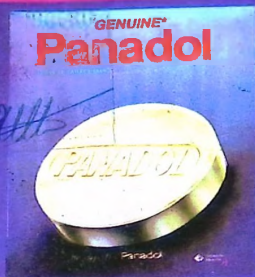


NIGERIA LOSES DEFENCE H/Q TO FIRE

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COMPLIMENTARY CD  
The Sunday Magazine

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THE SUNDAY MAGAZINE VOL. 7, NO. 2, APRIL 25, 1993 — Price: N20.00

# IGBOS

What do they  
want?

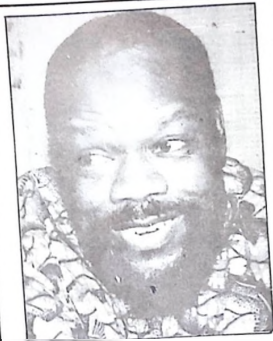
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**\*Nzeribe, Okadigbo  
disagree**

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**COVER:** In the new political arrangement, the Igbos have been nakedly marginalised. They have been schemed out of sensitive political posts as Yorubas and the Hausa Fulanis are to hold key post and political power as if the Igbos are not part of the constituent parts of the federal political entity called NIGERIA.

However, the Igbos, mindful of their alienation in the new political dispensation have started beating the drum of ADMONITION.

The drum humming the voice of wisdom that: *He that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils.*

The Igbos in a nutshell are calling for a favourable change. A positive change that shows and reflects federal character.



Struggle for political power is always fierce and bitter. The period when tight-friends become enemies. The period surprises are made and uncertainty beclouds the sky.

The SDP delegates reconvened again in Abuja to elect party officers after an inconclusive outing at Jos.

**Nigerian Heartcare Foundation provides solace for patients of Heart problems ..... 24**



IBB honoured

**South Africa gets embroiled in political turmoil. .... 30**

**Communities constituting Ajaokuta are yet to be resettled after 17 years of their displacement by the Federal Government ..... 40**



Hani....

**The question that agitates the mind of sports-lovers is the fate of sports in the 3rd Republic. .... 44**



Audu: any hope for the displaced?



MKO Abiola: contributes immensely to Sports

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RTHUR Nzeribe cried last week in the newspapers. It was about what he saw as the marginalization of a major tribe in the country: the Igbo. By this act, he put the Igbo question on the agenda of national news.

At TSM, we never go to sleep. Sniffing news is what we are all about and such news as was buried in the scanty lines of Nzeribe's paid advert could not escape our eagle eyes.

For us, news that matters is that which is current, touches the lives and interests of a large segment of our readers, serves a useful purpose for the society and nation, has relevance and import for our collective present and future.

**In doing this story, we have allowed the different shades of Igbo opinion to emerge. One thing that is however absent is the non-Igbo view on the question. We therefore welcome the views of all Nigerians on our cover story.**

It was for its weight and social significance that we chose the issue for our cover this week.

Ever since the national conventions, even before that, the reoccurring question in political discourse has been: "what do the Igbo want?" Following Nzeribe's cue, TSM felt it was time to seek answers to this interesting political question. And so Acting Editor, **Comfort Oba** and Deputy Editor, **Nnanna Ochereome** went East, spending the Easter holiday seeking out and discussing with a core of Igbo leaders. The result of their effort, as you can see, is indeed a memorable piece that serves the positive purpose of bringing to the fore sub-limited feelings and giving expression to the under-current of views. It is all in the spirit of democracy.

TSM hopes by doing this cover story to contribute a little to helping Nigeria openly and boldly confront her ethnic/geo-political problems, something which has been at the core of our political instability and even the unhealthiness of our economic environment. In doing this story, we have allowed the different shades of Igbo opinion to emerge. One thing that is however absent is the non-Igbo view on the question. We therefore welcome the views of all Nigerians on our cover story.

Perhaps we can help Nzeribe answer his question: where is the third leg of the tripod and in fact is there not a formation of a new third leg outside that which Nzeribe seeks?

Foed for thought this Zesty Sunday, and have a swell time.

*- TSM: We dare where others run!*

*Chris*

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# apocalypse<sup>®</sup>

by emkay

ONCE UPON A TIME

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VERY SOON

BROAD ST.



FOR TEN POUNDS, YOU GO BRING ANOTHER WHEEL BARRROW OF NAIRA . CHIKENA .



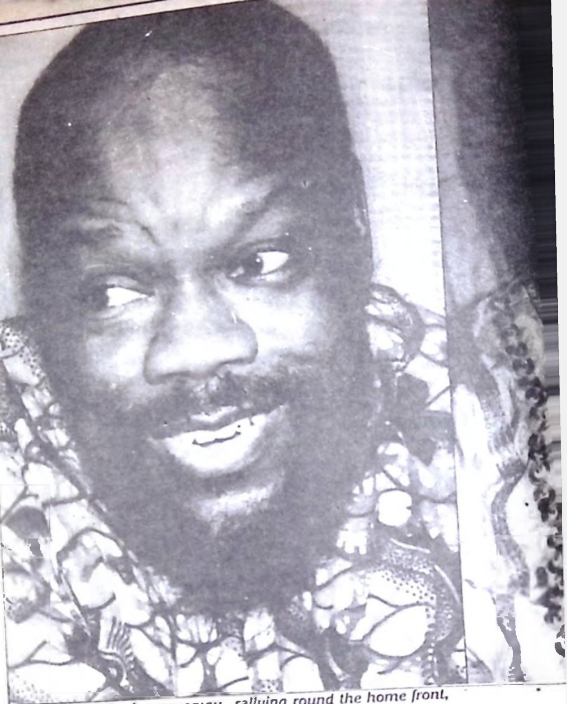


*The two-party system has sidelined more than 20 million Nigerians and woken up their leaders to a need for a new approach to the game of politics*

By Ochereome Nnanna and Comfort Obi

**F**EW people took time to think very deeply about it until now. On October 17, 1989, Ibrahim Babangida, the President, in one of his epoch-making political manoeuvres, disbanded 13 nascent political associations vying for registration. In their place, he smithed and registered two brand new ones, which he christened the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). He, *in situ*, condensed the manifestoes of the condemned associations and assigned the ones that were "a little to the right" to the NRC and those that were inclined "a little to the left" to the SDP.

Thus, history was made. Gone were the days when Nigerian politics rested on a tripod, whereby the three major ethnic groups - Hausa-Fulanis, Igbos and Yorubas - controlled the major parties. Analysts had felt that a two-party system would spawn a North-South dichotomy, or a Christian-Muslim polarity. But the presidential primaries



Ojukwu, Nwodo, Iwuanyanwu...rallying round the home front, but in need of common focusing

# Igbos: A new

of 1992 that were cancelled showed something different. Three core-North Muslims - Adamu Ciroma, Umaru Shinkafi and Bamanga Tukur won the first round in the NRC. In the SDP, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, from the same area, came first, though with a strong showing from Olu Falae (West) and Arthur Nzeribe (East) who placed a weak third. Though allegations of vote-rigging, vote-buying and violence were later advanced, the voting pattern refused to clearly show any North-South or Christian-Muslim cleavage.

Through a hastily-authored Option A4, the voting pattern of 1992 seemed

only further confirmed recently. At national conventions of the parties Jós and Port Harcourt, Bashir Tafa Hausa-Fulani effortlessly took the NRC flag. Moshood Abiola, Yqruha managed to pick the SDP tick after a long, wearying war of nerves a horse-trading. Abiola won the first round with a slim 3,617 votes, while Baba Gana Kingibe clinching 3.2 votes. Kingibe's erstwhile colleague the Shehu Yar'Adua organization Atiku Abubakar, also roped in 2.0 votes. It means that if Kingibe and Abubakar had not split the Yar'Adua camp, the latter would have, theon



# political agenda

cally, beaten Abiola by polling 5,291 votes, thus making the final ballot a mere celebration. In other words, the far-North areas would have beaten the rest of the country hands-down, even with a popular candidate from SDP's strongest base - the West - in the race.

It needed a crisis in the "Northern" camp, and a new-found political accommodation between large elements of the East, the Middle Belt, the Kano axis of the far-North and the West for Abiola to rise beyond the 1,057 total "home" votes of the core West to reap a generous 2,683 votes, leaving Kingibe with 2,456 votes in the final ballot

after Atiku took a bow.

But for these developments, the two-party system would have produced two flag-bearers for the far-North who are Muslims. The traditional political tripods would have transformed into two legs, with both of them firmly planted where power has resided since Nigeria's political independence - the far-North. And, assuming that a person of Abiola's stature had not gone into the race, and given the ordinariness of most of the state flag bearers that emerged after some prominent people had been disqualified from running on the Option A4 platform, the same far-

North would have taken both parties' presidential candidacy. Gone would be the East, West or Middle Belt for the Vee-Pee position, despite their relative strengths in the party.

And in the NRC, the East, with equal number of NRC - controlled states as the Far-North, was unable to present a meaningful challenger to Tofa (who comes from Kano that is mainly SDP - controlled except at the gubernatorial level).

What does it all mean? Simple. In the game of politics, the weak gets eaten first. The introduction of two-partyism has now exposed the real political strengths of the former tripod homesteads. Strength here does not imply population at large. It means the ability to play real politics and win. And that means, the ability to move the entire home front in one direction, and make the other fronts to come along (willingly or not) with all available instruments.

In spite of the modest nature of the "achievement" inherent in putting one of the parties' flags in the hands of a Southerner, many saw Abiola's victory in Jos as an unprecedented historical milestone. An ecstatic Chuba Okadigbo, a senator, saw it as "the change we have been hoping and fighting for since independence. We have proved today that if we stand together, we can effect change," he enthused. Okadigbo, Lulu Briggs (Rivers) and late Jacob Esuene (Akwa Ibom) were among Eastern leaders who had rallied round to swing their people's delegates votes in Abiola's favour, and felt entitled to share in the joys of victory. And, Okadigbo publicly chided an Eastern delegate who complained to him that his Western colleagues were "appropriating Abiola's victory", making non-Westerners to feel like strangers even when the candidate had not won the presidential elections. Said the senator: "don't begrudge them their happiness. If you do not like it, work for your own."

In the aftermath of the conventions, Igbo leaders have been figuring out the implications of the casualty made of people from that part of the country by the (full actualization of the two-party system. Said an ex-SDP chairmanship aspirant from Abia State: "It is clear that the Igbos have become marginalized. I don't even know what we stand to gain in both parties now. But all hopes are not lost."

In a thorough self-examination, the Igbo elders have come to the conclusion that politicians of that ethnic origin who are in the field have tended to play the game in a misguided,



Tofa...already negotiating with Igbo

amateurish and self-serving way.

Pini Jason, a renowned columnist with the *Vanguard* newspapers, told our reporter last week: "I won't be perturbed if nothing accrues to the Igbo in the next four years of the Third Republic". One would have thought that the civil war would have put them on their guard, he said, like the historical persecution of the Jews led to the emergence of a strong, politically-disciplined State of Israel. Since the war could not persuade them to realize that they could only bounce back through collective political action, then they need an even stronger medicine.

Analysing the situation further, a member of the elders group said: "Igbo have become marginalized. Fine. But by who? Themselves! Many of our politicians don't half understand the game of politics. They think it is another commercial enterprise where you go to make a lot of noise and a lot of money. Between the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, only the latter does not understand that politics is all about a play for power. For the Hausa-Fulani, when it is time for voter registration or population census, everyone - the fit, the unfit and the none-existent goes out to register. When it is voting time, even their wives in purdah are herded to the polling booths. Do you know that in Port Harcourt, some aliens from Chad and Niger Republic participated in putting Tofa there? And who is Tofa, anyway? Did you hear of him before January this year? He is just the choice of a small group of people who understand how to play real politics. The top and grassroots connect well in the north when it comes to politics. Same

applies to Yorubas, though in a smaller and different measure. Come rain or shine, Yorubas will register massively and vote overwhelmingly in the same direction, more or less, money or no money. And if you try to stop them

from voting, they will be ready to fight, and then you will call them "Wild Wild West." That is power politics. And whoever emerges from that matrix does not go out into the larger Nigerian group to apologise for his demands and expectations. He takes what comes to him as a right. And if he can not get it by sheer political force, he will jump to the other side of the fence in sheer opposition and give you a miserable time. That is political power."

Okadigbo, therefore, believes that if they have benefitted from the change, the West merits it. He asserts that Igbo have a tendency of sitting at home playing their stereotypes (while others are queuing to put their people in power), hoping that when the time comes, "they will bring the Igbo share down." Wrong, he warns. "We are not talking about a romance. We are talking about power. It is raw...do you think the others are fools? You don't just shout Igbo and they will put you on the high table. It is this type of thinking that is causing problems for us in this country - that you can reap where you don't sow. And Igbo don't do that among themselves."

## A day to celebrate Merit

FRIDAY, April 30, 1993 will be a special day for *Anya Oko-Anyia*, one of the winners of the Nigerian National Merit Awards (NNMA) in 1992.

Anya, a professor of Biology and a leadership activist, will be formally feted by friends and well-wishers at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Victoria Island Lagos. The professor, who has churned out more than 100 published works, is at present a special consultant in the Nigerian Institute for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI), and the Diamond Bank chairman.

On that day at 10.00, his new book titled: *Science and the Crisis in African Development*, will be presented at a one-day seminar specially designed to celebrate the NNMA laureate.

The presenter-in-chief will be Hassan Adamu, a doctor and the *Wakili* of Adamawa. Also to make special presentations are Abdulaziz Chivuzor Ude (Alhaji) a renowned business man; Dike Udensi, the chairman of Citizens International Bank; Sonny Odogwu, a chief and well-known in-



Anya...NNMA laureate

dustrialist; and Ajibola Ogunshola, the chairman of the *Punch* newspapers.

The topic of the seminar is: Science, Politics and the Economy Agenda for Nigerian Development. Speakers include Claude Akpan (NNMA), Alex Animalu (FAS) and Femi Kayode, all professors spanning the fields of the social sciences, physics and economics.

A section of the Igbo political leadership has realized that it is time to turn away from wrong politics, especially that which reduces one of Nigeria's largest, most dynamic and evenly distributed ethnic people to a status of being patronised with political hand-outs that are grand in colour and empty in substance. Like the vice-presidency. The vice-pee has suddenly become unattractive to the core Igbo political establishment since the position has failed to enable the occupant to play decisive roles as a position of power ought to. They, therefore, advocate that, as a measure of goodwill, and in the new spirit of cooperation being forged with the Eastern Minorities, the Igbos should actively support them for the posts of SDP national chairman and NRC vice-president if they want it so much. Beyond these posts and the presidency exist other roles which are equally relevant. The idea is, "if we are not ready for the top, we should choose whom to assist to get there, one who will not forget," one source said.

Not everyone agrees with this point, though. Arthur Nzeribe, the quicksilver of Nigerian politics, who appears to favour an East North cooperation rather than that of the East West, wants the SDP chairmanship, with Gbazueagu Nweke Gbazueagu as the choice of the Nzeribe Kingibe alliance. In fact, he has warned the Yar'Adua Abiola camp that if this plan is frustrated and the East totally played out of the game, Abiola should not expect the zone to help him to win the presidency. And in the NRC, some Igbo leaders, especially from the Christian Onoh camp, feel there is nothing wrong in taking the vice-presidency as a matter of right. The contention that

Abiola...tired by too many factional demands

Alex Ekwueme's role in that position under Shehu Shagari in the Second Republic was a disaster, is countered with an assertion that, while Ekwueme was picked by Shagari with little Igbo support for NPN in 1979 thus making him an "invitee" in the presidency. This time, an Igbo vice-president will be a force in an NRC victory that can not be ignored.

But, all elements of the group are agreed on the basic fact that this time, no one can win the presidency without the cooperation and massive support

of the Igbos. Says a member of the consultative group: "the support isn't going to come cheap. It must be thoroughly negotiated. The NRC people have been talking with us. Perhaps, the SDP is still too busy to come. This time, we will use our numerical strength which is in excess of 20 million people widely distributed nationwide to determine who rules next, and also effect a positive change in the democratic development of Nigeria. And whoever gets our cooperation now will be the one whom we can count on when we are ready to vie for the top."

## QUOTELINES

"THE government has nothing to hide: it is politicians that have a hidden agenda."

— Prof. Humphrey Nwosu, Defending government's newly promulgated Decree 13

"BY right the North-West should produce a running mate (for the SDP) so that we do not jeopardise our chances in the coming election."

— Ahmed Ijumu, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Aviation

"WE have reached a point of no return and there is no point being

threatened about Decree 13."

— Alhaji Othman Tafa, expressing his view on the newly promulgated decree.

"LET it be known that a moslem — moslem ticket would be the winning formula for Abiola and the SDP."

— Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu, while commenting on the choice of running mates to two presidential candidates.

"POLITICS. I don't talk about politics in this country because I don't discuss madness. Nigerian politics is better discussed at Aro Hospital in Abeokuta."

— Fela Anikulapo when asked by African

Concord correspondent to discuss politics in Nigeria.

"NIGERIA is under siege by the military and Nigerians, especially the political class, have to be very watchful."

— Dr. Fredrick Fashun, former presidential aspirant of the SDP while picking holes in the new decree.

"GIVING us vice-presidency is the only way we can remain relevant in the party and it would be a very good compensation to our group which controls a big population."

— Kingibe group.



# The Igbos need a change

— Member, Igbo Leaders Consultative Forum

**T**HE Igbo question is the Nigerian question. We have read Arthur Nzeribe's advertisements on the Igbo question. To some extent, we agree with what Nzeribe said but the problem is that Nzeribe is on his own. He is alone. And he has a problem — he is too close to Abuja so the attitude of the Igbo elders to Nzeribe is, let's have him for his "nuisance value." If he talks and makes a point, we take his points and weave into whatever we are planning.

But you see the Igbo question, if we look at the situation on the ground, with respect to the emerged parties flagbearer you'll find that any of them that wins will win by a margin of between .5m to 1.5 million votes. It won't be more than that. So, it will be a very close — run thing. Now, you ask yourself, where does Tofa's strength lie and where does Abiola's strength lie? You'll find that no matter how they perform, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kano, Yobe, Jigawa, even Borno that is SDP right now, and even Niger, they'll all go to Tofa. It does not matter whether Abiola has Dasuki (Dasuki, Sultan of Sokoto) as running mate. In order words, let him pick the "most moslem" from the far North, it'll not change anything because they are interested in the presidency. They are not interested in the second position.

If that is true, and it is true, the Western States will vote for Abiola. The battle will be in the East and Middle Belt or central states. If Abiola chooses a Christian mate from the Middle Belt, he is likely to carry not the whole of the Middle Belt but a substantial number to make a difference. If he takes another moslem he'll lose that area. And that area added to the Northern states, if they go to Tofa he's already tilted the balance. The reason is that those states mentioned have about 11 million votes. So, Tofa will now have to be increasing in his lead. However, if he chooses a Christian, then they'll share the Middle Belt but more will go to Abiola. At that point, they will more or less be even.

The two will now be in the East. And in the East, all Igbos don't have to vote Abiola for Abiola to win. All he needs is a significant minority of Igbos to de-

part from the old thinking and vote for him. The margin of whatever he gets in the East will make the difference. It does not matter whether you have an Igbo Vice President or not from the NRC. A Vice President for the Igbos does not make any difference to the situation. We've seen it before and it didn't change anything. It may change the pocket book of the person but that's about all. It is not going to change the Igbo situation because the Igbos are saying that they are a major group within this country. That they are the most travelled people in the country. And therefore that the people who are making the most significant contribution to the economy all over the place, you cannot put them under and expect the country to move forward. If that is so, you have to give them a position where they will sit on the

table and discuss the future of Nigeria with everybody else. Period.

I believe that those are the options. We know that the issue will arise. For example, for Tofa. How does he manage with Rivers because Rivers has tended to go with the far North? But it is not really because Rivers people believe in the North more than others but it is because of the nature of the terrain. It is one area where there is no way you can run a proper election.

Therefore, it is where you can manipulate on paper. And therefore, if you have people on the ground who are favourable, they can manipulate the way you want it. If you do not have such people, then the manipulation will be reduced. To that extent, Rivers holds some chips for Tofa. But it also holds some chips for himself because the need is not for them to vote for him but to control some level of manipulation. Either way it means what you get in Igboland one way or another whether for Tofa or for Abiola will make the difference. And that is why right now, they are criss-crossing the East. But Abiola has not even started meeting anybody in the East. Well, that



Sam Mbakwe....In the cooler

is, maybe because it is taking him much time to organise but whether he does or not, is not the issue. The issue is, should this country move forward? And the answer is yes. In 30 years we tried one formula. We've seen where we've gotten to. If we've been trying this particular formula and it hasn't worked, we should try another. There is no way we can find out the other side without trying it. When a woman marries two husbands, she will know the better of the two. Now is the time to try it. That's the issue.

The Igbos need this change. If there's a change, one would have underlined the principle of change and once there is change, given the equation of this country, nobody can control the revolution in future.

For the Igboman, any change is better than what we have now. The issue is not an Abiola issue. But it is the Yoruba Igbos issue. But it is the issue of a change in the political equation of the country. Even if it means interim political sacrifice for the Igboman. The Igboman is interested in endorsing the principle of change. It is the only way to move forward.

We don't want the Vice Presidency. We don't even want the chairmanship. But if the chairmanship comes, fine. The Igbos have not been as relevant as they are now in the Nigerian politics. And this, in spite of all our contributions.

But what are we doing with the chairmanship position. He is not relevant. All he will do is to wear *Aghada* and talk to the press and go to the presidency to ask for contracts. No, the Igbos don't need that. We need a position that is relevant. And that's what we'll get. Make no mistake about it.

We have always gone for offices with visibility but which are empty in terms of power content. What it means is that the individual can look after himself and relations, nobody else. We want to be relevant, that's all. The reason this country has refused to move is that the talents haven't been brought to the centre. When you talk of talents, you cannot ignore the Igbos. Education wise you cannot ignore the East and the West.

We know there is a lot pressure on Abiola to pick a Hausa-Fulani Muslim running mate, and those behind it. Those behind it do not want any change. They know once he does he'll fall. And that's why they are pressurizing him. But the time has gone when the Igboman is taken for a ride. Now the chips are down. We will not play the second fiddle any more. We can't get the presidency now. But anybody

who gets it must have discussed with us. We say what we want. You want our votes, fine. We'll give you, but you give us what we want. And we know what we want. That's why there has to be this change. Because the change will signify hope for the Igbos.

It was the Igbos votes that made the

difference in Jos. Not Yar'Adua votes. If he supported Abiola as we are being told now the margin should have been wider. It was because the Igbos revolted against Nzeribe that Abiola won. That difference the Igbos made in Jos is the difference they are capable of making in June, in either party.

## The Igbos will fight

By Arthur Nzeribe

**T**HE Igboman stands nowhere in the present political dispensation. We stand in the middle of nowhere. But it is consoling that at least the NRC recognises the importance and the emergence of the Igboman whereas the SDP does not. It is really a pity.

The Igbos in the NRC are not complaining much. They have been recognised and they are playing an effective role in the party. But in the SDP you'll find that there is a deliberate and gradual marginalisation of the Igbos. It is even worse for us now that the Yorubas have got the presidential ticket.

I have nothing against Chief MKO Abiola, contrary to what people believe

but my Igbos patriotism, my Igbos nationalism shows me that Abiola's candidacy does not augur well for the Igbos. There is nothing in it for the Igbos man.

This is because the Yoruba track record as we know it so far has not been to the protection of the Igbos. For example, look at all the Federal Ministries, once a Yoruba is put in charge you see all the Igbos in that Ministry disappearing. The Yorubas are supposed to be our brothers, but they treat us as strangers. I don't know why. Look at the recent appointments by Secretary of Finance. All the Boards in banks and other financial concerns have been re-constituted. What did Igbos get? Zero!



Arthur Nzeribe....

Look at what is happening right now in Lagos Streets. That a bunch of ragged hoodligans, and drug addicts have succeeded in chasing Igbo traders out and they are being despatched 100 miles from the centre with the connivance of the authorities. The history is there for everybody to see.

I could even get personal. Last year, two Igbo sons, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu and myself ran for presidential primaries under the SDP and NRC. The Yorubas didn't give us any votes and yet we voted for Olu Falae. Olu did very well in the East. The Igbos are progressives. They are big hearted. But Iwuanyanwu and I got no votes in the West.

Now, Abiola has won his primaries and there is no pretending that he must have garnered some votes from the Igbos.

But now, what does the Igbo man gain in the whole set up? What do we want? In the SDP, the Igbos want the chairmanship of the party, ordinary chairmanship, yet they do not want to support us.

Now I am waiting to see what will happen. To see the Yorubas support the Igbos. If the Yorubas do not support the Igbos to get the chairmanship, they can kiss goodbye to the presidency. Because party loyalty or no party loyalty, when the chips are down, the Igbos will go to where they'll be recognised, where they'll be relevant. So far, the Igbos seem to have been very much marginalized in Nigeria. But it has to stop someday and this is the time to stop it. We'll fight to stop it.

In the SDP, the Igbos have been carefully zoned out of everything. We complained. We said zoning was unconstitutional but because they don't want us, they stuck to it.

I don't agree with those who say that chairmanship is nothing. They are not serious. It accords recognition. That's what they want. A bird in hand is better than two in the bush. Anybody who tells you that Abiola can become president tomorrow and give the Igbos a sensitive post is day-dreaming. The posts have already been shared out. But we are waiting. Most sensitive posts are not shared publicly. And they won't give us.

All the Igbos saying is, do not marginalise us. We are relevant. We want to take part in decision making. We want to sit down with the others and discuss the future of Nigeria. But somehow, we are being pushed aside.

"The time has come for us to say no. The time has come for us to call the shots. I tell you, nobody is going to get

that presidency without the Igbo support. We have to participate in the power structure. That's all we want. Otherwise, there is no unity yet.

Perhaps that's one of the reasons why I am saying that Babangida should stay on. I am convinced that his stay

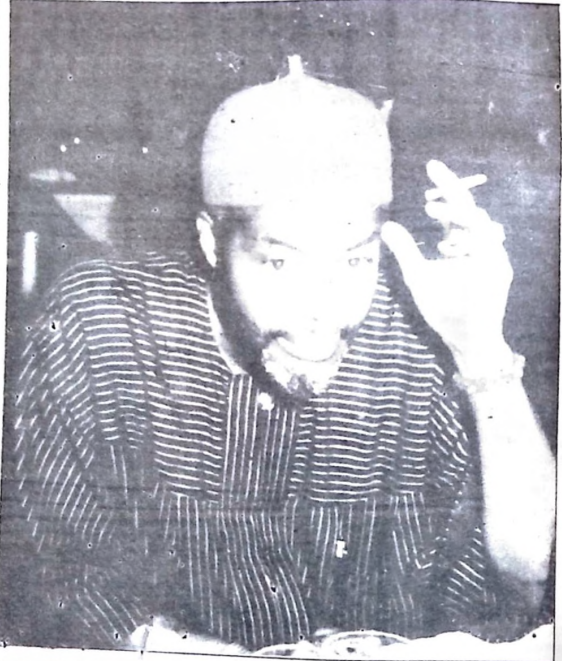
is in the best interest of the country to achieve unity, stability and continuity to make sure that a proper democratic and economic foundation is built for the success of the Third Republic.

# We don't want handouts

By Chuba Okadigbo (Senator)

**T**ALKING of the SDP and Abiola's emergence as the flagbearer and what's in it for Igbos, I'd rather not address parochial questions. We Igbos should behave like we were taught by Zik Go forward and find your place. Stop grumbling. Within the Nigerian state system, the Igbo man can get what he wants if he acts constructively.

I said it in 1979 and I'm saying it again. I won't call anybody and ask him to tell me what he has for Igbos. Nigeria is our own. Struggle for it. Any party, group or association does things according to their strength. In the SDP, there is only one Igbo SDP State. The remaining three are not SDP. And you don't take everything and give them just because they lost. That doesn't make any sense. You don't come to the university system and take the person who came last and make him first so that you encourage the person who



Chuba Okadigbo....

came first to be last. You don't do things that way. Our demands must be within reason.

If the West as a people who have 15 senators are talking, and you have only five senators talking; if the Middle Belt which has 12 senators are talking when you have five and we are going for votes, you must understand the difference. If the North-Western, zone which has 11 senators are talking you must understand...it is a question of votes and people. If the East gets SDP national chairman now, will it change the East? You don't just say it's because he's an Igbo man, and put him there. Who is the person? I don't believe in that. Igbos have never been known for mediocrity. If I want to contest for SDP chairman, the whole party will rise up and say yes — or, my merit, not just because I'm Igbo. And we are looking for such people for this country. It is not a question of Igbo, Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba, Christian, Muslim. Inject the quality of merit, a minimum standard of political behaviour into it; and political expectations into the calculus of POWER!

We are not talking about a romance. We are talking about power. It's raw. I teach political science and practise it. You don't go and take the first position and give it to the weakest point. It's not done anywhere in the world. When there was voting (for state government and federal parliament) where were they? Do you think the others are fools? You don't just shout Igbo and they will put you on the high table. It is this type of thinking that is causing problems for us in this country — that you can reap where you don't sow. And Igbos don't do that among themselves.

If we had the power...if I were in the NRC, yes I will put an Igbo man there as the president. See it in the SDP — Abiola is going in. And when the Yorubas say we want the president they say it with authority. If they did not have that type of voice in the SDP, Abiola would not be coming in today. But in the NRC, I do not see why the Igbos didn't make the push. They should push for it because the East is the biggest power block in the NRC. It is there that the demand will have more force. The whole Eastern bloc has shown it. It is there (NRC) that we should direct our attention. But here (SDP) we are trying our best, and the party is listening to us, encouraging us to move on.

Encouragement? How much encouragement was given to the others? Why you? In the forthcoming presidential campaigns that is the message I will have for Igbos, that you don't reap

**It is not going to change the Igbo situation because the Igbos are saying that they are a major group within this country. That they are the most travelled people in the country. And therefore that the people who are making the most significant contribution to the economy all over the place, you cannot put them under and expect the country to move forward.**

where you don't sow. That the SDP is moving on; has been able to control the National Assembly and the local government councils without you. And you are not going to think that what you are going to be doing in the next four years is to say, "I am an Igbo man. Give me my due." You due should be found in what you do also. You don't just open your mouth and shout "IGBO" and they throw in toffee. You should see the trend and follow it. You don't sit back and say, "don't worry, when they finish, they will bring the Igbo share down." On my own part, I have been doing my damndest best for the Igbos. I'm in many important com-

**And you are not going to think that what you are going to be doing in the next four years is to say, "I am an Igbo man. Give me my due." You due should be found in what you do also.**

mittees in the Senate including chairman of one of them. During the convention, I made significant contributions to the outcome. If the SDP wins the presidency, I can sit down where they are talking about Igbos and help them, tell them, don't go too far.

That is how to serve your people. You don't go and sit among VIP's where the cameras can pick you. You must go and mix with fellow Nigerians, know them and let them know you. So you can go and knock on their door and say, "this bridge you are building, if you put one in Igboland it won't be bad, you know." The people who will be ministers are there. Know them. Later you can invite them to one big ceremony in your village. They will travel through the bumpy roads. When they complain that the road is bad, you'll tell them, "but you are the minister. Do it."

Oh? These things are not about allocation — ten miles for Igbo, five miles for Hausa, three miles Yoruba. No. When Igbos like Arthur (Nzeribe) come here to cause confusion, why should the man who win give anything to Igbos? Answer the question. If you want to climb a mango tree and someone is pulling you down while the rest are helping you up, when you get there, will your detractor be the first to get a share of the mangoes?

Whatever you don't want, don't sit down and complain: change it. If you know that which puts you in a disadvantageous position, stop it, change it. If you have the capacity, crush it. Burn it. If you don't walk around it.

And now, money politics. People like Arthur are giving Igbos and Easterners a bad name. Arthur thinks that he can pay 10,000 naira each to Igbo and Eastern delegates and they would follow him. And he included my name among those...unabashedly (expletive). And that once he gives the money to my followers, they will join him. What it means is that when others give them money, they will also desert. So, that contention that Igbos are purchasable is one thing that we Igbos are saying is not the case. And Nigerians better believe it. And it is something I want to wipe out from the Nigerian psyche — that Igbos and the Easterners as a whole, the so-called CARIA states, will follow whoever gives them money. That bogey has failed many times. Quote me. That is very insulting, and that in itself, forced some of us into counter-action, to countermand it immediately during convention in Jos. Not with money, but with reason and dialogue. We Igbos and Easterners as a whole reject those who aim to buy us. We are not for sale, period.

## SDP SECOND CONVENTION:

# A three pronged battle

*After an inconclusive outing at Jos, SDP delegates reconvened in Abuja to elect party officers and rekindle the power struggle that has typified deliberations in the party.*

By Yusuph Olaniyonu

## W

HEN

about 5,000 national delegates of the Social Democratic Party, SDP assembled at the party secretariat in Abuja yesterday to complete the unfinished assignments of their national convention, the choice of venue and the trend of transactions suggested a symbolic replay of history.

Few months after the SDP and NRC were decreed into existence by the president on October 17, 1989, Abuja became the place for the power blocs in the party to test their strength and exhibit their hunger for power. With the Abuja convention, and its gains and losses eroded by another government measure, yesterday's reconvention again provided avenue for the new groups in the SDP to fight for control of the party.

The three groups which arrayed political weapons against each other are: the Yar'Adua group, the Kingibe platform and Abiola loyalists. These three groups which emerged mainly from events preceding and following the SDP convention went about discreetly strategising for the control of the party since according to a delegate "this is the last intra-party prize to contest."

Like the Jos convention, the intriguing scheme to outwit each other were perfected in Lagos, and Kaduna. The Kingibe group consisting of governors of Ondo, Benue, Plateau, Jigawa, Yobe, Borno, Kwara, Edo and Delta, states and others like Olusola Saraki, Ebenezer Babatope, Kola Oseni, Madu Marama, Mahmud Waziri, Mofa-umed Buhari, Emeka Ojukwu and Ar-

thur Nzeribe, organised a meeting penultimate weekend to review its performance and chart a new course.

The meeting which held at L Hotel Eko Meriden in Victoria Island concluded that it must go to Abuja to fight again.

This redemption, the group concluded after an elaborate discourse in which each of the members present did a post-mortem analysis of what transpired in Jos, would be based on its candidates winning key party posts in Abuja. So, the group decided to evolve a slate consisting of common candidates for specific positions.

The group also affirmed its readiness to support the SDP presidential candidate, Moshoud Abiola. But, the Kingibe platform decided to adopt a wait-and-see approach concerning whether Abiola actually desires the support of its members. So, a standing contact committee headed by Saraki was set up to discuss with Abiola if the candidate ever come forward with a hand of fellowship.

In arriving at candidates for party posts, the Kingibe platform shortlisted

three names for the chairmanship post. Eric Aso, a former ex-officio member of the Kingibe led SDP executive who last week signed a newspaper advertorial by a body known as Association for Democracy calling for the nullification of the election of Abiola as SDP candidate is the only one from the southern minority zone to which SDP gave the post. Other candidates are Ojo Maduekwe, lawyer and second republican national assembly member and Nweke Gbazuagu, the defeated governorship candidate in Enugu State who was a member of the Yar'Adua group.

In the estimation of the group members, Aso who has the merit of being the only man from the favoured zone has the disadvantage of the advertorial he signed following him. A Kingibe aide told TSM "a man who is not capable of foreseeing the implication of what he is appending his signature to will not make a good chairman." Members of the group are also wary of what Abiola's reaction will be to having a chairman who is a publicly acknowledged enemy.

For Gbazuagu, the Kingibe group are quite comfortable with his role during the Jos convention where he switched a large number of Enugu State votes



Abiola....SDP flagbearer

to Kingibe. His ability to raise a large sum of money required for the Abuja reconvention overshadowed his relative inexperience in the eyes of the group. The big *but* in his candidacy is his state of origin, Enugu, which is outside the southern minority zone. The Kingibe group, a source told *TSM*, are quite afraid of working against the collective decision of the party. This they argued, has the tendency to make their candidate an easy target for the formidable opposition.

Maduekwé, perceived as the most credible of the three is not too popular in the view of some members of the Kingibe group for his extreme liberalism, independent mindedness and his strong commitment to "moral values." These virtues might prove too adverse to the future battle of relevance and bargaining that the group intends to fight later on.

The weighty considerations given to the choice of the Kingibe group delayed the eventual decision till last Friday. The Yar'Adua group, which obviously is the strongest and oldest of the three, has no such problem. The choice of Tony Anenih, a retired police commissioner and one time Bendel State chairman of the defunct National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was a decision stamped and sealed by his octopus machinery in the SDP, long before the

Jos convention.

The candidacy of Anenih is believed to be the factor behind the scheme master minded by members of the Yar'Adua group that shifted the zoning of the party chairmanship out of the core Eastern zone into the Southern minority including Edo, Delta, Cross River, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States.

But while the SDP Presidential candidate was expected to give a ready support to the candidate of the Yar'Adua group in a reciprocal gesture to the support the group gave him in Jos, a strong section of his supporters think differently. The group consisting of PSP elements and technocrats in his campaign group canvassed reasons why the candidate should ensure the emergence of a neutral party chairman.

Ekong Etuk, an architect from Akwa Ibom is the choice of some members of this group. While the Abiola people identified the values of Maduekwé, his Kingibe leaning easily discouraged having a strong consideration for him. Etuk is seen as an appropriate beneficiary of the political IOU which Akwa Ibom have in Abiola for their endorsement of his candidacy in Jos.

The explanation that giving the chairmanship to Edo State will further alienate the entire areas of the old

Eastern region where some partymen already feel injured with the shifting of the chairmanship from the Igbo speaking states is also in Etuk's favour. Likewise, an extension of that argument which pointed to the fact that with the deputy senate president, Albert Legogie, coming from Edo State, the claim that the Eastern zone failed to get the chairmanship of the SDP because it produced the Speaker of the House of representatives no longer hold water.

Some members, of the Abiola group actually argued that the candidate should stamp its feet in the party hierarchy by having officers who share his goals, aspirations and understand the problem ahead at the party secretariat rather than a sectional chairman out to protect the interest of his group.

It is with these disparate tones that yesterday's Abuja convention held. The groups in the SDP are prepared to the convention with the sensibility and psychology of a man going for the last clan war. Group supremacy is the question. The eventual winner is expected to improve the bargaining power of his group in the eventual sharing of battle spoils in the SDP in their expectation that it will form the government of the Third Republic.



Yar'Adua...Anenih is his man



Kingibe...in a battle of relevance

# Mission statement

Full text of the address by:

**Bashir Othman Tofa**  
NRC Presidential candidate at a World Press Conference in Abuja on April 8, 1993.

**G**ENTLE

MEN of the Press.

I welcome you to Abuja, and to my first official Press Conference since I was elected as the Presidential Candidate of our great party, the National Republican Convention.

I assure you that indeed, I am grateful for this tremendous manifestation of confidence in me by our party members, and pledge to give honest, dedicated and patriotic service, and leadership, if elected President by the people of this great nation.

Permit me therefore, through you, to salute all our countrymen and women who worked ceaselessly to see me through the election process at all the various levels. Let me also commend you. The Press for your adequate and informative coverage of the various stages and processes of implementation of Option A4 method.

Indeed, looking back, one cannot but be proud that in spite of the various problems which initially beset the Transition-to-Civil Rule programme, and the skepticism with which Option A4 was received, we have made irreversible progress towards our transition to democracy.

For the journey so far, the Nigerian Political class deserves to be commended, while Republicans nationwide must be congratulated for the exemplary orderliness and decorous behaviour which characterised NRC Congresses, right from the Ward, Local Government and state levels, to the National Convention of the Party. Indeed, our great party, the NRC has by its ma-

ture conduct, once more proved that it is the party that deserves to be trusted with political power in the Presidency.

As we prepare to embark on the last lap of the journey to the final transfer of power to civilian administration, we must remind ourselves of the enormous responsibility which awaits the leadership of the THIRD REPUBLIC.

After over thirty years of political independence and despite being endowed with enormous human and material resources, all is not well with Nigeria. Our economy continues to experience a lot of stress despite some of the bold and courageous effort of the present Administration. The majority of our people are today in great despair, and extra-ordinary steps, on the short run, are required to alleviate the stress our people are now facing.

The naira has taken quite some beat-

ing. The unfavourable rate of exchange of the Naira makes the procurement of raw material for the manufacturing industry difficult. Exchange rate instability and continuous depreciation of the Naira discourages inflow of foreign capital, while making Nigeria cheap for foreigners and expensive for its citizens. The burden of debt service complicates the prospects of our national rebirth and redemption. The pace of diversification of the economy slows down national renewal and revival. Social problems which are a direct result of the state of the economy, and religious intolerance, combine with primordial loyalties to compound our situation.

Poverty, unemployment, disease and ignorance still constitute severe constraints to our national emancipation and development. These and more are some of the challenges which face us as we approach the end of the 20th century. It follows that in order to lay a solid foundation for our entry into the 21st century, as well as actualise Nigeria's potentialities, we must be prepared to make hard choices in the Third Republic.

Having identified some of these pressing problems, we can now discuss a

*Bashir Tofa...promises he must keep*



few of them. Excessive devaluation of the Naira, Excessive government deficit, and Excessive demand for foreign imports, without corresponding diversification of sources of foreign exchange earnings, have, along with low domestic Industrial and agricultural output, constituted the major constraints to strengthening the value of the Naira. My government's economic policy will strengthen and defend the value of the naira, achieve exchange rate stability, and protect the purchasing power of our national currency.

Equally unacceptable is the astronomically high interest rate, which currently hovers between 50 and 55 percent. This level of interest rate discourages new investment, stifles industrial growth, results in low capacity utilization, and engenders unemployment. My government will, as a matter of priority, implement policies that will bring down interest rates to levels essential to rejuvenation of the national economy.

We shall also review those aspects of the structural adjustment programme which have occasioned great hardship among our people. It is noteworthy that the World Bank recently observed that a major flaw in SAP policies was its failure to adequately protect the middle class from economic ruin. We will have to review some of these policies, so as to eliminate identifiable flaws, with a view to relieving the hardships of SAP. For instance, no nation allows unrestrained importation of all sorts of goods into her shores. Even the advanced economies of the world, find it necessary from time to time, to protect some sectors of their economy. While the NRC Government will not interfere with free trade, we reserve the right and discretion to employ appropriate tariff measures, to protect locally produced goods.

### Foreign Debt Management

Debt servicing currently consumes about 55% of our export earnings. This is excessively high, and deprives our country of vitally needed capital for pursuing our national development goals. As President, I will, through astute negotiation with our creditors, seek a reduction in the proportion of our revenues consumed by debt servicing obligations, to a level commensurate with our need for national economic and social survival, and persuade creditor countries to substantially reduce accumulated interest charges on existing debts. To resolve the debt crisis, creditor nations have



Asiodu.....desubsidization campaigner

to recognize that our destinies are inextricably intertwined. The survival of Democracy, in Nigeria, like elsewhere in the developing world, requires some sacrifices from our creditors. Our sacrifices need to be matched by concessions from our trading partners.

### Petroleum Subsidy

Our position on the removal of petroleum subsidy is well known. We do not support its removal because of its potential for causing social upheaval, instability, and untold hardship on the teeming millions of our citizens. Instead, we shall find a solution through differential pricing of different grades of petroleum products; so that users of luxury cars which consume higher grades of petroleum products, will pay more, while the masses pay less. There is nothing wrong with subsidy per se, what is at issue is the level of subsidy to be retained.

Furthermore, it has been established that a substantial portion of our present domestic demand for petroleum products is artificial, representing the smuggling of enormous quantities of these products across our porous borders. This implies both capital flight and an unacceptable loss of substantial revenue to the state. Effective and determined policing of our borders should eliminate this artificial demand, with resultant substantial savings, which can be invested in national development.

In addition, our energy policy will continue to ensure a balanced exploitation of all the Nation's energy re-

sources to guarantee the availability of adequate, cheap and steady energy supply for national development. Priority will be given to exploration for the augmentation of our reserves, petroleum production and refining for petro, petrochemicals, LNG, power supply, and coal development. We will continue to improve Nigeria's business environment, and will deliberately set out to ignite the growth of local petroleum based industries by publicizing available products, and educating the public about their end uses. Also, efforts will be made to encourage private sector participation the only really viable option for efficiency in the industry. Nigeria has already initiated far-reaching processes that would ensure more efficient utilization of our oil resources. These include, revamping the existing refineries, and petrochemical plants; improving products distribution, and embarking on numerous gas utilization projects, the LNG project, and several gas and fuel enterprises. Furthermore, the Government is displaying some flexibility in negotiating terms for new projects, bearing in mind the current global capital shortage. We are committed to continuing and strengthening these moves. With these steps in place, the industrial take-off of Nigeria, and the consequent economic self-reliance can be assured when the potentials of her petroleum industry are fully developed. We are committed to this goal.

### Food Productions

The escalating prices of food and domestic necessities must be a matter of utmost concern to my administration. It is entirely unacceptable that any Nigerian should go to sleep hungry in the midst of plenty. Our country is full of rich resources and with vibrant and resourceful labour, capable of harnessing these resources for national development. My administration will accord the greatest priority to agricultural production with the objective of making Nigeria the bread basket of Africa that it ought to be. My administration shall provide agricultural inputs especially fertilizers, improved seedlings to enhance the productivity of small scale farmers who occupy a pivotal position in our agriculture. I shall encourage the development, manufacture and supply of simple but more efficient farming implements and make them available to farmers at affordable prices. We shall provide easy access to credit facilities and loans for small scale farmers and build silos and other storage facilities to minimise

post-harvest loss and wastage.

My administration will facilitate land clearing at subsidized rates, and reduce tariffs and import duties on agricultural machines, implements and spare parts, in order to encourage the development of large scale farming and plantations for major industrial and export crops.

Individuals and private organisations will be encouraged to participate in food production, processing and storage, through the provision of necessary tax reliefs and other incentives.

My administration shall continue to subsidize the cost of fertilizers, and encourage the production of animal feeds. The development and growth of Fisheries and Livestock sector, to improve dietary conditions of Nigerians, as well as earn foreign exchange, shall also be vigorously pursued by Government.

Manufacturing industry is the most significant and dynamic sector for promoting economic growth in general as well as provision and creation of employment opportunities. My administration shall reverse the serious decline in the performance of the country's industrial sector. Existing industries will be revitalised and new ones established.

My administration will undertake a comprehensive resources inventory which will be continuously reviewed upon which a viable industrial policy and planning will be predicated. Only industries that will be viable and fall within the national scale of priorities for the time being will be granted necessary resources e.g. foreign exchange and other scarce input.

I will now summarize the problems of our country today, and what the government of the National Republican Convention, under my leadership as President of our great country intends to do about them:

## STATE OF NATION The Economy

Our standard of living is eroded by spiralling inflation, huge national debts, and an unstable currency. Large numbers of our youths are unemployed, many of them without any useful skills. The management of our economy is characterized by instability, corruption and, in some cases, incompetence. Our natural resources and available manpower are not fully, or properly utilized. There is minimal or negligible inflow of foreign investment; our industries are dying, and our



Stock Exchange...greater impetus for a market economy

industrial output declining. It must be emphasized that inflation, continuous Naira devaluation, and balance of payments problems, are symptoms, not causes of the malaise afflicting the Nigerian economy. The real problems are:

- (a) the low level of productive activity in the economy, arising largely from the low level of productive investment;
- (b) The low level of confidence in our ability to salvage the economy, which is approaching despondency, and a crisis of self-fulfilling expectation. Thus, as people continuously expect things to get worse, and behave accordingly, things do get worse.

## Political

Nigeria is today, a nation divided by mutual suspicion and distrust; a nation characterized by general depression, cynicism, and frustration; a nation in which religious and ethnic tensions are on the rise; a nation that has lost pride in itself, and lost faith in the political leadership, whether civilian or military.

## Social:

Crime and poverty are farnpaging the land, whilst the problem of hard drugs is rapidly deteriorating. Our educa-

tional institutions are decaying; our medical services are appalling; our transportation facilities are near chaotic; whilst tension in industrial relations has already led to a near shut down of the public sector for most of this year. Urban blight and squalor, rural poverty and stagnation, and an unflattering international image, summarize this dismal picture.

## What Must Be Done

First and foremost, we must reverse our national crisis of expectations, and raise the level of confidence of Nigerians in our ability to solve our social and economic problems, by

- (a) Uniting the country, and achieving a greater unity of purpose. Only a President, overwhelmingly endorsed by a united and disciplined national party, can achieve this objective.
- (b) Providing a dedicated purposeful leadership that leads by example.
- (c) Mobilising the best efforts of Nigerians in both the public and private sectors towards achieving greater confidence in our ability, collectively to pull Nigeria out of the economic mess.
- (d) Taking specific measures which we shall outline presently, to increase the level of output in the economy, and thereby reduce inflation, strengthen the Naira, and check the deterioration

in our balance of payments.

## Overall Philosophy

We will continue the deregulation and freeing up of the economy to market forces. This is not however, a signal for a free for all. We will pursue social and economic development as obtained in Germany and Japan where the Government still plays an active role in the economy, but this role will be somewhat selective, and will be pursued by a more purposeful, efficient, and less wasteful public sector.

5.2 Government under my leadership, will work closely with the private sector to develop long-term strategies for the revival of the economy; and will change the orientation of the private sector to see government not as an adversary, but as a veritable partner.

## Specific Measures

Studies I have commissioned confirm that the Government's budget deficit is the greatest contribution to inflation and the Naira exchange rate depreciation. My administration will therefore

- (a) reduce the budget deficit by reducing wasteful expenditure and increasing budgetary discipline and monitoring;
- (b) achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in Government expenditure, by undertaking more productive investments of the type that will free up and mobilize private sector energies and resources, to complement the efforts of Government.

### 6.2 Education

It is clear that people are the greatest asset that any country has. This investment in human capital is the most effective form of investment. In this regard, my administration will introduce free and compulsory primary education, and undertake substantial investment and improvement in secondary and tertiary education.

### 6.3 Infrastructure

We will undertake investment in certain key infrastructural facilities such as urban mass transit railways, a national standard gauge railway network, roads, bridges, waterways, airports and refineries will be developed. Innovative ways will be found of sharing the risks, and costs and benefits of such investments between private and public sectors.

Additionally, emphasis will be placed on the modernization of the Health sector. In this regard, every Local Government Area that does not

already have one, must be provided with at least one General Hospital, whilst facilities in existing ones will be improved. Overall, the thrust of our policies must be private sector oriented, in order to tap the resources of the people and empower them, thereby giving the people a sense of dignity and self-worth. The economy will be public sector directed, but not public sector dominated.

My administration will ensure that Government resources are used only for those essential infrastructural services that the private sector cannot be persuaded to provide by incentives. This policy is grounded on the manifesto of our great party, and is the optimal way to use government resources. Our policies will require the introduction of radical programmes which call on, or encourage mass participation in achieving national objectives that cut across all ethnic, regional, sectional or religious boundaries.

In building the New Nigeria, this administration will go to great length to ensure that our women are given special encouragement to play meaningful roles in all phases of our national life, in Government, in industry, in education, in commerce, and in all other spheres of endeavour.

Ahmed Kusanolu...NRC party chief



## War Against Corruption

Ours is a sacred task of national revival and national/rejuvenation. We must rebuild this nation, and restore, and give substance to the dreams that inspired our national struggle for independence. A nation endowed with enormous wealth in human and natural resources cannot, and must not be allowed to continue to suffer the indignity of being classified as the 13th poorest on earth. To build the New Nigeria, we must fight a war against corruption. All key personnel in my administration must declare their assets, and sign a code of conduct document binding them to provide selfless service to our country.

We shall wage a war against hard drugs, and restore the international image of Nigeria. We must restore meaning and pride to Nigerian citizenship and defend our citizens at home and abroad.

## External Affairs

The National Republican Convention Government will continue to recognise and fulfill all external obligations of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. We must emphasize, however, that Nigeria remains irrevocably, the centrepiece of our foreign policy. In this respect, the main thrust of our Nigeria-centered foreign policy will be a determined pursuit of the economic interests of our country, and our sister African nations. We must strengthen and revitalize our armed forces, our customs and immigration services so as to enable them discharge effectively, their responsibilities of protecting our territorial integrity, and defending our borders against wanton violation. Whilst appealing to Mr. Taylor to give peace a chance in Liberia, we must stress that our administration will take every necessary measure to assist the Economic Commission of West African States to ensure the success of the ECOMOG Mission in Liberia. We also remain committed to supporting the role of the United Nations, and its regional agencies, in promoting world peace and stability. We must however appeal to the world powers, to recognize the new status of African Nation in the post colonial era, more concretely, by assigning to Africa, a permanent seat in the United Nation's Security Council.

Gentlemen of the press, this struggle has just begun. The dawn of the New Nigeria is here. The eagle has landed. Thank you and God bless.

## Change of baton in NRC

**T**HE cloud of political uncertainty as to whether the military government will hand over August 27 was cleared somewhat last Tuesday as the Latifat Okunnu-led National Caretaker Committee of the National Republican Convention (NRC) handed over the mantle of the party's leadership to the new executive members. At a symbolic ceremony at the party's National Secretariat in Abuja, Okunnu said she was handing over a strong and formidable party capable of winning the June 12 presidential elections. She handed in N11.24 million to the Ahmed Kusanmotu-led National Executive Council.

In his acceptance speech,



Kusanmotu, a doctor, promised that a seven-point campaign plan to install Bashir Tofa, an Alhaji, as the nation's next president would be the focus of his tenure. He called on fellow republicans to forget the past and work together for their common goal. He also promised to inaugurate a "Republican Economic Summit" this week as an avenue for the nation's 500 egg-heads to brainstorm on ways to resolve the country's economic problems.

## Killing of Nigerians in US condemned

**T**HE Federal Government may have decided to be concerned with the lives of Nigerians living abroad. Last week Matthew Mbu, a chief and Secretary for foreign affairs told a bewildered nation that the incessant killing of Nigerians in the United States will have to stop. Mbu said the government has protested to the American government over the wastage

## News Round-Up

of her nationals' lives on the streets of the US.

No less than four Nigerians are sent to the great beyond every month by gun-totting and drug-soaked Americans even without the slightest provocation. Mbu recalled that last month's felling of a Nigerian taxi driver in the US happened when he (Mbu) was in that country. Equally worrisome is the constant embarrassment meted out to Nigeria's top government officials in foreign countries. Just early this month, the nation's chief law officer, Clement Akpamgbu was searched by sniffer dogs at New JFK International Airport. New York to ascertain that he had not brought drugs to the states. Government says such act would be reciprocated on nationals of such countries in Nigeria.

## Justice delayed for Fela

**J**USTICE for Fela Anikulapo Kuti and five others on their alleged murder of one Adesamwo Shokoya was delayed last week till May 28 as prosecution witnesses were said to have disappeared. Akinwale Aka, a judge of the Lagos high court heard from the prosecutor, David Oryelike that the witnesses "are on the run".

Since January Fela and co have been on the rough side of the law for their alleged involvement in the killing of Shokoya. Two weeks ago the Afro Beat King had his liberty temporarily restored after a 75-day incarceration at Ikoyi Prison. He and his co-accused had the respite from Justice Ake "to facilitate a



speedy hearing of the case". The abami eda was released to his elder brother Okiye, the immediate past Health and Human Services Minister in the sum of N10,000. He also has a murder case pending at the Igbosere Magistrate court in Lagos.

## Okolie appears in court

**T**HE fire spitting pub-



lisher of *Newsweek*, Chris Okolie, appeared before a chief magistrate court in Abuja last week for allegedly publishing false information about the President, Ibrahim Babangida and other eminent Nigerians. This was after the chief had spent 40 days in illegal detention. He was arraigned on a three-count charge of attempting to incite disaffection against the government; causing hatred among classes of persons with intention to endanger public peace and the publication of false news in contravention of sections 416, 417 and 418 of the penal code as applicable in Northern Nigeria.

Okolie denied the charges and hearing was adjourned to last Friday. In the said publication, Okolie had allegedly named Babangida, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ibrahim Dasuki, Shehu Shagari, Oba of Benin, Benson Idahosa amongst others as belonging to the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity.

Industrial action paralyses banking services

**N**IGERIANS who had

exhausted their pockets during the Easter festivity in anticipation of a recap last Tuesday had a raw deal, courtesy of an industrial action by junior staffers of banks. The music flexing between the National Union of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions Employees (NUBIFIE) and their employers, the Nigerian Employers Association of Banks, Insurance and Allied Institutions (NEABIAI) over pay increase resulted in the strike which paralysed virtually all banking activities nation-wide. Very few commercial banks were able to render skeletal services to their numerous customers who were in most cases refused entry into the banks premises.

The strike action also created a crack within the NUBIFIE as contradictory signals emanated from two factions of the Union. The Ikeja faction with one Odion as General Secretary issued a statement calling the strike illegal and capable of derailing the transition programme. The dispute within the union led to some workers in some of the banks to resume duties. The dispute is over the union's demand for 57 per cent increase in basic salary and 300 per cent for housing and transport allowance. The NEABIAI has however decided to pay only 47.5 per cent increase on the basic salary.

Meanwhile, the dispute has been referred to the Industrial Arbitration Panel (IAP) for adjudication by the Federal Government.

## Fisticuffs in House of Assembly

**T**he relative peace in Osun State was shaken as agitated parents of detained pupils stormed the Osun State House of Assembly to engage executive members of the State Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) in a free-for-all fight. The NUT executive was invited by the House to state why teachers in the state were on strike. The parents of the detained students, whom the previous week were arrested for rioting against the state government, moved into the House and beat up the NUT members. The grouse is that teachers allegedly incited the students to demonstrate but they (the teachers) decided not to intervene on behalf of the students numbering about 80. The riot was on April 7 over teachers' pay parity with council workers in the state.

Compiled by  
Akaninyene Esiere

[Continued from last week edition]

## PART III: Nigerian obstacles to democratization

By Chinweizu

DEMOCRATIZATION does not take place in a social vacuum, but in specific settings. A realistic assessment of the prospects for success at democratization in Nigeria would have to take crucial Nigerian realities into consideration. What, then, is Nigeria; and which of its dominant features would influence democratization?

Contrary to orthodox belief, Nigeria is not a sovereign nation state, but a neo-colonial nationless state; that is, a state without a nation, a state coralling together a multitude of persons with diverse ethnic allegiance; in fact, a state with a captive multi-ethnic population that exhibits only a rudimentary degree of national cohesion and national feeling.

The British created the beginning of a state apparatus, bequeathed it to a collection of disparate villagers they had half-trained in modern state processes, and ordered them to feel patriotic and build a nation. These semi-villagers were unused to any identity beyond that of their village, and unused to any loyalty beyond that to their semi-feudal chiefs. Finding themselves thrown uncomfortably together in the warrens of the state apparatus; impatient with the procedures of an orderly modern state; and excited by the fortuitous fact that the apparatus included an oil rig gushing petrodollars, they became the advance guard of a rambunctious, energetic, undisciplined horde of invaders from the villages, each vandal desperate to grab a chunk of the state apparatus and squeeze from it all the petrodollars he could.

Thus, today, nothing holds Nigeria together except the state apparatus, and the oil revenue, and the desire of the vandal citizens to grasp that revenue through manipulating the levers of the state apparatus which collects the revenue from the oil companies. Add inertia to that, and the will of the military part of the state apparatus to hold the contraption together, and you have practically everything that holds Nigeria together. And even the state apparatus is rickety. Its stable, constitutional, civil administration was destabilized, beginning with the Murtala-Obasanjo regime, and has degenerated to a point where the conduct of official affairs is a game with no rules and no referee. So, though the land is rich in resources, and has a sizeable educated elite, the riches are routinely squandered, knowledge is wasted, disorder is institutionalized, and the rule of law is more honoured in the breach than the observance, thus putting the society permanently on the brink of anarchy.

Other features of Nigeria which conspire against democratization are as follows:

- (1) An elite ill fitted for democracy by a deep antipathy to such democratic values as orderliness, the rule of law, fair play, the right of dissent (for others); and which is plagued by the intolerant convictions that "whoever is not for me is against me," and that "any who dissents from my present passions has been bought by the other side."
- (2) A chaotic, turbulent, political culture, fertile for political mercenaries...one with scant concern for nationalist spirit, constitutional stability, due process, the rule of law, adherence to political principles or party solidarity; a political culture noted for parochial loyalties, minimal patriotism, inflammable sectarianism, the delusion that demagoguery is democracy, and the belief by the average politician that "democracy is the misgovernment of the people, by myself, for my foreign bank account."
- (3) A nationless state with no integrative establishment that is national in scope, national in composition and nationalist in outlook; with no coherent body of powerful citizens which sees it



Muhammadu Buhari, IBB's predecessor

as its obligation to organize the society and referee its competitions within established and fair rules

(4) A bloated state-bureaucracy which operates as an enormous bureau of internal plunder for looting the oil-rich, rentier economy; and which, therefore, becomes a jackpot that attracts besieging gangs of political mercenaries and military adventurers.

(5) An elite with a vested interest in disorder, disorganization, abuse of public office, corruption, lawlessness, tribalism, religious fanaticism, and the lack of national spirit which they manipulated to become, and still manipulate to remain, an elite.

(6) Competing civilian constituencies which go knocking on the doors of the barracks, begging the military to intervene on their behalf in their political and economic quarrels.

(7) A middle class and a lower middle class with ill-defined political views, and a preoccupation with keeping up with the highest standard in international consumerism; which demand everything but produce little; and which are devoted to a crybaby culture of complaining and protesting without participating in problem solving; which are perennially on the look out for "saviors," and loudly cheer any political adventurer who seizes the state apparatus; they cheered Buhari, expecting him to revive an economy which had "collapsed" under Shagari; they cheered IBB, expecting him to revive an economy which had "collapsed" under Buhari; they cheered Orkar, for a half-morning, expecting him to revive an economy which had "collapsed" under IBB....) Their only obvious political interest is to be allowed to pilfer or loot, as their ability and opportunity allows.

(8) Traditional rulers who have become wards of the state, and who the military use as social footrest when their regimes are at their most socially isolated.

(9) A moaner-groaner intelligentsia, in the media and academia, which is plagued by a chronic amnesia, and so is unable to supply the public with judicious summaries of experience by which to interpret the present. Its amnesia allows autocrats, fascists and swindlers to reemerge, a few years later, and parade themselves as saints, as anti-authoritarians, as anti-corruption campaigners as libertarians and democrats, and to be welcomed and lionized as the awaited saviors from the ravages of whatever gangs have succeeded them. The incompetence and irresponsibility of the intelligentsia disorganize the national memory and prevent it from being brought to bear on events through knowledgeable and timely reminders.

(10) A press which misconstrues the freedom of the press as the freedom of editors to evade their obligations to nation-building; as the freedom of editors to censor from their pages news and views which oppose their private political agendas; as, the

freedom to misinform, manipulate, agitate, sensationalize and titillate, all with the supposedly "public interest" purpose of making profit off the public for their proprietors. A press with more than its fair share of pundits from fantasyland, who know everything that ought to be in a perfect world, but are no guide to what is likely in this real and imperfect world.

(11) A military which, with its now 23 years of rule out of 33 years of independence, is the dominant political party in all but name: which is organizing its own withdrawal from politics, and leaving with its morale high, its firepower intact, and a clear ability to intervene again in politics when it chooses.

The Mexican poet, Octavio Paz, said that Latin American democracy "has been its own worst enemy, a victim to the adulation of the demagogue, corrupted by cash, undermined by favouritism and nepotism." Add tribalism, religious fanaticism, intolerance, indiscipline, etc. to that list, and you have a fair indictment of Nigerian democracy.

Now, how would you proceed to democratize a social contraption with such characteristics? And do so without a crisis or chaos that would bring the military back into politics? I dare say that even God would be daunted by that job description; yet that is the monumental social-engineering work which an intrepid IBB undertook to commence, and which his civilian successors would have to complete — if they are democrats, that is.

## PART IV: Observations on the IBB demilitarization

1. From the foregoing, there is indeed little that IBB has done which has not been done elsewhere. If there were a standard textbook on demilitarization, we could presume that he studied it, and studied it well. Bannings? Unbannings? Ad hoc laws? Endless amendments to draft constitutions? Artificial parties? Negotiations with political parties, trade unions, business groups the military itself sponsored or engineered into being? Name it, and you can find precedents in what happened in the transitions in Peru, Brazil, Turkey, Chile, Uruguay, etc. Clearly, there has been a method to what, to some pundits, has all seemed arbitrary. Maradona may be a dribbler, but he has dribbled by the rules book, and dribbled to get to the designated goal.

The claim by his opposition that his measures were unique in the world, or amounted to confusionist engineering, could only have been made out of ignorance, and from a refusal to look around the world and study other transitions. It might also have been induced

**IBB: Which pattern is he copying?**



by focussing on the only other transition Nigeria has known. But, alas, the Obasanjo transition, made in understandable great haste, proved ephemeral. Obasanjo's claim, back in September 1979, that he had laid down the basic infrastructure of a stable political order was quickly disproved by history. His ephemeral transition is hardly an appropriate yardstick for judging transitions.

2. From the foregoing, a fairly lengthy period of diarchy is conducive to durable demilitarization. Therefore, the non-provision of such a phase of diarchy at the level of national government is a serious flaw in the IBB demilitarization programme. Note that the Shenekan Transitional Council, being unelected, and being appointed by the military, lacks that separate authority base that would make its tenure a diarchy. Note, too, that the behaviour and attitudes of the politicians, so far, suggest that they have yet to wake up to the gravity and magnitude of their responsibilities. So, if diarchy does not materialize in some form and give them time to grow into their roles, this demilitarization is likely to prove ephemeral, and all the years and resources invested in it would be a monumental waste. If diarchy is not part of the IBB agenda, it ought to be.

As the Evren type of diarchy seems foreclosed by the August 27th handover date, only the Pinochet type remains. This might mean splitting the office of President from that of Commander-in-Chief for the duration of the democratic consolidation. And if diarchy in such a form would help make the transition a success, then why not? Better to get things right this time than continue the civilian-military musical chairs into the 21st century, when we should be on to other and greater projects.

3. I think it is fair to assume that Nigerian civilians — whether politicians or para-politicals, — are not in any position to defy, let alone overthrow, the military. Nigeria, therefore, is quite lucky that, under IBB, its military is orchestrating its own retreat towards the barracks. Nothing but their own internal corporate reasons, and pressure from the neo-colonial overlords, oblige them to exit from politics. And should they change their minds tomorrow, they could do a Mobutu or Eyadema on us, and get away with it. Thus, as of now, IBB could well be the best ally that democracy has in the Nigerian barracks. Should he lose control of the transition programme, we could well find ourselves under another military regime that is determined to hang on to power for the next 20 or 30 years.

4. It would be naive to assume that there are no factions in the Nigerian military which are against the abdication, and which would gladly abort it, or make it as ephemeral as possible. Whether or not the military get to the barracks and stay there depends on two main factors: one is the ability of the demilitarizing faction to restrain the military opposition; another is the ability of the civilians, politicians and para-politicals alike, to restrain themselves from doing anything that would goad, or offer an excuse to, the anti-abdication military to abort or shorten the abdication.

5. All those who want the IBB demilitarization to succeed, making this the last military regime in Nigeria, would do well to ensure that the abdication settlement is such as would tempt the military to stay in the barracks; and that the operation of democracy does not produce chaos. But if it does, the politicians must show the discipline not to invite the military into their disputes.

6. IBB's proto-democratic restructurings can, at best, lay part of the foundations for the evolution of democracy in Nigeria. The necessary conventions and ethos of a democratic political culture will have to be evolved by us all, after his phase of the work is done. Given the complexities of the democratization process, the all-important task is to find a civilian leadership that can complete the job successfully. If the civilian leadership is inept or anti-democratic, all the foregoing work would be undone.

7. When will IBB go? Who knows? When will the military go? I dare say, not even IBB knows. But one thing is certain: neither of these events will occur just because of agitation by the politicians and parapoliticals, particularly by what Buhari once denounced as the Southern Press. For as long as IBB's principal constituency:

# River blindness - an end of the road disease

*In spite of the devastation it has caused in our rural communities, most know next to nothing about this terrible scourge.*

a dry husk of a coconut fruit. From her buxom built, her flushed up face and the sparse sprinklings of gray on her low cut hair, her age could be put at between 45 and 55.

Her daughter an ebony-dark young woman of about 20 and the younger of her two children sits by one of the two opposite ends of the mat, through which ample floods in brightening up the interior which otherwise would have been dim lit in those twilight hours of a fast spent evening. A black and white cat glides around the room, finally cooing up under the woman's legs.

At the other end of the oblong-shaped one room hut which doubles as bedroom and living room is a slightly wider-made up bed, on which sits her son, who works as an artisan in one of the country's urban cities, but comes home frequently because of 'Mother's condition'.

Mother's condition is the affliction of blindness. Casually, you do not notice anything unusual about this woman. Her eyes are not shut. However, she utters not a word. In all the 40 minutes spent in her hut, her children do all the talking, detailing their mother's long suffering, the tribulations they have been through, looking for a cure for 'mother's condition.' Occasionally, she blinks her lids as if occurring to her children's heart-touching accounts. After all those years of shared misery, she trusts her children enough to let them talk on her behalf.

Still you search the face of this woman who has been blind for some twenty years now, trying to read her mind from visage. You see the stark open eyes that do not see. You probe further, expecting to read hatred or bitterness at a world fate that foistered this illness on her, but you see neither

Life & Style



By Ngozi Abanobi

**S**HE sits on the edge of a narrow bed. Her feet rest on



*It is the end of the road for one, but there is hope for the other.*



of those, you see neither happiness nor unhappiness. Instead you see a stoic acceptance of a condition, she has little control over.

Martha is a victim of River Blindness or Onchocerciasis, a scourge caused by the bite of a hump-backed black fly which breeds in fast-flowing water. Like in all the areas where the disease is known to be present, Martha's village Mbala Okigwe, farming a suburban town in Abia State of Nigeria is traversed by streams — tributaries of the Imo, River.

Martha is just one out of the about 7 million Nigerians now suffering from the disease. Unlike Martha not all suffering from the disease have gone blind. Blindness is just one of the manifestations of the disease, usually about the last stage of the disease, after which a sufferer's life expectancy is reduced from 30 to 15 years. Before then, a sufferer could have visible scratchy nodules on the skin, depigmentation of the skin sometimes called "Leopard's skin. Other signs of the disease include scratchy rough skin, tightness of the skin, muscular skeletal pain, swelling on the legs and other organs of the body.

In Martha's closed knit community, almost every family has a case or two of River Blindness. Martha's twenty-something-year old daughter, for instance is already in the advanced stages of the disease. Her dark skin glistens all over except on her legs which show several patches of depigmented skin. At the next compound to

Martha's, of seven men gathered in a drinking place, five of them have visible signs of the disease, as could be deduced from the light skin patches on their legs, swollenness on their feet, legs and impaired vision.

Because the black fly carrier of the disease breeds in water (even though it is capable of flying up to 40 kilometers) the agile farming middle aged group whose farms are usually located by waters and streams are the most prone to the disease. Suckling

babies and young children taken to the farms by their parents are also bitten by the fly.

River Blindness may not enjoy the kind of sensation or publicity a disease like AIDS enjoys, but it is as devastating, if not worse. The disease has serious socio-economic consequences. It is debilitating. Strikes mostly the rural dwellers, that constitute the farming population. The disease is known to have made a whole clan desert their town. Perhaps that is why it has earned

the name - a disease of the end of the road.

The diseases' proximity to rivers and streams from which it derived the name River Blindness also explains its endemicity in the tropical zones of the sub Saharan Africa, Latin America and the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula.

As far-fetched as this disease still seem to most, 86 million people in 34 countries of the world were at risk, as at 10 years ago. And World Health Organization report says of this number 18 million have been infected with the disease. One million suffer visual impairment while 350,000 have become blind. Most of these cases are from Africa - Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Cameroun, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sudan, Tanzania.

Continued on Page 29



Rashes



Depigmentation... two signs of the disease

Interview with:

## His excellency Ambassador Donald Easum.

(Former American Ambassador to Nigeria and  
Vice President of the River Blindness Foundation  
World-wide).

BY Ngozi Abanobi

His excellency sir, you are the Vice President of the Foundation, could you please tell the story of the Foundation. Why the interest in River Blindness?

The Foundation is precisely the product of the interest of a man named Dr. William Baldwin from Houston. He was the dean of the school of Optometry at the University of Houston medical school.—

For many years, he has been coming here as a member of the board of examiners of universities that have optometry schools. He started doing this in the mid seventies. In the late eighties, he became aware of the River Blindness disease here. In fact I suppose he knew about the River Blindness for a number of years. But he knew in the early eighties and early nineties that the Merck and Company incorporated, a pharmaceutical company in New Jersey had developed a drug that was very effective against River Blindness and he reasoned that perhaps he could somehow figure out a way in which to deliver that drug to such places as this country. And he set up pilot projects in parts of former Imo and former Bendel State, using the Imo State University (as it was then called) and the University of Benin and his essential staff. They would set up teams and put together pilot projects beginning, I think in 1991 in those two states. There was no Foundation then, there was very little money. He got enough money from Rotary International to put these two demonstration projects together. These projects showed that indeed they could organise efficient distribution system in areas where the disease was reported. He gave a personal interview in Houston. Must have been one of these personal interviews that was noticed in the early 1990 by John J. Moores, then chief executive officer of BMC software.

Moores called Baldwin and said I would like to come over and see you. And that was the beginning of the Foundation. They discussed whether or not Dr. Baldwin would be interested in establishing a Foundation for the

control of this disease and Moore was willing to fund it. So the River Blindness Foundation was set up under the laws of the state of Texas as a non-profit organisation. And Dr. Baldwin began building a staff. Don Rice was one of his first close associates. They have been together here a number of times. I was engaged. Dr. Brian Duke, a medical director was engaged and a little while, the River Blindness Foundation took shape over the course of the following year. It is now focussing on River Blindness globally. It is expanding quite remarkably since its foundation. And it is active in a number of countries where the disease exists in about 33 countries. Six of them are in Latin America. That leaves you with 27. The 27th is Yemen and the remaining 26 are in Africa. No one knows why the disease is localised the way it is. But all we know is that the disease has to be near fast running water because the vector that carries the infection is a lit-

tle fly that only breeds in fast-running water in the tropics. Why is the disease not in Asia, there are lots of fast running water in Asia but for some reasons, the disease, is not there, it is only in these countries that I have mentioned. In West and Central Africa, the disease is particularly serious. And Nigeria being the largest country has the most number of cases of any single country in the world. Anywhere between 3½ to 7 million people are estimated to be infected.

I understand other non-governmental bodies have embarked on programmes of combating River Blindness. How do their efforts complement yours?

The organisations in this country that are busy trying to tackle the disease are first of all, the Federal Government through what is called National Onchocerciasis control programme.

The Federal Government has not been able to fund the programme as it deserves. We hope they would be able to have success under the new regime.

But they have not funded the national programme adequately to put in on its feet. The second organisation that is very active is UNICEF. UNICEF has given money to fund distribution in four states. The distribution is handled by Nigerians. UNICEF does not have any person on the ground. They simply provide vehicles and funds. The River Blindness Foundation is probably the



Easum: "Hopefully the disease would be eradicated in 10 years time."

most active of all the organisations working here, on River Blindness. Of all the foreign organisations, we have committed something like \$4 million in the course of the last 2 or 3 years to this cause.

Africare which is an American based NGO that works in grassroot development and grassroot health is very active in working on this disease in 5 states. In the 5 states, the Africare's work is funded jointly by USAID and RBF. The states are Kwara, Kebbi, Adamawa, Taraba and Borno.

One peculiarity of the tropics as regards combating the disease is that the aerial spraying method of killing the insect bearing the disease is that unlike in other areas where that method has been effective, here it takes a lot too much, (in terms of resources), it is therefore uneconomical. Secondly in the tropics, the Rivers are covered by dense jungle overgrowth that makes it impossible for the spray to reach the water. Again the fly gets to develop a resistance to the spray. So the aerial spraying method is not just a practical way to go about it. It is also not a happy thing to spray it all over the area, because the drug might affect other forms of life.

You have chosen a number of states. Does that mean those are the most endemic ones?

Yes. One of these endemic areas is the Federal Capital. That has yet been officially addressed but we understand that it will be. We are in neighbouring state, we are in Plateau, which has a border with the FCT, Africare is in Kogi, Southern Borno. Africare is in Kwara. The disease is spreading fast and it is spreading to the Capital Territory which I suppose is going to be taken on by the National Onchocerciasis programme.

A lot of ignorance still surrounds the River Blindness disease. Could one bite of the black fly make one go blind?

It takes lots of bites but I cannot give you the scientific explanation to that.

What has the response of government been like to your efforts at combating this disease? I understand that you also solicit support from private individuals and corporate bodies.

We have just begun to organise financial partnerships here. We are trying to insist that in the first year of programme, the River Blindness Foundation will fund only half of the cost, the other half will be funded by the state and the local government areas where you are going to distribute the drug. And we believe that increasingly each year following that first year, cost should diminish. And hopefully with the primary health care system, there must be something on the

ground already, in which you can incorporate a delivery system. So we hope that foreign cost and the local cost diminish over the course of time. That is what we are trying to do.

I still think that public enlightenment is vital towards the eradication of this disease. In addition to distributing drugs, is the Foundation focusing on ways of educating people in ways of prevention rather than cure?

You can't prevent it. You can't change life styles and avoid Oncho. You can change your life style and avoid AIDS. You can change your life style and avoid guinea worm, if you boil your water. There is no way you can avoid this disease. You are going to get bitten (by the black flies) if you work on the fields. All you have to do is take the pill once a year and if you have the infection, the pill will work wonders against the parasites in your body. In the course of time we will eliminate the disease.

As far as educating people is concerned. Yes you need to tell them that River Blindness does not mean that if you work near the river you become blind, it does not mean if you live beside a lake, stagnant or non-moving water, you become blind. You must be educated to come back every year and get the drug. You must be educated not to buy this drug from somebody in the market. You are not supposed to take more than one or two each. You are not supposed to give to your children if they are under the age of 5. Pregnant women and nursing mothers are not supposed to take it neither are aged people. That is the kind of education that we are talking about. Essentially, it is the responsibility of government. We can advise. We can not insist, surely, the National Ministry of Health can design an educational programme that would make sense to people in the villages.

Do you think enough commitment has been shown on our side here by the government?

The Federal Government has not the state government has been very enthusiastic. This is a democratic government that has been elected by popular vote. The governors, the commissioners of health, they are all very keen. They want to do something good, some social good towards those who elected them. The local government leaders are the same way. And I said there is a lot of enthusiasm from the private sector.

The problem is that the Federal Government say they don't have money. They have adopted the Onchocerciasis programme in principle. They set "a reg-

ional system, that is pretty good on paper, but that is falling apart because they don't have the money to fund it. We hope that next year under a new administration, it will be a different story.

If everything works according to plan, when do you think you can accomplish your mission of eradicating River Blindness in Nigeria?

You have to take this drug for ten years. If we could right now, 1993 begin the dosage to any person in the country who is at risk and that is going to mean a number of millions of Nigerians. It is probable you will need to get the programme on the out in the next ten years, eleven years or the most 12 years.

There is still going to be some reinfestation or reinfection. Probably you are not going to eliminate this disease completely. But you are certainly going to be able to remove it from the public health agenda of this country. You will increase life expectancy, you will prevent blindness, you will clear up the skin, particularly for women who are concerned with this cosmetic problem that they won't find husbands. You will feel better. That's what we could do in ten years in this country with adequate encouragement from the federal government, the state government, the local government, the private sector, the international NGOs and UNICEF. If we could get the World Bank and the WHO involved then we might have an even more positive picture.

## LIFELINES

"NIGERIA'S food culture is basically survival. In Nigeria, we wack, we don't die."

— Tonia Igchion on finding a Nigerian food culture.

"LIFE doesn't necessarily get better, you get better at life."

— Nigerian born musician Sade Adu, on getting older.

"THE trouble is that life is too short. But I welcome that because it would be absolutely awful if it were too long."

— Peter Ustinov — American film star

"I HAVE prove that without money the womenfolk can make a mark on Nigeria's political scene

— Sarah Jabril on her unflinching aspiration towards the presidency

**NIGERIAN HEARTCARE FOUNDATION:**

# A good cause with a big heart

*Africans do not have heart problems: FALSE. Heart problem is a disease of the Western World: UN-TRUE. New born babies and the young cannot suffer from heart problems: ANOTHER FALACY.*

By Ngozi Abanobi

**S** pervasive and deadly as health problems relating to the heart are, a majority of the people are ignorant about Heart problems especially in this our part of the world. The result? The increasing number of deaths, of which only a fraction is represented in the ubiquitous daily refrain of obituary announcements in the

pages of our newspapers, and on the wireless of so and so dying suddenly after a brief illness. It is against this backdrop that a group of Nigerians got together last year. Recently, the ceremonies marking the turning of the sod of a Heart-care centre was performed in Abuja. The Centre is the baby of the Nigerian Heart Care Foundation, a non-political and non-profit making organisation concerned with the promotion of the health and social well-being of Nigerians with particular interest in the prevention and care of heart diseases. With a pool of eminent medical practitioners, and seasoned professionals from diverse backgrounds making up the membership and no less a person as Adeoye Lambo, a professor of international repute as president of its board of trustees, the foundation although still young, already portrays itself as one that is set for serious business. The federal government believes so too, as can be deduced from its encouragement of the foundation's programmes. During its launching at Abuja a month ago the foundation was given 8 hectares of land in the Federal Capital Territory for the purpose of building a Heart-Care Centre. In addition, a plum

sum of N25 million was given the foundation by the Federal Government as an initial donation. Although, it would be built in Abuja, the Heart-Care Centre will have a continental scope. To be named the African Heart-Care Centre, it will be funded by all African countries.

Kola Akinroye, a cardiologist and vice president of the foundation told TSM, that with the scope the foundation has in mind, its won't be easy for a single country to fund it all, on its own. Already, he said other African centres such as Egypt, Zimbabwe, Ghana and Gabon are involved and will be meeting in Nigeria next month.

However, Akinroye said, the foundation's primary aim is not so much as to set up a centre, but to educate Nigerians on ways of coping with, and preventing heart problems. This, the foundation hopes to achieve through a community based dissemination of information, using families, churches, organisations, etc.

It is also the foundation's plan to use the three levels of health care delivery — primary, secondary and tertiary to achieve its objectives. It will establish and administer a research fund; disseminate up-to-date information on heart and related diseases. Hospitals offering heart care services will be identified and necessary equipment for the detection and cure of heart diseases donated to them. The foundation



Big wigs at the Abuja ceremony Vice President Aikhomu familiarizes with the brains behind the Heart-care centre

will also undertake the training of hospital personnel from chosen hospitals and health care centres in the country. It will also motivate and mobilize people to participate in heart related educational problems.

Already the foundation has recognised some persons for their support towards the Heart-Care Centre project. In recognition of this, Akinroye told *TSM* their names would be immortalized by having sections of the centre building named after them. The administrative and clinical building has been named after President Ibrahim Babangida. The International Conference Centre is named after Gado

Nasko, an army general and administrator of Federal Capital Territory. The Research Library bears the name of Houphet Boigny, the Ivorian President while the Annual International Seminar building is named after Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe.

When work is finally completed on the centre, Africans will not need to fly out of the continent for heart problems, as Abuja - Nigeria will have a place in their hearts. Akinroye said although there is a similar centre in Ivory Coast, it is sponsored by the French Government and English speaking African Centres do not have access to it.

More than opening its doors to all Africans, the African Heart-Care Centre in Abuja will not just be for the wealthy. Because it is a foundation, its services would be subsidized therefore, making them available to the poor.

The African Heart-Care may be ambitious in scope and utopian in objective, it is not a dream any more. With what the foundation has achieved so far, the quality of the people behind it and the backing it is enjoying from the government, this worthy cause will surely make a positive impact on health care system in Nigeria, nay Africa and the world.

*Continued from Page 25*

Zaire, Togo and Nigeria. On the degree of endemicity, Nigeria tops the list. It is estimated that 60% of the cases in West Africa or between 30-40 per cent of all the world cases exist in Nigeria. G.K. Gyoh, director general in the federal ministry of health and social services describes Nigeria as the most endemic country in the world. A prevalence survey conducted by the National Onchocerciasis Control Programme, NOCP between 1988 and 1989 shows that the disease is present in virtually all the states and Abuja. Kwara, Kogi, Benue, Niger, Bauchi, Taraba, Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Anambra, Enugu, Ondo, Edo and Delta have a prevalence rate of 75 per cent and above. Plateau, Abuja, Imo, Abia, Cross River, Kebbi and Sokoto have a prevalence rate of 74 per cent to 26 per cent. Ogun, Katsina, Kano and Jigawa trail after, with a rate of 26 per cent to 5 per cent while Lagos and Rivers State are said to have the lowest endemicity.

Before the mid 1970's when an American firm, Merck, Sharp and Dohme came up with a wonder drug, Mectizian which it now gives free to endemic countries, through the River Blindness Foundation, a humanitarian organisation based in Houston, Texas the only known way of tackling the disease was through aerial insecticide spraying of the black flies' breeding areas (see interview). Since the Foundation established presence in the country about two years ago, it has embarked on a programmed eradication of the disease in a number of states of the federation; through the distribution of Mectizian.

Already, the impact of the Foundation's work is being felt. Ezekwesili Godson, the traditional ruler of Isuochi

where Martha comes from told *TSM* that before the distribution of Mectizian in his area, the disease had caused so much devastation, debilitating able bodied farmers, causing low productivity and driving young people who have

nothing to look forward to away from the villages to the cities. It is a different story now, he says. Thanks to the Foundation, productivity has increased. Those who have taken the initial dosage confess a general feeling of well being, spreads the good news, making more and more people come for the drug.

Okwuoma Abanobi, a doctor of epidemiology and director of the Foundation's project in Imo and Abia states, agree that the project will have a big task coping with the surge of people to be given the drug but is confident that the project will be equal to the task. Abanobi said the project will start massive distribution of Mectizian in the two states with the help of rural based health workers.

Combating the disease is however not such a smooth sail for the Foundation. Other than finance which levels of government are expected to bear part of, the Foundation still has a lot of obstacles on its way. There is still a lot of ignorance and superstition surrounding the disease. Donald Rice, the American project director of the Foundation told *TSM* that once a young girl of about 16 or 17, who has signs of the disease - depigmentation on the legs was asked if she knew why she had those light skin patches on her legs. Her reply was that she had violated the rules of the clan and the gods of the land has struck her with the disease. Rice believes that with increased public enlightenment such ignorance would be erased.

If all things go as programmed, if all levels of government, especially the Federal Government which formulates policies on health, show adequate commitment to combating the disease the foundation is sure in 10 years time River Blindness would be substantially controlled. Then cases like Martha's would be history.



Rice: project director RBF.

# Fresh Seeds Of Discord

**Africa**

Fresh seeds of discord appeared last weekend when a powerful force for the peaceful transition to democratic rule, perished. Chris Hani the former commander of the African National Congress (ANC's) military wing, Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) was gunned down, by a white man, in a drive way, outside his suburban home, near Johannesburg.

He was shot at close range by Jans Jakob Wallus, 40, who has close links with the Neo-Nazi Afrikaaner Resistance Movement and the far right Conservative Party. The assassin, who is of Polish origin, was immediately arrested after a tip off by a white lady who witnessed the murder. After raiding Wallus' home The South African

Police Commission said it found a list of some prominent political leaders. By then, it was not established whether Wallus acted alone, or was part of a conspiracy.

A mood of apprehension among whites and anger in the black community set in immediately after the killing, enraged blacks took to the streets. In Natal, two white were said to have been attacked in their car and burnt to death, while a house was set ablaze. Outbreaks of sporadic violence also broke out in black townships such as Cape Town and Soweto.

Fury among blacks were high, despite earlier attempts to diffuse tensions. The ANC in particular, was told to rise above the provocation, while top officials, among their ranks called for



**White assassin kills top ANC official in an attempt to fuel tension and throw democracy talks to the dogs.**

**By Joseph Umunegbu**

**T**HE present political climate in South Africa is a paradox. On the one hand, the overhauling of the notorious apartheid regime is taking shape, while the process of democratisation is in progress. And on the other hand, the beleaguered nation has been faced by an upsurge of political turmoil.

At the centre of the storm is the ongoing talks for a democratic South Africa, in which all groups from diverse political and racial spectra are jostling for a decisive position in the new South Africa. Two major black groups: the Rightist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the Leftist Pan African Congress (PAC), who feel sidelined by the present talks, are said to be spawning bloodshed to make their presence felt.

Then there is the racist white groups, bemoaning the end of apartheid, and using every opportunity to encourage racial conflict, and thus, throw the country into the abyss of anarchy so as to end the present multiparty negotiations, for a united South

*Hani....the slain "warrior", Time*



calm. Nelson Mandela made a passionate plea for peace when he said: "we call for a spirit of tolerance". The country's president, F.W. De Klerk also condemned the killing. "Hani and I, were of the opposite pole of the political spectrum, but we were working together for a peaceful South Africa. The killing could be seen as an attempt to sabotage the transition programme, at a time when a political deal was very close - I wish nobody will use this for political ends", he said. Furthermore, he reiterated that since it was a white lady who gave the vital information, leading to the arrest, it shows that there are some whites who are upset about the death. "So it will be bad to allow the killing to stop the process of reconciliation", he added.

But the police who were very quick to conclude that Wallus acted alone when no evidence pointing one way or the other had emerged - aroused widespread suspicion. To this end, many in the black community accused South Africa's security officials of complicity in the assassination.

Hani, who was also the General Secretary of South Africa's Communist Party was, according to political commentators, the second most popular figure in the ANC, after Nelson Mandela. He was highly respected among the grassroots, particularly militant black youths whom he was able to keep in line - making them part and parcel of the multiparty talks. With Hani out of the scene, many ANC young militants may decide to align with PAC, who are more anti-white. They may feel the PAC talks the language of whites better than the ANC - violence. The PAC who are only peripheral to the negotiation talks, have recently been blamed for a series of attacks on whites. The Azanian Peoples Liberation Front (APLF), the armed wing of PAC was accused by a Cape Town Judge, Richard Goldstone, of using the Transkei tribal homeland as a base for rebel attacks in areas of South Africa, dominated by whites.

Although it is too soon to draw assumptions about the current political scene in South Africa, the nation may be on the brink of civil war unless the ANC and government can speedily press ahead for multiparty elections, before a descent into chaos, materialises.

Serious difference over the control of the various armed formations which are plaguing national life, have all along divided the South African government and its principal negotiating partner, the ANC. Black gun men had

been attacking whites in a series of apparently random raids on school children and commuters in areas south of Johannesburg and Eastern Cape. De Klerk and his ministers received pressures from National Party supporters to take action against the groups threatening whites. The focus was on guerilla armies attached to black liberation movements such as MK and APLA. There had been calls for the disbandment of both and of the handing over of their arms caches. Though they refused at the time, the death of Hani may likely strengthen the resolve of black guerilla movements.

Even before the killing of Hani, Cyril Ramaphosa, the ANC General Secretary and Mongosuthu Buthelezi, the IFP chieftain, stated that the possibility of civil war in South Africa cannot be ruled out, because the social fabrics was falling apart. To prevent this, the multi party talks on the transition from white rule to democracy, which

opened on April 1, this year, after months of deadlock, was seen as the last, to prevent South Africa's slide to anarchy.

The Johannesburg meeting was the first since the anti apartheid struggle began. Twenty-six political groups including whites, converged for a two-day meeting to thrash out terms of transition to democratic rule after more than 300 years of white minority rule. The South African government and ANC had agreed to join a government of national unity. The transitional government was expected to take place after the first all South African elections scheduled for April 1994.

But whichever group intends to lead the five-year transitional government would inherit a ravaged economy, uncertainty over the country's future, violence, drought and depressed world prices for the nation's vast raw material resources.

*A protest rally against Hani's death*



# APPROPRIATE PRICING OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

## Introduction

*The issue of whether or not to adjust upwards the present absurdly low prices of petroleum products price in Nigeria has been on the agenda of public debate for quite sometime now. While government has continued to remind the public of the waste inherent in retaining the regime of very low priced petroleum products, some interest groups in society have insisted that correct pricing, through adjustment upwards of product prices may be desirable as an economic proposition but that it will have adverse effects on the lives of ordinary Nigerians if its proceeds are not applied to the provision of much needed infrastructure and social services.*

*In the 1993 Budget, there was a definite indication that the pricing policy of*

## The facts of the Matter

*petroleum products in the country will come under serious government attention and that existing price regime may not be maintained for much longer.*

*What the issue requires is not sentimental arguments but a close look at the major facts and figures in our domestic economy and comparative figures in other countries of the world.*

## Deregulation and Petroleum Pricing

The major thrust of the economic reform measures in the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) is the deregulation of prices of goods and

services in the economy.

At present, while pricing in most other sectors have been deregulated, there is still regulation in the pricing of petroleum products. The current pump price of 70 kobo per litre of premium motor spirit (PMS) is

**“ Prices in  
Nigeria are  
the lowest in  
Africa... the  
Nigerian  
pump price  
is only about  
4% of the  
current average  
price  
in African  
countries ”**

the result of a system of regulated pricing. Govern

ment, through the NNPC, sells PMS at 51.7 kobo per litre while marketers retail at 70 kobo per litre. The difference of 18.3 kobo per litre is the gross margin allowed to marketers to cover their costs, overheads, and transportation. This implies that both the wholesale and retail prices of petroleum products in Nigeria are regulated. On the contrary, with the deregulation of the foreign exchange market and a 1100% decline in the value of the Naira, the cost of machinery, spares and additives in the oil industry have risen by a corresponding 1000% as against a 77% increase in petroleum product prices between 1987 and 1992.

**International Trends in Petroleum Products Pricing**

Prices in Nigeria are the lowest in Africa. While PMS retails for 70 kobo per litre in Nigeria, the aggregate average price in other

African countries is the equivalent of N18.6 per litre. Thus, the Nigerian pump price is only about 4% of the current average price in African countries.

Specifically, for instance, the price for a litre of PMS in some neighbouring countries is as follows:

Benin	N14.95
Cameroon	N20.4
Niger	N16.2
Chad	N20.6

These wide differentials between prices in Nigeria and our relatively poorer neighbouring states is the genesis for the wide-spread smuggling of petroleum products across our borders and the frequent shortages that have in the past caused our populace considerable hardship. A country like Cameroon has had to shut an 80,000 barrels per day refinery as it finds it more cost effective to have her citizens use cheaper petroleum products smuggled from Nigeria.

There is of course the often canvassed argument that most of our neighbouring states are not oil-producing countries and that Nigerians should pay lower prices since we are so richly endowed with oil

**“Because of the huge price disparity between Nigeria and neighbouring countries, there is a real incentive for smuggling of petroleum products to these other countries”**

and gas resources. But the trend in the developed economies of the West and other OPEC member countries would seem to deflate this argument.

In the technologically-advanced western countries, specifically the OECD members like USA, Germany and the United Kingdom, gasoline prices are maintained at levels that are substantially higher than crude oil prices in order to cater for the total cost of supply and distribution, adequate returns on capital and robust government fiscal take. In these countries also, there has been a conscious maintenance of positive growth in product prices at an average of 8% per annum between 1987 and 1992.

Among fellow OPEC member-states like Venezuela, Indonesia and United Arab Emirate, petroleum product prices are not less than the cost of processed crude.

Relative to the trend in these other groups of countries, Nigeria, has maintained a monumental decline of prices at an average of 29% per annum in real terms. Similarly, the pump price

of our motor spirit is only 30% of the cost of processed crude, 24% of the prevailing average price of gasoline in the reference OPEC countries and paltry 5% of those of the

**“ Low price of petroleum products encourages wasteful consumption and inefficient utilization ”**

OECD countries. Yet, the need for development and the demand for social services is higher in Nigeria with a vast population of over 80 million than in most of these other countries, some of which have very developed infrastructures and efficient social services.

Another commonly expressed argument against product price adjustment is that given

the present state of the Nigerian economy and in particular the prevailing income levels, the "average man" cannot absorb higher prices. On the contrary, if we use Gross National Product (GNP) per capita in relation to the affordability of goods, especially petroleum products, there is a scandalous distortion between Nigeria and other major African countries.

For instance, Zimbabwe with a GNP per capital of \$420, consumes premium motor spirit (PMS) at the cost of US \$0.56 per litre, Egypt with a GNP per capita of US \$620 consumes PMS at a cost of US \$0.18 per litre, Ghana with a GNP per capita of US \$400 pays US \$0.49 per litre while Nigeria with a GNP per capita of US \$280 pays only US \$0.038 per litre of PMS.

Therefore, the relationship between gasoline price and GNP per capita in Nigeria is totally out of tune with what obtains in these other African countries. Given the trend in these other nations, Nigerians can in fact afford a PMS

price increase of 1000% at current GNP per capita ratio.

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**Effect of  
Low Petroleum  
Products  
Price**

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The long-standing absurdly low petroleum products prices in Nigeria have continued to have damaging effects on both the national economy and the petroleum industry. The implications for both areas in the future are even more far reaching.

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**Economic  
Effects:  
Smuggling  
and Diversion**

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Because of the huge price disparity between Nigeria and neighbouring countries, there is a real incentive for smuggling of petroleum prod

***“The current low price levels have generally hampered the growth of the Nigerian oil industry”***

ucts to these other countries. This trend which became so widespread along most of the nation's borders contributed to the many incidents of fuel scarcity and their attendant social unrest that we have witnessed in the recent past.

With gasoline prices averaging N18.6 per litre in these countries, a tanker load of 30,000 litres of PMS which would sell for N21,000 in Nigeria would fetch an average of about N558,000 across the border. It is clear that the financial incentive for petroleum price smuggling is quite tempting, hence the problem of

smuggling has remained almost intractable.

The net effect is that there is a higher than real demand for petroleum products which existing crude oil allocations can hardly meet since Nigeria unofficially supplies these products to meet the deficit in the rest of West Africa.

A close look at the petroleum products supply and demand balance in the West African sub-region shows that there is a supply deficit of 2.63 million tonnes per annum (MT/annum) in West African countries outside Nigeria. This deficit translates to about 60,000 b/d of crude. This deficit, as mentioned earlier, is satisfied with cheap smuggled products from the highly subsidised Nigerian Market.

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**Wasteful  
Consumption**

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Low price of petroleum products encourages wasteful consumption and inefficient utilization.

**“ Unless something positive is done to reduce the price distortion, the continued losses and decay will force activities in the refined products distribution industry to a halt in the not too distant future ”**

In real terms, our domestic need for petroleum products should by 1992 standards be at about the equivalent of 270,000 barrels per day (b/d). At present, we consume in excess of 360,000 barrels daily. If the correct pricing

system is adopted, the extra 90,000 b/d would be conserved either for export to earn much-needed foreign exchange or added to the much-talked about strategic reserves. Growth rate rose from 2% to 18%. At this rate Nigeria will be dependent mainly on imported fuel for domestic consumption in ten years from now.

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### Product Adulteration

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In order to maximise the already huge profits which accrue to them from smuggling petroleum products across the Nigerian border to other West African countries, unscrupulous traders have taken to product adulteration with its attendant hazards. For instance, the practice of mixing Kerosine with premium motor spirit has often led to large scale shortage of kerosene and aviation fuel in the domestic market with the attendant economic disruptions as was witnessed at the end of 1992.

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### Environmental and other Hazards

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Because products are uneconomically priced, existing oil Marketing companies are operating on a survival basis, with little or no margin left to keep maintenance at its optimum. Consequently, the operational integrity of facilities is compromised and safety standards are generally low while funds are not available for necessary environmental pollution control programme. For instance, the industry has not been able to switch to the internationally more acceptable unleaded fuel, despite the environmental and health appeal of the programme.

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### Low Level Investment and Expansion

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The current low price levels have generally ham

pered the growth of the Nigerian oil industry. For instance, it has been difficult to promote the consumption of gas for domestic and industrial use which would ordinarily have freed some other products for export. As a result, the flaring of natural gas has continued with the attendant loss of revenue while the consumption of refined products escalates. The fol

**“The way to rescue the nation's oil industry from imminent collapse, is to work towards eventual correct pricing of petroleum products”**

lowing projects will also be grounded:

1. Upgrading of parts

- of pipeline system from 6" to 12" pipe line
2. Pipeline system phase III
3. Bonny Export Terminal
4. Apapa Jetty reconstruction
5. Export Refinery Project
6. Maintenance of existing systems, such as refineries, pipe lines and Depots
7. Butanisation Projects
8. Methanol Project

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### The Commercialised NNPC

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The essence of government's privatisation and commercialisation programme is to encourage efficiency in the operation of Corporations and Parastatals. NNPC, which is the nation's premium economic corporation itself bears other costs like storage, refining, transportation and distribution of products which are not subsidised by government. While government's sub

sidy on crude oil to the NNPC stands at a whopping N41.6 billion annually, the NNPC requires an additional N16.64 billion to refine, store, distribute and market petroleum products. This amount is the difference between the total cost of providing the above services and the revenue derivable from the sale of all petroleum products at the present low prices.

In some instances and on some occasions of embarrassing scarcity of products as a result of smuggling or inefficient utilisation, the NNPC has had to expend scarce foreign exchange in the importation of additional products. This reduces the proceeds derived from domestic sales by about N2.09 billion.

It is difficult for the NNPC to operate as a viable commercial enterprise with corporate strategic obligations to the Nigerian nation if the corporation has to continue subsidising the distributive business with earnings from other source.

## What is to be done

After careful study and analysis of the existing price structure of petroleum products and its overall effect on the Nigerian economy and society, certain conclusions are inevitable.

**Although the nation is endowed with vast resources of oil and gas reserves, it is the challenge of the present generation of leaders and followers to harness these resources for the upliftment of our nation**

If current uneconomic pump prices are retained, government would earn N41.6 billion, less than the appro-

priate crude value while NNPC would continue to sustain a loss of N16.64 billion in the distributive business. Similarly, marketers would earn N1.2 billion per year less than the minimum figure to keep that sector vibrant.

Unless something positive is done to reduce the price distortion, the continued losses and de-

If the present 95% government support is maintained; there is no way the NNPC and marketers can provide efficient services. There is an urgent need, therefore, for substantial price increases. The minimum level of adjustment will have to be between 250% - 300% in the prices of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) and Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) in order to sufficiently encourage NNPC and marketers to continue providing efficient services.

The way to rescue the nation's oil industry from imminent collapse, is to work towards eventual correct pricing of petroleum products. This will mean a domestic Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) price of between N7 and N9 per litre, making it unattractive to import the product and thus adequately protect the entire downstream petroleum industry.

Even then, a Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) price N9 per litre would represent less than 53% of the

crude will force activities in the refined products distribution industry to a halt in the not too distant future.

average prevailing price in neighbouring West African countries which is N18.6 per litre.

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### Direct Export

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In order to control, smuggling of petroleum products, direct export to government-owned oil marketing companies of neighbouring countries should be encouraged. However, the export price, would be less than the prices prevailing in these countries to make exports attractive.

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### How to Utilise Additional Earnings

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The question that is likely to agitate the mind of most Nigerians in the event of eventual appropriate price introduction is: **To what use would government apply the proceeds:** In the proposed correct pricing mechanism, the exercise will yield over N41.6 billion annually to Government.

The suggested areas of application for these additional earnings are as follows:-

- Mass Transit
- Zero Duty on Agricultural Implements
- Tax Reliefs
- Increased Investment in Public Housing
- Health-Care
- Education
- Duty Incentives for Bicycles and Motorcycles
- Increased rural Development

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### Conclusion

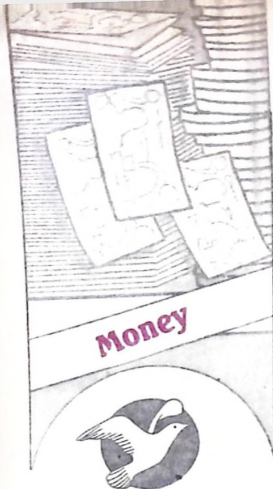
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From the foregoing, it is obvious that the issue of correct petroleum products pricing is more that of rational economic thinking than that of sentiments. Although the nation is endowed with vast resources of oil and gas reserves, it is the challenge of the present generation of leaders and followers to harness these resources for the upliftment of our nation. We cannot afford to sac-

rifice the future of our children through wasteful consumption of petroleum products.

The Oil Industry in Nigeria is about the youngest in the world, but has not only kept abreast with international counterparts, but has proved the most developed in Africa South of Sahara. In order to maintain this status and sustain an already inbuilt maintenance culture, petroleum products must be correctly priced.

**“What the issue requires is not sentimental arguments but a close look at the major facts and figures in our domestic economy”**



Money



## Resettling the displaced

Seventeen years ago, the Federal Government acquired the land mass now known as Ajaokuta Steel Complex. There is now, however, a jinx over the N31.9m for the resettlement of the displaced persons. Who has this sum? Ask the Kwara government.

By Ono Bobi

**AJAOKUTA.**  
Nigeria's largest steel town is fast wearing a new look. Old roads are being resurfaced and new ones being constructed; roundabouts are being built with all architectural touch of artistic designs while homes, both office

and residential are being renovated. Ajaokuta is now a beehive of activities, as the people of the steel settlement are anxiously awaiting the official commissioning of the complex, come June, this year as promised by President Ibrahim Babangida.

But behind all this facade of a new look Ajaokuta and commissioning of the steel complex is a haunting question: what has become of the resettlement project meant to relocate indigenes of the 13 villages around the steel complex who were displaced in 1976 when the Federal Government "compulsorily acquired" the area for the establishment of the iron industry?

TSM learnt that 15 years after the government's acquisition of the area for the steel project, the Babangida administration had on January 31, 1991 advanced the sum of N31.9 million to the former Kwara State government in respect of the resettlement scheme.

According to TSM investigation, the amount was lodged in two bank ac-

counts: Trade Bank PLC and the Bank of the North, Ilorin respectively. Desirous to expedite action on the completion of the project, the former Governor of Kwara State, a Colonel (now Brigadier-General) Alkali Jarji Kazir had inaugurated an implementation committee for the Ajaokuta Resettlement Project. The committee had as its chairman the then deputy governor of Kwara State, Chief Ezekiel Oyejipo, Secretary to the State Government as members. On February 14, 1991, the committee, TSM was told, submitted its first report detailing contracts to be awarded and suggesting contractors.

For reasons best known to former Kwara State Government, the report of the committee on the Ajaokuta resettlement Scheme was not implemented until states were created on August 27th, 1991. The state creation exercise witnessed the redesignation of the Ajaokuta project area as part of the landmass and geo-political territory of Kogi State.



Audu: Complete asset sharing is yet to be resolved

The advancement of the funds for the resettlement scheme to the then Kwara State Government was premised on the fact that the Ajaokuta Steel Project at the time was located within Kwara State.

With the creation of Kogi State and the consequent transfer of the Ajaokuta project to the new state, TSM was told, it was expected that the funds and Resettlement Scheme would be transferred to Kogi State. But this was not to be as, since August 27, 1991 when Kogi became a reality, no documented contract had been awarded for the resettlement project.

TSM gathered from government circles at Ilorin, the Kwara State capital that the N31.9 million for the Ajaokuta Resettlement Centre was one of the serious issues canvassed by Governor Abubakar Audu of Kogi State during the assets sharing exercise which saw the two states almost at daggers drawn last year.

While government officials in Kwara would not deny that the sum was actually received and is still in government purse, they refuse to be drawn into discussing why the project is crippled and cheques issued to contractors are dishonoured at receiver — banks.

TSM, however, reliably understood that the sum in question has sketchy stories on its whereabouts in the Kwara State Government. Some top government officials are said to be pointing accusing fingers at several sources for "developing itching palms." Other senior officials suggest that the Kogi State Government should allow the Kwara State Government complete the project, a piece of advice which a member of the Kogi House of Assembly described as "ridiculous," stating that "this is daylight robbery" by the Kwara State Government.

What is of serious concern is the sudden turn of events after the creation of Kogi. For, a few days after Kogi State was created, the moribund report of Oyejipo Committee on the Ajaokuta project was exhumed, revived and contracts awarded for the various projects planned for the resettlement scheme. As at December 20, 1991, the government of the new Kwara State was still holding discussions with contractors on the preparation of preliminary documents such as performance bond.

According to TSM sources in Lokoja, this was in total disregard of the Federal Government's directive that all projects and their liabilities be suspended by the former Kwara State while the processes for their formal



Lafagi: What hope for the dispossessed communities?

transfer to Kogi State should commence immediately. Despite the fact that N31.9 million advanced to the former Kwara State by the Federal Government in 1991 was split and lodged in separate accounts, it was expected that the funds would be harnessed and committed strictly to the prosecution of the project, but this was not the case.

Again in April of the same year, some contractors were authorised to collect some money from the fund.

With less than three months to the official commissioning of the Ajaokuta Steel Project, work on the project has stalled. Contractors have abandoned the project and left the site. The project which is divided into three phases is aimed at resettling thirteen communities who are supposed to move to a new location before the Ajaokuta Steel goes into full production, not only to provide a more suitable location but to avoid environmental hazards of the Industrial Complex.

However, the question still remains. "Is it possible for the various communities that are scattered about the steel complex to remain without a permanent settlement before the commencement of full production by the

steel industry? The answer may be no. Reason: on February 25, 1992 N12 million was withdrawn from Trade Bank of Nigeria PLC and transferred to Central Bank Account 105, Ilorin. This was quickly followed by another withdrawal of N3 million on February 25, 1991.

Early last year, Kogi State Government vehemently protested the illegal diversion of the funds but the Secretary to Kwara State Government, Alhaji Shehu Gafar assured then, that, the funds were intact. The Kwara State S.S.G later re-affirmed his earlier statement when the issue re-echoed in June, 1992.

However certain developments created doubts in the authenticity of Kwara State SSG's assurance, for example in January, 1992, 19 cheques totalling N373,500.00 issued to some contractors handling preliminary works at Ajaokuta were returned unpaid.

This is a sad story of misplaced buck passing with all its games of hide and seek. But who will accept responsibility for resettling the displaced owners of the area on which today stands Ajaokuta Steel Complex?

the other with the result that both government and operators of the market "see ourselves as partners in progress". Nigeria's joint efforts aimed at self-sufficiency technology, and scientific break-through Bakari explained, are now yielding the desired results capable of restoring the economy of the country to its former heights. "We must therefore not waiver in our collective resolve to bring about a high and sustainable real growth required for substantial improvement in the living standard of our people", he advised.

Extolling the virtues of the diversification of our economic base, and encouragement of Inter-Country exchange of Trade Missions as the thrust of this administration, Commerce Secretary told TSM that it was to achieve this that his ministry is giving priority attention to non-oil exports, stressing that "It is our belief that we have created conducive enabling atmosphere and ample investment opportunities in the country for existing investors - local and foreign to plough back part of their profits for greater yields."



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(N' Million)

COUNTRIES	Imports		Exports	
	2 Jan-Dec 1991	1 Jan-Dec 1990	2 Jan-Dec 1991	1 Jan-Dec 1990
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	52,663.1	34,708.5	120,930.6	104,107.6
<b>Total Africa</b>	421.3	262.7	8,948.8	7,677.3
E. C. O. W. A. S.	210.7	142.1	7,255.8	6,269.0
OTHERS	213.6	120.6	1,693.0	1,408.3
<b>Total America</b>	7,109.1	4,673.5	65,060.7	56,018.0
U. S. A.	4,581.4	3,005.7	62,158.3	53,459.0
Canada	210.6	146.9	241.9	213.3
Brazil	2,159.1	1,413.0	1,209.3	1,066.3
Others	158.0	107.9	1,451.2	1,279.4
<b>Total Western Europe</b>	27,857.2	18,379.0	45,469.9	39,174.8
Western Germany	7,846.4	5,180.8	5,079.1	4,371.8
United Kingdom	9,004.9	5,943.0	2,055.8	1,812.7
Netherlands	2,527.7	1,665.4	9,916.3	8,530.3
Italy	2,369.7	1,557.9	4,837.2	4,158.5
France	4,792.1	3,168.4	5,200.0	4,478.4
Spain	737.3	477.9	13,181.5	11,302.6
Others	579.1	385.6	5,200.0	4,520.5
<b>Total Eastern Europe</b>	1,421.8	931.5	241.9	171.1
<b>Total Asia</b>	9,847.4	6,488.0	1,088.4	959.7
Japan	3,159.6	2,069.1	241.9	213.3
Other Countries in Asia	6,687.8	4,419.7	846.5	746.4
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# Green light at the end of the tunnel

*Hopes of increased productivity and economic boom heighten as Nigeria's Trade with International Community increases.*

By Obinna Nwachukwu

**T**HE volume of Nigeria's trade with the rest of the world increased by 51.73 per cent within the last two years. A large proportion of which was on import of goods and services into the country. The value of Nigeria's import increased from N34,7085 billion as at the end of December, 1990 to N52,6631 billion at the end of 1991. This resulted in an increase of N17,955 billion representing 51.73 per cent.

On Exports, Nigeria's export volume increased marginally by 16.1 per cent. It rose from N104,1075 billion in 1990 to N120,930 billion as at the end of December 1991. Official figures from the Federal Office of Statistics on Nigeria's trade shows that the flow of Nigeria's trade is largely towards Europe and America. For example, in 1991, of the N52,663 billion imports, N27,857 billion was from Western Europe while Nigeria imported N4,581 billion from the United States of America.

In the case of exports, the United States tops the list of importers of Nigeria's products. Of the N120,930 billion total Nigeria's export of 1991, N65,060 went to the United States of America which was because of her large purchase of Nigeria's crude oil. And while N45,469 billion went to Western Europe, Intra-Africa trade still remained on the lowside. Nigeria's export to countries in the continent rose marginally from N7,677 billion in 1990 to N8,948 billion in 1991. At the same time, Nigeria's import from the continent also moved up from N262.7 billion to N421.3 million.

Above all however, one single country that seemed to have enjoyed greater trade relations with Nigeria is Germany. The volume of trade between Nigeria and Germany which rose from US \$2532 million in 1993 to US \$2794 in 1985 later plummeted to US \$1202



Inuwa Bakari — Government and private sector are partners in progress

three years later.

However, at the end of 1991, the volume of trade between the two countries made an appreciable increase to US \$2173 million.

A breakdown of the yearly data of trade between Nigeria and Germany shows that Germany imports from Nigeria which stood at US \$1822 million in 1983 dropped to US \$689 million in 1988 but later increased to US \$1262 million in 1990.

According to German Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden, the country's exports to Nigeria which dropped from US \$710 million in 1983 to US \$411 million, the following year rose to US \$973 million as at the end of 1991.

Further breakdown of the figures revealed that while the Federal Republic of Germany's exports to Nigeria for the first half of 1991 and 1992 stood at US \$428.9 million and US \$511.4 million, respectively, its imports from Nigeria for the corresponding period stood at US \$625.3 million and US \$791.2 million. During this period under review, Germany made the highest import from Nigeria in January 1991 which trade cost was US \$168.6 million with April having the least of US \$57.4 mil-

lion while its exports to Nigeria for the first half of last year was highest in January 1992 with a volume of US \$109.1 million and its lowest of US \$59.8 million for the month of May.

The structure of trade between these two countries revolves around crude oil, crude cocoa, chemical products, machines, vehicles, Electro technical products, iron and iron products. Based on this structure, German imports from Nigeria are mainly crude oil which accounts for 94.1 per cent of the trade volume and crude cocoa which accounts for 3.2 per cent of the trade while its exports to Nigeria are chemical products 17.9 per cent, machines 18.5 per cent, vehicles 16.7 per cent, Electro technical products 13.9 per cent and iron and iron products which accounts for 12.8 per cent of Nigeria's volume of imports from Germany.

Commenting on this development, Inuwa Bakari, (Alhaji), Commerce and Tourism Secretary described it as healthy for the growth of the economy, pointing out that it was as a result of cordial relationship existing between Nigeria and International Trade Missions on the one hand, and Nigeria and the Organized Private Sector (OPS) on

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And with the razing of the historic 25-storey Independence House, Tafawa Balewa Square which houses Nigeria's defence headquarters, the entire history and records of Nigeria's defence went down in angry tongues of flame.

It happened between 6.00 pm and 6.30 on Thursday April 16, 1993. And until 9.00 am on Friday, when we wearily left the eye popping sight, the MOD burnt on.

An officer described the incident as a "National disaster".

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quarters and Central Bank went up in flames. While the fire in Central Bank was controlled, that of Defence Headquarters brought forth a National tragedy. Opinion is that the fire couldn't have come at a worse time when a team of International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials arrived Nigeria on an economic mission.

The inferno reopens the entire question of the planned movement of the military Headquarters. With the Independent building gone, where do they go? Two options are available, a source told TSM. One is that they may have to move to Badagry - the Trade Fair site. Two is that the earlier plan on the decentralization of the military headquarters which was put on hold may have to be carried out more swiftly. If this option is taken, the earlier plan to move the army to Minna Niger State, the Airforce to Kano while the Navy stays put in Lagos using the Bonny Camp as its headquarters may now become a reality.

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Nigeria has had a history of fire outbreaks. In 1983, the famous NET building, adjacent MOD was gutted by fire. On its heels followed Western House also near Defence Headquarters, NEP PLC building on Awolowo Road Ikoyi, the famous Cocoa House in Ibadan and the former Ministry of education building on Moloney street in Lagos.

Reconstruction work on these expensive, high rise and strategic buildings take hundreds of millions of naira to complete. That is why even till today work on the NET building which was burnt more than

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

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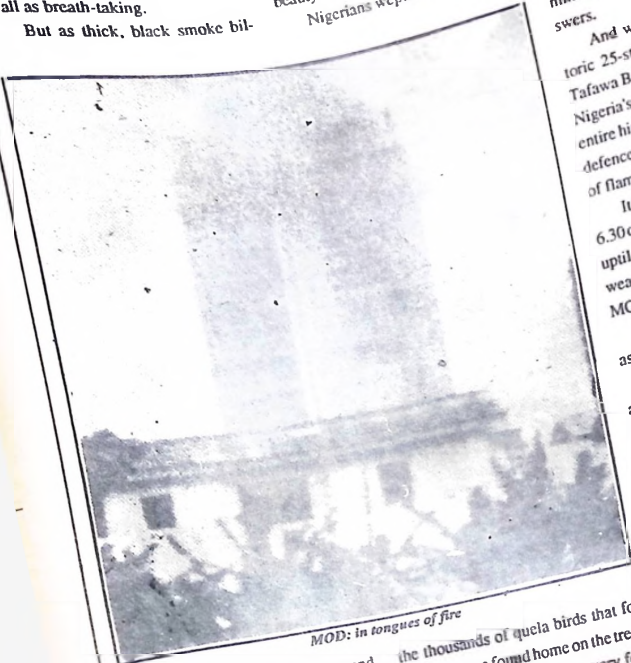
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sensitive materials, written or taped are gone."

Perhaps, but for the unfriendly attitude of the soliders who had by Friday morning manned all entrances to the MOD in their droves, most documents on the first and second floors would have been saved.

A very perturbed female worker on the second floor lamented to herself, "My office is still intact on the second floor. And there are sensitive materials there. The Nominal Roll of the military is there. I have been begging them to allow me in with some fire-fighters and military men to go and retrieve them, they have refused. They are behaving now like they do not know me. We are in trouble".

Her frustration couldn't move the military men who flogged most people silly and beat up one boy to a state of coma. Journalists suffered the same fate.

While Nigerians are still dazed by the national disaster, a few implications of the disaster have emerged. First is that Nigeria's defence apparatus is now homeless. All the service chiefs including Secretary of Defence and Chairmah Joint Chiefs of Staff, Sani Abacha, a General, now have no offices. So also are hundreds of officers housed in there all of whom were ordered to report to Bonny Camp immediately.

Secondly, invaluable documents and equipment are gone. Already some contractors who rushed to the scene of the disaster are threatening suicide. Said one of them, "All my contract documents are gone and I am being owed millions of naira. How will anybody ever think of paying me". He was not the only person thinking of sur-

MOD, and surprisingly some military men, were worried about their salaries. One officer lamented, "Gone with the fire is my salary and my wife will put to bed next week.

As of press time, the cause of the fire had not been ascertained and given the country's record, many fear it may never be known. But the shock has resulted in many angry, ridiculous speculations, some of them bordering on accusations. One angry bystander sneered, "they know what happened. They should tell us. This building is guarded 24 hours everyday and still they didn't notice the fire. It took a civilian passer-by to notice it. How can the military not be able to protect the Military Defence Headquarters? What are they doing? The Defence chief should speak-up now. That house represented the freedom of Nigeria. And now, it is gone".

But perhaps more frightening is that the MOD Headquarters was razed by fire on the heels of worrying allegations that the run-away suspected coup plotters of April 22, 1990, were criss-crossing several countries planning terrorist attack in Nigeria.

According to a Newspaper report which quoted what it called usually reliable sources, "the trio of dismissed Lt.- Col Anthony Nyiam, ex-Major Saliba Mukoro and Mr. Great Ogboru featured prominently in the dastardly plan. Among public utilities and buildings believed to be the target of terrorist attacks are the Central Bank, Ministry of Education on Victoria Island, the 25 storey Ministry of Defence building, the NITEL PLC headquarters and NEP PLC headquarters all on Lagos Island".

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range of traditions in anthropological perspectives.

**MUSEUM KITCHEN:** Still in the spirit of Easter, the National Museum Lagos in conjunction with Aaragon Galleries held a special Easter music and dance concert at the Museum Kitchen.

The show which was an attempt to provide an indigenous cultural mode of entertainment as an alternative to the existing forms Nigerians seem to be more at home with, and to reactivate activities of this kind on a regular basis at the Museum kitchen, witnessed live

music supplied by the Youth Generation Band, the Resettlers Band and Galadima and the Live Gospel Band.

There were also breath taking and nerve wracking cultural dances and acrobatic displays by the Aaragon cultural productions and Alhaji Jimoh Arenu and his acrobatic fire eaters, respectively. The programme was further spiced with a mini art exhibition as defined by Aaragon Galleries, and food fair staged by Vitus Hotels and choral songs recited by the Triumphant choir.

As stated by Mr. Tunde Adetunji who

implored Nigerians to undergo a cultural rebirth, the Easter concert was an experimentation in articulation at Aaragon Gallery's Afro Jazz Cultural Nite, which is expected to be a regular feature at the Aaragon Gardens, 209 Ikorodu Road, Obanikoro, Lagos.

Big names in the Nigerian music scene were absent here and this lent credence to the fact that this concert which shall henceforth be regular was designed primarily to fish out budding artistes.

All in all, the setting was mature, the presentation subtitled and the audience had a good time.

# The Badagry beach and the Blue Water Music Festival... Tales of the unexpected

Emma Anyamele (Jnr.) and Akaninyene Esiere



IRTUALLY all roads led to the Badagry Beach, venue of the Badagry Blue Water Music Festival, organised by AIBTONIA, the food people. Also tagged the Easter peace concert, this show scheduled for Easter Sunday and Monday, metamorphosed into a war of sorts on its baptismal day as fans became somewhat riotous.

In a manner that is fast becoming stereotypical as far as shows organised in Nigeria are concerned, the beach musical jamboree scheduled for 10.00 a.m did not kick off until at about 7.30 p.m after fans who had flocked the beach in numbers between 9 and 11.00 a.m had been completely worn out.

Before the commencement of the show however, the heavens opened up at about 4.30 p.m and endorsed the concert with showers of blessing. But this blessing was of a peculiar kind as fans who had become restive started showing signs of strain. This restiveness was further accentuated by the inability of the organisers to put their acts together even after the rain. And suddenly, the string which had been holding the patience of the crowd together, which had been under considerable strain for sometime, snapped

and rampage was the result.

Everyone on stage was dissipated with every conceivable object which the people used as projectiles. Even Bisi Olatilo was suspected to have sus-



Majek.....so long too long

tained injuries. And when the concert finally commenced a good number of the audience anticipating a complete flop had vacated the arena, only to walk straight on, into the jaws of suffering.



Danny Wilson.

since it was much "easier for the camel to pass through the eye of the needle" than for a beach comber to get a bus at that time. It is indeed incontrovertible that over 70% of those who spent the night at the beach did so against their personal inclinations.

When the concert finally started in the night, the fans who had arrived the beach since morning had started exhibiting symptoms of fatigue and irritability consequent upon strains and fast depreciating victuals and money. But from then, it was smooth sailing to the early hours of the morning with Blakky, Wasiu Ayinde Marshall, Danny Wilson, Ras Kimono, Oriz Williki and Majek Fashek on parade in this order.

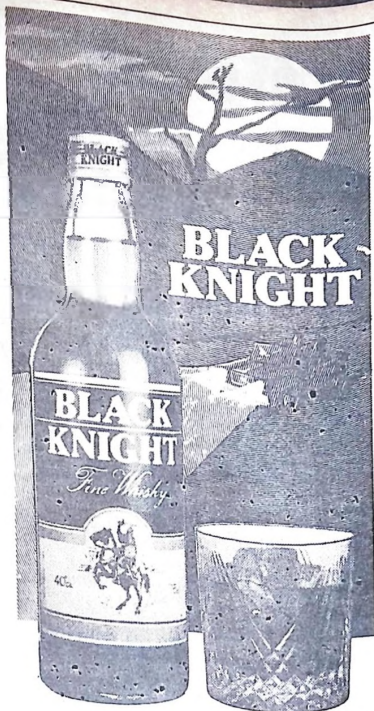
Action started on day 2 at about 3.00 p.m with artistes of very little consequence who were not appreciated by the crowd, which was quite insignificant in comparison with that of the previous day. The appearance of the Mandator was quite soothing but he failed to carry the fans along. This was followed by the performances of Evi Edna Ogholi Oghosi, Shina Peters and Ras Kimono.

All in all, the much trumpeted show fell far below average. According to an official of AIBTONIA the organisers, the artistes lucked them up. They kept everyone in suspense, failed to appear on schedule and were quite lackadaisical viz a viz the show. Put two and two together and you will know that the reason for this has to do with artistes who are always double dealing and who no doubt were billed to perform at some other places as well.

Moreover, shows of this kind should not be experimentation grounds for all categories of embryonic musicians. In fact before a musical up start is given the nod to appear on concerts of this nature, he should be known to be imbued with very arresting potentials. The argument that most music giants of today started out as lilliputians do not cut much ice, since we still recall that Blakky won an award at the Lekki sunsplash '89 even before releasing an album. Youthful Junior and Pretty who were acclaimed by music buffs even when they had no album to their credit, also provide another case in point.

Coupled with the above, the jamboree was marred by technical problems which distorted the overall sound output of the system consequently the voices of the singers became strange and quite unappealing.

Furthermore, there was nothing like time restriction on any performing artiste, since nobody could say for sure where the next artiste will spring from. Thus, the audience was encumbered



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with the agony of putting up with the prattles and pranks of any artiste on stage for what seemed like eternity.

The above notwithstanding, the jamboree provided an opportunity for fun seekers to get together and enjoy themselves even under very irritating circumstances. This is hoping that we all get together again come Easter '94 but under a much more pleasant atmosphere.

### Hopes of the Living Dead On Stage

Lovers of the theatre once again are in for a good time as the play titled *Hopes of the Living Dead* by Prof. Ola Rotimi hits the stage of the National Theatre under the patronage of the

Nigerian International Bank (NIB). One recalls that last year the play *Ovonramwen Nogbasi* also by Ola Rotimi was staged at the University of Lagos auditorium for a week. And the sponsors were still NIB. Just like *Ovonramwen Nogbasi* which recapitulates the famous Benin massacre, *Hopes of the Living Dead* is also a play structured in the guise of history.

While acclaiming this spectacular romance of NIB with the theatre, we hasten to add that this play promises to be a thriller for theatrical enthusiasts and a must for students especially those of the arts. It starts today April 18 and runs for a week.

Stay tuned for a complete analysis of this play.

# Big return of Lady Mandator

Backed with the powerful vocals of Albert Kalu, Peggy Curtis Imanah seems set to sizzle in the music arena.

By Zik Okafor

**H**ER second song was soul touching. A momentary silence gripped the audience. A few mouths were agape. Some stole a soft smile; while others mused. Then came a spontaneous applause. Lady (*The Mandator*) Peggy Curtis Imanah has returned to the bit, music bit. A big, big return.

It was at *Niteshij Nightclub* in Ikeja. Occasion was the launching of Peggy's debut elpee simply called *Guess who*. It was a rendezvous of stars. Big artistic figures include Onyeka Onwenu, Charly Boy, Christy Essien-Igbokwe and her hubby, Obiora, Taiwo Ajayi-Lyett, Duchess Maria, MC Skiddo, Just Meg, Mike Okri, Chris Mba and Mozyxx among others. They all waited to see what Peggy had to give away from her pandora box.

Just as dusk was kissing away the day, the sound echoed. The powerful rendition of the first lines jolted not a few members of the audience. "Guess Who" was the track. You could have sworn that Shabba Ranks was on. But it was Albert Kalu setting the tempo. Then came these two ladies. Like ballerinas, they stretched and contracted to the tunes. Then like the awaited messiah Peggy emerged in sophisticated African toga, her movement on stage was defined, graceful and eloquent. A vintage performer you could say. She was a stunner in many. *Guess Who*, parading reggae and mid-tempo swing tune was certainly way out of what people guessed Peggy would play.

But it was her second track *GUILTY* that touched the vivacious audience. It was a retrospection of her chequered marital life with Victor Essiet

who still hoists the Mandators' flag. She gave Victor her heart and got misery in return; he did not want her to survive, she laments. And then the chorus:

"If I am guilty, I will pay. If you are guilty, you will pay".

In a fast tempo, roots-related reggae she sang and danced with a sardonic smile that betrayed her vicissitudes in respect.

The audience was sure Peggy's eight tracker was the scent of a storm. And this to many was not an accident. For way back in 1979, Peggy's musical bent, as a student of Saint Timothy's College saw her being a pioneer member of the *Mandators*. Though they released two elpees initially, the group was almost non-existent until 1987 when Victor and Peggy set Nigeria's dormant reggae scene on a wild fire with their album *Crisis*. In 1988, they capped the monster-hit, *crisis*, with *Rat Race*, the elpee that set the stage for a rage of reggae.

But life itself is a chess-board of irony; or how else do you explain the fact that the duo soon found their matrimony entwined with *crisis*, that they sang about? Tried as they did to stop

the tiff, they realised it was a rat race

But Friday, June 21, 1991, Peggy had moved out of Victor Essiet's house to commence a new life. That marked her eclipse from the melody circuit. "I don't think I'll forget what I went through", she confessed to *TSM*. "I managed with my mum and children in one room at Ajegunle (Lagos) but I was never bothered. I know all that will change somebody", she added.

For now Peggy may not be dreaming of a mansion in the sky. She may not have reversed her "midgety" financial stature, but she surely has sprung up again. It is rise of the sun after an eclipse.

It was a sweet day in all. A day Christy Essien-Igbokwe reenacted her teenage role as Apena, protesting vehemently (but comically) Peggy's decision to sing "guilty" an indictment of her country guy, Victor. It was also an evening that Onyeka Onwenu seized opportunity to preach the thorny road that the woman in music faces and advised Peggy to brace. Duchess Maria was not left out. "If I could survive with seven fatherless children, I tell you Peggy you will survive with two", she said with a quaky voice. Pedro Okojie, Peggy's manager could not speak. He had a swollen face. We gathered that 48 hours to the show he felt victim of police brutality. Did you say different strokes?



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