body to direct its energies through the appropriate channel by writing him a formal letter stating their reasons.

Though by last week Dr. Ekpo said that the committee on medical ethics and practices was yet to take a decision on the matter, he hoped that by this week, its position would be made public. A rather calm Dr. Olatunbosun said it was unfortunate that some of his colleagues, out of ignorance, were pitching their tents against him. Said he: "The experiment itself is emotionally wracking for patient and doctor. It is (even more) emotionally wracking for people to doubt you."

He explained that the baby was the result of an experiment begun about November last year, and that only one survived out of three other pregnancies. He was prepared any day, he said, to prove to the doubting Thomases that the hospital had the equipment to achieve the feat.

While the agitators are willing to concede to some degree that the multi-million naira hospital complex may have the modern equipment to make a breakthrough, they are not in a hurry to buy the idea that it did. Said one of the doctors: "We have to be careful, lest our credibility as a profession, a nation and a people, be called to question."

By Josephine Akarus



• Ogunkoya: Receiving conflicting signals from the unions on the NLC pruning exercise

Labour in shackles

Administrator's mandate to restructure unions draws flaks

BARELY a week after the Sole Administrator of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Mr Michael Ogunkoya, appointed a nine-man panel to prune the 42 industrial unions affiliated to the labour body, there are fears that he may have embarked on a futile exercise. There are indications that some of the workers' unions would spurn the call for memoranda to enable the panel to begin its assignment. Says Mr. Suraju Abiodun Odunuga, President-General, Nigeria Union of Railwaymen (NUR): "This is an imposition on labour... it is only workers that have the right to restructure themselves."

Mr Precious Kiri-Kalio, general-secretary, Nigerian Union of Electricity and Gas Workers, holds a contrary view. Kiri-Kalio, a member of the panel, suspects that a future NLC leadership may adopt a partisan posture if asked to conduct the restructuring.

Kiri-Kalio's and Odunuga's views symbolise the ideological cleavage in NLC. A member of the Alhaji Takai Shamang's "democrats", Kiri-Kalio alleged that in 1987, when the erstwhile NLC President, Alhaji Ali Chiroma, who is said to belong to the "marxist" group, attempted to reshape the NLC, he grouped smaller unions sympathetic

to the cause of "democrats" into bigger unions with a bias for his faction. Apparently, it is on this score that Kiri-Kalio would want a somewhat "neutral" body to carry out the mergers. However, Odunuga's position seems supported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention which gives trade unions the exclusive right to organise themselves.

But the government's action is not without precedence. Under the Trade Unions (Central Labour Organisation Special Provisions) Decree of August 18, 1976, the government of General Olusegun Obasanjo appointed Mr Michael Abiodun to restructure the existing trade unions. At the end of a two-year exercise, 42 industrial unions emerged from a staggering one thousand labour unions. The "democrats," it seems, are basing their support for the present exercise on the 1978 experience. But last week, some union leaders from the "marxists" camp argued that the 1978 exercise did not contravene ILO regulation because government and labour reached a mutual agreement to restructure the trade unions.

In line with Odunuga's position, the Lagos chapter of the Nigerian Union of

Journalists (NUJ), in a communique issued after its meeting on September 10, stated that the democratic rights of workers to unionise freely should be protected. The statement says it is an attack on trade union's independence for an outside body to restructure the NLC.

This argument does not appear to make any sense for the "democrats." Kiri-Kalio confirmed to *The African Guardian* last week that his group had suggested to Ogunkoya that the existing 42 unions should be reduced to 25. This is six more than the 19 union structure that Alhaji Chiroma had envisaged.

Though the criteria for merging the unions are yet to be worked out by the panel, it is expected that unions whose areas of activity are related would be grouped. For instance, it is expected that the Nigerian Ports Authority Workers Union, the Dock Workers Union of Nigeria, the Nigeria Union of Seamen and Water Transport Workers Union and the Union of Shipping, Clearing and Forwarding Agencies Workers of Nigeria, would come under the umbrella of Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria. Also, the Nigeria Civil Service Union, the Civil Service Technical Workers Union of Nigeria and the Customs and Excise and Immigration Staff Union, may constitute the new 'Public Service Union of Nigeria'.

For now, it is doubtful whether the panel would complete its assignment within the two weeks deadline, given the fact that the last restructuring exercise took two years. But Ogunkoya believes the exercise will be wrapped up within two weeks if the unions cooperate with the panel.

The Minister of Labour and Productivity, Alhaji Abubakar Umar had, on February 2, announced the dissolution of NLC executive council following what government viewed as an inconclusive delegates conference in Benin; and appointed Ogunkoya Sole Administrator of the Congress. Ogunkoya was given a presidential marching order to conduct fresh elections within six months at a special delegates conference in which all the 42 industrial unions will participate. But by August, the Sole Administrator asked government for an extension of the period, hinging his tardiness on the unco-operative attitude of the industrial unions. Ogunkoya was given another four months to tidy up NLC affairs, but with the present developments it is doubtful whether the administrator can keep faith with the deadline.

By Mike Ubani

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Banks to the rescue

NITEL uses the banks to collect its duty bills

THE Communications Minister, Col David Mark is surely making his mark in the ministry, especially in the Nigerian Telecommunication (NITEL) department. Since assuming office in January, NITEL seems to have woken up to its responsibilities in the area of debts collection. In the first half of this year, revenue generated by the department was up by ₦114,315,107.67 from ₦102,901,879 generated for the same period in 1987. A remarkable improvement of 111 per cent. But it appears the minister is far from impressed with this achievement as 29 per cent of the ₦217,236,986.67 generated this year is yet to be collected.

And to what looked like the Minister's doubt of the integrity of the staff of the department in the collection of money on behalf of NITEL, the duty bills collection have been contracted out to the banks. This is in keeping with his earlier hint at a press briefing on July 20 that all payments of subscribers' bill will be made through the banks before the year runs out. In this regard, eight banks have been selected for the scheme which kicks off on October 3. The banks are United Bank for Africa (UBA), African Continental Bank (ACB) and National Bank of Nigeria (NBN). Others are Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), Nigeria Arab Bank (NAB), Bank of the North, Societe Generale Bank and Savannah Bank.

The Privileged eight are to collect an estimated ₦200 million due to NITEL up to the end of the year and all subsequent bills into the future from the over 250,000 telephone and 7,000 telex subscribers as well as other NITEL customers. At an average of 10 per cent of money collected as bank commission, the banks are to share among themselves, ₦20 million as commission for rendering the service to NITEL.

NITEL spokesman, Mr. Osagie Ayanru is optimistic about the efficacy and success of the new system of payment. Stating that although customers can still settle their bills directly through NITEL cash offices, the new system, he says is safer, convenient, faster and

more reliable than direct payment. Where a customer gives a standing order to his bank to make regular payment on his behalf, it becomes even easier, he adds. To ensure that bills are promptly delivered to customers, NITEL has decentralised the processing of bills from its Management Information Service (MIS) department at the Corporate Headquarters in Lagos, to the operating zones and territories. In this respect, bills are distributed 21 days in the subsequent month through users'



• Col David Mark. For a more efficient NITEL.

address and all enquiries on bills are principally dealt with in the Business Customer Office of the Exchange. Although this seems to be working smoothly according to NITEL records, customers are yet to be treated to it as many still talk of irregular receipts of bills. For Mr. Ogunnade Olorunfemi, a staff of National Insurance Corporation of Nigeria (NICON), he could not stand the inconvenience of having his telephone disconnected through no fault of his, hence, he has to go to NITEL offices most of the time for his bill.

But what looks like a possible source of hitch for a smooth take-off of the system is the banks' disregard for NITEL directives that special tellers and cages be used for the exercise. Except for Savannah Bank, whose Public Relations Manager, Mr. Gbade Sinda, said has printed proto-types of spe-

cially designed tellers and ear-marked cages for the exercise, the other banks simply believe, in the word of Yem Albu, Societe Generale image maker, that the exercise is not likely to be anything radically different from normal banking procedures. As a result they will be handling it as such.

Even more disturbing is the fact that barely a week to the take-off of the scheme, UBA undoubtedly the biggest among the eight, with 170 branches well-spread all over the country, is yet to come to terms with NITEL. Although both sides are not forthcoming with demands, Mr. Seb Ezirim, the bank Public Relations Manager, however, said that his bank simply wants NITEL to accept the Central Bank guidelines on interest which is anywhere above 15.5 per cent in the commission.

Against this backdrop, observers have predicted that unless NITEL steps up effort to ensure that banks comply with its directives as well as resolve the UBA stalemate on time, there might be another postponement of the exercise, having been earlier shifted from its August date. From indications, it appears NITEL is well informed about this, and has therefore remained undaunted in its effort to see the exercise through. To this end, it has intensified negotiations, with UBA and it is believed that within the week, something positive might work out. Given the experience of the bank, it is also believed, it would be able to cope with the exercise within a short period.

What then could have been the criteria used in selecting the banks, given the fact that there are other equally large banks with branches all over the country? Although NITEL was shy and would not be categorical on the issue, it was gathered that commission quoted by banks was the major factor. Most of the banks accepted a commission of about 10 per cent of money collected, which falls within NITEL terms.

However, most of the banks that accepted lower commission maintained that it was done to foster better relationship with NITEL. Whereas some of them have never been bankers to NITEL, the exercise will now necessitate NITEL opening an account with them. As it is, NITEL is poised to ensure the convenience of customers, through this scheme.

By Lucky Flakpa

Juicy morsels in the vault

Savannah Bank set with fresh plans to attract customers

BEFORE long, current account customers might start receiving interest on their deposits as against the present trend where they have to be charged a commission for operating a current account. With over 50 banks operating in the country, it appears, at least, in the urban setting, that the industry, judging by all kinds of services it offers, is gradually becoming that of customers. There is the UBACARD, a sort of credit card by the United Bank for Africa, and UNICARD, operated by Union Bank. All these are to ensure that purchases are done easily by customers.

But Savannah Bank believes that a customer needs more than just a credit card and has, therefore, floated a facility that is very much like a current account on which interest will be paid. Known as Time Deposit Open Account (TDOA), Mr. Gbade Sanda, the bank's public relations manager, says the facility is aimed at corporate and individual customers who can afford a minimum of N5,000 in the account to operate it like a current account while earning interest at the same time.

Unlike Time Deposit which requires a specific amount, duration and rate, the TDOA requires no prior notice before withdrawals can be made. But such withdrawals are done only by instructing the bank to transfer the required amount to the customer's current or

savings account. It follows that for a customer to use the TDOA scheme, he must have a savings or current account with the bank. Mr. Sanda says that the bank is informed by the fact that opportunity cost of money has become very high, a situation which has made customers to reduce idle balances.

Since customers favour Time and Fixed deposit accounts, the bank decided on the TDOA innovation to beef up idle balances. Interest, though negotiable, is calculated on a daily basis from a minimum of 11 per cent. Failure to meet the minimum balance at any one time disqualifies the customer from the TDOA facility, Mr. Sanda warns. Such a customer, however, can have his money transferred into an ordinary savings account.

Savannah Bank may have scored a first in this direction, more so when banks like UBA, Union Bank and First Bank do not pay interest on even savings account on which withdrawals have been made more than four times in a month.

But what Savannah Bank may not have known is the enthusiasm it has kindled in customers who are already looking beyond that facility to the time when interest will be paid on the actual current account. Financial analysts believe that the time has come and even getting overdue when banks generally should be made to pay interest on current



● Savannah Bank Chairman S.O. Lawani: Setting the pace

accounts. Dr. Michael Omolayole, a former chairman of Lever Brothers Nigeria Limited, argued recently at a seminar that the Federal Government should promulgate a decree enforcing commercial banks to pay interest on current account deposits. According to him, a situation where banks charge customers more than five per cent over the Central Bank minimum discount rate calls into question the social responsibility of the banks.

For its pioneering effort, Mr. Efeho-ka Agberia, assistant manager, Glanvills Enthoven and Co. Lagos says Savannah Bank should be commended for, at least, paying interest on account that is more or less a current one. He believes other banks can take off from there to score a first in the payment of interest on the actual current account. What he would, however, want Savannah bank to do is to reduce the initial minimum deposit from N5,000 to something lower so that more members of the public can avail themselves of the facility.

By Lucky Flakpa

Set to recover

United Spinners Nigeria Limited (USNL) is set to recover from the pains inflicted on it by the devaluation of the naira in the Foreign Exchange Market. The cost of setting up USNL, a major backward integration effort of President Indrisc and Empe Industries, has burgeoned from N45 million in 1986 to N180 million, thus upsetting the proprietors' plans.

But UBA has come to the rescue with a N55 million syndicated credit. Shouldering 36.3 per cent of the package, UBA brought together six other lenders, which in-

clude First Bank, Union Bank and International Bank for West Africa to provide the life-line to the nearly marooned spinning mill.

New orientation

Not even the impending privatisation and commercialisation of government holdings would stop state governments from rushing into the banking industry. In the thick of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), the Anambra State Government launched Orient Bank, a commercial Bank in a joint venture with private investors.

Dr. J.N. Abaclu, Chairman

of the Board of Directors, says the bank will bring a "new orientation" to commercial banking by emphasizing "all-round customer satisfaction."

Job Vacancies

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● Research Associate with M.Sc degree in Biological Sciences. N12,000 basic salary plus generous benefits. Apply to: The Personnel Manager, International Insti-

tute of Tropical Agriculture, PMB 3320, Ibadan. Oyo State.

● Financial Controller to an International Pharmaceutical Company. Age: Between 35 and 45 years. Qualification ACA, ACMA or ACCA with minimum of 8 years experience. Apply: Executive selection Division, Coopers and Lybrand Associates Ltd., P.O. Box 4929, Lagos.

● Chief Accountant to a bank in a northern state capital. Qualification: Professional accountant. Prof. Peat Marwick Ani Ogunde Consultant, Bolex House, 33 Imam Dauda Street, Iganmu, P.O. Box 549, Lagos.

STOCK MARKET WATCH

Shift in strategies

Hope for improved dealing at the NSE

EXCEPT for occasional spurts of interest in a few securities during the last two months, investors and stock brokers' reaction at the trading floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) has remained lukewarm. Buoyed by new developments in a few equities, trading has taken a slight but significant shift from dividend-related exchanges, to translating company strategies to market pulses.

For instance, the stocks of R.T. Briscoe which have remained dormant at 50 kobo per share since last year was pushed up kobo in reaction to the 13 kobo in reaction to the company's acquisition of 60 per cent equity participation of Coconut Industries Limited. It is believed that this move would spur the revival of R.T. Briscoe, which had shed its turnover down to a meagre N11.34 million from N227.9 million only six years ago, due to the foreign exchange squeeze in the automobile market.

In another reaction, BEWAC Nigeria Limited, trading at its trough for 42 kobo per ordinary share, is expected to pick up investors' confidence, although some brokers are prepared to dump their holdings—it is envisaged that BEWAC is poised for better days ahead. As if expecting a new boom in the automobile market, it appears that investors are eyeing the sector for possible future capital gains earnings.

That may well be expected. Automobile assembly and dealership have taken a new turn in an effort to cash in on mass transit schemes. For example, UACN last week unveiled its new line of Bedford city buses, vans and trucks and Leventis Motors is coming up with a line of Mercedes Benz buses.

In the breweries sector, Nigerian Breweries Limited (NBL) is riding a crest, picking up some 84 kobo since last January in result-related demand pres-

sure. In half year ended last July, NBL's turnover jumped about 159 per cent over the same period last year with after-tax profit of N35.7 million, up from N13.4 million last year. Guinness Breweries' shares have equally gained a moderate 30 points since last January to close at 137 kobo last week.

Even with these bits of information, it seems that holders of these stocks would rather have them for keeps than swap for cash. Where there are exchanges, it

has often been observed to be too small to make any appreciable dent in market capitalisation. This feature, international capital market analysts say, is why the Nigerian stock market is generally regarded as closed. Also, issues have been raised about the market's ability to attract international attention.

In a recent study of the emerging markets of the Third World, Nigeria did not make the top 20. That is to be expected.

analysts say, because of very low market capitalisation, and the devaluation of the naira has further dampened any hope for meaningful growth in the short term.

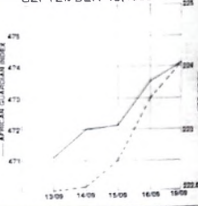
Taiwan for example led the emerging markets with capitalisation of US \$50 billion, about 53 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP). At the bottom rung was Greece with only \$4.5 billion. Nigeria does not even come close at barely \$1.5 billion worth of market capitalisation, that is a meagre 12 per cent of its GDP.

In the same vein, though NSE common stock index has been growing steadily since the beginning of the year, its movement has been tiny. From about 190 points in the beginning of this year, the NSE index rallied to close at 220 points last week, while The African Guardian composite index closed at 475 points.

By Herbert Ojeh

LEADING CONTRIBUTORS
TO AGM INDICES
SEPTEMBER 19, 1988

Company	Points
NBL	787
NIG. BROS. (NIG. SEC. EXCH.)	679
GUINNESS	611
AFAC	574
UACN	430
LEVENTIS	426
NBL	300
OTHERS	4173

SUMMARY OF
SUPPLY &
DEMAND STOCK
SEPTEMBER 19, 1988GUARDIAN & NSE INDICES.
SEPTEMBER 19, 1988

Unprofitable stocks

Stock	Earnings per Share (K)	Price (K)	Last Div. Date	Dividend (K)
Nig. Enamellers	0.0	53 +	25/4/80	1.5
J.L. Morrison	0.0	51 -	27/7/80	3.0
Chivald	0.0	52 +	23/6/87	5.0
Pharma Devo	0.0	40 +	15/5/87	7.5
Yare & Life	0.0	51 +	13/3/87	10.0
Bateri Nig.	0.0	45 +	26/9/86	10.0
Great Nig. Breweries	0.0	18 +	19/5/86	1.8
Onitsha (W.A.)	0.0	48 +	06/6/88	8.0
Foranaco Dairies	0.0	62 +	30/4/86	20.0
Golden	0.0	29 +	07/12/84	1.0
Roads (Nig.)	0.0	50 -	07/10/83	0.0
Nig. Tann. Machine	0.0	15 +	24/9/83	0.0
R.T. Plastics	0.0	85 -	22/1/81	0.5
Storvans	0.0	38 +	16/3/81	0.0
BEWAC (Nig. Ltd)	0.0	40 -	05/9/81	1.8
Nigeria Wire Ind.	0.0	58 -	05/9/81	1.8
West African Glass	0.0	17 +	27/10/78	1.8
Merrimale Bank	0.0	30 +	0.0	0.0

* The above stocks as at September 19 show zero earnings per share for the last financial year report. This is indicative of a loss or non-profit. It should be accordingly observed that several of these stocks have not paid out dividends recently and generally would represent poor investments.



UACN Chairman, Ernest Shikoro

Humanising the prisons

THE Babangida administration, in one of its earliest gestures which inspired hopes about the emergence of a humane dispensation, exposed the unacceptable face and methods of the Nigerian Security Organisation, the NSO, under the Buhari-Idiagbon regime.

For the first time ever, the doors of NSO detention cells were flung wide open to the press. The grotesque methods used against helpless, though perhaps, culpable citizens by mindless security officials were published to a horrified public. A number of operatives, including the top NSO man, Ambassador Rafindadi, were placed under arrest.

Both government and society felt a revulsion at the institutional assault on the ideal of individual freedom and dignity. It was logical to expect from the new military leadership a systematic sanitization of conditions at the prisons and detention cells which could extend to the overhaul of the entire administration of justice.

Three years into the present administration, there is no evidence of superior official treatment of incarcerated persons or of those facing the sanctions of the law. There may actually be a greater depravity in this area.

The distinction is fast becoming blurred of what constitutes security offences under the enabling law, Decree 2, and what passes for routine offences. Virtually any offence, including those which can normally be handled by the courts, are liable to be treated these days under the heading of "Security," so that the victims can be put conveniently away.

Persons are still held for long periods without trial, against constitutional injunctions. Some magistrates are prone to grant police requests for holding charges to keep suspects indefinitely pending investigations.

There have been reported cases of death in custody. Behind-the-bar petitioners have highlighted worsening food rations. Some inmates stepping again into the outside world

present emaciated profiles. Disease is rampant.

Many of these convicts, on their emergence from the prison gates, are thrust into a hostile world, or as with cases of long confinement, into an altered environment with only the bright familiar countenance of the sun to gladden their footsteps.

Understandably, those who contravene the mores of the society as to deserve the name of felon must be sequestered and kept under vigilant guard so that the ordinary, law abiding citizen shall be spared the contamination of their ways and negative influences. It must, however, be conceded that a significant number of people are justifiably behind iron bars with extra-large padlocks only with the strict application of legalistic principles.

Morally absolving circumstances include conviction secured on technical points, inability to afford the high cost of legal defence, an irrepressible psychological urge as in kleptomania, or predisposing socio-economic environment. It may be a little cheering to learn that the Internal Affairs Ministry has appointed a firm of consultants to review food, health, accommodation, staff disposition and other conditions of the prisons.

This country shall additionally be served by a change of orientation to the convict, down to the often sadistic prison wardens, coupled with a sense of moral responsibility to the deviants in our midst.

Modern penal systems recognize the reform of the criminal as their cardinal object. Our system could do with sympathetic handling of the convict and tutelage in vocational skills. The society could then complete the re-integrative cycle by developing structures to rehabilitate the ex-convict, such as assistance programmes by prisoners' welfare associations or loan agencies.

Regime succeeds regime but the prisons appear to remain the same in their archaic brutishness.



Trials of nationhood



"There is still the individualisation of economic aspiration, in which the wealth of the individual, encouraged by indiscriminate system of government contract award for important developmental projects, take precedence over state wealth"

BY SUNNY BIAGHERE

WHAT is that unique about independence anniversary? Or in this instance, for it to be celebrated with pomp and pageantry? Is the lesson to be derived from the Orwellian maxim, that the people find in the celebration, exhilarating comfort in the reminder that they were truly their own masters and that their labour was for their own benefit? So that, what with the usual military march pasts, the fluttering of the flag, the songs, the speeches and the procession, they are able to forget that their bellies have been empty at least most of the time.

Or is it a celebration, in the mould of the Athenian, spontaneous gladness, in which, the citizens must realize, at all times, what the nation means to their lives, as if they were a supremely beautiful, indispensable and worthy mistress? A time-honoured truth, which ex-hood of state Major-General Muhammadu Buhari, put differently in his clarion call when he declared: "This generation of Nigerians and indeed future generations have no other country than Nigeria. We shall remain here and salvage it together."

Given Nigeria's experiences of the past 28 years, there must be seen in her independence celebration, inspirations derived from an admixture of the Orwellian, Athenian and Buharian maxims. For as a renowned commentator once put the post-independence history in capsule, Nigeria has been a tale of two assassinated Heads of State, one murdered Prime Minister, two slaughtered regional premiers, one physically eliminated Federal Finance Minister, pro-and post-election riot, massacres and a bitter civil war ravages of an economy that has plummeted from the dizzying heights.

What can this gloomy picture imply? Have the independence struggle and sacrifices been in vain? Or did the whiteman leave the Republic of Kangan or Nigeria for that matter too soon, as Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* seems to ask?

The answers must lie in the fact that no matter how systemic and benevolent imperial rule can be, nothing can compensate for the sense of self-respect and self-dignity and an awareness of racial deliverance that come with independence. Independence, it must be agreed, has afforded the Nigerian the chance to carve out an identity for himself.

Besides, man's process of growth is not all laden with

triumphs. There must be the pangs of growth and there must be the tribulations. As with men, so with nations. In wishing to escape these tribulations in her march in nationhood, there are those, who therefore argue that Nigeria would have cheated history, by bypassing the route of great nations, in an attempt to avoid the blood of freedom with which the tree of liberty is watered.

What counts is a nation's resilience, the ability to withstand the stress and strains of nationhood, and being able to provide adequate consolation for her losses at every stage of the evolutionary process. The samplers in Nigeria's case would include for instance, her loss of Balewa and the discovery of Gowon. Like she also sent Awolowo to prison and brought him out herself, placed power in his hands and only reserved to herself, the right of reminding him that the people make the leader. Like the emergence of a Babangida, ready to do battle with the disoriented economic structures and be commended by posterity at a time it counts, rather than be censured by history for inaction. In this vein is the outcome of the civil war too and the manner in which gradual re-integration of the secessionist group with the rest of the nation was achieved. If nothing else, all these are an affirmation of the nation's faith in the immortal words of late President Johnson of the US when he said: "Yet the infirmities of man are such that force must often precede reason and the waste of war the work of peace."

True enough, in-built conflicts in the system due to the cultural diversity of the people will persist. There is still political opportunism in which the various ethnic groups want to take control of the central power base, to the detriment of integrated co-operation in economic resource development. There is still the individualisation of economic aspiration, in which the wealth of the individual, encouraged by indiscriminate system of government contract award for important developmental projects, take precedence over state wealth.

Internally generated wealth derived from active and participatory development such as in agricultural development for the provision of commodities and services are still in declining despite of current efforts to reverse the trend. There is the enduring attitude of the vast majority of the citizens who though wanting a virile and stable nation feel the nation owes them more duty than they are obligated to.

But in the present quest to dismantle old political and economic structures, to inculcate self-reliance and re-orientate societal attitudes, must be seen a recognition of the presence of these impediments to a stable, virile nation. What an structure, needed by the government and the citizens of a nation, is a coming down of expectations to fit the real productive level of the subjects.

On the nation's 20th anniversary, and as she approaches the Third Republic, let it therefore be said that the first step in the march has been the overthrow of the white civilislet. The second step is the dismantling of unworkable economic structures and oppressive post-independence governments.

The third phase is the blossoming of patriotism, in this instance, not an observance of an Orwellian bright and loud anniversary parade as a diversion from the address of empty bellies, but a devotion to a political, economic, and social vision — an ideal of independence, in which what counts is what the people have in common and what is worth cherishing and preserving.



SUPPLEMENT ON NNPC

undiscovered recoverable reserves. About 50% of the proven reserves are associated gas. However, only 10-15% of current production is being used, the rest is flared.

The natural gas reduction policy of the Corporation, along with existing policy infrastructures have brought along reduction in the flaring of gas.

NNPC is unshaken in its resolve to expand the foreign exchange earning potentials of the oil industry in Nigeria. One of the ways it hopes to do this is to export natural gas in a liquefied form. The liquefied natural gas market has been aiding Nigeria since 1982 when the first LNG project was contemplated. Another ambitious plan was aborted in 1980. Since then NNPC has embarked on an LNG project which is more realistic and more manageable in size. It has already clinched the European market and the first shipment of LNG to some consumer in Europe is expected about 1995.

From its inception NNPC has embarked on the down stream utilization of our petroleum resources. Apart from the production of fuels and lubricating oils from our crude oil, NNPC had wanted to establish the petrochemical industry in the country. Today, the Corporation is producing Petrochemicals in three plants at Epe and Kaduna. The second phase of NNPC's petrochemical development plan is already being tackled through the Elame Petrochemicals project in Port Harcourt.

The Petrochemicals projects represent NNPC's most recent efforts at diversifying the Nigerian Petroleum Industry. It is a major step in the direction of making Nigeria a self-reliant economy.

NNPC has been responsible for selling the portion of crude oil attributable to government from its equity interest in the operations of the oil companies. The Corporation has fashioned out appropriate strategies depending on the prevalent circumstances to move Nigeria's crude oil effectively and efficiently in the international oil market. To ensure a guaranteed outlet in the oil market, and enhance the integration of both upstream and downstream NNPC will be buying equity shares in customers downstream facilities — refineries and distribution outlets.

Since January, this year, NNPC has been exporting 450,000 barrels per day of crude oil to six of such refineries in which the Corporation hopes to have equity interest. The refineries (four in the U.S.A. and two in Spain) refine our crude and sells the products through their chains of distributive outlets.

A strategic industry such as oil requires very careful and adequate policing. The responsibility for regulating the activities of oil companies in Nigeria was vested with the Petroleum Inspectorate of NNPC. It also ensured that all statutory regulations are adhered to by all operators in the oil industry. One of its land-mark activities is the formulation of regulations for the protection of the environment by oil companies. Also, NNPC's efforts at conservation of our petroleum resources are put into effect

through the Petroleum Inspectorate. This arm of the Corporation has now been merged with the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources.

These track records make the Corporation believe that it is meeting squarely the challenge of its birth.

ORGANIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CORPORATION

In carrying out its assignment, NNPC has always been mindful of the need for structural changes in its organization to reflect the realities of the situation. From a very centralized structure, the Corporation has continued to evolve new organizational structures with a view to running its business much more effectively and efficiently. In 1985, the Corporation was re-organized into five semi-autonomous sectors, each headed by a Sector Co-ordinator who acted as its Chief Executive.

Since 1977, when the Corporation was established, its leadership had always seen the national assignment as a challenge. The present Minister of Petroleum Resources, Alhaji Rivers Lukman worked with a team, made up of dedicated technocrats, to translate the dreams of Nigeria about the oil industry into a reality.



Mr. Stephen Awe Adeniji
Group Managing Director, NNPC
Overseeing the Commercial Strategy of the New Structure

NNPC TODAY AND TOMORROW

Today, NNPC strives to be a strategically planned and commercially managed integrated international company, whose mission is to profitably explore, develop, produce, process and market crude and refined petroleum and their by-products and derivatives, at competitive prices, both at home and abroad. This new posture of the Corporation, announced by Mr. President in Kaduna on Monday March 21, 1988, and expanded by the Honourable Minister of Petroleum Resources in a press statement on Wednesday, March 23, 1988, is the product of a painstaking strategic planning process embarked upon by the Corporation from late 1986 to 1987.

A large number of staff of the Corporation participated in the exercise to produce a programme of work that would bring the best out of the Corporation. From the most junior cadre up to the highest levels of management, the staff of the Corporation were involved in assessing how the organisation can obtain optimum benefits from the petroleum resources of the nation. The search was thorough and comprehensive.

Apert from committees which examined the various ways in which the Corporation could be turned into a purely commercial venture, various seminars, workshops, conferences and class room lectures were organized for all categories of staff to educate them on the roles expected of every staff in the new scheme of things. The Corporation is therefore fully prepared for the changes which its new status will bring about. It is the background that underlines the Corporation's rock-tough assurance that it will succeed in its commercial direction.

During the strategic planning exercise, each business unit analysed and assessed its internal strengths and weaknesses, external threats and opportunities, defined its critical success factors and developed objectives, goals and strategies for achieving commercial success consistent with set corporate guidelines.

These strategic business units form the base of the Corporate structure and subsidiaries of the Corporation which the Honourable Minister of Petroleum Resources announced on March 23, 1988.

THE NEW STRUCTURE

The new structure of the Corporation comprises a corporate Head Office with three groups of functional Divisions and twelve subsidiary companies charged with the execution of the Corporation's business. The structure was designed to place the Corporation in a firm position to compete favourably in the international business environment, in line with its new commercial posture. The Corporation is geared towards efficiency, profitability and financial autonomy in all its operations. Under the arrangement, the NNPC will be adequately capitalised by Government. Henceforth, full commercial justification will be required for all the Corporation's investments. NNPC will now regularly make dividend payments to Government as returns for its investment in the Corporation.

THE HOLDING OFFICE

The Centre or Headquarters office of the Corporation is made up of Corporate Services, Operations and the National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS).

The Corporate Services Group, headed by a Group Deputy Managing Director looks after Finance, Legal and Insurance, Administration and Personnel, Technology and Corporate Planning and development Divisions.



SUPPLEMENT ON NNPC

THE SUBSIDIARIES

NIGERIAN PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED (NPDC)

The Operations group, also headed by a Group Deputy Managing Director is responsible for Exploration, Production, Gas, Manufacturing, Petrochemicals and International Trading Divisions.

The third grouping, NAPIMS, under the charge of a Co-ordinator oversees the Federation's investment in exploration and production companies. It is therefore responsible for supervising the Joint Venture activities of the Joint venture partners, it markets the Federation's crude oil and engages in direct exploration services in new frontier areas where the oil companies hesitate to carry out exploration.

The heads of the three groups report directly to the Group Managing Director, who is the Chief Executive of the Corporation. The Secretary to the Corporation and the Group Internal Auditor also report to the Managing Director.

THE NNPC SUBSIDIARIES

The twelve subsidiaries created will be limited liability companies some wholly owned by NNPC while others are jointly owned between NNPC and foreign and local investors. Most of the subsidiaries will take off this year, while the others will take off next year. They will all have their own Boards and their Chief Executives.

The relationship between the holding offices and the subsidiaries is defined by corporate policy, procedures and financial budget for execution and their Holding Office for approval. The Holding Office will pass on policy instructions to the subsidiaries on a day-to-day basis. In their own turn will pass programmes to the Holding Office for approval. The Holding Office will allocate resources for programmes. In their own turn will pass programmes to the Holding Office for approval. The Holding Office will allocate resources for programmes. In their own turn will pass programmes to the Holding Office for approval.

On a day-to-day basis, the subsidiaries will be independent of their Holding Office in the execution of their programmes. In turn, the Holding Office will make payments to the subsidiaries in turn pay holder. The Holding Office will make payments to the subsidiaries in turn pay holder. The Holding Office will make payments to the subsidiaries in turn pay holder.

The future of the industry will be decided by the success of the subsidiaries presented hereunder.

This is the petroleum producing company of the group. It is wholly owned by NNPC. It is involved in Exploration and production of crude oil and gas, just like other oil producing companies in Nigeria such as Shell, Agip, Elf, Mobil and Gulf.

The mission of this company is to profitably operate an optimum size Petroleum exploration and production business nationally and internationally, taking full advantage of local expertise in upstream operations. Its objectives are: to effectively and profitably produce and market hydrocarbons both domestically and internationally; to support exploration activities, support hydrocarbon reserves base and to local expertise particularly in operations.

This company is an offshoot of the Exploration and Production business of the Nigerian oil and Gas Sector of the NNPC. It inherits the assets of the Exploration and Production business unit, and Production concessions (on-shore) area leased to NNPC for purposes, and the oil wells and discoveries by NNPC.

Some of the first projects of NNPC include the acquisition of the Abura field by NNPC/Tenneco/Mobil/Elf and the Oredo oil area. NNPC would be responsible for the development and discoveries from its exploration on-shore and off-shore.

Fortunately, this company has a track record of its forefathers in the Exploration and Production Division of the Nigerian Gas Sector of the NNPC. It is well established in both on-shore and off-shore drilling activities. It is the leading way in NNPC's crude oil production. There is no doubt therefore that NNPC.



SUPPLEMENT ON NNPC

WARRI REFINERY AND PETROCHEMICALS COMPANY LIMITED

The mission of this company which is wholly owned by the NNPC is to efficiently and profitably process crude oil into finished petroleum and petrochemical products for domestic consumption and export, using the process plant facilities of the already existing NNPC Refinery and Petrochemical Plants at Warri and Ekpang respectively. Its objectives are to optimise the process plants facilities, to develop new products from the existing facilities and maximize the profitability of the Company.

The combination of the two NNPC facilities at Warri and Ekpang is a logical development because the Ekpang Petrochemical Plants take their raw materials or feedstocks from the Warri Refinery. From the point of view of making sure that the activities of the two Complexes are coordinated, the combination is an ideal one. This will ensure efficiency and minimise wastage of resources, man power and manhour that may result if the two were different entities. The combination ensures that if there is a problem in one the effects of such a problem on the other can be easily assessed and resolved.



Steel Drums Manufactured at the Drum Manufacturing Plant of the Warri Refinery and Petrochemicals Company Limited

KADUNA REFINING AND PETROCHEMICAL COMPANY LIMITED

This subsidiary was established to efficiently and profitably process crude oil into refined petroleum products and manufacture Linear Alkyl Benzene (LAB) and Tins and Drums for domestic consumption and export. It will do this using the already existing facilities at the NNPC Refinery and Linear Alkyl Benzene Plant in Kaduna.

The objectives of this Company are to optimize the capacities of the existing plants, reduce the plants operating costs, develop new products from existing facilities for use in downstream industries and to extend refining services to the West African Sub region.

The justification for the establishment of this company is the same as that of the Warri Refinery and Petrochemicals Company. Like its Warri counterpart, this company is owned 100% by NNPC.

PORT HARCOURT REFINING COMPANY LIMITED

The Port Harcourt Refining Company is in business to provide efficient petroleum Refining Services primarily to NNPC at a minimum cost while spear-heading the development and production of specialised petroleum products.

The Company will provide qualitative refining services for domestic and international markets at competitive prices.

The Company is made up of the existing Port Harcourt Refinery and the new refinery which is still under construction at Port Harcourt.

PIPELINES AND PRODUCTS MARKETING COMPANY LIMITED (PPMC)

The subsidiary was set up to provide excellent customer services by transporting crude oil to the refineries and moving white petroleum products to existing and future markets efficiently and at low cost through a safe and well maintained network of pipelines and depots. It is also part of the mission of the company to profitably and efficiently market refined petroleum and petrochemical products in the domestic as well as export markets especially in the ECOWAS Sub-region, provide marine services and also maintain uninterrupted movement of refined petroleum products from the local refineries.

The Pipelines and Products Marketing Company wish to be the dominant supplier of all refined petroleum and petrochemical products to the existing domestic and growing export markets within the West African Sub-region. It is also the wish of this Company that in a short while from now, the effectiveness and efficiency with which the operation of its pipelines are conducted will be comparable to those of similar companies in the international Community.

The following are important programmes of this Company:

1. After consolidating the home market within the next few years, the Company intends to explore the possibility of extending its pipeline Network to neighbouring countries to earn valuable revenue.
2. It will consciously minimize cost of services and other cost elements that go into product price determination. The Company will maximize utilization of coastal vessels for products

movement from the coastal refineries to identified markets. It will determine and meet the national level of petroleum and petrochemical products demand.

5. It will stimulate the consumption of liquid petroleum gas LPG to a significant level of the domestic energy mix.
6. It will stimulate sale of special products and promote import substitution of petroleum products and special products (Naphtha, Solent, DAK, Waxes, Bitumen and Sulphur). Finally, the Company will develop profitable domestic and export markets for petrochemical products.



A Section of the New Port Harcourt Refinery set under construction. Part of the Port Harcourt Refining Company Ltd.

NIGERIAN GAS DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED

The mission of Nigerian Gas Development Company Limited is to efficiently gather, treat, transmit and market Nigeria's natural Gas and its by-products to major industrial and utility gas distribution companies in Nigeria and neighbouring countries through Pipelines and other distribution systems using appropriate technology and at a profit that will yield an optimum return on invested capital.

The above mission statement captures the spirit of the major strategic thrust of this company in the next few years, which is to develop and nurture a gas marketing business, and through it, to promote the maximum commercialisation and utilisation of natural gas in the country.

The key elements addressed by the mission of this company are: to gather, treat and transmit gas and its derivatives, and the marketing aspect of its operations which is to sell and promote gas utilisation in domestic market and neighbouring ECOWAS Sub-region.

The observable overall strategic direction of this company therefore is to displace competing fuels with natural gas as a major economic energy source and establish a



SUPPLEMENT ON NNPC

viable domestic gas industry so as to utilize the vast natural gas resources available in the country.

The overriding objectives of the Nigerian Gas Development Company Limited are:

- To maintain leadership in the local gas market and establish presence in the gas market of neighbouring countries.
- To improve the financial performance and enhance the profitability of the Nigerian Gas Development Programme;
- To attract capital investment from interested domestic and foreign third parties.
- To develop a positive gas use culture and remove the traditional inhibitions to the use of natural gas.



Working the Escravos to Lagos Gas Pipeline
- A highlight of the Natural Gas Utilisation programme of NNPC

Petrochemical Company is actually an incorporation of the Eleme Phase II Petrochemical complex of the NNPC, on which preliminary work has started. What NNPC has done is to invite the private sector to participate in the Phase II of the Corporation's petrochemical development programme. It is this phase that actually holds the key to our large scale production of petrochemicals to meet our local demand and for export. Therefore, the Eleme Petrochemical Company is an opportunity for the organised private sector to participate in the downstream activities of the petroleum industry.

The business mission of the Eleme Petrochemicals Company is to profitably manufacture a range of petrochemical products by processing natural gas and refinery by-products and to market these products locally and abroad.

The key elements of this mission are the profitable manufacture of only intermediate products such as Polyethylene (PE), Polypropylene (PP), Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC), etc., required by downstream converters to produce and consumer products (such as Plastics, Detergents and Pharmaceuticals). The marketing (locally and abroad) of the products is another key element of the mission of this company.



Geosurveying at an NNPC Drilling Operation

From the above, it is clear that this is the company which will be responsible for developing the use of Nigeria's abundant gas resources.

Gas is already being produced in various of fields, either as associated or unassociated gas. It will be the job of this company to gather the gas, treat it and distribute/sell it for industrial and even domestic uses all over Nigeria and elsewhere. It will determine where gas is needed and deliver it as a profit.

The company's activities will take shape as soon as NNPC completes the Escravos to Lagos gas pipeline project. The Escravos to Lagos pipeline project will be the pivot of the company's gas utilisation plans.

ELEME PETROCHEMICALS COMPANY LIMITED

This company is a joint venture between NNPC and the private sector. The Eleme

1. a plant that will manufacture 250,000 metric tons per year of Ethylene,
2. a plant that will manufacture 90,000 metric tons per year of Propylene,
3. a plant that will manufacture 250,000 metric tons per year of Polyethylene,
4. a plant that will manufacture 80,000 Polypropylene,
5. a plant that will manufacture 22,000 metric tons per year of Butene - 1
6. Utilities, offsites and infrastructural facilities.

Before it can do this however, the company will establish the availability of finance for its projects through the development of financial arrangements with joint venture financial partners or through export foreign credit arrangements. The exercise of finding joint venture partners is already in progress.



The Petrochemicals Company
and Petrochemicals Project

Enquiries from interested parties can be made through the Deputy Managing Director, NNPC, The Holding

ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS NIGERIA LTD

This is again a firm based in America based on the Consulting firm of being world.

The Engineering Limited is to be set up for NNPC. The company, NNPC, is looking for an experienced person of Bachelors or other comparable future projects and job opportunities.



SUPPLEMENT ON NNPC

Notwithstanding that NNPC's engineers have been involved in the design, engineering, construction and commissioning of all projects undertaken by the corporation till date, we seem not to have been able to build a standing engineering outfit that could definitely be relied upon to undertake the building of any NNPC project such as a refinery with minimum foreign involvement.

This is because, at the end of every project, our engineers move over to other new projects, or are deployed to other operational units. This has made it impossible to have the experiences of such engineers concentrated in one outfit to build upon and utilise on a consistent basis. With the establishment of this engineering company, a base is now being built for technology acquisition and development.

The backing to be provided by Bechtel should shore up the needed confidence in the probability of successful execution of engineering jobs to be undertaken by the company. This company is definitely a worthwhile venture for a country that strives towards technological advancement and independence.

NIGERIA LNG COMPANY (NLNG)

The mission of the Nigeria LNG Company, a joint venture between NNPC and three other major oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria, is to acquire and ensure a growing share of the international market for Nigeria's abundant natural gas resources by the promotion and sustained implementation of a competitive Liquefied Natural Gas Project. The other companies in the joint venture are Shell, Elf, and Agip. Already, the consortium of the joint venture partners in the company has found a market for Nigeria's Liquefied

aid from buyers in Western Europe for Nigeria's LNG is unshaken and also keep a close eye on developments in the U.S. and Canadian gas markets, to continue the technical development of the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project to ensure first shipment of LNG in 1986, to source finance for the LNG project and to finalise arrangement for the Nigerian LNG fleet.

CALSON (BERMUDA) LIMITED

The company is a joint venture between NNPC and American Multinational Oil Company, Chevron. CALSON is strictly a products marketing outfit, designed to market our excess petroleum products in the West African sub-region and elsewhere.

The West African market is one in which Chevron has had considerable experience in trading for quite some time. NNPC intends to join forces with Chevron to exploit the ECGWAS - Sub-regional market to their mutual advantage. Moreover, this joint venture approach will reduce risks that may be brought about by regional politics and their possible adverse effect on the profitability of an NNPC wholly owned company.

Operational strategies of the company which have been worked out present fine business potentials for full profitable and efficient utilisation of Nigeria's refining capacity. CALSON will also purchase crude oil from Nigeria which it will refine at the Port Harcourt Refining Company for its international markets.

services are to be paid for by the company in foreign exchange. This constitutes the most strategic intent for the establishment of CALSON.

HYSON (NIGERIA) LIMITED

This is another subsidiary company formed in joint venture with Chevron. NNPC has 60% equity in the company while Chevron has 40%. Hyson is a service company whose primary focus is the profitable and orderly penetration of the West African market of Nigeria's petroleum products. It will do this by offering operational and logistic services to the NNPC/Chevron downstream joint venture company - CALSON - which will market excess Nigerian petroleum products.

Hyson is designed principally to ensure a successful operation of CALSON in its Petroleum Products Marketing business in the West and Central African Sub-region, particularly at the Nigerian end. Hyson's other objective is the transfer of international petroleum products marketing know-how to Nigerians.

INTERNATIONAL TRADING ACTIVITIES

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation is determined to be a force to be reckoned with in the international business environment. The infrastructures already laid out for the new international commercial outlook are only the beginning of the corporation's intent to go into the world to conquer.

NNPC continues to look out for open strategic windows in the world's petroleum business. To effectively do this, the corporation realises it must be there physically, hence it is presently working on the establishment of what it calls the **INTERNATIONAL TRADING AND MARKETING COMPANY**. When the arrangement is finalised, NNPC will be sure to emerge as a successful international oil corporation.



An NNPC Petroleum Products Storage Depot (see also the caption for the Refinery and Products Marketing Company Ltd. (PRM).



Vessel Loading Products at an NNPC Refinery Jetty



**RESEARCHED AND
DOCUMENTED BY
EDOREH E. AGBAH, SENIOR
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
(FEATURES) NNPC, LAGOS**

Natural Gas in Europe. All that is left now is for the company to complete the financial packages for the project before proceeding to the engineering aspect of the business. It is envisaged that its facilities will be ready before 1995.

The immediate objectives of NLNG are to ensure that the firm commitments obtain-

Therefore, the strategic advantages to NNPC for establishing this subsidiary are quite substantial. They include the collection of dividends from the company, the processing of its crude oil at an NNPC refinery, the purchase of petroleum products from Nigeria at international prices and as another source for Nigeria's crude oil sale, a most reliable source at that. All these

Preface

Since the false start...

TH**ERE** is a sense in which form is as equally important as content. For forms can sometimes determine the essence of the things they consist.

It was presumably in this light that the Osagyefo, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, upon Ghana's attainment of independence in 1957, was to parody the Holy Scriptures that "seek ye first the political kingdom, and all other things shall be added unto you." More than three decades later, the Osagyefo's homily is yet to come to terms with reality for the vast majority of Ghanaians. If anything, Nkrumah's countrymen would readily agree today that the form called independence has, paradoxically, subtracted from what they were made to expect so many years ago.

Ghana's dilemma, so typical, is unfortunately the sad burden of almost all independent African countries today. Just before the emergence of the Second Republic in Nigeria, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, a frontliner in the struggle for Nigeria's freedom and political inspiration for a generation of Nigerians, including Ghana's Nkrumah, had cause to lament the fate of independent Africa. To him, having observed closely the workings of more than 50 independent African nations, there was no conclusion he could come to other than that democracy — that irreducible minimum of a free people — was unviable in these shores. The Second Republic, when it came, succeeded abundantly in re-enforcing the Owelle's sanguine views.

Was Nkrumah naive? Was his accent on a mere political form, the hasty reaction of a man contemplating life without the whiteman's colonial yoke?

At a less simplistic level, Nkrumah's political kingdom can be interpreted correctly to mean a kind of lever by which all other societal forces could be galvanised. For, every nation without political freedom of action will only serve the interests of others, never its own. Put in proper perspective, therefore, the political kingdom is only a potential, although,



■ Nigeria's first head of government, Tafawa Balewa (left) and Babangida: Twenty-eight years between, not yet the promised land.

a powerful one. But like individuals, nations are never intrinsically bound to realise their potentials, no matter how prodigious.

Twenty-eight years ago, Nigeria got this powerful but latent weapon of freedom. And like Ghana, all other things have not flowed therefrom. Where, in the inimitable words of the French sociologist, Rene Dumont, did Nigeria begin *The False Start*? Can she ever realise its potentials? How?

As the State prepares to roll out the drums and the red carpets to repeat the almost farcical ritual of yearly celebrations on October 1, *The African Guardian* attempts to locate the problems and to offer a guide to the future because the prevailing vicious circle, if unchecked, may ultimately lead Nigeria into the abyss.

POLITICS

Democracy: The ultimate gold



Nigeria still on the trail 28 years after independence

WHAT does a man, born in the year of flag independence, a year of hope and dreams, know about Nigeria at 28? Except that he has seen Nigeria, his homeland, grope in the dark, drift through years of self-immolation, emerge battered and bloodied but still standing, still groping, still drifting and hoping?

How does he come to terms with a situation where in 28 years of manhood, he is still unable to decide, on a regular basis who should preside over his

affairs. Why must it be men who either shoot or rig their way into power? And why must they, more often than not, indulge in obscene opulence, thievery and squandermania? How does the young man explain the absence of a durable political system that would guide the conduct of not only the governors but the governed in an atmosphere devoid of blood spilling, distrust and treachery?

Daily, this young man ponders these questions, and on this particular day,

his attention is drawn to the lead story in *The Guardian* (September 22). He is informed that the nation's first "locally made" car would run soon with an imported engine block and gear boxes. He dumps the newspaper, picks another, which informs him that a cobbler at Yaba bus stop in Lagos has committed suicide by jumping into the flaming ruins of his life possession, set ablaze by agents of the state. He puts aside the papers and tunes the radio. Ernes

Okonkwo's voice blares loud and clear from far away Seoul, South Korea — a Third World country just celebrating its first gold-transition from a developing country to a developed nation. Okonkwo informs the young man that his own national soccer team, the Green Eagles, trained by a German, has been mauled again for the third consecutive time in the full glare of more than a billion television viewers.

Where have we gone wrong? Where are we going? God, what have we done? A barrage of questions. He is tormented, no doubt, but the answers won't come. The young man, quite familiar with other lands, is aware that the problems of his homeland are not without a solution. Take South Korea the country of the moment. Forget for now, its problem of unification with the North, the presence of foreign troops on its soil or its appreciable level of development. For in South Korea, like Nigeria, successive regimes have been locked in pitched battles with the people, especially the students, whose clamor call and desire have been one word — democracy.

Whether they have achieved that is open to different interpretations. But one thing is clear; the aroma of democracy, the ultimate gold, can be sniffed from the fresh air in the whole of the Korean Peninsula. Take this incident. A Korean journalist Mr. Oh Hong Kun, city editor of South Korea's *Joongang Daily News* has published an article denouncing "military culture" as the greatest enemy of his country's experiment in democracy. According to *TIME* magazine, goons from the country's military intelligence were not amused by the article and they went after the journalist, beating him and slicing his thigh with a knife. He ended up in hospital but that was not the end.

The country's leadership, now savouring the luscious dish of democracy — complete with a parliament and a strong opposition (both in Parliament and in the streets) — opened an investigation. The three military assailants were found and punished. Not only that, the country's defence minister took vicarious responsibility for the crime of his soldiers, apologized to the journalist and offered to resign. "It reflects the enhanced democratic strength of our people", an elated Kim Yong Sam, leader of the opposition Reunification Democratic Party was quoted as saying.

That is democracy, the sweetness of



• Okoye: We need tolerance and consensus

which every nation clamours. That is what Nigeria has clamoured for since 1946 when Richards gave her the first constitution. But clamour as Nigerians have been doing, the fact today is that democracy has proved to be an elusive dream. Various reasons have been offered for the failure. Soldiers have blamed civilians, civilians have blamed soldiers.

The nation's history in the past 28 years has been that of political instability which has triggered a civil war, botched attempts at democracy, military interventions, distrust among the various ethnic groups, class discrimination, suppression of dissent and the muzzling of labour, student unions and progressive forces. As Mokuwo Okoye, a hero of the independence struggle, who was jailed by the British colonialists laments to *The African Guardian*: "The present day Nigeria is a caricature of what we dreamt of." To him, it is akin to "adding salt to an injury each time you ask us to say what we feel about this country. I am not a happy man, we sacrificed ourselves and ideas for this nation, but see the mess they have made of the country."

Okoye is not the only unhappy man in Nigeria today. Indeed, only a few of his 100 million compatriots are happy. But who is to blame? What is to be done? Many Nigerians blame the system while others blame the operators of the system. Dr Kola Balogun, a minister in the First Republic, says that "What went wrong was primarily the ignorance of the leaders in political economy. If our leaders had had enough knowledge of the economy, the two republics (Balewa and Shagan regimes) would not have failed." Apart from ignorance, corruption, insecurity, political intolerance and election rigging have been



• Shagan: Presided over the Second Republic

taunted by successive military leaders for intervening in the political process. And in a bid to put a halt to this, the Babangida administration has outlined various ways of evolving a political culture devoid of these vices. The administration thus set up a Political Bureau in January 1986 to collate the views of Nigerians and articulate a transition from political instability to a stable democracy.

The Bureau in its report found Nigeria as a "modernising, capitalistic system and a largely pre-industrial, i.e., a subsistence economy." While the Bureau reported that Nigeria "has all the potentialities for greatness," it, nevertheless, observed that the country faces tremendous obstacles in "our ethnic and religious diversities, the marginalisation of the vast majority of the people as a result of class and social stratification, and differing levels of exposure to Western technology."

Which is the way forward? The Bureau recommended an "ingenious social engineering, a clear ideology (Socialism), and a committed and purposeful leadership." The Babangida administration, although impressed by the report, did not accept its recommendation of socialism. Rather, the Federal Government in its white paper claimed it was not interested in improving any ideology on the country. The transition programme which is the political version of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) envisages, according to Vice-Admiral Augustus Aikhomo, the Chief of General Staff, the "orientation of the Nigerian citizenry in the evolution of a new political order and gradual disengagement of the military by handing over the reins of power completely to a democratically elected civilian government in

Where lies the answer?

Nigeria's economic recovery remains a mirage



FOR Nigeria to come out of its economic crisis Dr Bade Onimode of the

University of Ibadan, has a recipe: "The country should reduce the link between the naira and other foreign currencies like the dollar, and unilaterally peg the exchange rate and debt service ratio." Some, like Chief Oluwale Adeosun, Managing Director, First Bank think that would be going back to the era of import licensing and fixed exchange rates which have put the country in its present precarious state.

However, the government has thrown its weight behind a market-oriented programme that it expects would pave the way for industrial growth and a self-sustaining development. But as it puts its plans into action, the public is not quite sure where the Structural Adjustment life-line would lead the country. Nor do critics and proponents see any light at the end of the tunnel that would herald prosperity in the 1990's.

Locked in a vicious debt circle, Nigeria has been going through a juggling exercise of debt rescheduling. For all the efforts, it seems that the only visible outcome has been that the country is sinking deeper into debt. Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has reported that in 1985, total outstanding debt was N17.3 billion. It hit the N100.8 billion mark last December and this year is estimated to add another N22 billion. All these in the face of painful debt-service payments that seem like a drop in a bucket. For the first half of this year, U.S. \$107.9 million was doled out for debt servicing, dwarfing last year's by 189.7 per cent.

With this kind of scenario, speculations are that Nigeria's debts may grow to \$60 billion by 1992. At today's exchange rate, that is a staggering N300 billion, leading to the ugly prediction that it could take the country well over 100 years to balance her debt portfolio. While the crystal ball gazers set the panic rolling, the government says the answer lies in shedding its holdings in various businesses and leaving parastatals to fend for themselves. But even this grand arrangement is tottering. Local

critics are divided about the underlying rationale by government. On the one hand, some businessmen say that by leaving profitable companies like banks out of the privatisation exercise, and still maintaining a presence in some, the government appears half-hearted in its efforts to turn the economy around.

Taking a cue from the indigenisation exercise, critics like Dr. Onimode ask: "Who gets what?" in the privatisation exercise? It appears that the central focus to this group should be the equitable distribution of investments of the tax payers for the benefit of all. Even so, Chief Omoswale Kaye, Secretary to the Technical Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation programme observed that the government has fragmented the ownership structure of these firms that a question arises as to its effective implementation. It appears that the government has tried to steer a middle course in an attempt to satisfy both sides.

But potential international investors and creditors see the arguments differently. They believe that government and critics alike are missing the point. Privatisation and Debt for equity conversion must go hand in hand and the government has not done quite enough. For example, it should not be seen that privatisation merely involves the government giving up part ownership. The whole idea is to open up the economy to create a climate for productive investment and efficient management. It does not matter who owns what. Now it appears there is not enough incentive to attract foreigners to bring the much needed capital inflow, through the debt-equity swap, to cash in on privatisation.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), an arm of the World Bank has its own prescriptions. First, Nigeria should open up the class of debts to be converted in order to attract genuine investors. At present, eligible convertible debts amount to about \$8.1 billion including \$4.8 billion in promissory notes. Discounting in the international capital market for a miserly 27-30 per cent of face value, it seems to them that the country is not quite ready for serious business.

Secondly, the debt-equity guidelines allow for capital repatriation in 10 years



● **Kollere:** Foreigners own some companies practically

while dividends could be taken home by foreigners in five. This arrangement is deemed to be a limiting idea in the investment decisions of foreigners. If the government meets these criteria, including reducing taxes and reviewing the Nigeria Enterprises Promotion Board decree to allow foreign interests into areas that were exclusively reserved for Nigerians, then it would have set off an alarm, because underlying the reluctance to endorse privatisation and debt conversion is the fear of foreign domination of the country's economy. But Alhaji Kollere, Managing Director, International Merchant Bank, says "we cannot deceive ourselves; foreigners own some of these companies practically, but subscribe to 40 to 60 per cent on paper." So where does Nigeria's future lie in the foregoing scenario?

It appears that Nigeria may have to experience a delayed take off for self-reliance or a hard landing that could follow a luke-warm effort. Haroun Adamu, Publisher of the Nigerian Economist and member of the Constituent Assembly is not mincing words. He believes that the country is heading toward a tragic fall. Even as government programmes point the opposite direction, the chances of success may be marred in the enormity of competing and conflicting objectives.

A particular problem is that there are no immediate answers. It has become apparent that unviable privatised companies would first be made viable before they can attract investors' fancy. Initial estimates indicate this could be achieved between 1990 and 1992.

By Herbert Ojoh

crowd. After they perform the miracle, Government can politely inform the group that government will have to be a beneficiary of such successes as there might be, and avail itself of additional revenue by way of taxes.

Meanwhile, the achievement of such an increase in productivity would certainly have provided the jobs and the overall impetus to growth which is mandatory for survival. It is a simplistic scenario, and yet for all its simplicity, it appears to be the only route that we have left. Assuming that we accept the scenario, how do we create the climate for it to become reality, and even more significant, how would we assign the benefits of the scenario in meeting with the challenges of the 21st century? These are the issues which should be preoccupying us at the present.

The route to wonderland

If we accept that the task before us is the creation of significant increases in productivity, so as to raise the level of capital formation, then we must address ourselves to the question of the model to be adopted. It does appear that we have actually chosen a model based on private initiative and market-orientation, but there is a marked reluctance to be explicit about the choice. Such reticence will only lead to obfuscation, and then to failure.

Take our proposed privatisation programme for instance: the antagonists to the programme have created so much apprehension that the programme is rapidly resembling an esoteric exercise in financial juggling, which is increasingly obscuring the fact that the major issue is that of installing capable and efficient management. After all the financial juggling, we shall simply find that we have preserved the bureaucratic and management structures that brought us to the place of pain in the first instance.

Our perspective plans must implicitly recognise that the liberalisation of the economy is the only route to the expansion of the productive frontier. The contradictions arising from our reluctance to grasp market-orientation explicitly are causing a great deal of damage to our ability to forge ahead. Examples of the contradictions abound. On one hand we condemn the banks for making profits from the Foreign Exchange Market (FEM), and then turn around to congratulate the state banks for finally having become efficient and profitable because of their access to the same market.

The antagonists of privatisation cite

the over-concentration of economic power which the programme will result in, while at the same time bemoaning the inefficiency arising from public sector equity participation! We require domestic investors to show more confidence in the economy by making new local investments, instead of resorting to capital flight schemes, and yet we continue to pursue capricious policies which indicate that investment decisions of today may very well be undermined tomorrow. A whole generation of Nigerian entrepreneurs have seen their fortunes crumble right underneath their noses, and would certainly demand strong assurances before they invest in new ventures again. We urge



• Ogunjide: Liberalisation of the economy is the only route

foreign investment in one breadth, and in the other breadth we propagate strident economic nationalism. There is a need for some consistency.

Government can no longer lead in the capital formation drive, considering the level of its commitments in the area of provision of infrastructure and basic social services. We need to convert the huge private fortunes of Nigerians, currently in foreign and local real estate, and fixed deposit accounts into productive capital. We can only do so by a thorough liberalisation of the investment climate, and the reduction of bureaucracy to the barest minimum. The stand-off between the private sector and the government is both superficial and unproductive; both groups represent factions of the same elite.

The country is an investors' paradise with fortunes to be made and boundless opportunities for productive ventures. The route to wonderland is straightforward if only we can let go of some of

our out-dated fixations. Government should let private initiative flourish, relax investment regulations further, increase access to bank credit, reduce the cost of agricultural credit if no other subsidies exist, and concentrate on bringing efficiency into the taxation machinery. This is the route to the creation of our productive scenario mentioned above.

Towards the 21st century

The next stage of the equation is the tricky part, establishing our development priorities for the beginning of the next century. A great deal of unorthodox thinking will have to come into play here, because there are some truisms of world development that we cannot avoid. For one thing, there is no question of our ability to achieve technological parity with the industrialised nations. The only hope that we have is to exploit the inevitable changes that will take place in the composition of the labour forces of Europe and North America. Demographic studies indicate that an increasing percentage of the population of the industrialised nations will be falling into the category of retired and senior citizens. More important however, the decline of birth rates in these nations over the last two decades suggests that new recruits into their labour force will increasingly be on the decline.

The logic of the above developments has explicit implications for the type of productive activity that these nations will be willing to undertake, and those which they would be willing to concede to the developing nations, not out of altruistic motives, but for reasons of comparative cost disadvantages. For nations like Nigeria, it means that primary production will continue to be important both for domestic consumption and for export. In addition, there will be vast opportunities in the area of elementary manufacturing processes, and assembling of intermediate goods, both for export and re-export.

Thus, if for instance we should pose the question of whether or not we should continue to establish motor-vehicle assembly plants, the answer would be 'yes'. Why? Because, we would be unable to compete anyway with the level of automobile technology in the industrialised nations in the 21st century. Because, we could conceivably develop a significant export market in sub-saharan Africa.

Ogunjide is a G.M. Special Duties, First Bank of Nigeria Ltd.



■ Fruits on display: Self-sufficiency in food production is first step to economic emancipation

Foibles of food

Lack of foresight stalls Nigeria's agricultural output

AGRICULTURE is a depressing signpost against the stark, cheerless sky of Nigeria's experience in the last 28 years. Not even the great amount of information churned out periodically by research institutes and university agriculture departments can conceal this depressing fact: Almost three decades after the Union Jack went down, the Giant of Africa cannot feed itself. Malawi, a tiny country in southern Africa pulls off this "feat" quite regularly. It is enough to make the most optimistic patriot shed tears of frustration.

Consider: in 1960, agricultural products accounted for four-fifths of the total value of the country's export earnings. Two years later, the sky was still awash in silver linings: agriculture contributed about 61.2 per cent to the Gross National Product (GNP), that is, the total value of goods and services produced that year. In 1970, 18 years later, the portents were not so bright. Agriculture was responsible for 44 per cent of export earnings. Four years later, it was down to less than 24 per cent. But the worst was yet to come. By 1980, agriculture was virtually in its death throes; it contributed only 18 per cent to the economy.

In one of the most telling indictments of Nigeria's agricultural policies, the chairman of the Directorate for Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure recently asked: "Why should we have food crisis in spite of the huge funds pumped into World Bank-assisted agricultural

development programmes, river basin authorities, Operation Feed the Nation and Green Revolution?"

The answer to that question lies somewhere between poor planning and misdirected policy execution. Before the 1960s and the immediate post-independence era, agriculture was the crown in the jewel of Nigeria's economy. But there was a perfectly rational explanation for this. Then, petroleum was only a rumbling in the distance and "Back to the Land" was not just a jingle; it was sheer necessity. Thus, 20 per cent or nearly 35 million pounds of total

export earnings of about 200 million pounds was from cocoa alone. Palm oil and palm products even did better, and groundnut production exceeded one million tonnes.

The black gold put an end to all that. Eight years after the Shell oil company exported the first 5,134 barrels of crude oil from Nigeria, oil had reduced agriculture's contribution to total export earnings to 60 per cent. And within five short years later, oil was king; agriculture was a pretender to the throne of Nigeria's economy. Evidence: oil accounted for 74.4 per cent of earnings; agriculture a paltry 22 per cent.

The Arab-Israeli war which broke out in 1973 caused a further slide in the fortunes of agriculture. A fall-out of the war was the tripling of the world-wide prices of petroleum. Nigeria was in a good position to benefit. The oil boom was on!

But something else besides the boom was on: Importation. Nigeria went after any foreign good it could lay its hands on; including food. The food bill at the end of 1982 was more than N3 billion. It was a period of illusion, of hopes built on the quicksands of doubtful affluence.

In 1978, Nigeria took its first foreign loan. By 1982, the naira value, (at the height of the oil boom, two dollars were exchanged for one naira) took a tumble. The oil glut had begun. That year, President Shugu Shagari introduced his austerity measures. And suddenly everyone was on the look-out for a saviour, for the banished "impostor" of yesteryear. Agriculture was back on the throne.

But it would take more than good will

■ Nasko, Agric Minister: An uphill task to stimulate increased agricultural output.



to get agriculture back to its pre-eminence. Neither the pre- or post-oil boom initiatives to take Nigeria's agriculture out of the woods have proved successful. In 1973, for example, there was the National Accelerated Food Production Project, a half-hearted effort at best. The other programmes that followed in quick succession fared no better: Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Seed Multiplication and Distribution Project, the Green Revolution and the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (AGS).

There is no doubt that agriculture, perhaps, more than ever before, is on centre-stage. But intentions and policies are yet to be reflected in returns. Between 1984 and now, as Koinsva noted recently, at least N5 billion has been pumped into agriculture. But the returns are far from fantastic. As Nurudeen Adedipe, Vice-Chancellor of the recently-established University of Agriculture, Abeokuta puts it: "The way we were 15 years ago is the way we practically are today." Adedipe attributes this distressing situation to problems of "funding, strategy, operational modality, leadership and geo-politics."

The problem may be more than that. Njoku Awa, a Professor at the Department of Communication, Cornell University, New York believes that "many projects, especially those designed by government agencies, the national ministries of agriculture, education and health, continue to ignore local needs, neglect local resources and alienate local groups."

The ban on importation of foodstuffs, including wheat and maize, though well-intentioned, has not resulted in an automatic rise in the fortunes of the agricultural sector. Not even the presence of 16 faculties of agriculture, 40 schools and colleges of agriculture and 14 agricultural research institutes have caused any significant improvement in the food situation. In 1981, the federal government supported only the Federal department of forestry financially; by 1983, there were 78 different agricultural parastatals solely funded by government. But research funding is limited to an average of one per cent of the value of agricultural products; elsewhere it is as high as 3 per cent.

In its White Paper on the findings and recommendations of the Political Bureau last year, Federal government confidently declared that "The ban on the importation of food, including rice, maize and wheat as well as vegetable oil has significantly removed our depend-

ence to achieve self-reliance. It is significant that Nigeria is now reasonably self-sufficient in food production."

This seems a bit far-fetched. There is compelling evidence that makes short work of any statistics, however well-couched they are. The come-back of *Kwashiorkor*, the ailment that sent many to their graves during the civil war, is evidence. A 50kg bag of garri is sold for between N250 and N270, up about 100 per cent from last year. Garri is perhaps the best known case. The lowly national staple is suddenly high brow, affordable only by the rich. Other staples have not fared better.

The reasons for the country's backwardness in agriculture, of its having about 80 per cent of its citizens in this field, are legion. Francis Idachaba elaborated on some of them in a recent



• *Kanyan*: Returns from agriculture are unimpressive

interview: "It lies in a faulty philosophy and faulty organisational set-up. It also lies in defective programming in the teaching and research by our universities of agriculture. Another major constraint is the problem of rural infrastructure..."

The last problem is certainly worthy of note. The government says its agricultural policies revolve around the small-scale farmer. But the lending policies of banks and other factors seem designed to frustrate him. Even though the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme made it possible for a total of N102m to be loaned to 16,209 farmers last year, many other farmers were not

able to get loans. The 20 per cent interest on agricultural loans has remained, in spite of the cries of farmers. It worsens an already compounded situation, the partial privatisation of the Nigerian Agricultural Credit Banks (NACB) has made it more difficult to overcome the collateral obstacle. And some unscrupulous farmers are giving others a bad name. Ondo State is a typical example where the government, having spent N67 million in 12 years as loans to farmers, could only recover N40 million. Navy Captain Olabode George sounded somewhat bitter when he highlighted the problem three months ago: "The government has always been ready and willing to assist the farmers financially, but the farmers are not reciprocating the gesture judging by the high degree of defaults." But it seems that government can only stop loans at the expense of the genuine farmer who, in spite of the advent of millionaire farmers, produces almost all the food eaten in the country.

Nature, the less sublime aspects of nature, are also part of the blight on agriculture. In the north, rinderpest, quela birds, grasshoppers and the big brother of them all — drought — wreak havoc yearly. This year, destruction came from an unexpected quarter — the heavens — as dams and rivers were flooded by rain. Last year, Kano State spent N7 million to combat pests. This year the bill is much more.

Down South, erosion and salinity continue to do terrible things to the soil. All in all, nature has done more damage to the food fortunes of Nigeria than many know. The solution? Instead of the piece-meal approach for which we are renowned in these parts, a more integrated approach to the problem should be adopted. The rickety dams which traverse the country should be over-hauled, and periodic checking should be the rule, not the exception. As in other areas, government may be said to have a lot of good intentions.

But this may not be enough. The tendency for government policies in agriculture to be subverted by unscrupulous officials or to go unrealized because of inadequate planning are very real possibilities in the final analysis. The emphasis in the next years should not be on having perfect solutions. Rather it should be on making the policies more perfect in the light of new experiences, and the contributions of those directly in the line of fire: the farmers themselves.

By Paul Nwabulimu



• The National Arts Theatre, Lagos. Inset are Durbar and (right) boat regatta

CULTURE

At last a manifesto

New policy desires a cultural dimension to national planning



NIGERIA this year made known her cultural policy. The break-through may be credited to Information and Culture Minister, Tony Momoh,

who, since his appointment in 1986, has pushed hard to get such a policy in print. The definition of the horizon of culture is seen as the prior objective basis for any forward march. Its possibility in shaping or assisting the course of national development cannot be overlooked.

The publication of a cultural policy in the twenty-eighth year of the nation's independence is itself a criticism of the quality of that independence. It is a reminder that the titans of the nationalist struggle did not have a cultural programme to enable a conscious modelling of the new Nigerian nation. It is perhaps inevitable that the fabric of the cultural policy would be intertwined with the world outlook of its active proposer. There is a concern throughout with the past, witnessed by the ubiquity of the word "traditional". The policy states, on the very first page, that "culture is not merely a return to the customs of the past. It embodies the attitudes of a people to the future of their traditional values faced with the demands of modern technology which is an essential factor of development and progress."

Though the foregoing statements

escape the vulgar identification of culture with whatever belongs to the past, they are not totally free of the same. To say that culture is not merely a return to the customs of the past suggests the possibility of a return which is independent of the socio-economic matrix. The policy prescribes a number of bodies which will put Nigeria on a path already being trod by some nations. One of these is the National Troupe, being constituted with the assistance of the performing arts, Chieftainship, and Ogunde, as consultant.

Nigerians may look forward to the day when the state fulfils its commitment to promote the establishment of theatres which will be sources of recreation, leisure and entertainment. The presentation of concerts, revues



• Tony Momoh. A plausible dream

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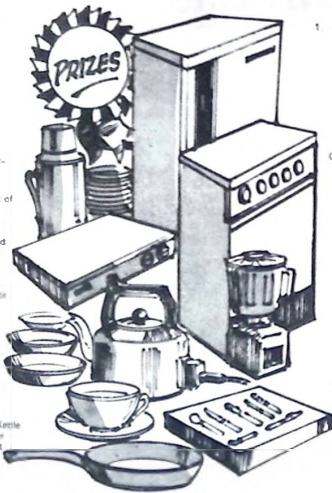
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4. Employees of UAC FOODS and THE FINE & SCHIMMEL LTD. and their relations are not eligible to participate.

5. Entry closes on the 21st October, 1988.

6. The Super prizes will be drawn at the National Theatre on the 11th November 1988.

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A disturbing vision

Arthur Nzeribe bares his mind on the Nigerian polity

Title: *Nigeria: I believe. A manifesto for the Third Republic.*

Author: Arthur Nzeribe

Publisher: Kilimanjaro Publishing Company Limited, London

ARTHUR Nzeribe, millionaire businessman and former senator, in his latest book, goes full-tilt into the North-South ethnopolitico-religious divide that threatens the emergence of a viable Nigerian state and society.

The Ikemba of Nnewi, Odumegwu Ojukwu, in a similar line of thought last month, clarified the many aspects of dichotomy in a publicized lecture. Nzeribe's main gripe is: "A situation in which nearly 24 years of our 28 years of independent leadership have been dominated by northerners, all but one of them muslims, reflects neither federal character and geographical spread nor the plurality of religious followings."

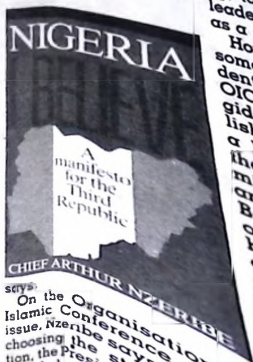
This is essentially the same grievance aired in Nzeribe's earlier work, *Nigeria: Another Hope Betrayed*.

The present work seems to have been an update to take account of developments since the advent of the Babangida administration. The verdict is unchanged. It is religion, or rather the government's sins of omission or commission on the subject, that really riles Nzeribe, who is described as "a Christian Igbo from Eastern Nigeria" on the back cover of the book. He is irked by the utterances of Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, the King Faisal award winner. His words: "It is relevant to illustrate the gravity and potential for danger for the nation, of Gumi's views by reiterating the constitutional provision on the issues that

Sheikh Gumi deals with such treasonably sectarian partisanship."

Nzeribe gives prominence to the disturbances in Kaduna last year, sparked by sectarian clashes at the College of Education, Kalanchan. He brings to his service reports on the disturbances in *Today's Challenge* magazine, and a feature in the *Sunday Voice* newspaper. He cites supporting evidence to show Saudi Arabia's involvement in Nigeria's religious crisis.

Nzeribe dedicated his book to the President "for the way he abrogated the Draconian Decree Number 4 of the Buhari terror regime...." Because of Babangida, "I was able to return to my beloved country," he



• Arthur Nzeribe

ment of Nigerians, grossly underestimated the reaction of the public, especially the Christian community, to what some of the leaders clearly regard as a stab in the back. However, he backs some excuses for the president, asserting the OIC initiative was gida's attempt to slash his credibility. "a Northern military moaner are down. When Babangida, Gen. Abacha, and the Federal Military Government both emerge, mutual cooperation is essential for Nigeria's development. The present situation is a temporary

says. On the Islamic Conference issue, Nzeribe says that choosing the steed for the President, by knowledgeable and sensitive to the



• Allen Jr. and Innocent Jr., moulding a new generation of stars

Twinkle, twinkle little stars

Kid performers hit Nigeria's musical scene

PENNY Nursery and Primary School is tucked away in the Coker District of Orile Iganmu, a less densely populated part of that residential area on the Lagos Mainland.

Dance artiste Innocent Udeh, 8, who attends the school cannot be easily identified from the 60 odd pupils who in their hurry to return home at the end of the school day quickly go through the national Anthem and Pledge before making for the exit.

When Innocent Jr., as he is popularly known sheds his school uniform and dons his dancing costume, probably for an engagement, he is instantly transformed and becomes something apart.

Since 1985, when he first executed his dance routine at the Apapa Amusement Park, Innocent has grown to become a stage delight. To a rising new generation of kid entertainers belong fellow dance practitioners Allen Latei and Chukwuma Mojekwu (of the Miller family who perform



• Tozin: Fast rise to fame

acrobatic displays) as well as Nigeria's youngest singing star, Oluwatosin legede.

Tozin, 7, who had her first outing in 1984 at the Isolo S.O.S. Welfare Village in Lagos, has since released her debut album, "Children Arise." Watching Innocent or Allen mime Michael Jackson's "Bad," with their superb mastery of the "cabbage patch" and break dance, the observer would readily conclude A run-down of Innocent's

that a brilliant career in the spotlights seems to be their gilded destiny.

Kid performers are becoming a feature of the Lagos entertainment circuit. Enthralled by their singing talent or fluidity of their dance steps, fans leap on the stage and plaster kisses or naira notes on their faces. As audience applause goads them to further heights, tears are being entertained about their educational career.



• Miller Jr. Aiming at stardom

results since he joined the 14 other pupils in Primary Three in 1987 reveals the following: Third term of primary Three—12th position; first and second terms of primary Four—11th and 8th position respectively.

"This is not good enough," said the school proprietor, Mr. Ileolu Adeniyani. "We are proud of his (Innocent's) talent but his academic progress is more important."

John Oluwayomi Dilly, class teacher of seven

year-old Allen Latei (also called Allen Jr.) berated the performance of his pupil. "Apart from not being too good academically, he also lacks textbooks and writing materials," Dilly said. In this academic year, Allen, who is a Primary Four pupil at Community Primary School, Amuwo Odofin, Festac Extension, emerged in the 29th and 31st positions in a class of 49 during the first and second terms. Absence from classes could hinder the schoolwork of the starlets. Innocent was discovered to have abstained from school a number of times, once for a whole week. His Father, Innocent Udeh (Sr.) who works in a construction firm, explained that his son, the fifth of eight children, at that time took some time off to recover from the shock of their commercial bus skidding off the road en route Lagos from a performance in Kano.

Adeniyani, the school proprietor, warns against lapses in the kids' education. "There's a danger of these kid performers ending up as delinquents if they lack proper academic grooming. With their education, they would have something to fall back on when their art fails."

Cyndi Lauper, the American superstar, who returned to school and bagged a diploma, once rendered this advice to young aspiring stars, "I'd first like to mention to you the merits of reading and writing before you go on to do anything." The kids could be used as money "mints" by show business professionals as they lack handlers to see to the business side. On the average they get between N100 and N200 for a show in which they feature. — *By John Nwaobi*

Crusading photography

Smart-Cole's photo collection mirrors the society

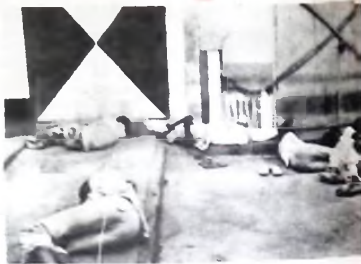
THE ability to transform photography from the mere art of recording impressions of people, places and things to a dynamic medium that distils various affective experiences clearly distinguishes Sunmi Smart-Cole from his peers. With the gifts of patience, care and dedication, he weaves his love of nature and social consciousness into themes consonant with the concerns of purveyors on stage or with the pen or the brush.

Sunmi's current exhibition of some 60 photographs running from September 17 to October 15 at the Goethe Institute, Victoria Island, is a celebration of his 10 years romance with the camera. The photos touch on virtually all aspects of contemporary society. They include: "And, it came to pass," "Sweat and Tears," "From the First Republic," "Brewing," "Freedom for Nelson Mandela," "Shape of Things to Come," "Big man, big trouble," "Behold the Homeless," etc.

"Yours might be Here" (1984) shows an array of wheel-covers of such automobiles as Volkswagen, Peugeot, BMW, Opel, Datsun, etc. The picture deals with the daily practice of car-snatching in some cities and the cannibalisation of the parts for sale. "Sweat and Tears," (1979) captures half-clad men in the process of loading into a truck or off-loading sacks of flour. The intensity of the task is clearly outlined on their bodies.

"Behold the Homeless," (1987) is another sharp pictorial of the other half of society. In it, seven able-

bodied men are shown lying on the bare floor, sleeping away after an exhausting day with no roof over their heads. "Bring Back P.W.D." (1987) is a nostalgic piece invoking the days when the Public Works Department under colonial management ensured that the water flowed when taps were turned on. In contrast is a picture of a lad dejected by the failure of the tap to flow



Behold the homeless



Good morning Harare

freely a shot from contemporary times. Droplets of water emerge from the tap and the lad's bucket is kept away from it, probably in protest.

Sunmi's works in the nature series include "Solitude" (1976) in which a white seagull is seen against a sea of darkness, and "Save the Trees" II (1983). The latter shows the stump of a dead tree whose trunk and branches have been cut off by the axeman. A feeling for the abstract is evident in some works. "Good morning, Harare" (1986) presents what looks like a piano or grand cabinet with a statue atop. On its face is a wash of shadow and light.

Dignitaries present on the opening day of the ex-

hibition included the American Ambassador, The Guardian Group Publisher, Alex Ibru, a former governor of Lagos State, Brigadier Mobolaji Johnson, the Director of the National Council for Arts and Culture, Frank Aig. Imukhuebe, etc.

Sunmi-Smart Cole, 44, is the editor of *Lagos Life* one of the Guardian group of newspapers. A man of many parts, he has had more than 12 exhibitions within and outside Nigeria. The present exhibition is backed by 48 sponsors.

By Humphrey Bekanni

Overheard

► Some of us belong to the grey area, neither new-breed nor old-breed Nigerians.

— *Chief Olu Falae, Secretary to the Federal Government in reply to a statement by Archbishop E. O. Alayande, during the launching of Obafemi Awolowo: The end of an Era? in Lagos.*

► Congratulations to Mr. President for making a good catch 19 years ago.

— *Deborah Barfu, while delivering an oration on Maryam Babangida, at the launching of her book "Home Front".*

► Hoener

► What do you people know about football? Have you travelled out to anywhere?

— *Super-Eagles technical adviser Manfred Hoener rounding on journalists who queried his selection in Seoul.*



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• "Behold, the homeless"



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Olympic blues

For Africa there's little cheer in the games

FOR Africa and most of the rest of the world, the first week of what is perhaps the most competitive Olympics ever has been a bag of mixed blessings. In soccer, the world's most glamorous and most watched sport, Africa had three representatives: Zambia, Nigeria and Tunisia.

While Nigeria, the much vaunted West African team succumbed under an avalanche of Group D goals from Brazil, Yugoslavia and Australia, conceding eight in all and just scoring one in three defeats, North African's, Tunisia, earned two draws against Sweden and China and lost to quarter-finalists West Germany. Zambia, initially the least favoured of the three, bagged in all of 10 goals in three matches, distributing four each to Italy and Guatemala and two to the Arab nation, Iraq who were lucky to put in the only goals the Zambians conceded in the preliminaries.

The Nigerians blamed the level of officiating but conceded that the Olympic

team was far below the standard the nation could really muster as some of her professionals stayed away from the competition. Complaints against officiating, this time on account of his colour, came from Patrick Waweru, the captain of Africa's best boxing team, Kenya. Waweru had been on the wrong end of a controversial 4-1 split decision that saw East German Andreas Zuelow advance in their first round bout. He immediately launched an attack on the jury, accusing them of being biased against Black African boxers and stating "it could get worse."

It didn't, at least not for the "hit-squad" as the Kenyan boxing team is affectionately called. A couple of knockouts spearheaded by Chris Sande and light welterweight David Kamau who demolished Abid Nasir Shabab of Jordan in just one and a half minutes, saw the Kenyans dominate and establish an emphatic African presence



• Odizor and (right) Okwaraji: A string of defeats sports



in the boxing ring.

The Kenyan hockey team has not fared brilliantly despite being current African champions. They lost by a whopping 7-1 to Australia in their opening match and by an even more whopping 8-0 margin to Pakistan in the following match.

In spite of the alarming defeats of the Kenyan hockey team and Nigeria's soccer team, there have been spirited and unexpected performances from other African teams. Algeria, African handball champions, played an opening match against Sweden with gusto, losing eventually in the final stages, through lapse of concen-

tration, by just a three goal margin, 21-18. Central African Republic even went one better in the men's basketball event, reversing the three-point-loss to a 73-70 victory over hosts South Korea.

More spectacular was the lead the trio of Mostafa Adam, Mohamed Abdoulsahid and Ayman Mohamed of Egypt carved out in the modern pentathlon. On the opening day of the five discipline event, the Egyptians, not heavily favoured to end up in the top 20, drew the best horses for the Equestrian event and ended the day with a surprise lead. By the fourth day of competition, however, Mostafa Adam and co. had slipped to a more realistic 13th position.

At the Olympic tennis court Nigeria's Anthony Mmoh won his first round match against Poland's Wojciek Kowalski 6-2, 6-4, 6-4 but lost in the second round to Dutch man Michel Schapers who had deposed top shot Andrei Chesnokov of the U.S.S.R in five keenly contested sets. His compatriots Nduka Odizor and Sadiq Abdulahi had lost their opening matches easily to American Robert Seguso nd Spaniard Javier Sanchez respectively.

By Ola Seyin

SEOUL OLYMPICS



Of guts and determination: Greg Louganis, head on board. The dive that costs four stitches but proceeded to make the best dive which put him on course for a third Olympic gold.



Presidential unseens

WE recall those days when the man of timber and calibre, K.O. Mbadie was still in form. Once, on the occasion of the warming ceremony of his "Peoples' Palace Home" in Arondizogu, the veritable wordsmith was asked the source of his income. He explained that the origins of his wealth were both "seen and unseen; known and unknown".

This brings us to what we hear, happened three weeks ago. According to sources close to Dodan Barracks, President Ibrahim Babangida presumably in an expansive mood paid a visit to the Ota farms of General Olusegun Obasanjo. The friendly visit, we hear, was in the most cordial of atmosphere in which the President took part in a meal of pounded yam and bush meat.

We learnt also that Obasanjo washed down his dish with palm wine which the President, who does not drink, graciously declined. Both generals, according to our sources, cracked jokes and were in a most lively mood.

This should not come as a surprise to the average Nigerian who may feel that the President and the former Head of State are not exactly the best of friends. Presidential visits after all, like K.O.'s source of income, are supposed to be "seen and unseen; known and unknown".

Mourning WAI with relish

The War Against Indiscipline (WAI) which brought with it the queue culture may just have been swept into the dust-bin of history, and it seems a selected group from the upper crust is reaping the fruits of its demise... with relish. Consider the two scenes that occurred recently at two of the country's airports (where else would a befitting end of WAI be celebrated?).

Scene one: September 13, Maiduguri airport: passengers for Nigeria Airways flight from Maiduguri to Lagos via Kano had queued up in the spirit of the (late) WAI to board the only flight available for the day. While boarding passes were still being checked, a group consisting of a retired major-general, a former federal minister and honourable(?) members of the Constituent Assembly, calmly by-passed the queue, went up the gangway and into the plane, with the help, of course, of the officials of Nigerian Airport Authority who cleared the way for them.

As expected, the WAI spirit, (or is it NOM?) was forgotten and a battle to board the plane ensued among the lesser mortals who by now had realised that "turn by turn" belonged to another era.

Scene two: September 13, Aminu Kano International Airport. The plane had touched down in Kano amid a torrential downpour. But it turned out that Nigeria Airways officials, as usual, had issued boarding passes to more passengers than available seats. After another battle, some lucky passengers boarded and probably harboured the confidence that they were on their way to Lagos. This was not to be. From the VIP lounge emerged two military governors, their wives and other state officials heading for the Better Life Fair in Lagos.

With military precision, eight passengers who had paid



N210 each for a seat, were tossed out of the plane by security officials led by the Airport Commandant — a wing commander. The passengers could only protest as the plane took off. After all, it is said that in Nigeria it is easier for the "big oga" to board a Nigeria Airways plane than for the camel to pass through the eye of a needle.



Olympic double-talk

WE are inclined to think that double-talk is now part of the Nigerian national character which we suppose must have rubbed off somehow on Super (?) Eagles handler, Manfred Hoener. We recall that Hoener, before his fateful trip to Seoul, had said that the national team was full of "good (?) defenders, good (?) attackers and a solid (?) midfield." The same Hoener, after the national team showed it was also good at letting an avalanche of balls slip into its own net, blamed The Eagles for not being mobile on the field of play.

Hoener should not sound too surprising to those who listened to Ernest Okonkwo's commentaries on radio, the Sunday Nigeria played against Brazil. The versatile sports commentator had run a first half commentary on the game showering praises on the Eagles as if the Brazilians were not on the pitch and the Eagles were literally having a field day. When the goals started piling up against the Eagles in the second half, Okonkwo's description of the match changed. The fleet-footed Eagles in the first half, became flat-footed in the second half of the game. One then heard in Okonkwo's commentaries more Brazilian names than Nigerian.

The sports commentator was still berating the national team when Brazil netted its fourth goal, thus robbing radio listeners of the benefit of knowing just how the ball found its way into Nigeria's net.

This again brings to mind the popular adage that only a good son is considered the child of the father while the origins of a bad son is anybody's guess....

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