

Nigeria Talks Tough Yankee, No Deal

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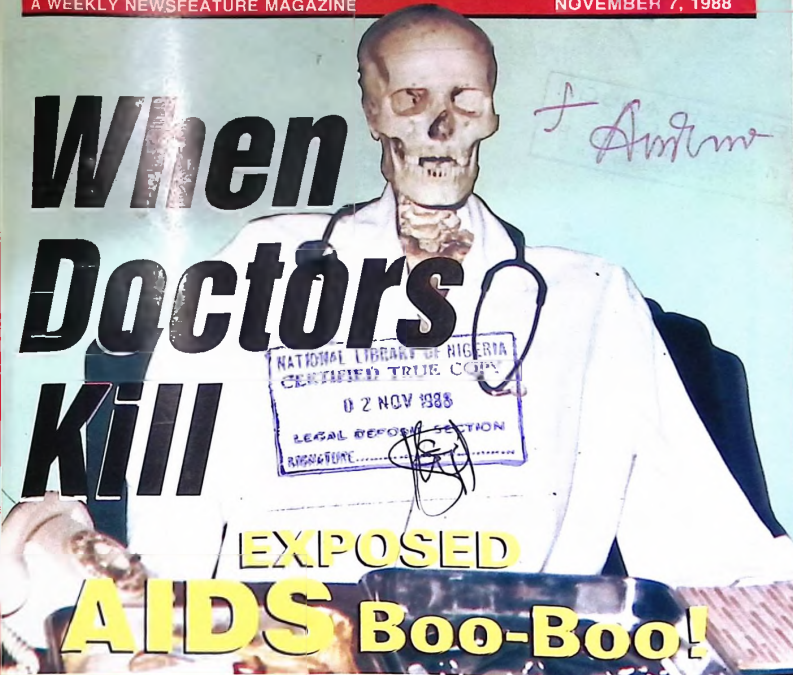
A WEEKLY NEWSFEATURE MAGAZINE

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THE celebrated Dr. Christian Bernard made a historic visit to Nairobi, Kenya in 1978. As a South African, it was unusual for his visit to be anything but a most hush affair. There was euphoria; there was fanfare. Not for the man's politics, (in any case, he professes opposition to apartheid) but for his profound professional reputation as a pioneer in the science of making one man subsist on the heart of another by 'mechanical' transplant.

There was some speculation that the then powerful Attorney-General Charles Njionjo had made it possible for Njionjo to come and take a look at Mzee Jomo Kenyatta's heart. The President was dying at 88 and it didn't seem there was much use trying difficult tricks. Of course, Dr. Bernard wouldn't tell the Press why he was in Nairobi, but he very kindly obliged us with answers of a general nature in medical science.

There was a particular statement he made that seemed to many of us quite definitive. "The task of a doctor", he said, "is to reduce pain and not to prolong life." Most unpretentious, you bet, and I can even see a tinge of metaphysics in it. Isn't it only the Creator who can prolong life?

Some 20 years ago whilst some of

us were drinking from the great fountain at the liberal wing of the University of Ibadan, there were often strange stories from the medical school and the teaching hospital. Fractured limbs were carefreely amputated, where more imaginative orthopaedic therapies were available; dosages meant for cows were wrongfully administered to baby humans and there were all sorts of needless surgical "accidents".

A professor of surgery once taking his clinical students on a ward round

was asked by one of them how young doctors could prevent death at the theatre. He was said to have replied most casually that the prevention of such deaths could only come from the experience of killing several patients by error.

How callous? Unfortunately, medical "accidents" have become facts of everyday living. And it is simply frightening how many persons die daily in so many so-called hospitals who could have lived!

The issue of liability may never arise except in a very few cases of blatant and open negligence. And at that, the doctor as a person, is in many instances, protected by the legal indemnity which he may enjoy under his employers.

Associate Editor Godwin Agbroko in anchoring this Cover Choice, takes a broad view of the problem and asks the rather rhetorical question: Who cures the doctor?

It appears the physician would have to heal himself before the 'jungle' gets him.

Andy Okponbo
Editor-in-Chief



Nigeria

The Nigeria Police Force, like other civil and armed services, is one apple-cart that accommodates only "obedient servants" who must only be seen but not heard. Alozie Ogugbuata, a superintendent of police till October 21, knew this but he steered a course that piqued his police bosses.

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International

Solution to the five-year civil war in Sudan may seem far-fetched. Prime Minister Sadiq El Mahdi however, holds a different opinion. To him, an end to the strife lies in Kenya's willingness to cease military support to the rebels.

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Not yet glory

Your cover (October 10) would have been different if our Seoul team performed better. Why didn't you take the pains to do this impressive and penetrating research on our sports and football before "the big crash" in Seoul? That perhaps, would have helped.

Well, Barcelona'92 is not too far! Let us know our weaknesses and strength before then. Administration of drugs on a corpse, no matter the dosage, is as useless as pouring such drugs at the sand beach.

*Mike Anang,
Kontagora, Niger State*

Justice Ikpeazu, as a sports enthusiast in his days, might have worked wonders in sports and football administration just as Samuel Ogbemudia. But that was a different era; and even then Ogbemudia, for one, had unlimited resources to fund sports the way he wanted it.

Those Nigerians who, therefore, expected "super-wonders" and placed Nigeria's sports hope in their hands were grievously mistaken. Ogbemudia did not just stay in his office making policies and signing cheques. He was part of the implementing force. But now, his hands and that of Ikpeazu are tied.

Ever heard of a winning team with tied hands?

*Benedict Onoda,
Markurdi, Benue State*

A lie for a win

You opened a can of worms by digging up the bio-data of our so-called "infant" footballers (October 10). But, that Nigeria was lying to win was, and is, not a secret.

It is common to beat down age in Nigeria. It is same in the civil service, in the armed forces, the judiciary, etc. It is not surprising, therefore, that when a man dies, his family records say he was born in 1920 while his place of work announces 1935 as the deceased year of birth.

*Idolo Ochoba,
Markurdi, Benue State*

While you focussed on local cheats in your report, no attempt was made to reveal the over-aged players in other countries that participated in these under-17 tournaments. As it is, you seem to reveal that Nigeria is the only country that cheats in these internation-



al engagements.

*Innocent Agbaka,
Festac Town, Lagos*

In your embittered rage over Nigeria's dismal outing in Seoul, you opened Nigeria to the world as a nation of liars. Wouldn't the Nigerian press cry foul if such a scoop (for that is what your report is) had been dug up from quarters outside Nigeria?

Did you think of the damage your report would have on some of our players now pursuing professional football outside Nigeria? There should be a limit to everything including reporting the news.

*Andrew Saimu,
Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.*

A rail behind time

Although your covers (September, 26) was very articulate, you will agree with me that the railway is not the only derailed corporation in Nigeria today.

Lets take, for instance, an office being created for the First Lady and staffed by the Federal Military Government. The Nigerian constitution which you and I have access to created no such office. Could it be that it was created in error? Better still, could it be a facet of the self-reliance and self, (or is it structural) adjustment programme or better life for (rural) women?

The simple fact is that the governing process has, like the railways, derailed. Someone should please tell the Military President that we are yet to see his economic boom. Or was starvation his actual intention? 1992 is almost here. That office of the first lady should be discontinued. It is unconstitutional. I am hungry o! The fund for that office

could be spent on something more meaningful.

Nwazu Gabriel.
Isolo, Lagos.

The Power, the fury

It is disappointing that while enlightened associations in other countries close ranks for the general well-being of their nations, the Nigerian Medical Association, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria and Nigeria Nurses and Midwives Association are engaged in futile acrimonies which only dissipate their lean resources.

Must we politicise everything in this country? Can't these scientifically minded associations study the trends in other countries and adjust?

Barbara Ogbola.
Sapela, Benidel State

Stock market watch

I found that the Economy and Business department usually carry some inaccuracies in your stockmarket coverage: Your February 29th issue had "Cappa & D' alberto" as having last dividend date of 19th November 1987 which contradicts your August 29th issue which had the same company as having last dividend date of 19th November 1986.

Secondly, your August 1st, 1988 issue compared with that of August, 29th 1988, you find that the following companies Costain, G. Cappa and Bewac Nig. Ltd. all have contrasting information which may affect and confuse potential investors in Nigerian companies. Surely, these mistakes couldn't have been 'slips of print'.

Patnick Fagbola,
London, W37 0H

The mix up of dividend dates on the relevant dates of publication of *The African Guardian* arose from the computer print-out. The correct information is as follows:

Last Ex-dividend dates for:
Cappa and D'alberto is 19th Nov. 1986
Costain (W.A.) Ltd is July 12, 1984
G.Cappa is March 10, 1986
Bewac is September 6, 1981

Editor

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



Triangular drama over apartheid

THE international Conference on Apartheid, slated for next week in Lagos is likely to run into a hitch as a result of differences over funds to sponsor the conference.

The triangular drama involves the Cabinet Office, the South African Relief Fund (SARF) and the National Committee Against Apartheid (NACAP).

According to sources, the disaffection that might ruin the forum scheduled for November 7 to 9 at the National Assembly Complex Lagos is over the withdrawal of money from the accounts of the SARF to host the conference. The amount to be withdrawn by the Cabinet Office, which sources say controls the accounts of SARF is speculated to be in the region of N200,000. *The African Guardian* learnt that while a committee had earlier been constituted under NACAP, which is the chief host of the conference, the Cabinet Office came up with the idea to give the NACAP a leverage by withdrawing the amount of money from SARF. But the objections stem from the fact that SARF and NACAP are two separate and independent bodies. The former under the Cabinet Office and the latter established in 1976 by the Obasanjo regime as a body accountable only to its board.

The money in the account of SARF is thought by officials of the agency to be better used for assisting South African refugees instead of organising the conference. In addition, it is said that neither the SARF nor the officials of the African Nationalist Congress, which SARF liaises with was informed about how the money to be withdrawn from the accounts of the relief organisation is to be expended.

SARF is also said to be against the conference as a whole because in the two days it will hold, not more than 50 participants are going to attend, with the only top dignitary among them cited as Trevor Huddleston from Great Britain. This is an exclusion of well known Nigerian officials.

But by last week, President Ibrahim Babangida had approved the theme of the conference as "strategies for dismantling apartheid." Other participants of the conference will be drawn from Nigerian universities, research institutes, the armed forces, anti-apartheid movements and the United Nations Committee Against Apartheid.



• Black Youths of South Africa: Apartheid must be dismantled

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Botha's 'breakthrough'

In South Africa and other countries where policy-makers claim they abhor institutionalized racism but are unwilling or unable to do anything to end it because of the obscene profits that the enslavement of the Black majority by the white settler minority brings them, they are hailing Pieter Botha's recent visit to some African countries as a "breakthrough".

A breakthrough was precisely what the racists needed to break out of the pariah status to which apartheid, stigmatized as a crime against humanity, has consigned them. Shut out of the civilized intercourse that governs relations among nations, excluded from international sports that means so much to the Afrikaaner psyche and his primordial will to dominate, its embassies are almost permanently besieged by outraged citizens of host countries protesting their inhuman policies. Few nations in history have been consigned for so long to the leprous state in which racist South Africa finds itself, and with such dim prospects of breaking out of it.

Use and threat of terroristic force has not cowed neighbours into complaisant accommodation with South Africa. Blandishments, genuine or contrived, have yielded few returns. Mind-boggling inducements to celebrity entertainers and sportsmen have led a few of them to South Africa for engagements of little consequence, but South Africa, for all practical purposes, is banned from the big league. Its Krugerrands, minted in the billions from the unremitting toil of Blacks whom it would be courteous to call labourers, have failed to earn South Africa a place among the concert of civilized nations.

And the prospect of further ostracism seemed splendidly real. Thanks to the illustrious Jesse Jackson, the Democratic Party pledged to declare South Africa a terrorist state if Michael Dukakis won the United States presidency. If such a declaration won Congressional approval, it would only be a matter of time before apartheid is brought to its bloody knees. Botha needed desperately to break out of the deep isolation that white greed and cruelty afthought

had brought on a land with enough resources to keep everyone happy and contented and secure.

And, as usual, his strategy was a curious evasion of the problem. He went to Mozambique for talks with Joaquim Chissano, whose government he has been arming and aiding the murderous gang that calls itself the Mozambican National Resistance to overthrow in a campaign of terror that, in sheer brutality, has few parallels. His aim was to lull the war-weary Mozambicans into signing another Nkomati-style accord that had, two years earlier, claimed the life of Mozambique's first president, Senor Samora Machel. It was a fruitless trip.

Next he went to Malawi to confer with his long-term friend, President

"... Botha did break out of the laager in South Africa. His effort was misplaced, however. He was talking to people who, however well-meaning, are not crucial factors in the unfolding drama in South Africa."

Kamuzu Banda, who, in his dotage, is barely conscious of what is going on around him, to the point that all power in that captive state is now exercised in his name by his enigmatic "official hostess", about whose political sagacity or knowledge of international events little is known. If she was the one Botha "negotiated" with, he could not have spent his time less profitably.

His next port of call was Zaire, with a summit of sorts with Mobutu Sese Seko who, having with American, Israeli and Moroccan money and arms crushed all opposition to his capricious rule, now fancies himself a power broker in Central Africa, especially in the denouement of the Angolan crisis. The usual cruel hoax about the possible release of Nelson Mandela was bruted, only to be denied as soon as Botha left Zairean soil. And a projected follow-up visit by the Zaireans

was never to be.

Finally, Botha had a stop-over in Yamoussoukro on his way back from the burial of fellow racist and comrade-in-arms, Franz Josef-Stauss of Bavaria, for a re-union with another sociological artifact, President Houphouet-Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire, who had been advocating "constructive engagement" with South Africa when Ronald Reagan was still a bit actor in "B" movies and Chester Crocker was in graduate school.

To be sure, Botha did break out of the laager that is South Africa. His effort was misplaced, however. He was talking to people who, however well-meaning, are not crucial factors in the unfolding drama in South Africa. Chissano's programmes and policies, are at every point subverted by the machinations of the apartheid state, but neither he nor his countrymen bear burden of demonstrating daily: that they are human beings and not expendable chattels.

Malawians are, at least in a manner of speaking, masters of their own destiny. Nobody has erected the most fearsome structures in modern times to expropriate and dehumanize them. Zairicans are too busy worrying about Mobutu's tenacious grip on power to see South Africa as a cause and present danger. And Houphouet-Boigny's influence, like that of Botha's other African friends, does not go beyond Cote d'Ivoire.

TO call these people fringe actors would be to dignify them. They cannot in any way influence developments in South Africa. They cannot stem the turmoil in the streets, the seething rage in the townships, the bitter disenchantment in the mines, and the resentment in the schools. They have no claim whatever to the attention of the millions of Black youths who have vowed that if they cannot live as men, they will at least die as men.

These are the people whom Botha and the high priests of apartheid should be talking to, not superannuated statesmen who do not understand the dimensions of the conflict and are far removed from it anyway.

Yankee, no deal

Nigeria unbending on wheat ban and incre- asing local production

IRKED by a widening balance of payment deficit against her, the United States of America has utilised every opportunity to tell Nigeria that her (Nigeria's) ban on wheat import does not impress Washington. Before the ban in January 1987, Nigeria imported the bulk of her wheat from the US. Figures from the Federal Office of Statistics, indicate that the highest haul was in 1985 when Nigeria imported 1.261 million metric tonnes of wheat valued at ₦283.313 million. Though the total import declined slightly to 951,606 metric tonnes in 1986, the US share of 818,954 metric tonnes accounted for ₦240.792 million and constituted over 80 per cent of wheat import. This figure represents five per cent of America's export to Nigeria.

On October 6, this year, in Owerri, the Imo State capital, the United States Ambassador to Nigeria, Dr. Princeton Lyman, got another chance to state the American case. Speaking to the Octagon Membership Club on "US-Nigeria relations since 1960" Lyman touched on trade relations between the two countries. The wheat ban invariably came up in the 12-page speech. The final plea in his Owerri outing was for the wheat ban to be looked into once more — and lifted.

Predictably, some Nigerian newspapers see the matter differently, and they have been writing so. On October 16, two Ibadan-based tabloids, *The Daily Sketch* and *The Nigerian Tribune* came out loudest. *The Nigerian Tribune* screamed "Wheat ban may attract sanctions." *The Sketch* headline was equally alarming. Nigeria's reaction was swift and tinged with tough talk. The President's Chief Press Secretary, Duro Onabule retorted that there is "no going back on the wheat ban" The government, he said, will not be intimidated on the issue despite the threat of sanctions by the US. He said the ban "is the path Nigeria has mapped out and will not be distracted".

Though considered undiplomatic, his tough talk probably received the gov-



• A flourishing wheat farm in Kano state: Nigeria can produce her wheat.

ernment's approval. Significantly, the Chief of General Staff, Vice-Admiral Augustus Aikhomu has also indicated that there will be no change of policy. Emerging from a meeting with governors of eight wheat producing states, Aikhomu announced that Nigeria has the capability of production wheat for local consumption and even for export. The Information Minister, Tony Momoh has also been drumming up support for Nigeria's position. The government appear set to elicit the endorsement of Nigerians.

But all the furor could turn out to be misplaced. It is now known that Lyman's speech was somewhat misquoted. In Owerri, he had said that "Trade legislation recently passed by the American Congress and signed by the President, with overwhelming bipartisan support requires the President to report to Congress on all countries which discriminate against the United States' exports and what steps are being taken to overcome these practices." Perhaps, the cause of the uproar was a portion of his speech that reads: "Trade sanctions are called for if no redress is possible. While Nigeria was not the target of this legislation, it will show up on the list that the legislation requires". No part of the speech called for trade sanctions against Nigeria; certainly not overtly.

Onabule has also admitted to *The African Guardian* that he goofed. Says he: "One should feel embarrassed to concede this, but the truth is that the media quoted the US ambassador out of context". He further asserted that "Ly-

man's speech was not threatening Nigeria with sanctions".

Lyman has also confirmed that his speech was abridged. He says that a sinister meaning was read into his statement. The legislation, he says, stipulates that all unfair trade practices against US export must be reported to Congress. "That was the issue I was trying to let people be aware of," he told *The African Guardian*. Lyman remarks that the law is flexible, allowing varied approaches to solving trade disputes. However, the Ambassador says that the law stipulates that sanctions, if imposed, should be commensurate to the loss in the trade imbalance.

AMERICA'S wheat export to Nigeria ran at about \$300 million before the ban. On its part, the US imports over 50 per cent of Nigeria's oil output. Nigeria expects to sell over \$4 billion worth of oil to her this year. This will account for half of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. With the ban, the US lost a market of 1 million metric tonnes. Lyman concedes that what aches his country is not necessarily the ban, but the flourishing smuggling of wheat flour. He estimates the inflow to Nigeria to be at least 300,000 metric tonnes annually. "The problem", he explains, "is how to convince American wheat farmers that they can't sell to Nigeria, when we are importing 10 to 12 times more than Nigeria is doing".

A tariff, he suggests, would have been

more acceptable than a total ban. But market analysts say that such arrangement would give the Americans greater leverage for manoeuvres. Many of Nigeria's flour mills have foreign participation, some of them American. Besides, the US has been having problems with its wheat sales, especially with the emergence of new competitors. One of these is Saudi Arabia which is aggressively entering the market. Argentine wheat is also about the cheapest in the world. In addition, the U.S. has to contend with traditional wheat producing European countries. To maintain its world market share, the United States came up with the Export Enhancement Programme (EEP) in May 1985.

The strategy of the programme is to subsidize American exports to enable them to compete against products from other subsidizing economies, especially the European Community. A \$1.5 billion fund is set aside to finance the programme over a three-year period. To solidify its competitive status, the Food Security Act of 1985 also made EEP mandatory from the 1988 fiscal year. Under the programme, the first 1 million tonnes of wheat was sent to Algeria. Egypt also received 150,000 tonnes. Over 100 such activities have occurred

with 63 countries, and 11 commodities having been covered.

Some analysts contend that there is no way Nigeria's wheat could have been competitive against that of the United States. With no ceiling on how far EEP can go on subsidy, a tariff, many say, would trigger a price war which the Americans are well placed to win. This probably informed Onabule's initial statement that a lifting of the ban would stifle the new wheat agro-business. But Lyman does not buy that idea. He agrees that Nigeria's increased interest in local production of food is commendable. "It was wasteful", he says, "that only a few years ago Nigeria spent five billion naira in a single year on food imports, while its own agricultural sector languished".

However, he says that Nigeria's reduced imports was anticipated when the Structural Adjustment Programme was launched in mid-1986. But what he did not expect was a ban on wheat import. His grudge is that in spite of the ban,

wheat and wheat flour are being smuggled into Nigeria. He, nevertheless, concedes that some of the wheat products coming into the country may be American wheat: "I think some of it is American wheat".

BUT Onabule has reaffirmed government's efforts to arrest wheat smuggling which he describes as "embarrassing". But local millers have more than the smuggling problem to contend with. Mr. Gray Longe, executive director of the Flour Milling Association of Nigeria (FMAN), says the government has agreed to look into the



• Onabule: Government is set to arrest wheat smuggling

plight of millers. Even so, FMAN officials say that Nigeria's present wheat output is a mere 285,000 metric tonnes, an amount the millers say can only cover three months. Convinced that there is no feasible alternative, the millers appear to be lobbying the government to lift the ban.

The pressure has been on for long. The tactics are also fairly familiar. Under the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), flour millers rolled out statistics disputing Nigeria's ability to feed the industry from local wheat production. Four million hectares, they say, was required in the semi-arid fringes of northern Nigeria to produce two million metric tonnes of wheat. In 1984, they struck a bargain with government which gave them a six-year period of grace to source their raw materials locally. But by 1986 the government had become restive about the timing. It changed the date to January 1987. The millers argued that what the government was asking for was impossible. Wheat cultivation in Nigeria, they said, was technically feasible but commer-

cially unviable.

The flour millers gave the example of the United States where 58.9 million metric tonnes of wheat was cultivated on an area of 29.1 million hectares in 1985/86 crop year. Their stance was that with an average yield of two metric tonnes per hectare, Nigeria needed at least two million hectares to produce four million metric tonnes of wheat. And even if the industry has to blend wheat with corn to produce composite flour, the land requirement will be about one million hectares. They contended that such large expanse of land cannot be available in the areas favourable for wheat cultivation in Nigeria. They also asserted that a whopping N15 billion, with about half of the amount in foreign exchange, would be required for cultivating even a million hectares. Their final submission: leave the import option open.

However, the emerging facts in the country are beginning to question the authenticity of the millers' contention. About 285,000 metric tonnes was harvested from the Kano River Basin project in 1987. The target for 1988 is 500,000 metric tonnes. The result from other seven producing states — Sokoto, Katsina, Plateau, Borno, Bauchi, Kaduna and Gongola — is also encouraging. The myth that Nigeria will not be able to grow wheat in commercial quantity may be a hoax, especially with the total cost of local production coming under N200m. Encouraged by these results, the Federal Government is moving to consolidate its gains partly by providing more funds to participating state. Last Thursday Governor Lawrence Onoja visited a wheat farm at Kankara in Kankara area of the state; and the Chief of General Staff, Augustus Aikhomu, is expected to inspect the Kankara farm mid next month. The heavy down-pour witnessed this year has improved the level of the drought-hit Lake Chad, an indication that the South Chad Irrigation project may start ahead of schedule. Plateau has already marked out six zones for wheat cultivation and plans to put 200,000 hectares under cultivation this year.

Hopes are high for a bigger harvest this year. If the projections come to fruition, it might be the government's way of telling sceptics that Nigeria could be self-sufficient in wheat production.

By Felix Obenya

'Sanction's not the question'

Ambassador Lyman says Nigeria, US should not get to that point

TWO newspapers reported, recently, the United States Ambassador to Nigeria, Dr. Princeton Lyman as saying that the US may impose trade sanctions against Nigeria for banning wheat import. The reports largely quoted from Dr. Lyman's lecture of October 6, 1988 at Owerri, Imo State caused some stir.

Editor Nduka Iboror spoke to Dr. Lyman on some of the issues raised by the reports and others.

Excerpts:-

The African Guardian

The startling thing you did say was the amount of wheat which was finding its way into the country. Would you be kind enough to let us know how you arrived at 300,000 metric tonnes?

Ambassador Lyman:

Yes, by the amount of bread produced. The amount of wheat flour millers are able to purchase in Nigeria. The fact is the people who are able to import wheat, I mean sell flour, not the millers. They are mainly smugglers. And for us to explain to American farmers? Yeah you can't sell to Nigeria, not because they are not consuming wheat but because it's coming in through the wrong channel. That is very hard for us to explain when we are buying 10 to 12 times more from Nigeria than Nigeria is buying (from us).

Without smuggling, would you still have considered the ban on wheat an unfriendly act?

Yes. It wouldn't be as difficult because there would be an indication that Nigeria didn't need wheat anymore. And if the ban was effective and people were eating something else then it could be understandable.

Your worry isn't that it has been banned. But that it's still coming in.

That's right. That there is a legitimate market out there and we thought we can participate.

Have you considered for a moment that wheat coming into Nigeria might be coming in from the US?



• Princeton Lyman

Yes. And it may well be. It may be American wheat being made into flour. You are absolutely right. I think some of it is American wheat. Other countries import quite legally, turn it into flour and take them across the border.

What could you say is the volume or amount of flour exported to Nigeria by American wheat farmers?

Before the ban, it was over a million tonnes.

Are you saying American farmers can't find market elsewhere?

Sure, sure, we have markets all over the world.

That probably means Nigeria's name will be among those to be reported to the Congress for unfair trade practice.

Yeah. Almost surely it would be in the report. And

that's what I am trying to get people to be aware of...

When is this report being expected?

The first report is due in Congress in March 1989.

Now, what will be the immediate fall out of this report of having Nigeria named?

unfair trade practice. But it is much too early to say what steps could be taken. I think the first step would be like an instruction from the US saying, please sit down with the Nigerian government, see what we can do about the problem.

Let's assume you are sending down here wheat worth about \$300m, that still does not upset the deficit.

We don't expect to get approval for more. Nigeria is an oil exporter. And with all the oil exporters we have an unfavourable balance of payment situation. How do we upset that? Even if we went back to a million metric tonnes, we will still be importing five — six times more than Nigeria does from US.

You have discriminatory trade conditions with Japan.

We have been engaged with a number of countries on how to deal with the problem. Japan. The feeling was not so much that Japan was selling so much to us, but that they were keeping out American firms. So the crux of the negotiation with Japan has been — open up those markets to us. The Japanese realising the problem, also agreed to voluntarily cooperate. Those kinds of understanding are very important to keep trade open.

Can America really afford to stop lifting Nigeria's crude? Let's assume that is one of the measures contemplated.

This is the reason why the headlines in the papers talk about sanctions. That is not the question. The thrust of the thing is let's avoid that kind of inferiority composition. Nobody wants it. We don't want it. The thing could hurt us badly as it will hurt Nigeria. The whole point is let's never get to that point. I don't think we want to get to that point. If we can say to the Congress, and the American people that the trade is fair, we can keep the trade system open.



• Oguabuaja. He had his say but not his way

Foot in the mouth

Police Superintendent Oguabuaja gets the boot

OCTOBER does not seem a good month for Alziege Oguabuaja, who was until last week a Superintendent of Police and Divisional Police Officer (DPO) at Atakpa, Calabar, Cross Rivers State. Perhaps, Oguabuaja would not readily admit to the ill-luck the month seems to hold for him. This would be understandable, after all, his birthday falls on October 15.

But two years ago, on October 6, 1986 Oguabuaja who was then spokesman for the Lagos State Police Command was suspended from office a few weeks after the well published "pepper soup" theory which he submitted at the Justice Akanbi Commission of Inquiry which looked into the nationwide students' riots earlier in May of that year.

The former police officer had then told the commission that the Armed Forces "are the unregistered party of Nigeria" whose members are over-paid, drink beer and pepper soup quite early in the day and do nothing else but plan coups. Police authorities then had denied that his suspension was connected with his testimony before the commission, but rather to an illicit sexual affair with a female member of the National Youth Service Corps. After a year in suspension, Oguabuaja was reprimanded and reinstated with a promise of dismissal from the force if and

when he became involved in anything considered embarrassing to the Nigeria Police Force.

Last week (October 20), history, like a bad phonograph record was to repeat itself. Oguabuaja was dismissed from the Police Force as a result of a profile done on him by the Cross River State government-owned *Chronicle* newspaper, in which the "pepper soup" statement was again highlighted. According to his dismissal letter, the former Police divisional officer was alleged to have made seditious and treasonable statements against the Federal government which bordered on "criminality".

The fateful trip into *deja Vu* for Oguabuaja had started quite innocently in mid September at the police officers' mess in Calabar where the local Police Community Relations Committee was to donate ₦10,000 to the Cross River State Police Command. A journalist-in-training of the *Chronicle*, Armstrong Abangson, introduced himself to Oguabuaja and asked for an interview. Oguabuaja was said to have declined and referred the reporter to past files of newspapers on him. The reporter was then said to have asked if Oguabuaja had changed his mind on the statement he made two years ago before the Akanbi

Commission. The reply was in the negative. On October 8, a features article with Armstrong Abangson's by-line appeared in the *Chronicle* on Alziege Oguabuaja.

In it, Oguabuaja was said to have told Abangson that after two years, the forum of the Akanbi Commission had not been enough for him to say all he had wanted, and, given another opportunity, he would say more. The article continued: "Even more importantly he says he owed nobody any apology." Oguabuaja was also credited with the conviction that the military had failed the country as agents of revolution and have only succeeded in making themselves members of the ruling class. Oguabuaja then declared in the article that "we have to look elsewhere for an alternative source of revolution."

Also equally controversial was Oguabuaja's call for a "people's police force" and not the Dodan Barracks or government police force which is what we have now. He was said to have asserted that "if the Inspector General of Police or the President's policy contradicts the will and aspirations of the people, the people's policeman should turn his gun on the government rather than on the people."

On October 10, two days after the article was published, and five days to his birthday, Oguabuaja was informed verbally that he had been transferred to the state police headquarters at Diamond Hill in Calabar with instructions to hand over the Atakpa station to another superintendent of police, S. Onuko. Oguabuaja was said to have declined since the procedure was irregular. But before the end of the day, a wireless message arrived the Atakpa Station ordering him to vacate the post and report to the state Police headquarters.

The next day, at the Diamond Hill police headquarters, Oguabuaja was handed a query from the Commissioner of Police of the Cross River State Police Command, Mr. Parry Osayade. The query levelled six charges against Oguabuaja which stated that the former police boss of Atakpa, by the *Chronicle* publication, had seditious intention of bringing hatred and contempt or inciting disaffection against the federal government or inciting the citizens of Nigeria to attempt to procure the alteration or overthrow of the federal military government. The query *The African Guardian* learnt also indicted Oguabuaja for not obtaining permission from

the Commissioner of Police before granting the press interview or expressing an opinion for publication. Ogunbuaja was given two hours to reply.

Between October 11 and October 21 when Ogunbuaja received and replied his query, there was a lull in the state police headquarters. Reliable sources said Commissioner Osanyande had forwarded the query and the reply to the Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Mohammadu Gambo, in Lagos and a copy to the acting head of Zone 6, Calabar Mr. Porter Dabub, a Commissioner of Police on relief duty for Assistant Inspector General Adeyemi who retired from the force five months ago.

Meanwhile, at the *Chronicle*, the writer of the profile on Ogunbuaja, forwarded a "letter of clarification" dated October 17 to the management of the paper and four other daily papers including the *News Agency of Nigeria* and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Calabar stating that his article had been read out of context.

According to him, although the article was a profile on Alozie Ogunbuaja, the former police officer did not say the words contained in the article in "any exclusive or press interview." Rather Abangson stated, the profile was a "flash back on things he said predominantly at the Justice Akabi Panel two years ago." Abangson added: "I, therefore, regret any embarrassment caused any party due to the misinterpretation and misconception of the

write-up."

But Abangson's explanation did little to soothe the ire of the authorities in the latest "pepper soup" saga. The editors of the *Chronicle* Joshua Okpo and Dennis Uteng were suspended for causing the pub-

interdiction. His suspension was back-dated to October 8, a two-day difference from his suspension in 1986 which occurred on October 6. It is said that the interdiction of Ogunbuaja came directly from the Force Headquarters,



• Gambo: No room for 'disloyal' elements in the Police force

lication of Ogunbuaja's profile: while Abangson had his service withdrawn. For Ogunbuaja, the disciplinary action against him arrived on October 21, through a telex message from the Commissioner of police in Calabar. Ogunbuaja who was said to be awaiting a new posting was informed of his

Kam Salem House, in Lagos. Under civil service procedures an officer under interdiction or suspension is not allowed to leave his post without clearance from his superiors or leave the country without the knowledge of the federal civil service commission. Rules require the interdicted officer to inform his station of his whereabouts within seven days of receiving his suspension. Failure means the officer would be considered absent from duty without leave.

Ogunbuaja perhaps needed not bother about breaking the rules. On October 20, he was dismissed from the Nigeria Police Force. Curiously the wireless message sent to inform him of his interdiction was dated October 21. According to the letter of dismissal, his reply to the query served on him was "found not to have exonerated" him from blame and his "past behaviour of similar nature and other misdemeanours" portrayed him as "recalcitrant and disloyal."

To Ogunbuaja, the events that led finally to his dismissal would probably elicit from Shakespeare's famous line in *Julius Caesar* which he loves to quote: "we shall meet at Philippi".

But to his conquerors the incident might simply have been "good riddance" as unceremonious perhaps as removing a fly from a plate of pepper soup.

By Wale Akin Aina



• Osanyande: His charges got Ogunbuaja the sack

New laws on the scroll

Legal experts confer, seek resolution of conflicting laws

FOR participants, the consensus was that the first national conference on the unification and reformation of criminal laws and procedure codes in Nigeria, held in Lagos, October 25-28, was long overdue. Their reason was hinged on the opinion that Nigeria may have achieved political stability, if she had operated uniform and indigenous criminal laws. The Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal Ibrahim Alfa, who was guest of honour, appears to share this view when he observed that the adoption of alien criminal laws in Nigeria had compounded the task of nation building. At the end of the conference last week, legal experts and criminologists who spoke had made several suggestions on how to harmonise and indigenise the country's criminal laws and procedure codes, but the fear was whether government has the political will to implement the suggestions?

Prince Bola Adesumbo Ajibola, attorney-general of the federation, and minister of justice, says there was no cause for alarm. "We must as a matter of priority and within the shortest possible time, produce two draft legislations", he assured Ajibola, whose ministry organised the four-day conference, says one of the legislations will embody the uniform and revised criminal laws (an amalgam of the present criminal and penal codes), and the other, a uniform criminal procedure code which will be applicable nation-wide.

Ajibola, had opened discussions at the conference with a 15-page address which was largely a dossier of how Sir Frederick Lugard, in 1916, foisted the British criminal laws on Nigeria. His address which also touched on the defects of the criminal law system, says the penal code which operates in the north and which sometimes varies among southern states, did not reckon with Nigeria's socio-cultural values. The criminal law system, Ajibola says, did not also resolve the conflicts between the Islamic law on crime, reflected in the administration of the law in the north, and the principles of crime in English law, which guides the south.

The dual character of the criminal law system stymies the work of legal practitioners. Ajibola says to conduct cases in various states of the federation, an average lawyer would need to familiarise himself with all the differences in the

criminal law system of the northern and southern states.

Law students have their share of the problem too. Since their universities study either the criminal law or the penal code depending on whether the universities are in the south or the north, these students are expected to study both systems at the law school.

Mr. Muhammadu Gambo, Inspector-General of Police, contributing on the issue of uniformity of criminal laws regretted that while adultery is an offence



• Ajibola: Uniform criminal laws and procedures a priority

under section 387 of the Penal Code (Cap 89, laws of Northern Nigeria 1963), it is not regarded as an offence under the criminal code and other laws operating in the southern states. Gambo, whose terse speech was read by Deputy Inspector-general, Christopher Omeben, also cited 'intoxication and drunkenness' as another offence the penal code, which not only thrives in the south, but often given as a defence in a criminal charge.

However, central to the issue of uniform criminal laws for the country is the problem of religious and socio-cultural differences among Nigerians. The fear is that the provisions in the penal and criminal codes may not be adequately harmonised as to command acceptability by the various ethnic groupings in Nigeria. Alhaji Abdulkadir Orire, Grand Khadi of Kwara State, a participant at the conference told *The African Guardian*, that the differences between

the two codes could be resolved if the government "shows some determination." Echoing Orire's position, Ajibola, said the major differences between the two codes are very few, and would be harmonised.

One such major difference in the two codes is the disparity of punishment for killing an unborn child. Section 328 of the Criminal Code says that "anybody who prevents a child from being born alive when a woman is about to be delivered of a child", is liable to life imprisonment. But section 235 of the Penal Code prescribes for the same offence, a maximum of 14 years imprisonment. Dr. Kharisu Sufiyan Chukkol, a law teacher at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in his paper "Unification and



• Alfa: Alien laws incompatible with national aspirations

Reform of some offences against the person under the penal and criminal codes", suggests the adoption of the provision in the penal code on the basis that life imprisonment is "too excessive."

The 20 thought-provoking papers delivered at the two-day conference which was attended by Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Mohammed Bello, former Chief Justice Sir Danley Alexander, the Director of the Nigerian Law School, Mr. Babatunde Ibrorke and the former Chief Judge of Plateau State, Justice Obi Okoye (Rtd), each touched on the unification of various aspects of Nigeria's criminal laws and the reformation of punishments ascribed to such laws. The communique of the conference was not ready by press time last week, but a participant said that Nigeria's criminal laws will soon wear a new look.

By Mike Ubani.

Concert of leaders

Forum discusses palliatives for ailing continent

THE serene atmosphere of Obasanjo Farms in Ota, Ogun State seemed a perfect setting for the kind of activity that began there last week.

African opinion leaders, and a sprinkling of foreign experts, got together in a brain-storming session on African leadership problems, tagged "African leadership Forum".

The Forum, a brainchild of former Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo seeks to encourage "diagnosis, understanding and an informed search for solutions to local, regional and global problems, taking full account of their inter-relationship and mutual consequences." The conference which is expected to last 10 days is jointly sponsored by the Japanese government, Victor Mpofo, an industrialist and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

President Ibrahim Babangida, declaring the forum open, observed that "nations without strong leaders have had

no enduring philosophy and remained vulnerable to external pressure." Africa, the president said, needs strong and self-confident leaders who should be creators of great ideas, command the loyalty of their people and be totally committed to the development of their countries.

Supporting the thrust of the presidents address, General Obasanjo, who



• Obasanjo A new forum for Africa

is also the co-ordinator of the forum, submitted that while other nations, notably Asian countries, are forging ahead African nations seem to be moving backwards. Noting the enormity of Africa's debt burden, General Obasanjo expressed fear that a new dependence not unlike the old colonialism, is upon the continent.

Banda Jiama Machobane, Lesothan minister of education, another participant at the forum, thinks the major problem of African leaders is "that of not knowing whom to be committed to: themselves or the masses." He believes that personal interest often informs state decisions. He called for a re-orientation in the thinking of African leaders.

Dismissing fears that participants at the forum might be handicapped by government for leadership positions, Professor Oyeleke Oyediran, a lecturer in the department of political science, University of Lagos, said the forum is not another National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies, though both could be complementary. "He, however, sees the forum as a kind of "place where African leaders can come to meet and discuss leadership problems in Africa."

By John Ndego

A toast for forty

University of Ibadan celebrates, but aches

"THE university has constantly endeavoured to maintain the academic standards which have made it world famous but it would be idle to pretend that this has not increasingly become an uphill task." As Nigeria's oldest, University of Ibadan's (UI) story cannot be well summarised in one sentence. But the above, coming from its Vice-Chancellor, Ayo Banjo is an apt description of the state of affairs at "Ibadan."

At 40, UI may not have lapsed into total senility; its present condition, however, reflects the gradual decline it has suffered especially in the last two decades. Each year has been rougher than the previous one in terms of resources for maintaining standards of any kind. Thus what used to be the tenth best university in the world, now finds it, in Banjo's words, "very difficult to ensure adequate supply of books in the libraries, or of reagents in the laboratories while equipment generally is either in need of repairs or of replacement."

"The agonising predicament of the university," says Banjo, "is that,

although programmes have expanded and student enrolment swollen, resources have not kept pace with this trend."

It is indeed the desperation for money that has prompted the UI into designating its bookshop, printing press, publishing house, guest house complex and the zoo, "profit centres" now being managed as UI Ventures Limited.

Yet, observers wonder how effective this drive would be in enhancing the institution's chances of getting fully back on what they say should be its natural track: predominantly post-graduate programmes.

UI has the largest concentration of professors (about 300) in Nigeria and indeed black Africa. This "priceless possession" certainly marks the university out as a veritable citadel of learning. And some 12 years ago, it was supposed to begin a process of becoming a post-graduate university. Unfortunately, this seems to have been aborted since the financial backing never came.

Established as an affiliate college of the University of London in 1948, UI



• Banjo UI needs a new lease of life

became a full-fledged university in 1962 by an Act of Parliament. With a student population of about 12,600 in 11 faculties today, the institution has come a long way from the 104 students in three faculties it started with in the beginning. Over the years, it has produced the cream of Nigerian doctors, teachers and other technocrats. And it has served as midwife to many other Nigerian universities.

Today, UI is still regarded as "one of Africa's best-known and most-respected universities," but it has lost some of its old glories. Enough of it to warrant a call from Banjo: "We ask the Nigerian public to join us in giving our university a new lease of life."

By Dabo Adesina

Sermon from the hills

Babangida tells off ideological and religious extremists

PRESIDENT Ibrahim Babangida's address at the tenth graduation ceremony of the Nigerian Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) in Kuru near Jos on October 22, was quite expectedly, in the tradition of memorable speeches for which the institute is known.

But the importance of the President's address does not lie in any new policy which might have been announced in Kuru. Rather, the thrust of his speech was the re-dedication to certain principles already laid down by government for "lofty national goals."

On the political front, for instance, the administration's unwavering commitment to preclude extremists from the immediate political future of the country was boldly restated. "We are also resolved that we will not be succeeded by extremists," he pronounced. Extremists, he lectured, are those who are "uncompromising, fanatical or im-

moderate in their views; who go beyond the limits of reason, necessity or propriety to advance their case. They are not believers in politics of equality, they are not democratic."

Ironically, however, some observers reckon that the president's resolute determination to exclude some people from the country's future political process smacks of extremism *per se*. Government's rigid stance against ideological extremists, it is said, may in the end, help the cause of these extremists who may be seen as persecuted martyrs.

Nonetheless, the government has not, and is not, ready to commit the country to any ideological camp. According to the president, an ideology can only emerge through a "slow and volitional process of evolution".

It, therefore, follows that what seems upper most in the President's mind is the restructuring of the economy. The logic of the Structural Adjustment

Programme (SAP) is hinged on the necessity to restructure the Nigerian economy if a call is to be made for a major overhauling of the world's financial system. "We cannot stridently call for an external restructuring without embarking on our own internal restructuring." He declared that whatever hardship is imposed by SAP is adequately matched by the determination of government to pursue an imaginative social programme to ease the burden of adjustment.

The President's strongest words were, however, reserved for religious extremists. He declared: "No religious leader or group will be allowed to wantonly spread ill feeling. Similarly, no religious leader or organisation will be allowed to challenge government in its area of responsibility." This unequivocal warning, is no doubt, directed at the religious power-brokers that are now rocking the Constituent Assembly over the issue of Sharia and customary court of appeal.

For the President there is need to show the world that the country is capable of producing a constitution — for its own sake.

By Wale Akin Alna

Sharia shakes Anigolu

The chairman of the Constituent Assembly (CA), Mr. Justice Anthony Anigolu (rid), was visibly shaken when he returned to Abuja last week after the Eide-el-maulud holidays, to learn that the closely guarded report of the controversial General Provisions Committee, had been circulated to CA members without his consent. The 55-page report signed by all 20 christian members of the 32 member committee covers sections one to 13 of the draft constitution, including the controversial issues of Sharia and customary courts of appeal. The 12 moslem members declined to sign the report claiming that the committee was yet to reach a consensus on Sharia and customary courts of appeal.

Anigolu's letter to the CA members urging them to discountenance the report and promising to issue an "authentic" one at a later date

seems to corroborate the standpoint of the moslems that there was no consensus on the vexed issues of Sharia and customary courts.

Last Wednesday, the CA sat for only 13 minutes, its shortest session since the assembly was inaugurated later this year. Majority of the members had left the Abuja Conference Centre venue of the CA meetings when Anigolu emerged from a meeting with two different delegations of CA members who came to see him in respect of the circulation of the controversial report. The late resumption of the day's session, obviously explains the briefness of the meeting.

Limits for local governments

In his speech to mark the nation's 28th independence anniversary President Ibrahim Babangida, had vested the 301 local government in the country with autonomous status, but that autonomy is not absolute. The govern-

ment will still stipulate the activities of the local government to ensure they are run effectively and prudently.

To demonstrate their dependency and perhaps, the supervisory role of the government, the office of the Chief of General Staff, last week issued a circular limiting the amount of money each local government council can spend. The circular titled "spending limit of local government", and addressed to all the state governors, says councils whose annual internally generated revenues are above N2 million will spend N250,000. Those whose revenue is between N1 million and N2 million have been empowered by the circular to spend N100,000, N50,000 for those whose internal revenue is below N1 million.

The circular requires local government chairmen to seek the approval of the director general in the military governor's office and in their states for contracts above the respective local government level, while the state execu-

tive will approve contracts above N1 million.



Adomokhai retires

The membership of the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), the highest ruling organ in the country, will revert to 27, its original size when the General Officer Commanding 1 Mechanised Division of the Nigerian Army, Major General Peter Adomokhai, retires from the army next month. General Adomokhai, who has served the army for 27 years will be bidding farewell to the army shortly after his command in Sokoto was reportedly attacked by gendarmes from Benin Republic.

INDUKA TRABOR
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The leadership question

THE issue of leadership has in recent times come to the fore of Nigeria's and, indeed, Africa's agenda. In an address at the graduation ceremony of the Nigerian Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies at Kuru, President Ibrahim Babangida spoke of his dream for the emergence of a "national elite" which "must have common perception of the place of Nigeria and its aspiration." The President also used the opportunity to offer his definition of those he has always loathed: extremists. He defined extremists as those who are "uncompromising, fanatical or immoderate in their views."

Four days after the President's Kuru outing, the theme of leadership once again commanded the nation's attention in a widely reported workshop of the Africa Leadership Forum at Otta. The President was again on hand to advance his thesis that a crucial part of Africa's bane is the scarcity of skilled leadership in the continent. Nigeria's former Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, who is chairman of the forum, read a paper entitled "Africa in Today's World" in which he offered a quite cheerless scenario for the future of the continent. The only way by which Africa can evade the unflattering future, suggested Obasanjo — rather predictably — is through a new initiative, a refurbished vision, by the continent's leaders.

Important as the renewed reflections on the question of leadership are, there appear, nevertheless, to be substantial flaws in the presumptions of those who now expend their breath on the issue. Babangida's dream for a national elite is misplaced, especially as there is hardly to be found any aggregation that can wear the tag. The elite are of many kinds, and their varied interests, far from coinciding, are often in dire conflict. There is little, for example, that binds the military elite to the political elite, or the business elite to the intelligentsia.

Every country has its unique environment which constitutes the context for the emergence of its leadership. Each country, it seems, must also decide for itself the purpose of leadership. Where this purpose is determined, then the leader is enabled to operate co-operatively with his followers towards the realisation of the purpose. Such a purpose cannot be found outside a framework of national consensus.

It is doubtful that a forum such as that in Otta is the occasion for the formulation of this national consensus. A far more rigorous process is required, spanning a far wider territory of interests than gathered at Otta, than can be gathered, in fact, in any one seminar. And part of the

trouble with Nigeria is the absence of this consensus, the absence, in other words, of an appropriate reference for measuring leadership.

Without first of all addressing this consensual lacuna, little can ever be achieved. One way of redressing the situation is to seek always to broaden the base of decision-making and initiate mass-based programmes towards which the leader and the led would be obliged to act.

The kind of leadership envisaged here is not, to be sure, one groomed in the laboratory or weaned on lengthy classroom treatises on "the way to become a great leader." No great leaders emerge from interacting with their environment, their human constituency, and by anchoring their vision in the collective experience of their people. This process will of course benefit from continuity, from the exposure of a leader to a phased variety of leadership roles.

It is instructive that the countries which provide us with the most enviable examples of leadership are those which celebrate the virtue of "limited government." The Japanese example illustrates the possibilities open to a country once its direction is no longer hazy. Significantly, Japan is justly famous, not for the high visibility of its politicians, but for the bold, awesome initiative of its industrialists. The reverse is the case in Nigeria where, despite the anaemic vision of the leaders, they refuse to benefit from the insight of talents who are outside the apparatus of government.

It is in this sense that Babangida's unceasing rallery against the so-called extremists continues to be disquieting. The philosophy of decreeing holders of uncomfortable views as pariahs is itself a manifestation of rabid extremism. Even more, the attitude impoverishes the options available to the country, for is it not possible that some of these stigmatised views contain profound truths? Any leader who does not understand that he alone, or he and so-called moderate voices alone, cannot be the repository of all wisdom, stands in need of re-orientation. This country runs the risk, ultimately, of being turned into a barrack, an obviously dangerous prospect in a market of multiple interests that Nigeria is.

That prospect is also frightening because it is coming at a time when dialogue, debate and democratic values ought to be enjoying promotion. Babangida cannot betray such impatience with "extreme views" and yet expect politicians to cultivate the needed give-and-take reflexes for democratic governance. Babangida's precepts on the leadership question are healthy, if a little confused; his example, on the other hand, is rather unsettling.



God-men or men-devils?



"When a doctor commits a mistake, he is hardly held liable. The truth is that the patient dies and the doctor's mistake, the cause of death, remains buried with the victim. Too true!"

BY SUNNY BIAGHERE

It was the inimitable satirist and newspaper columnist, Sad Sam who once made a profound pronouncement on the matter. Irked by the face-off between the Gown regime and the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), in which patients in government hospitals were the ultimate victims, he drew a parallel between his risk-prone professional calling and the self-protectionism of the medical profession.

According to him, dare he commit a slip in any of his writings or the newspaper of which he was then editor and a wave of libel suits or scathing criticisms would start raining forth. But adds he, when a doctor commits am mistake, he is hardly held liable. The truth is that the patient dies and the doctor's mistake, the cause of death, remains buried with the victim. Too true!

For, if one may elaborate on Sad Sam's contention, it is not so with the writer. He is ambushed by avid readers, too eager to put a pin in his ego balloon. He is read critically by unseen audience, from the capitalists to the socialists; from the indefinable common-man on the street to the egg-head, in the citadel of learning on the fringes of omniscience, before whom he is stark naked; the kind of men and women who gain self-gratification seeking the odd pebble in a pile of sand.

The point here is not to draw a parallel between two professions but to paint graphically, the sanctity and near-inviolability of one, by throwing up in contrast, the direct opposite of the risk-prone frailty of the other. Take the archetypal case of the retired doctor who lived to be 84 years, before he died in 1983 in the genteel Sussex seaside resort of Eastbourne, England. In his example are embedded such elements as the sacredness of the medical practitioner reinforced by the "normal" injunction of keeping mum over crimes, the lure of avarice and the hopelessness of fishing out a culprit except where exposure comes from within the fold.

As recorded, in *The World's Greatest Unsolved Crimes*, his passing might have warranted no more than a paragraph in the local newspaper, but for one thing... The doctor, John Bodkins Adams, aptly given the fitting epitaph, Dr. Death, was believed by many to be a man who literally got away with massmurder. And it was only after his death that newspapers could safely produce their dossiers on the astonishing case in which Adams was tried at

the old Bailey for the murder of one of his patients, Edith Morrell, a 72-year-old widow. Dr. Adams was acquitted after a classic courtroom duel between the Attorney-General and a brilliant defence lawyer.

What the defence lawyer did was to instruct Dr. Adams to exercise his right to remain silent and thus, avoid cross-examination. Thus was the lynch-pin of the crown case snatched away, the jury took just 45 minutes to find him not guilty. What the jury never knew and could not in law be told was that the police had investigated the deaths of a further 400 of his patients.

The police knew that over his 35 years practice in Eastbourne, Adams, a.k.a. Dr. Death, had been the beneficiary of 132 wills from his victims. Yet, he retained, throughout, a facade of the most fashionable doctor in Eastbourne. He had arrived there virtually straight from medical school in his native Northern Ireland and built up a "good" practice with the cream of the town as his patients.

Given that a careful scrutiny of character, aside qualification and experience, is a matter of considerable importance to medical practitioners, how come then that a Dr. Death, who paradoxically had all the trappings of respectability, could infiltrate the fold? Does the apparent respectable life which Dr. Death lead not a pointer to the possibilities of the existence of many of his ilk? Dead men don't bite nor can they squeal on those responsible for their deaths.

Arguably, there are many who would want to contend that the legality of medical practice is adequately covered by the laws of the land. But then, the position in law, in the event of a malpractice is often obscure. What, for instance, can compensate for the most recent known tragedy as revealed by Health Minister, Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti and in which everything, from the victims' identity to that of the hospital, are shrouded in secrecy? As the story goes, efforts to save the lives of two critically ill Nigerians were botched when blood, contaminated by AIDS virus, was infused into their veins. What could be responsible for such fatal foul ups? How does one explain for instance, a situation where a doctor stitches up a forgotten scapel or cotton-wool in the abdomen of an operated patient? Or the insouciant attitude of a doctor who leaves a patient in the emergency room to have his meal?

THE plausible reasons may be that the medical practitioner is torn between two loyalties: His loyalty to his symbol, which is a snake, wound round a cross or short pole, a creature which to many is the god of evil and death. And his loyalty to his Hippocratic Oath, which embodies godliness and selflessness when it states in part: "That into whatsoever house you shall enter it shall be for the good of the sick to the utmost of your power." By this, the Doctor is of necessity a god-man and an implacable foe of death. By his enormous responsibility to preserve and save life, he is, so to speak, Man-in-Nature and proof that the medical man is not ordinary; by his being able to offer lifelines, acting wholly on distinction and principles at periods, nature makes no distinction between good and evil. To abdicate this role, for that of Dr. Death, even under cover of secrecy, is to yield to the alternative base instinct in man that creates the man-devil. It is a clear violation of the immortal saying of Pope Leo XIII, that God, and we may add, even where he is man, should not only be true but truth itself

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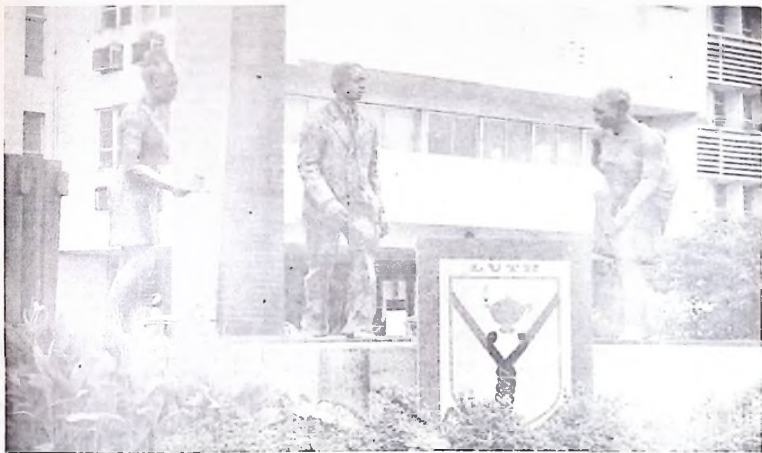
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Who cures the doctor?

A rash of complaints as physicians fail to live up to Hippocratic oath



• Lagos University Teaching Hospital: We cure, God heals

WEDNESDAY, February 26, 1987. Gimah Isenalumhe, a large-scale farmer based in Auchi, Bendel State, was experiencing an attack of fever. In addition, he had a "loss of appetite" and a "bitter taste in the mouth." He received treatment and two days later, he was relieved of the fever, but the loss of appetite and the feeling of bitter taste persisted.

On March 3, 1987, Isenalumhe began to pass stool frequently; so he went to the Auchi General Hospital where he was admitted. There, he was placed on medication, including intravenous fluids (IVF). At the request of his relations, however, Isenalumhe was referred by his attending doctor to the medical unit of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) Benin, with a transfer note, indicating his complaints and the medication he had been given. Isenalumhe, still on the IVF, left

for Benin at about 6.00 a.m. on March 4, 1987.

On the way to Benin, the patient alighted thrice to pass stool. Consequently, the IVF, now out of the vein, had to be discontinued. By about 9.00 a.m., Isenalumhe, accompanied by his oldest surviving child, Miss Muniretu Isenalumhe, and his first son, Razak Isenalumhe, arrived at the UBTH. There, Dr. Tony Isenalumhe, a brother to the patient and lecturer at the Institute of Child Health, College of Medical Sciences, University of Benin, immediately handed over the transfer note of the patient to Dr. Alexander Bazuaye, the Senior Registrar and second in command of the medical casualty team on call.

On the instruction of Dr. Bazuaye, Gimah Isenalumhe was moved immediately to the Accident and Emergency Unit where he was reg-

istered and his vital signs recorded by the nurses at 10.00 a.m. Dr. Joseph Onakewhor, a houseman in the casualty team on call, saw the patient and made the first medical recording at 10.35 a.m. He prescribed some drugs and intravenous infusion but refused to start treatment "until the patient reached the ward and the Senior Registrar reviewed" the case. It was not until 2.40 p.m. that the patient was moved to the ward.

Even so, Dr. Bazuaye saw the patient at about 4.30 p.m. when he reviewed the prescribed treatment which included IVF. It took about an hour for the infusion to start at about 5.35 p.m. Not only was Isenalumhe passing watery stool frequently for the almost eight hours he was without IVF, he started to vomit too. More than this, the type of infusion (five per cent dextrose in normal saline) and the rate of administra-

tion (one litre to run for eight hours) could not be of any use in the advanced dehydrated state of the patient. So, Ise-

was apparently in, he did not respond to knocks at his gate for about 30 minutes. They set forth for the nearby house of

on the issue of shock and perforation of the intestine.



• Health Minister Ransome-Kuti: Nigerian doctors could do better

nalumbe fell into hypovolemic shock (shock due to dehydration).

IN that state, no action was taken to resuscitate him until about 9.30 p.m. when he went into coma. The efforts to bring him out of coma consisted of fast infusion of large amounts of fluid and administration of oxygen which could not immediately resuscitate him because of his advanced state of shock and coma. At about 10.30 p.m., Muniretu, daughter of the patient and Dr. Tony Isenalumbe inquired from Dr. Bazuaye if the consultant, Dr. Lawrence Jarikre, had seen the patient. Bazuaye replied that the consultant's presence was not necessary since he (Bazuaye) was doing all that needed to be done. Whereupon, they requested to know from Bazuaye the house address or telephone number of the consultant. Bazuaye did not oblige.

By about 11.30 p.m. Dr. Isenalumbe, in company of two children of the patient, were able to locate the home of the consultant. Although Dr. Jarikre

Dr. Kenneth Oyarebu where Dr. Isenalumbe telephoned Dr. Jarikre many times, using both his (Jarikre's) direct and university extension lines to no avail.

Back to the hospital in the company of Oyarebu, they met Bazuaye who informed them that he had just relayed to Jarikre over the phone all about the patient's condition and the efforts to resuscitate him, saying that the consultant endorsed all the efforts and promised to be with them shortly.

Meanwhile, Dr. Bazuaye was of the opinion that the shock state of the patient resulted from perforation of the intestines, secondary to typhoid fever which he, Bazuaye, suspected to be one of the primary conditions afflicting Isenalumbe. Apart from typhoid fever, the patient was suspected by the medical team to have had pneumonia, amoebic hepatitis or liver disease and infection from an injection site. Consequently, Isenalumbe was sent for an abdominal X-ray and the surgical team was called in by Dr. Bazuaye for its expert opinion

AFTER examinations of the X-ray and the patient, the surgical team led by Dr. Ohanaka, a senior registrar in surgery ruled out intestinal perforation and stated that the patient was in "hypovolemic shock." The team instructed that the patient should be resuscitated from the shock before further review of his case.

Well after midnight, Dr. Jarikre arrived at the ward at about 1.00 a.m. to review the condition of the patient and the activities of the doctors. Some of the actions earlier taken by Dr. Bazuaye were radically altered by the consultant, an intervention which improved the condition of the patient considerably before 3.00 a.m.

At about 3.30 a.m., Dr. Isenalumbe saw off his friends, Dr. Oyarebu and Dr. Oviawe, who, having been convinced that the patient's condition had improved considerably and was progressively improving, felt free to go home. When he returned shortly after, he went straight to the bed-side of the patient only to find him gasping for breath. The oxygen on which the patient was being resuscitated had been removed. Dr. Isenalumbe raised an alarm: "They have killed him! Who removed the oxygen? You have killed him!!! Since the oxygen was not forthcoming, Dr. Bazuaye resorted to the use of the ambu-bag to aid the respiration of the patient. That was too late since the patient had apparently stopped breathing before Dr. Bazuaye's futile efforts with the ambu-bag.

So, Gimah Isenalumbe, a husband to two wives and father of 17 children died. At the relatively youthful age of 46. A death certificate later filled for the deceased arbitrarily claimed that he died of "intestinal perforation secondary to typhoid fever. There was no autopsy.

In a nutshell, the foregoing account constitutes the grounds on which Muniretu, Razak and Tony Isenalumbe, as plaintiffs, have filed a joint statement of claim against the Board of Governors of the UBTH, and doctors Jarikre, Bazuaye, Onakewhor and Mrs. Amina Egbudin, a staff nurse.

In the suit filed at the Benin High Court, the plaintiffs are alleging negligence on the part of the medical team which treated the late Gimah Isenalumbe. In the "particulars of negligence" contained in the joint statement of claim, the plaintiffs averred that the failure of the second defendant, Dr.

Jarikre to see the deceased for over 15 hours of hospitalization (from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 a.m.) gave room to the series of mismanagement of the patient which culminated in his death.

AS for the third defendant, Dr. Bazuaye, they alleged that his failure to see the patient for seven-and-a-half hours gave room to the excessive delay in starting the patient on medication, including the all-important intravenous infusion. In addition, they insist that the failure of Dr. Bazuaye to call the consultant until about 1.00 a.m. when the patient's condition had seriously deteriorated as a result of mismanagement provided the foundation for the fatal negligence of the fifth defendant, Miss Amina Egbudin, the staff nurse.

In the case of the fourth defendant, Dr. Onakewhor, his failure, according to the plaintiffs, to give any treatment to the deceased, particularly the IVF while the patient was passing watery stool frequently, allowed for dehydration and the subsequent shock from which Isenalumbe never recovered. The fifth defendant, Egbudin is being accused of negligence because in the eyes of the plaintiffs, she did not take precautions in ensuring that when the oxygen cylinder (which was empty) and the mask were being removed, that there was another oxygen set for immediate replacement. This particular negligence, according to the plaintiffs, was the immediate cause of death of the deceased.

For these alleged acts, the plaintiffs through their counsel, Jim Akhere, are claiming one-and-a-half million naira from the defendants, jointly and severally. Justice Alfred Obi, the presiding judge is yet to pronounce on the issue.

Grave as the allegations of the Isenalumbe are, the defendants have equally put up a strong joint statement of defence. In general terms, the defendants outrightly denied many of the allegations. At other times, they noted that they were not in a position to admit or deny some of the averments, saying they would require strict proof of such averments at the trial. More specifically, however, the defence rested its case on the following:

- The deceased was promptly attended to at all times. The delay in administering medication on him was caused by his relations who could not procure the prescribed drugs including the IVF until about 5.20 p.m. It is the operative policy of the hospital that patients must provide the drugs to be used in treating them.



● Nurses and midwives: Any hope for Nigeria's healthcare?

- The dehydration of the deceased was not due to the management of the deceased by the defendants but for the fact that the patient had been ill for about 10 days at home without any specific therapy or treatment being given him. The shock therefore was a consequence of the advanced nature of his ailment.

- The consultant, according to hospital procedure, is only called in by the senior registrar when the condition of the patient can no longer be effectively handled by the senior registrar. This procedure was adhered to in the medical management of the deceased patient.

- The X-ray which did not confirm the suspicion of internal perforation did not totally rule it out either.

- There was no radical alteration of treatment measures previously carried out by Dr. Bazuaye as the steps taken by him were approved by Dr. Jarikre. There was an improvement of the deceased's condition thereafter but not of considerable nature. Dr. Isenalumbe not being a medical doctor must have held erroneous views on the rate of improvement.

- When the oxygen cylinder used for the patient was getting finished, a new cylinder was brought to replace it. When Egbudin removed the oxygen mask, Dr. Bazuaye immediately started ambu-bagging before the new cylinder was put in place. The process took about two minutes. Dr. Isenalumbe did

not raise any alarm as the entire replacement procedure was properly carried out.

- The post-mortem could not be done on March 6, 1987 as scheduled as the pathologist had to go to court for a coroner's case. It was rescheduled for the next day but Dr. Isenalumbe pleaded it should be shelved as arrangements for burial had been concluded. On humanitarian grounds, Dr. Jarikre acceded to the request so as not to upset the burial arrangements and increase the sorrow of the family.

IN another medical centre in Benin, precisely at the Central Hospital, amiable Mrs. Theresa Gilbert was a well-known face. As a student of the Bendel State School of Nursing, she was frequently seen at the crowded wards of the Central Hospital. But on this Thursday, October 13, Gilbert was less than her usual cheerful self. She had come to work with a "mild" headache and an attack of fever. She promptly consulted the physician on call, Dr. J. Chiejina, a senior consultant reputed to be one of the hospital's best physicians. Chiejina was said to have tested Gilbert for typhoid fever — an epidemic currently ravaging parts of Bendel State — and prescribed anti-biotics. Two weeks later, Mrs. Theresa Gilbert died, leaving behind a husband and two children. According to sources at the hospital, the cause of death was cerebro-spinal

meningitis, an inflammation of the meninges, a covering for the brain.

What happened in those two weeks Gilbert was on admission in the Central Hospital is still not clear. But to the 80 student-colleagues of Gilbert, there is an overwhelming feeling of outrage. On October 26, the students poured into the streets with placards, charging Chiejina and other doctors in the hospital with negligence and indifference in the handling of Gilbert's case. They even went further to heap allegations of corruption and care-free attitude on some of the doctors.

One of the students, a close friend of Gilbert, claimed that for the two weeks Gilbert was on admission, no doctor attended to her. She said that when she discovered that her friend was on the

verge of death, she went to Chiejina, knelt down and pleaded with him to attend to Gilbert. She alleged that the doctor turned down her entreaties because, according to her, he had an urgent meeting at the Health Management Board. When contacted, Dr. Chiejina declined comments, saying he would make his report available only to the Health Board.

Sources, however, told *The African Guardian* that after the admission of Gilbert, Dr. Chiejina also attached to the Government House clinic because of his medical expertise, was summoned to Government House to treat the child of a visiting commissioner from Akwa Ibom state. The child, said to have contracted typhoid fever, had been admitted

at the Ogbe Nursing Home, Benin. According to the sources, after treating the child, the doctor travelled to Lokoja in Kwara state on a mission for the Bendel State governor, Col. Tunde Ogbeha.

Although the accusations of negligence against Dr. Chiejina and the UBTH team might, in the long run, prove ill-founded, there appears to be a distinct impression in public consciousness that for many a Nigerian doctor, a wide chasm exists between his practice of medicine and the physician's oath that "I will practice my profession with conscience and dignity; that the health of my patients will be my first consideration."

For Mary Osayi, the gulf between

The legal angle

Barrister Oshisanya says mistakes are no defences for negligence

In an interview with *The African Guardian*, a Lagos-based lawyer, Mr. Lai Oshitokunbo Oshisanya discusses the right of victims and the position of the law on medical malpractice and negligence. Excerpts:

On when a legal action can be brought against a doctor

The most agonising thing about the relationship between a doctor and a patient in this country is that a lot of Nigerians don't know their rights under the law. A doctor can be held liable in a case of negligence.

On what constitutes negligence

Negligence connotes a complex concept of duty breach and damage suffered thereby to a person to whom one owes such a duty. Duty of care is the exercise of reasonable skill (or reasonable care), that is the need to exhibit the degree of skill or competence which is usually associated with the efficient discharge of professional calling.

What of a mistake by a doctor?

Negligence is negligence. Mistakes are no defences for negligence. If for instance, a doctor administers a wrong drug to his patient in error and that results to a harm (either physical or psychological), an action can be brought against the doctor.

On who has the right to sue

The patient can sue or the patient's next of kin. If the patient is a woman for instance, her husband or children can sue.

Any defences open to the doctor?

A doctor can plead *volenti non fit injuria*. If a patient or his next of kin gives consent to a particular treatment, it may be difficult for a case to be brought against the doctor if the treatment fails. But this is so long as the process is not unlawful.

There are other defences like egg-shell-skull-test and necessity. For necessity to be pleaded, there must be some conditions, one of which is that the medical assistance rendered to a person unconscious at the time is necessary



• Oshisanya: "Negligence is negligence"

and reasonable to make the defendant's act justifiable.

There is also the general defence for doctors which is that a doctor is not an insurer against every accidental slip. The doctor must exercise such care as accords with the general and approved practice in the profession. But he cannot be held liable for any risk unknown to medical knowledge at the time.

On damages

Damages can be either general or special. If a man is deformed (like amputation), he can claim general damages for his inability to work and raise money in order to, for example, provide good education for his children. But he can claim special damages for the deformity he actually suffers.

There is the Latin maxim "*res ipso loquitur*" (the thing speaks for itself.) This maxim makes it easy for a victim of professional negligence to recover damages from the doctors or hospital authorities for the patently negligent acts of medical practitioners.

what the oath expects of the physician and the reality on the ground might be responsible for her death at the youthful age of 20. Two days after Gilbert's admission into the Central Hospital, Benin, Mary was hospitalised there for sickle cell anaemia. Her condition, according to a nurse at the hospital, required blood transfusion. Her blood group was available quite alright and the staff nurse promptly informed the doctor in charge. After what seemed to the nurse to be an interminable wait, she went to call the doctor. According to her, she reminded the doctor of Mary's grave condition four times and on each occasion, his reply was: "I will be there in a moment." The nurse said the doctor's excuse for his seeming tardiness was that he was teaching house officers. Twenty-four hours after her admission, Mary died. Without the blood transfusion. A source at the hospital said the authorities have ordered an investigation.

If medical doctors in Nigeria were on trial, then the charges against them are legion. They range from professional negligence to outright incompetence, through insensitivity to blatant corruption. Although public ignorance of medical practice could account for some of the allegations against doctors, the Health Minister, Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti, himself a medical doctor of long standing, has conceded some of the allegations against his professional colleagues. At a conference of the Nigerian Medical Association in Benin on April 28 this year, he told the doctors that "examples abound where the outcome of a disease might have been different if the doctor had known better or acted with greater care."

Acknowledging that "we have not reached the point where the confidence of the people in the health system is fully restored," the Health Minister noted that the restoration of such confidence "will depend on the professionalism of every doctor whereby every patient is treated promptly, with care, sympathy, humanity, consideration and attention to detail.... ensuring that the patient is given every opportunity to get the best care available." To him, "this is not the time for confrontation and protests; it is the time for government and the profession to work together closely to repair the damage of the past in an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence."

Ironically, the minister's theme of 'trust and confidence' was rudely shaken a few months after when he announced to a bewildered nation in

late October that two patients had been inadvertently transfused with AIDS-infected blood in an hospital yet to be named (see box). Suddenly, the largely hidden but vexacious question of medical malpractice and negligence gathered momentum and assumed a life of its own. Since then, the health minister has tried valiantly to douse the flames of passion, saying that he gave out the information, not in condemnation of the hospital involved, but as a warning to Nigerians to be more careful because the possibilities of such occurrences exist.

BUT even as alarming as Kuti's disclosure might seem, allegations of medical malpractice and negligence are not new to Nigerians. What appears worrisome is the inability or unwillingness of victims or their relations to seek legal redress. Dr. Beko Ransome-Kuti, former vice-president of the NMA and younger brother of the health minister is irked by the reluctance of Nigerians to bring erring doctors to book. An apparently lone-ranger in the fight to ensure medical probity, Dr. Beko Ransome-Kuti sees the problem as the reluctance of Nigerians to sustain malpractices and negligence suits against doctors.

He is not exactly right. His position is disproved by the Isenalumbe who have gone to court.

The same University of Benin Teaching Hospital currently has another case of negligence instituted, ironically, against her by a former employee of the University of Benin, Benin City. On March 23, 1986, Alan Omorogbe, a quantity surveyor with the University of Benin (UNIBEN) physical planning unit fractured his femur in a car accident. He was taken to the

casualty ward of the UBTH where he recalled spending "five agonising hours" without a doctor to examine his injury. After Professor Felix Orhewere, then Head of Surgery at the UBTH detected that Omorogbe fractured the neck of the left femur and recommended surgery, the operation was not performed for five days after the patient had been admitted. At the instigation of Omorogbe's mother-in-law, Dr. Irene Ighodaro, Orhewere and his assistant, Dr. R. F. A. Umehese, operated on the leg and they declared the surgery a success.

Instead of abating, Omorogbe's pains increased. After his discharge nine weeks later, the patient was still unable to walk, even with crutches. When he eventually managed to stand on his feet, he noticed that the leg operated upon was shorter by about an inch. All the while, he received assurances from his physicians that he would eventually be alright. Not satisfied, he took the X-ray films to a private orthopaedic hospital where three specialists informed him that the surgical operation was "wrongly performed", and that the reset bone had been placed in the wrong position.

Eventually, Omorogbe travelled to England in October 1986 to seek medical succour. There, experts who examined x-rays from the UBTH concluded that an "appalling job" had been done on Omorogbe's leg and that infection had set in. First, Omorogbe had an operation to clear the infection and to treat the leg with anti-biotic beads. According to Omorogbe, the acute pains stopped "almost immediately" after the first operation. Some months later, a second surgery was performed to remove the anti-biotic beads before a final "corrective" surgery. On February 14, 1987, the final operation was performed to "re-align" the leg. Omorogbe said he was able to walk with crutches three days after the operation. Ten days later, he was back in Nigeria, walking unaided.

The report of the medical team in Britain was scathing. Dr. Richard Crooms, the consultant there, described the UBTH surgery as "totally unsatisfactory" for the alleged negligence. Omorogbe is still pressing legal charges that the UBTH board pay him ₦745,000 as compensation.

Although, complaints against doctors in Nigeria are many and varied, few ever get to court, thus raising the question of who cures the doctor of his malpractice, incompetence and negligence. Few see little hope. For Dr. Beko Ransome-Kuti, "if nobody takes it up,



• Beko: If nobody takes up cases against doctors, they will go on killing people

they (the doctors) will go on killing people."

To Professor Ayo Binitie, acting dean of the College of Medical Sciences, University of Benin and President of the West African College of Physicians, the problem lies in the society. Says he: "The doctors are not different from the rest of society. What of the police, the army, the politician, the NEPA man, the railway man or the university admission board ... are they not corrupt?" According to Binitie, these bodies and persons "selectively recruit and reward people who are not straight forward. Any straight-forward man is either thrown out of office or put in trouble." Apparently irked by it all, he blared: "Quiet me, Nigerians do not like honest governments. That is why everybody is corrupt. That is what we deserve."

Even so, there is a body established statutorily to cure the doctor of his ailments. That body is the Nigerian Medical Council (NMC). What seems disturbing, however, is that the cases handled by the NMC over the years have been meagre in comparison to the deluge of public criticism, allegations and accusations against doctors. In its 25 years of existence, the NMC has tried only 20 complaints against doctors. All of these resulted in admonitions, discharge and acquittals.

However, the severest weapon available to the council — the erasure of a doctor's name from the medical register — has been applied four times. On December 24, 1963, a doctor at the General Hospital, Lagos received, corruptly, five pounds, before agreeing to treat a patient. For this act, his name was struck off the council's register for professional misconduct. In 1966, the name of an expatriate dental surgeon was erased from the register for advertising his profession, contrary to medical ethics. He never applied for reinstatement and has since left the country.

In April 1969, a doctor at the General Hospital, Kaduna was alleged to have had sexual dealings with a female patient. The case was charged to the High Court in Kaduna. The doctor was discharged and acquitted. As with all cases decided by the courts, a copy of the judgement was sent to the NMC. The council's tribunal studied the facts of the case and decided that the doctor's name be struck off the register. Till date, he is yet to be re-instated. Dr. B.O. Kioki was found guilty in 1974 by a Lagos High Court of being in possession of marijuana. He was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 10 years. On



• Binitie. Problems against doctors emanate from the society

receiving the judgement, the council struck out his name in August, 1977. He subsequently re-applied and was reinstated in July 1983.

On December 31, 1984, the Nigerian Medical Council was dissolved. At the time of its dissolution, 19 cases were awaiting investigation by the council's panel. Since then, 16 more cases have been added to the backlog. These 35 cases border on professional negligence and misconduct. In response to the anxiety of the health minister that these cases be dealt with speedily, the investigating panel of the NMC held a meeting in September. This week, the panel would meet in Calabar to look into eight cases. And on December 8, the Council's tribunal would sit.

PRESUMABLY reacting to a rise in cases of medical malpractices and negligence, as well as, public outcry, the NMC is currently reviewing the rules of professional conduct for doctors and dentists, to impose stringent penalties on them. Essentially, the review being undertaken by 14 doctors and dentists is expected to state in explicit terms those things that constitute malpractice by doctors in the course of their duties. Already under review by the panel, set by the NMC, are the council's 27 rules drawn up eight years ago.

Although the NMC is apparently making spirited efforts to put the medical house in order, there are fears that

the practice of medicine is being polluted at its very source — the medical school. At the University of Benin Medical College, there are more than 600 students. According to the acting dean, Professor Binitie, the main building to house the college has not been completed despite the fact that it has been on the drawing board for many years.

Still, the issues go far beyond problems of accommodation. Binitie's summation: "Our problem is poor finishing in practicals. The whole lot (of funds) goes to payment of salaries. Experienced staff are leaving us because the situation is very bad. What has happened is that many types of equipment have broken down and there is no wherewithal to maintain them. There are no books, my dear. It is that bad and the college is virtually grinding to a halt. The damage is so extensive that unless there is a cut in the intake of students, we won't be able to manage for too long."

Binitie's sanguine projections would hold for virtually all the teaching hospitals in the country, to varying degrees. At the University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan, for example, many consultants, because of the poor economic conditions, are reported to have left the country for greener pastures. While the hospital fills these vacancies routinely, it is believed that the successors are less experienced than their predecessors. The consequence of this brain drain, according to a source at the UCH, is that the students, especially those in post-graduate courses hardly get the benefit of experienced hands in their training. It is said that the staffing in some teaching hospitals has become so bad that there are whole departments without even a consultant.

With the growing disenchantment and lack of confidence in the doctor arising from the perceived lapses in the physician's training and practice, the medical profession faces an uncertain future in Nigeria. That point was well illustrated by Olikoye Ransome-Kuti at the Benin conference of the NMA on April 28. Said he to the doctors: "The future of the medical profession in Nigeria is intimately inter-twined with that of the medical services. They will go up or down together. That future also lies in your hands to do what you will with it. I pray that your choice will be that it will go up and that you will work for that result?" A pious hope?

By Godwin Agbako with reports from Abdul Oroh, Debo Adesina, John Nwaobi, Dili Ojukwu and Humphrey Bekaran



• A Tanzanian AIDS victim: The scare lives on

AIDS: Not yet a safety-valve

Faulty medical handling heightens the scare

A GAINST Acquired Immuned Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), mankind is currently a pitiable sight to behold. As the realities of the dreaded disease confront everyman, everyday, especially in places where a sizeable number of real cases have been recorded, the fear of AIDS finds little or no parallel in history. Even the *white death* which swept through the world like a hurricane in 1918, pales in comparison.

In the fear of AIDS, even measures for its prevention seem to scare more than they assure. Each way out seems to contain a loophole that makes it another way in. And to each man, the other is a walking corpse who might unenviably be holding a one-way ticket to the grave, patently stamped. Yet, against the background of this worldwide AIDSphobia, Nigeria remains a compelling curiosity. The nation's campaign on the disease has been vociferous but her attempts at controlling it, frantic as they seem, are far from being fool-proof. Hence the nation's fatal susceptibility to the scourge.

Although heterosexual promiscuity is acknowledged as the most potent way of spreading the disease, Nigeria may turn out an exception. Rather, blood transfusion may be the way through which AIDS will catch up with many Nigerians. This fact is aptly illustrated by the case of two patients who were infused

with AIDS-contaminated blood in error at a hospital which is supposed to be an AIDS screening centre. The hospital's identity remains a closely guarded secret. Even top medical officials and academics, some of them members of the National Expert Advisory Committee on AIDS (NEACA) claim they do not know.

Although, circumstances surrounding the error are still foggy, it is certain however that it was detected after the transfusion had been done. One theory has it that a laboratory technologist may have mistaken the AIDS-contaminated

• **Dayin Okupe:** Statistics are out of tune with WHO's



blood for an uncontaminated one and infused it into the victims. This is lent credence by Health Minister, Ransome-Kuti's admission that "blood was in a hospital. It was tested when it came. They found it was AIDS contaminated. But by some mistake, somebody went and transfused somebody with the blood."

This theory has however been derided by medical practitioners who wonder why the blood already identified as HIV-positive was left in a place where it could be confused with AIDS-free. "If the blood was tested and found positive," says Dr. Seyi Roberts, vice president of the Committee on AIDS Educations (CAE) a voluntary organisation "it should have been sent for comprehensive study in a research centre or discarded. We are baffled."

Perhaps, another plausible cause of the error *The African Guardian* learnt, is that the hospital had no reagents and blood was not in anyway screened before transfusion. According to sources, ideally, all blood should be screened, especially for AIDS, before donation. But two factors: non-availability of reagents and the fact that blood is donated on demand with little or no chances for screening, have made this impossible.

More astounding however, is a reason of logistics which observers believe has particularly made a nonsense of Nigeria's AIDS programme so far. The AIDS-testing kit (Wellcozyme anti-HIV test kit) which is used in all the centres comes in a pack of 96 or 480 — when it is available. This means that if blood donors were to be screened, 96 of them at least would have to be assembled to avoid a waste of the very expensive kit, (the 96—pack reportedly costs about N1,360.00 while the pack of 480 goes for about N6,804.00). Since this is impracticable, what the hospitals have been doing is to store samples of donated blood, until it is sufficient to warrant opening a kit. A hematologist calls this "screening in retrospect." And the result is that whatever contamination in the blood can only be detected after it may have been transfused into another person.

Observers see the retrospective screening as mind-boggling in view of the fact that there are effective one-case-kits in the market. But these have not been used because they are not made available to the centres. "All the screening centres are government sponsored", says a hematologist at the University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan, "and we have been using what the government has provided."

The question many observers then ask is: if transfusion error cannot be avoided at a place with the facilities, what is happening in the hundreds of hospitals without screening facilities all over the country where blood transfusion is done as a matter of routine. If this riddle is best left to the imagination, then the Health Minister's decision to keep the identity of the offending hospital is even more puzzling. Olikoye Ransome-Kuti says he actually announced the error primarily to make Nigerians aware of the dangers in blood transfusion. "I do not know the details", he says.

EVEN so, observers say it is counter productive for the government not to disclose the identity of known victims. But government officials say the rationale behind the decision is that under normal circumstances, an identified victim should be kept away but this has been deemed unrealistic as it would infringe on the rights of the person. And to disclose his identity would expose him to being treated as an outcast. "So, what the government is doing is to make the society aware of dangers in its midst so that each individual can protect himself".

Thus argument however hardly impresses some people who reason that government is being deliberately silent so that fear could be driven into the people. Says Seyi Roberts: "Since nobody has been told who the affected persons are and the hospital where it happened, more panic has been unleashed. Those people who have recently had blood transfusion will be on edge. This is a criminal offence and the health ministry should have kept quiet instead of giving out piecemeal information."

This is not the first time the Committee on AIDS Education would disagree with the health ministry on AIDS. The Ministry's statistics show that as at February, out of the blood samples of 25,000 persons screened nationwide, 25 were confirmed HIV-positive, 12 of whom had developed into full blown AIDS while 11 have died and another one at large. These figures have been contested by the CAE. The committee's president, Dr. Doyin Okupe at a press conference in Lagos last month, said the figures are out of tune with the World Health Organisation's established pattern of the spread of AIDS. According to Okupe, for every case of the full-blown AIDS, there are 100 other carriers either detected or undetected. He reasoned that for Nigeria to have 12 cases of AIDS, the carrier population

should be about 1,200 and not 25 as submitted by the NEACA.

Even amidst these claims and counter-claims, many Nigerians couldn't care less, especially about heterosexual promiscuity as a source of the dreaded disease. Many still go about with their guards entirely down, as though they have acquired immunity against AIDS. "Nigerians have not fully appreciated the implications of AIDS," says a medical doctor. "Generally, people do not like using the condom," notes Seyi Roberts. "They complain of decreased sensitivity and interruption of spontaneity". "The whole thing has been over-mystified", says Dele Adekunjo, an economics undergraduate at



• Ransome Kuti: A subtle caution

the Obatemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife.

Since 1983, when an American, Roberts Gallo, a Harvard scientist led the team that discovered the AIDS virus quite a lot of intrigues have been woven around it. Three years ago, Phillip Kanki and Max Essex of the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, USA, led the teams that announced the discovery of two new AIDS like viruses; one in African green monkeys and another in "some West African people." Then, they thought they had uncovered the origin of AIDS as African. This led to the general suspicion that AIDS was becoming a propaganda issue. Kanki and Essex however have recently acknowledged in an issue of the British science journal, *Nature*, that their discoveries were a case of mistaken identity. Their viruses which were named

STLV 3 agm and HTLV-4 do not exist.

There have also been conflicting claims in the local and international circles on the cure or prevention of the AIDS virus. And all these have become part of the myth-making. Medical treatment for AIDS costs 25,000 pounds in Britain and about 60,000 dollars in the United States.

Early this year, a British firm reportedly developed what is supposed to be the first contraceptive for women, that prevents pregnancy as well as protection against AIDS. The contraceptive is known as Femshield: There is also 3'-azido-3'-thymidine (AZT) made by Wellcome, the multi-national pharmaceutical company which gives some remission to AIDS patients. But it is acknowledged as a very expensive drug with devastating side-effects like blood depression.

A herbal AIDS medicine has also reportedly been developed at China's Herbal Medicine Research Institute.

In Nigeria, Kehinde Solaja, a 28-year-old herbalist claims he has manufactured two concoctions, *Cimeo* and *Kokoye* from local herbs. With this, he claims, he has cured an AIDS patient who for fear of embarrassment cannot openly confirm the feat.

Mukadam Balogun, the self-styled president of White Witches World Association based in Lagos, also says he has cured four female AIDS patients with herbs. One of them, he says, contracted the disease in London. And J.O. Lambo, national president of the Nigerian Association of Medical Herbalists draws a parallel between AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases like "Ero" and "Magun". "And he says that "a drug which can cure those two diseases can at least control AIDS if a permanent cure is difficult"

HOWEVER, medical doctors have argued that these claims are frivolous. The herbalists, they say, cannot cure what they do not know. More so, most of their claims are not verifiable. One thing is certain: Acquired Immuned Deficiency Syndrome is one deadly disease for which there is no known cure yet. "To combat AIDS," says a LUTH professor, "Nigeria needs to mobilise as much resources as she would for a large-scale war." Unfortunately, this is far from the situation now. And as each nation battles with the dreaded disease, inadequate resources and planning has made a mince-meat of the Nigerian crusade.

• By Debo Adesina with John Nwobi and Onajomo Ores

Now it's war of words

Khartoum, Nairobi trade charges over support of rebels

KHARTOUM has all along barely managed to hide its concern over the links of rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) to the government of President Arap Moi. Last week, that suppressed tension exploded in a welter of stinging accusations.

Foreign Affairs Minister, Hussein Haba Saleh in an envenomed speech, October 25, accused the Kenya leader of giving military supports to rebels in southern Sudan, adding that the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA's) office in Nairobi is used to transmit military aids to the rebels. He said rebel leader John Garang is accorded a head of state status by the Kenyan government. He also said that Kenya is helping rebels' activities through wide television coverage of these activities. Sudanese Prime Minister, Sadiq El Madhi even went to the extent of branding Moi a corrupt leader, charging that he is in collusion with a Western company interested in exploiting mineral deposits in Southern Sudan. He warned him to beware because, in his own words, Kenya's house is also "made of glass".

Reacting to the allegations, Kenyan Foreign Affairs Minister Robert Ouko described Sadiq's claims as being "factually wrong and malicious". He said Madhi's language was unethical and unbecoming of an African leader. Ouko denied allegations that the SPLA office in Nairobi is being used for anything other than transmission of relief materials, adding that Kenya follows a policy of non interference in the internal affairs of other states.

Khartoum's war of nerves with Moi's

• Garang: At the centre of the feud



government came in a week of battle field reverses. The SPLA continued to sack government troops in many fronts and it was able to prevent relief materials from being flown into the besieged provincial capital of Juba. An estimated 200,000 refugees in the city have been without food for weeks. Cut off from the government controlled regions of the country, the city faces the danger of being completely exterminated by hunger. Scores die daily as United Nations and other relief agencies encounter difficulties in trying to break through rebel air fortresses to reach the refugees with food. Rebels last month opened fire at an air-liner carrying relief materials as it was about landing in the town. Already, road convoys from Uganda and neighbouring countries have been blocked by rebel ambushes.

It is still doubtful if the rebels are using the denial of relief supplies to the



• El Madhi, Moi (below) No love lost



hunger stricken refugees as a weapon to force government to the negotiation table. Speculations, however, are that the rebels are guarding against possible infiltration of government forces into rebel-controlled areas.

Understandably enough the government of Prime Minister El Madhi has been trying to arrange external mediation. Uganda was the first to promise to bring the warring groups to the conference table. President Yoweri Museveni was reported to have received a message from Garang, informing him of the SPLA's readiness to hold talks with the government. So far, however, nothing positive has happened. There is a lot of mistrust.

The SPLA, whose estimated 40,000 fighters are drawn from the Christian-dominated south, wants Sharia laws repealed before it can agree to peace talks. More than this, Garang would prefer the involvement of either Ethiopia or Kenya in the peace arrangement. But government has enough reasons to say no to that. The rebels enjoy military support from both countries. Al Tourabi, a moslem fundamentalist leader, openly accused Ethiopia of pressuring the rebels into rejecting government peace overtures.

Against this background, a corresponding support for government forces by Arab nations seems only natural. Thus, Libya's pledge of military assistance to Sudan is taken to be racially and religiously biased. And the offer is coming at a time when the Sudanese war has intensified in favour of the rebels.

The more disturbing aspect of the situation is the fact that El-Madhi is fast losing the initiative for peace. He had promised to put a halt to the indiscriminate application of the Sharia, adopted as the legal code by ousted President Jaafar Nimeri. But today the Prime Minister has turned his back on that promise and has dropped all persons who support the idea of Sudan's secularism from his cabinet.

For now, Al Tourabi, leader of the National Islamic Front (NIF) — also the Justice Minister — has been given the responsibility of reviewing the Sharia laws which he (ironically enough) helped to draft for Nimeri. But how those laws will be reshaped to assuage southern fears is still a big question. Only recently, members of the Union of Sudan Parties (USAP), main opposition to Madhi's Umma Party, stormed out of parliament when he tabled a draft penal code based on Sharia.

By Chukwuemeka Gahla with reports from Abraham Ogbodo

Deep in dilemma

Whichever way Israeli elections go, Palestinians are no better off

BETWEEN Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli conservative Likud Party chief, and most of the Arab statesmen; there's clearly no love lost. The Arab leaders (Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, King Hussein of Jordan, and others) urge the Israeli electorate to vote against Shamir's right-wing bloc in tomorrow's (November 1) parliamentary elections. The reasoning, as can be gleaned from statements by Jordan's King Hussein, is that a Likud triumph in the polls will spell "absolute disaster" for the Middle East peace process.

The Jordanian monarch — a moderate in the Arab political spectrum — is disturbed by Shamir's threat to handle the 10-month-long *intifada* (uprising) in

peace" (not war), by endorsing the Labour Party candidate, Shimon Peres. It was obviously their belief that such a clear-cut Arab position before the polls, would help most voters make up their mind. While the three leaders (the conservatives) met, representatives of Syria and Libya (the so-called Arab hardliners) also parleyed on the same day on apparently the same issue. The PLO boss and the Jordanian monarch used the meeting to formalise their agreement to work on a "confederal basis."

It is not that all Arab leaders prefer the victory of Peres to that of Shamir. Mubarak, King Hussein, Iraq's Saddam Hussein, and others obviously want Peres to win. But, others like the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat do not believe that



• Arafat: No cause for cheer

The African Guardian that the organisation prefers neither the Likud, nor the Labour. Both political parties, he said, are fundamentally the same in the sense that they do not recognise the Palestinians' right of self-determination, and the position of the PLO as their sole, legal representative.

Perhaps, the only difference between the two blocs, according to the ambassador, is that they adopt varying methods in achieving the same political end. While the Likud adopts a more aggressive strategy (makes use of steel-gloves as Arafat once put it), the Labour is more subtle ("fights with leather gloves"). But, they are fighting all the same, Baker argued. In fact, some officials of the Labour Party, like Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin, have been as hard on the Palestinians as such conservative rabble-rousers like former Prime Minister Menachem Begin, or even Yitzhak Shamir himself. Besides, it is also on record that all major annexations of the Palestinian and Arab lands over the years (Egyptian-held Gaza, Old Jerusalem, Syria's Golan Heights and Jordan's West Bank) were carried out by Labour-led Israeli government.

Therefore, whichever way the power equation eventually swings, the outcome of tomorrow's Israeli elections will give the Palestinians little to cheer about. What is more, the initiative for a solution to the Middle East impasse coming from the White House (after the November 8 US elections) now also seems quite far-fetched. As Ambassador Baker pointed out, neither the Republican, nor the Democratic candidate promised a major shift from the present pro-Israeli (and anti-PLO) American policy. Experts believe however, that the chances of a substantial political break-through being made are much higher with the formation of Labour and Democratic governments in Jerusalem and Washington, than with Likud and Republican parties in control.

By Emenike Okoré

• Shamir, Peres: Varying ways to same political end

the occupied territories (Gaza and West Bank) with "iron fist." He knows, like most other Arab leaders, that this implies even greater bloodshed and suffering for the Palestinians. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that Mubarak and King Hussein quickly met October 22 with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader, Yasser Arafat, in what observers say was an attempt to sway the Israeli voters (PLO Ambassador in Nigeria, Samir Baker, insists that Arafat had met Mubarak and Hussein only as part of his ongoing routine consultation tour, and not to discuss Israeli elections.)

But at the end of the meeting, the leaders had, among other things, called on the Israeli electorate to "vote for

victory either way will make much of a difference. Those who favour the victory of the Labour Party have apparently been influenced by its more sympathetic position on the *intifada*, and on the general Israeli-Palestinian question. The Labour Party, among other things, believes that international round-table talks between Arab and Palestinian representatives excluding the PLO will go a long way in helping to resolve the Middle East political deadlock.

For the PLO, however, supporting either the Likud or the Labour parties is not like having a clear-cut choice between the good and the bad. It does not even think that the matter is a question of picking a lesser evil from among two evils. Ambassador Samir Baker, told

No longer a gentleman's game

Contestants resort to mudslinging as presidential race enters last lap

AT the end, if Michael S. Dukakis fails to emerge tops in the 1988 presidential contest, it would not be because he was not qualified for the number one job, or because of his inability to work hard enough for victory (he is natural workaholic). It would probably be on account of what analysts call his "fatal passivity" in the face of the Republican campaign of "fear and smear."

As this year's presidential race, described as one of the most negative in recent times, enters its critical last lap — barely a week to go — everybody is on edge. The Republicans have unleashed their final nation-wide television advertisement blitz. This, however, comes as little surprise, given earlier reports that Vice-President George Bush had put aside more than half of his \$30 million advertisement budget for last-minute media onslaught. But, rather than concentrate on his own platform (what his presidency has in stock for Americans and so on), Bush is zeroing in on Dukakis.

The Republicans, in what is seen as a subtle appeal to conservative whites, are trying hard to portray Dukakis as

too soft on crime and criminals (especially Black criminals). Even before the latest Bush campaign, the Massachusetts Governor was said to be having some problems getting across to white voters in the South where race is still a pre-eminent factor. They (the whites), complain of Dukakis' strong commitment to civil rights. So, what the Republicans are apparently doing is to capitalise on such white fears or feelings. This, they have deftly done by building their campaign theme around the case of a Black convicted murderer, Willie Horton, who, let out of a Massachusetts prison last year on a weekend furlough, fled, stabbed a white man and raped his fiancée twice.

It is not that the Dukakis team are just sitting idly, watching their man being battered into a political pulp. In these final, decisive days, they too have launched their own war in an attempt to debunk some of these negative charges against Dukakis. On one or two occasions, they have even tried to "say things that really hurt" about Bush (as a servile, squash-playing upper-class wimp who is out-of-touch with the con-

dition of the average American); and about his controversy-tainted running-mate, Senator Danforth Quayle.

But, the harder the Democrats have tried to deflect the Republican attacks, the more the presidential contest has turned into a sort of defensive bout for them — with Bush doing all the attacking, and Dukakis, all the dodging and dodging. The one fights dirty, while the other is a stickler for the rules of the game.

Some pundits are, however, blaming Dukakis for not matching the Republican demagoguery word-for-word. Former President Richard Nixon, for instance, regards the Dukakis soft, un-aggressive approach as naivety. And even some Democratic sympathisers, disturbed by the Republicans' number one position in the polls, also complain that the Dukakis team may have "blown" the race by refusing to trade "political garbage" with the Republicans.

Even so, it is now beginning to dawn on many that Dukakis could eventually emerge victorious for the same reason that he is being his own man, running the race at his own pace and in his own style. In their stampede to paint Dukakis as a "soft red-meat," chances are that the Republicans may end up achieving the opposite result. While harping so much on the Massachusetts Governor's anti-death penalty position, for instance, Bush has unwittingly acquired the tag of "national hangman of the year" in certain quarters. A sure indication that American voters may at the end, surprisingly prove themselves too enlightened to be easily befuddled by the Republicans' rather dispiriting, near-vacuous drive for the presidency, as against Dukakis' greater attention to issues.

As it is, poll figures, towards the weekend, still show the Republican candidate several paces ahead of the Democratic rival. But Dukakis, determined as ever, assures his supporters that it is "people, not polls" who will determine the outcome of the election. The surveys further indicate that there are many undecided voters. These, watchers of the American political scene believe, are the people who will eventually make all the difference.

By Emenike Okorie



• Dukakis: Reluctant to trade political garbage

• Bush: The end justifies the means

Charting a new course

Kohl's Moscow visit promises improved East-West co-operation

THERE was little chance of Helmut Kohl failing to make the best of the trip. He knew he was undertaking the four-day Moscow visit at a time West Germany is widely taken to be crucial to any Soviet effort to streamline relations with Europe. Sure enough, at the end of his 10-hour private and full talks with Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet leader (October 27), it was obvious that Moscow was eager to earn his trust.

It gave him an unprecedented concession for the release of all Soviet political prisoners by the end of the year. In return, Kohl announced that Bonn will end its opposition to the holding in Moscow in 1991 of an international human rights conference under the aegis of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE).

Observers think the planned Moscow human rights conference is far from what is currently at stake in Soviet-German relations. The West German leader is believed to have gone to Moscow to continue political contacts over the issue of German re-unification and the status of Berlin (especially in view of his upcoming East German tour), based on the long standing German policy of *ospolitik* (improving relations with the East.)

How far the Soviets are willing to go as far as these crucial issues are concerned was hinted in a stern response from Gorbachev. The Soviet leader said the impact of attempts to alter the German situation will be "unpredictable" and "even dangerous." It was an observation that was informed by a lot of strategic thinking. The implication of a unified Germany will, at the very minimum, threaten Soviet preminent power position in Europe. Kohl later wisely emphasised that such a re-unification will in fact have to await the elimination of ideological blocs in global politics. Otherwise, "it must become possible," he urged, "for the Germans to overcome the division of their country by peaceful means."

In the end, although Gorbachev himself went on to affirm that Soviet-German co-operation should be limited to improvement of bilateral ties, (not a change in positions on reunification and Berlin), it was expected that he would agree to the idea of easing restrictions

against emigration from East Berlin (now up to 1.2 million a year) and to request for ending Soviet jamming of broadcasts to the East.

Until now, the German Chancellor and Prime Minister Thatcher of Britain were the most ardent opponents of Soviet moves for rapprochement with Europe. In fact, he was so distrustful of the Soviet leader that he thought nothing of likening him to Dr. Josef Geobells, Hitler's propaganda wizard.

The Chancellor's change of heart comes in the wake of realistic appraisals, by European leaders, of gains made through Gorbachev's open door policy, European leaders' hope that the Soviet

obviously elated Gorbachev promptly explained to the German delegation (including five ministers and 48 businessmen) that what it means is that "the most difficult period in our relation is behind us." "The ice has been broken," he said.

One area that is likely to be the focus of immediate talks now that there is a thaw in relations, is arms control. West Germany houses the US Pershing missiles, expected to be eliminated under the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) treaty. Besides, she and France have been trying to decide on how to respond to Soviet proposals for the withdrawal of all longer range intermediate nuclear force (LRINF) and shorter-range intermediate nuclear force (SRINF) weapons based in Europe. The Germans are particularly afraid that without the SRINF weapons they will not be able to resist major conventional attacks from Warsaw Pact nations. The



• Kohl: Taking the initiative



• Gorbachev: Some element of skepticism

economic reforms will ultimately provide an opening for them to exert a moderating influence on the Kremlin, and the acceptance of the Soviet leader by Thatcher and President Reagan. Kohl disclosed he and the Soviet leader have already instructed their foreign ministers to re-examine the 1971 quadripartite agreement on Berlin signed by the US, Soviet Union, France and Britain, "in order to find long-term and practical solutions."

His visit has helped remove the remaining obstacle to Kremlin's new European strategy and paved the way for both countries to formalise — at the highest level — a forum for ironing out a variety of bilateral problems. An

other worry is that withdrawal of the two weapons systems will lead to a political neutralisation of Europe.

Observers agree that assurances over these concerns are going to be matched by guarantees that will definitely be sought as the Soviet Union unavoidably begins to expand its economic links with West Germany, Europe's strongest economy. A West German statement issued after the meeting said agreement will be concluded (when Gorbachev returns the visit) to protect and promote Western investments in the Soviet Union. Over 30 contracts and six bilateral agreements were signed during Kohl's visit.

By Chukwueke Gaha

POSTCARD

First ever multi-racial elections

LAST week, Pieter Botha's so-called internal reforms was put to test. The first ever multi-racial local elections were held in the racial enclave. The results at the end of the day, showed a shift to the ultra-right by white voters in rural areas and industrial towns in Transvaal province while the ruling National Party retained lead in Pretoria and Johannesburg the country's largest city.

The elections, said to have attracted the biggest white turnout in municipal voting in South Africa, were held on a racially segregated basis and under tight security following threats by African National Congress (ANC) to disrupt the election.

PHILIPPINES

Families count losses

THESE are tearful times for the Filipinos. Families and friends of the 500 people on board the ill-fated 2,855-ton Dona Marilyn ferry are anguished. And so is nearly everybody in Manila which came under a three-day-long (October 23-25) ravage by Typhoon Ruby.

Somehow, the two disasters are related. Both were caused by powerful winds. The unlucky ferry passengers were thrown into the waters near the Filipino city of Cebu during a fierce storm. So far, only eight survivors (out of the 500 passengers) have

• Aquino



been fished out. There is an unknown number of dead bodies.

In Manila, the typhoon is believed to have damaged crops worth over 2.2 billion pesos (103 million dollars) for the three days it lasted. And only the damages in three of the seven affected regions were computed.

FRANCE

Firm calls off sale of abortion pill

THIS, surely, is a bad year for Roussel-UCLAF, a French pharmaceutical company and a subsidiary of the West German Hoechst group. The company last week was forced to announce suspension of the sale of its abortion pill, RV 486 world wide. The decision to halt sales of the pill was due to threats by Roman Catholics in the United States to boycott the firm's other products.

The pill whose sale was approved by the French government late last month, was already being prescribed in about 100 French abortion centres. Said to be taken only under medical supervision, the pill is most effective within the first 49 days of pregnancy.

The Federation of Catholic Family Association (FCFA) has applauded the firm's decision, saying it has brought comfort to all those in France and other parts of the world opposed to the "policy of death." But the French Movement for Family Planning (FMFP) reacted angrily saying the suspension was forced on the firm by fundamentalist and reactionary Catholics who want to impose their "backward laws" on women.

SRI LANKA

Jayewardene to step down

IT will make sense if a man like President Junius



• Mierrand

Jayewardene of Sri Lanka, faced as he is, with a protracted bush war in the jungles of the tiny island quits office for reason of being bored with the war. But he himself is saying that his announced unwillingness to vacate office has nothing to do with the war's agonies. He is serious about the decision, he said.

In the meantime, the 82 year old president is appealing to the nation's Buddhist clergy and the opposition to help prevail on the rebel Sinhalese militants to hold dialogue with the government. The move comes in the wake of lightning strikes in most parts of the country fuelled by the Sinhalese People's Liberation Front (P.L.F.). Jayewardene also held talks with the nation's seven-party opposition alliance last Thursday in a bid to defuse mounting political tension in the island.

U.S.

Kennedy killers: wrong person identified

THE 25-year-long search for killers of late U.S. President, John F. Kennedy, will just have to continue. One of the men alleged to have featured in the assassination plot was declared innocent by the French Navy last week.

Sauveur Pironi, described by British Independent Television (ITV) as one of the late president's killers, was, according to investigations by the navy, working in a mine-clearing unit at Toulon, Southern France, from Octo-

ber 16, 1962 to April 16, 1964. In other words, he could not have been in Dallas, USA, when the president was shot (November 22, 1963).

This immediately casts doubts on the ITV report which claimed that Pironi, now 46, was among three hired killers who assassinated late John Kennedy.

USSA

Soviets launch first space shuttle

SPACE-SHUTTling is definitely not going to be a preserve of the Americans. The Soviet have joined in. Last week, the first Soviet shuttle, tagged *Buran* (Storm), was launched in Baikonur, Kazakhstan. The unmanned shuttle, said to be similar to US shuttles was let into space at 0323 GMT on Saturday.

Propelled by *Energia*, the largest Soviet rocket ever built, the shuttle's return to earth will be guided by an automatic pilot system. *Energia*, (weight - 2,000 tonnes at take off with a 3,000 tonne thrust) is capable of placing a 100 tonne space craft in orbit around the earth or sending 27 tonnes toward Mars. This was successfully tested in May last year.

The launch date had been a closely guarded secret at the Baikonur center. Space officials had simply said the shuttle would make its first flight before the end of the year.

• Gorbachev



Termites of the economy

Foreign exchange merchants bite deeply into the naira

THEY mill about, obstructing traffic, along Martins and Breadfruit streets in the central business district of Lagos. Their business is done in small stalls and rooms that are tucked away behind imposing sky-scrapers around which they solicit for customers. They are the foreign currency merchants who make up the hub of the parallel foreign exchange market.

The market, though illegal is booming again after a lull brought about by an autonomous market that had effectively competed with it. Sources in financial circles even suggest an ominous possibility: this gray market for the naira gives a more indicative worth of the currency when measured against major international currencies. For between ₦7.35 and ₦7.50 these seemingly idle traders can form a syndicate to exchange as much as 100,000 US dollars within a five-minute notice. And it appears that the government has inadvertently given this illegal dealers new powers.

Irked by the plummeting naira at the inter-bank foreign exchange market, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) ordered the banks to peg the exchange rate at ₦6.00 per dollar last month. This intervention, aimed at easing the unwieldy inter-bank rates where the dollar sold for anything between ₦5.50 and ₦7.50, may be working against what the CBN intended. It has certainly created some ripple in the economic life of the nation.

To begin with, the funding of the autonomous market appears to have dried up. It was only a trickle before the clamp down. Bankers suggest that holders of domiciliary accounts may find the new rate unacceptable; so that there may be a shift toward not repatriating export proceeds. They may be right. A source at the First City Merchant Bank (FCMB) says that although the CBN's order for exporters to repatriate proceeds within 60 days is supposed to check any excesses; it would seem that they have not been responding well enough. Even so, the new rate could be a disincentive for them to comply.

Two weeks ago, the CBN black-listed some companies who had made no return on export proceeds through their banks within the specified period. Although this action is yielding some

fruit, some say it is not far-reaching enough.

Speculations are rife that small exporters have resorted to diverting their export earnings to the parallel market where they could get 25 per cent improvement in exchange rate. Alhaji Bello Abdul-Qadir, a dealer at the gray market, says there has been a boom of late. His customers cut across the so-



• Broad Street: An action point for illegal marketeers

cial strata — students, traders, industrialists and expatriates. Such dealers believe that the personal touch they put in the business, and the swiftness of transactions with no documentation whatsoever guarantees that the customers would come back. But sometimes this laissez-faire tradition offers more heartache than currency: counterfeits are coming into the market more than ever before. Chris Akinlosotu, image maker for Nigeria Arab Bank, says that those patronising the parallel market stand the risk of buying counterfeited foreign currency.

As the illegal gray market booms with the risks involved, the government seems unable to check its influence. Even where it has effective control in the autonomous market, some other problems are becoming obvious. For example, pegging the rate at ₦6.00 gives foreign investors a better rate for their dividend repatriation. Earlier, some had complained that dividend

should be sent back to their home at the auctions rate. But government and banks have made a point of allocating auctions money to industries and essential sectors of the economy that need them most. Also some believe that the new rate would discourage repatriation of flight capital by Nigerians living abroad. Tied to that is the fear that the CBN's intervention means that the government is not sure-footed in its policy initiatives.

But officials of the CBN say that if the naira must have any meaning, there must be some form of intervention. For them, even the gap between the au-

tions market and the autonomous funds — some 24 per cent — is worrisome. It would seem that government would come off better with a stronger naira although, analysts do not see how when the market is constantly threatened by insufficient funds.

Apparently, through its actions, the CBN appears to be gradually allowing the market to determine the realistic exchange rate for the naira. While it does that, complaints from bankers suggest that meddling with the autonomous funds market is unnecessary and counter-productive. And the parallel market would begin to firm up at an even more depressing exchange rates as if it is aimed at giving the government bigger worries, for, as Alhaji Isa Mohammed another Broad Street trader puts it, the boom in the market would continue for as long as there is scarcity of hard currencies in banks to meet customers requests.

Herbert Ojeh with Lucky Flakpa

Assuaging the thirst

Gongola State seeks loans for Yola water project

WITH the Federal Government's hand-outs down to a trickle, more and more state governments are looking to the capital market for money to finance development projects. Last Wednesday, the Gongola State Government took the hint when it signed for a ₦22 million syndicated loan led by Merchant Bank of Africa (MBA). The facility, repayable in 45 monthly instalments, is part of the funding required to complete a water project in Yola.

For the finance industry, the entry of government into the capital market is welcome challenge. Mr. Bernard Anyanwu, Managing Director of MBA says his bank is looking forward to a time when state governments and financial institutions would go further into bond issues as a way to fund utilities. Bailing governments out of financial hardships with such facilities amounts to opening new markets for the banks. But even so, the state governments have to pay a stiff "market" price. Soft loans guaranteed by the Federal Government have become scarce.

Already, the Gongola State Government has received the nod of the Federal Government to seek \$16 million dollars which is the external component of

the loan package. Mr. Bernard Baran Adi, the state's Commissioner for Finance, says that the money is being financed from the International Capital Market, not from the World Bank or other sources of soft lending. The ₦22 million medium term loan syndicated locally comes with 18 per cent interest rate. This is some 5¼ per cent above the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) minimum re-discount rate of 2½ per cent over MBA's prime rate. At the end of the day, the state will cough out about ₦30.5 million to the group of banks, out of which ₦8.6 million represents interest over the 4-year life of the loan.

But the state government is confident that the Yola-Jimeta water scheme will be worth the trouble. Says a state official, Yola has "extremely hot weather and very scanty rainfall." It appears that the state government has picked a firm with some enviable track record. The contractors, Aprofim Engineering and Construction (Nigeria) Limited, builders of the Nicon-Noga Hilton, Abuja are confident of completing the job in two years, says Ben De Vito, the company's General Manager. If they do, Yola municipality will be sure of sufficient water supply up to 2005, says Mr.



■ Anyanwu: Looking forward to more bonds with state governments

Adi.

In the meantime, Merchant Bank of Africa and its aligning creditor-banks appear to have wrested enough assurance from the state on how to get their money back. Encouraged that the "cash flow position of the state government can comfortably service and repay financial indebtedness up to ₦15 million a year," MBA may have sought a foolproof way to recover. Authorised by an irrevocable standing payment order, the CBN will pay MBA on behalf of the syndicate directly from the statutory revenue going to Gongola State from the Federation Account.

For MBA, which has ₦6 million share of the loan, the project is like doing a social service. But it does not hurt to reap a sizeable chunk in profits, even as it welcomes the state to the intrigues of the capital markets.

By Herbert Ojeh

A jolt from within

Building experts unfold new techniques

THE first brickwall for many people thinking of building houses is a nightmare. The cost of building houses is jumping into the sky. For tenants, the picture is not less bleak. Urban housing is in chaos. Even in rural areas, the quality of housing is appalling. In simple terms, houses are still a scarce, costly commodity. Nigerian policy planners have a dream: houses for all by the year 2000. This dream appears now illusory. The plan is heading for the rocks as projections become unattainable by the day. What to do? Realising how hopeless the picture was, the government has over the year called on scientists to develop local alternatives to imported building materials. The scientists went into it in full swing. The preliminary re-

sults have been encouraging.

Last Tuesday, in Lagos, some of these results were shown to the public in an exhibition organised by the Nigerian Institute of Architects. The materials exhibited covered various parts of the building industry. The bulk of the new techniques shown were based on local products, such as bamboo and raffia.

The University of Lagos Consultancy Unit demonstrated how timber window units can be used in place of other materials now in vogue. They also explained how bamboo could be used to reinforce floor slabs. The Unit also demonstrated the usefulness of coconut and palm kernel products in floor finishings. The attraction of these products is their lower

cost and better aesthetic appeal.

Also at the exhibition, the giant roof makers, Nigerite showed off their fire resistant roof materials. There were also new house designs which make building a lot cheaper than the usual designs.

But it was not exhibition all the way; papers were also presented. The topics covered ranged from maintenance, aesthetics to the use of local materials in the building industry.

Many of the participants expressed fear that recent research gains may be eroded if they are not encouraged. The president of the Architect's Registration Council of Nigeria, Dr. Wale Odeleye says the support of the government would be a significant way of popularising inventions and new techniques of building. We left a challenge with the government: "show examples and the people will follow."

By Felix Obanya

Shipping policy for sale

AS the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) opens deliberations this week in Geneva, Switzerland, Nigeria's seven-man delegation led by the Federal Director-General of Transport, Alhaji Baidu Barda, will, among other issues, attempt to sell the nation's 18-month-old shipping policy to the international community.

The policy which falls under the UNCTAD 40:40:20 shipping code, allocates 40 per cent of cargoes to the originating country, 40 per cent to state of destination and 20 per cent to independent carriers.

It appears that UNCTAD code is not favoured by the technologically and economically advanced states. Their grouse is that it is protectionist and against the principle of free trade.

But the secretary to the team and the out-going chairman of the UNCTAD shipping committee, Dr Ola Adegbeyemi, who is also the director of transport co-ordination inspectorate in the Transport Ministry, says, the team will strongly defend the nation's gains from the shipping policy. To ensure this, he said the team will strive to prevent countries which were not party to the drawing of the code from voting for or against it during the conference.

Cole tours Brazil

AS part of his familiarisation tour of parts of Brazil, Nigeria's Ambassador to Brazil, Dr Patrick D. Cole was guest to two important research centres — ACARESC, responsible for rural extension programme for rural farmers and EMPASC, which carries out research on various agricultural crops, such as onion, cas-

sava and maize.

Recently, the EMPASC came up with some important discoveries which involve the planting of a seed, which grows and if eventually harvested the useful part of the seed extracted, while the other remaining part is replanted, to undergo yet another spell of recycling process.

He was also a guest of the Hering S/A in Blumenau, State of Santa Catarina, where the Ambassador pleaded for technical co-operation, for the Nigerian Textile Industry. At Ceramica Portobelo, a ceramic factory, Dr. Cole revealed that



• Ambassador Cole with President of the Legislative Assembly, Juares Rogério Furtado (left) of Santa Catarina, Brazil.

Nigeria uses about 70 per cent of Brazilian tiles, in servicing her building industry but regretted that the purchases of the tiles were made through private dealers. He therefore, urged the company's Chief Executive, Dr. Roberto Wolowsky, to seek possible ways of selling directly to Nigerian entrepreneurs.

Shattered dreams

UNLESS the US — based Phillips Petroleum Company currently operating in Cote D'Ivoire thinks otherwise, the country's dream of ex-

porting crude oil may as well be forgotten. This is as a result of the company's decision to close down the larger of the two oil fields, Espoire, at the end of October this year.

The field which has yielded about 30 million barrels since its discovery in 1980 has for some time now been experiencing dwindling fortunes. From a peak of 20,000 barrels a day in its early days, production has tumbled to less than 10,000 barrels a day, the spokesman for the company said.

This factor combined with increased overheads and the depressed world market for petroleum has all made activities in the field uneconomic, the spokesman said.

With this development, Cote D'Ivoire is left with one oil field — Esso Cote D'Ivoire SA which is managed by an Ivorian company. This is not enough for Cote D'Ivoire to realise her oil export dream as the field could take out only 5,000 barrels a day.

This dwindling hope for some oil fortune will give the Ivoirians a lot of concern at a time when her major export crop — cocoa — is being rocked by low export prices in the world market.

Naira slides again

THE naira again depreciated against major currencies at the 65th bi-monthly Foreign Exchange auction held last Thursday in Lagos. Against the dollar it slipped 1.13 per cent and 4.39 per cent against the deutsche mark. For the next fortnight one U.S dollar will exchange for N4.83, a pound sterling N8.50, French francs, N3.21, deutsche mark, N2.72 and Japanese yen, N0.04.

At the autonomous market where the exchange rate is pegged at N6.00 to the dollar, it fluctuated between N5.84 and N6.00 during the week.

Naira exchange rate

Cross rates vis a vis other currencies

Name of Currency	Buy- ing	Con- tral	Sel- ling	Pre- v- i- ous Con- tral	Depre- ciation ** Per Cent
US Dollar	4.7780	4.8020	4.8260	4.7476	-1.1329
Pound Sterling	8.4141	8.4564	8.4986	8.2347	-2.6217
Deutsche Mark	2.6926	2.7061	2.7197	2.5872	-4.3938
Swiss Francs	3.1758	3.1918	3.2077	3.0639	-4.0071
French Francs	0.7880	0.7920	0.7959	0.7590	-4.1667
Dutch Guilder	2.3872	2.3992	2.4112	2.2957	-4.3139
Japanese Yen	0.0380	0.0382	0.0384	0.0368	-3.6649
CFA Francs	0.0151	0.0152	0.0152	0.0151	-0.6579

STOCK MARKET WATCH

Can they cope?

Uncertainties over privatisation worry brokers

CLOSING a deal at the Nigerian Stock Exchange is an instruction in paper chase. And it can be mind-boggling. For example, a broker sells 10,000 shares of Nigerian Breweries Limited which the NSE allots to 10 other dealing houses equally. The selling house must fill 10 bargain slips, arrange for settlement of claims and transfer of share certificate through his registrar. If the broker sells several large volumes he is knee-deep in paper work. By law, he has only 21 days to deliver but that is easier said than done. Investors have had to wait for three months to get hold of share certificates after a deal has been closed.

Judging by the hassles they face, stock brokers are likely to face an avalanche of documentation, come privatisation. Can they cope? Surprisingly most stock-brokers think they can but for different reasons. For one thing some do not believe that privatisation would sufficiently induce Nigerian shareholders to speculate with a view to grabbing some capital gains. Also others suggest that even if privatisation is expected to unleash shares worth twice the present market capitalisation, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and NSE have the mandate to maintain orderly trading and share exchanges.

The SEC is expected to do that through pricing, volume and timing of the release of new issues. Otherwise they say, the SEC would be failing in its duties, and the market would be ruined in backlog of unsettled bargains while investors will be left with neither share

certificates nor dividends.

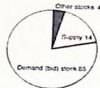
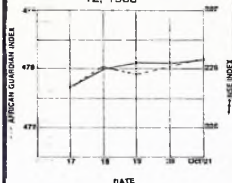
But a timely intervention of SEC or NSE may not do the trick of relieving the stockbroker for long. It appears that to better prepare for a more active secondary equities market some restrictive practices may have to be modified or eliminated. First, the journey of the shareholder's certificate between the selling house to the registrar to the investor need to be made. The shares could remain with the broker for storage while the equity is registered in the new owner's name, thereby cutting short the process. Second to go would be the two-week accounting period. Some say this relic could give speculators the chance to make or lose money, even as it guarantees a delay, if the NSE becomes a deregulated, speculative market. The investor it appears is forced to tie down his money with the broker for a two-week period neither earning interest nor having his shares registered.

However, market watchers think that such development would require some infrastructure to be acceptable and fool proof. Already, while the NSE is linked to international market centres it appears hard put to effect any in-house automation. Still, brokers can save themselves a lot of tedious documentation processes. Again, a shortened method of share exchange could save the stock holders the frustration of chasing dividends and share certificates and not knowing the right place to look: whether the seller's, buyer's house, the registrar or the post office.

LEADING CONTRIBUTORS
GUARDIAN INDEX
OCTOBER 21, 1988

Union Bank	9.04
UBA	7.62
Food Specialities	6.72
UAZ	4.30
Nig. Breweries Ltd	3.44
Guinness (Nig) Plc	2.41
Others	60.27

Summary
of Supply &
Demand Stocks

AFRICAN GUARDIAN &
NSE INDICES OCTOBER
12, 1988

Highest Priced Stocks

Stock	Per (K)	Total (K)	Dividend Div.	Last Date
Union Bank	360+	100	8.0	28/06/88
First Bank	349+	100	27.0	17/03/88
Sterling Products	313+	50	70.3	03/05/88
UBA	304+	100	24.0	12/07/88
P.Z. Industries	251+	50	40.0	20/10/87
Food Specialities	222+	50	40.0	31/05/88
John Holt	216	50	12.0	10/08/88
Nig. Bottling	214+	50	28.20	29/09/88
Nig. Breweries Ltd	208+	50	17.0	26/05/88
NIGERCEM	200-	200	8.2	10/10/77
NTC	185+	50	27.0	27/11/87
TOTAL	183+	50	36.0	30/05/88
NCR (Ng.)	182+	50	44.0	14/06/88
Lever Brothers	175	50	29.8	26/04/88
Agip	170+	50	18.25	01/06/88
AP	169+	50	16.7	08/06/88
Mobil Oil	164+	50	16.6	29/04/88
Beecham	160+	50	17.5	26/06/88
Glaxo	156+	50	10.5	28/10/87
Thomas Wyatt	152+	50	20.0	22/09/87

• NSE: Can its intervention help?



New style drug adverts

Consumers get 'consult your physician' warning

"HURRY up, dear, let's get to the village before dark", says a woman to her husband in a well-known advertisement. The husband pulls a long face because of a sudden headache. After two tablets of an analgesic, he recovers instantly and the couple zooms off to their village haven with a song on their lips in praise of the drug.

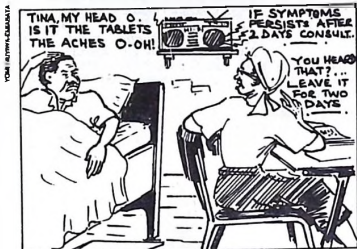
Such split-second recovery on television and radio may be part of advertising strategy to boost sales. A number of drug manufacturers like Beecham and Sterling Products have recently gone a step further to accompany product advertisements with warning statements. At the end of the advert comes a tip for the would-be purchaser: *If symptoms persist after two days, consult your physician.*

The inclusion of such tips in adverts and on drug packages appears to be a growing trend. "There's a world-wide tendency towards self-medication", observes George Thorpe, the marketing manager of Sterling Products, manufacturers of *Caféol*, and *Hedex*. "Our society still has a lot of semi-literate. The advice, also relayed in indigenous languages, is saying if a headache persists after two days, it might be something else, so see a doctor." Appending the counsel on adverts and packages of such easily accessible over-the-counter (OTC) drugs as analgesics and cough preparations, is expected to discourage abuse. "Our interest is not in killing the consumers. It is only fair to protect people from continuous use of drugs when

they are not getting any relief," says Thorpe.

The concern is not far-fetched. An overdose of aspirin, a salicylic acid, could irritate the stomach lining and in severe cases cause internal bleeding. The use of aspirin-based drugs like *Phensic* and *Alabukun* powder might not augur well for a peptic ulcer patient. Despite having the relatively mild pa-

have been triggered off by a directive on June 15, 1987, from the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) unit of the Federal Ministry of Health. It requires drug makers to include two and five days advice limit on analgesics, and cough/cold preparations respectively. Though yet to be passed into law, the directive is anchored on regulation No. 35 of the 1974



racetamol as its active ingredient, *Panadol* could also be injurious to the kidney if indiscriminately ingested.

In some parts of the world, like in the United States, the style of testimonial adverts has changed. It is no longer fashionable for glamorous personalities used in such adverts to say that a particular product is good for you, the would-be client. He merely gives a personal testimony that the product is good for himself. The copywriters changed their styles after contrary testimonies in court by users of the products fetched them enormous sums as damages.

The "consult your physician" warning appears to

respond to the directive was delayed for almost a year by the plea of most drug manufacturers that they needed time to reflect the change in new drug packages and adverts.

Earlier this month, health minister, Professor Olikoye Ransome-Kuti, disclosed plans by the ministry to give the FDA directive legal muscle. Warning labels on adverts and on packets of drugs and cigarettes are expected to become mandatory by December. "The law will soon be out, and my preference is before the year's end," says Professor Kuti. "The draft has just been finished and returned to the Justice Ministry for

appropriate action."

Prof. Ransome Kuti comes the action already being taken by drug manufacturers to include warning labels in adverts. "My support is for informed self-medication to common symptoms which we know are associated with diseases affecting most of us like fever, cough and diarrhoea," he adds.

Some question the usefulness of the warning labels. "Shouldn't people see a doctor first to ensure proper diagnosis and prescription rather than self-medication?" they ask. Medical experts argue that self-medication for simple ailments would remain an option for a long time as the ratio of patients to available doctors is very wide. Self-medication

could come with terminal risks for which no external agent would be held accountable. Dr. Bo'ao Ogunsakin of Holy Trinity

Hospital, Ikeja, notes, for instance, that nobody would be held if a person, under self-medication of analgesics, was to die within the given two days. "Nobody would be liable

because the analgesic was not prescribed," he said. Ogunsakin, however, believes that over-the-counter analgesics have a large safety margin if used within the right dosage.

The snag is that most potent drug stores, where OTC drugs are easily accessible, do not have pharmacists to enlighten customers about drug dosage. But there is no doubt that mandatory warning label on drugs would be one step forward in the institutional efforts to redress a chaotic drug medication system.

By John Nwobu

Friendship through art

Bulgarian cultural troupe thrills Nigerians

A BULGARIAN pantomime theatre troupe thrilled audiences on October 21 and 22 at the main bowl of the National Theatre, Iganmu, in an effort to tie another knot in Nigeria-Bulgaria friendship.

Pantomime uses highly sensitized movement, gesture and mimicry to tell its story.

The root of the pantomime theatre reaches to the early days when drama was deep in the ritual context. The Bulgarians, parading a cast of seven men and three women, executed a repertoire that spanned 13 themes, under the subtitles of Boxer, Dwarfs, Pianist, Traffic Policeman, Banjo, Ostrich, Hair, The Consulting Room, The Sunflower,

Biorhythmical Circle, Pygmalion, the Prison, and Invasion.

Traffic Policeman appealed highly to the audience. The Policeman used a variety of gestures to direct the flow of vehicles from four imaginary roads. He commanded drivers to stop, move, park and so on. Now he cautions a driver, rebukes another and takes down on an unseen notebook a car registration number. Sometimes a vehicle comes very close and he jumps clear of the danger. Background instrumental music provides the engine sounds, braking and honking of vehicles.

Another remarkable episode was that of the Dwarfs. Two dwarfs wrestled for some time without

producing a victor. Then to the amazement of the audience, the costumes came off to reveal that a man, bent double, his legs and hands concealed in shoes and two doll heads cleverly mounted on his back, had been enacting a two-man duel. This scene is reminiscent of a Chinese wrestling performance in the same hall in July, 1988 on a similar inter-governmental agreement

on cultural co-operation.

At the end of the performance, the Special Guest of Honour, Prince Tony Momoh, Minister of Information and Culture, the Bulgarian Ambassador to Nigeria and the audience looked as if they had had a swell treat as they tramped out of the theatre built more than a decade ago by the Bulgarians.

By Humphrey Bekaran



Members of the troupe in action

Honouring the intellect

ON Tuesday, October 25, the family and friends of the late Kenneth Onwuka Dike, first Nigerian vice-chancellor of the University of Ibadan gathered in Lagos to launch an endowment fund for a N10 million centre to be named after him in Awka, Anambra State. The proposed centre will have a library and facilities for research in African history and culture.

The Federal Government donated N250,000 while the Federal Ministry of Education made its own contribution of N50,000. On the whole, N432,000 was collected at the launching which took place at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.

Dike, who died in 1983, is

renowned for his landmark publication: *Trade and Politics in 19th Century Nigeria Delta*.

The Chairman of the board of management of the proposed Kenneth Onwuka Dike Centre, Professor S.J. Cooke, said it would be a "befitting monument in honour of Dike and the unique intellectual pursuits to which he dedicated his life."



Dike, honoured

A nappy affair

Kiddies all set for Pears baby contest finals.

A national contest to decide the baby of the year has swung into its final stages. Sponsored by A.J. Seward, a division of UAC of Nigeria Limited, the contest, a promotional drive for the company's baby care products, is aimed at encouraging maternal care, according to the organizers. The judges comprise paediatricians, health officials and mothers, looking at criteria such as healthy looking skin, clean nails and bright eyes.

At the regional raffle draw held Tuesday October 25 at the Ikeja complex of A.J. Seward, a total of 300 babies from all parts of the country sailed on to the final round to be held in

Jarugue. Tagged "1989 Pears Baby of the year," the lucky kid in the finals is due for a cash prize of N5,000 plus a free supply of Pears products for a year. The two runners up are to receive N2,000 and N1,000 respectively.

By Omatayo Afolabi

A.J. Seward General Manager, Egri-Okwaji



PEOPLE



• Thompson during the launch: Flashback to a dark era

No bitterness here

THUNDE Thompson's opting for a jail sentence rather than reveal a news source has left behind no deep scars. Thompson, now *The Guardian's* Managing Editor, and co-victim with the *The African Guardian* editor Nduka Irabor, of the notorious Decree 4, under the Buhari administration, has taken time off to document his experiences on the beat, and memories from the 11-month imprisonment in the book, titled *Fractured Jail Sentence*. Despite fears that October 24, being a public holiday might affect attendance rate, the hall of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, the venue of the book launch, was packed full. The Chairman, Alhaji Alade Odunewu, himself a veteran journalist, said that the book belonged to an entirely different category of publication. "It's a serious and complicated true life story based on personal experiences in the course of duty".

Thompson, 37, who says he isn't "bitter" about his imprisonment, harped on the "elements of wastefulness in our culture". "I'm happy that SAP is SAPPING us somewhat. It's keeping some in check", he said.

Sola Akinyede, a member of the Constituent

Assembly, said of the book launch: "It should be a day for the human conscience", with hidden reference to that dark era of Nigeria's history noted for draconian decrees.

Ceaseless afflatus

ARTISTS frequently worry about the flow of inspiration but not Ndidi Dike, who began an exhibition of her works, titled "Rhythm in wood" on October 18 at the National Museum, Onikan, Lagos. "Ideas constantly bubble in my mind in such an uneasy frequency that I have always made determined effort to pick and choose," she says.

Her previous exhibition at the Goethe Institut, Lagos, in July 1987, titled "Explorations into Nature"

• Dike: Full of ideas



was well received by art enthusiasts.

She has struck a balance between utilitarian and aesthetically satisfying art with the use of coloured wood pieces, delving alongside into the Uli art of the Igbo people.

Ndidi, who had her early education in England, where she was born, later attended the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where she graduated in Fine and Applied Art in 1984.

In her enchanted world can be found *League of Lolos*, *Guardians of the River* and *Eucalyptus Moonscape*, some of the titles of the works in her present exhibition which ends November 1.

Playing for high stakes

MY heart says to play for Nigeria, but my business head says to play for England. Remember those words by Nigerian-born footballer, John Fashanu? At least football buffs will. Fashanu, last August, was at the centre



• Fashanu: Follows the dictates of his pocket

of town talk as to whether he would make the Nigerian team to Seoul or not. Those warring instincts finally pitched his heart where his pocket is.

Fashanu, who is probably the most-talked about Nigerian footballer based abroad, was recently "crowned" captain of Wimbledon Football Team in England. But Fashanu's excitement is double-fold — He's a couple of months away from being a father.

By Omolayo Afolabi and Humphrey Bekare

Overheard / Landmarks

► We have many criminals in the police force, and I think the time is ripe for the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice to set up a body to check the criminality of our policemen

— Mr. Justice Emmanuel Fakayode (ret.) contributing to the National Conference on the Unification and Reform of the Criminal Laws and Criminal Procedure Codes of Nigeria.

► Let me reiterate that we have not chosen and have not sought to choose those who will succeed us. We have only decided on those who will not

— President Ibrahim Babangida at Kuru.

Transition: Oba Samuel Adeyemi Adelabu Ewi of Ado Ekiti, Ondo State, 56, Sunday October 23. A lawyer, he once served as Secretary and Legal Adviser to Oduua Textile Mill, and later on as the company's General Manager.

A painful inheritance

Musical drama captures Black past in beautiful idiom

I HAVE no history; I have no past... Being Black is too emotionally taxing. I will be Black only on weekends and on holidays."

An alienated Black man (Francis Agu) in America tells it like it is in "God's Own Country" in those highly emotive words from the playlet, *Symbiosis*, one of the 12 theatrical performances that make up the *Coloured Museum* which opened at the National Theatre, Lagos, on October 20.

Such declamatory statements run through the 90-minute performance which began with an invitation to the audience aboard a "Celebrity Slave Ship." More:

From *Lola's Opening* — "My story is a simple one, full of fire and mystique...I'm a meteorite... Before I dazzle you with my talent, tell me something America. Why has it taken you so long to recognize my talent?"

Lola continues, "I have had brunch with the Pope, I have had lunch with the queen. Everywhere I go, I cause riot."

From *Permutations*: "My mama says: God made the exceptional; God made the special; when he got bored, he made me." (The child-mother, played by Becky Musa, spoke thus of her mother's reaction when she got pregnant to a garage man).

The narrator in *Last Mama on the Couch* is given to monologues in the grand style. "Tears are the fabric of racist America", he states. When mama's son, Walter, rushes onto the stage, the narrator pityingly remarks: "His brow

is heavy with 300 years of burden." In *Last Mama on the Couch*, Walter (Christopher Olaigbe Omozokpa) rebels against his mother's constant checks on his ungentlemanly conduct. He initially refuses to wipe his feet on the foot-mat. When he later does so, rather half-heartedly, his mother is pleased. "Good boy," she says. But Walter does

not want to be anybody's good boy. What he wants is to go out there and deal with the white man who continuously wipes his feet on him like a foot-mat. He talks as if in a trance: "I want to dream...I want to be somebody...The old order has to be changed. The oppressor out in the street has to be overcome first."



• Scenes from Coloured Museum

At that moment, a voice from the window identifies himself as the oppressor, Mama (Gloria Rhodes) shouts a warning but it is too late. A bullet whistles in from the street and finds its fatal mark. Mama falls beside the body and sobs: "Walter was a good boy.



She makes peace with the past, no matter how terrible.

The soldier with a secret tells his hearers: "I know the secret to your pains. First I had to die to come back to life. God or the devil said to me — these guys are not gonna be the same after the war." The emergence of the new Black man from the current struggles is predicted.

The play written by Afro-American George Wolfe featured a 16-member cast put together by a venerable director Bayo Ogunye.



Ananaba) and Janine (Edyth-Jayne Azu) each on one side of a woman's dressing table, prevail on the woman (Derin Osayinbi) to be selected for an outing.

The resolution of the conflict within the Black psyche appears to have been found in sketches like *Lola's Opening* and *Soldier with a Secret*. Lola's cleverly concealed past, her handicapped live-in lover and the child she hides in the closet, come uninvited on stage to confront her with the truth of her life. Lola (Edyth-Jayne Azu) finally, in a large gesture, embraces all the emblems of her history.

The performances buoyed on the dimensions of sound (the music was composed by Steve Rhodes), throbbing drum-beats and imaginative costumes which succeeded in transporting the audience into the "Celebrity Slave Ship" promised at the beginning. The various play on words, evident even in the title of the scripts — *Coloured Museum* — (some of playlets were actually pitched in a museum setting) and the poetic language forcefully conveyed the kaleidoscope of the Black historical experience in America.

By Humphery Bekaren

Images of the Sahel

Onabrakpeya explores relationship between man and environment

THE master printmaker in retracing the universe of his undergraduate days, comes up with what ranks as an apocalyptic vision. A paragraph in the accompanying 32-page book to the exhibition of about 80 art works by Bruce Onobrakpeya, 56, probably captures the disquieting aura of the exhibits. "The burning crescent dunes of the desert are forcing their way through lush grass and giant trees towards the surf-ridden sandshores of the Atlantic as if to become one and the same with their kinstfolk."

Gabriele Tombini, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute which is hosting the two-week exhibition that began on Saturday October 22 described the event as a milestone in the history of the institute.

Titled "The Sahelian Masquerades," the prints, paintings and reliefs are inspired by the life of the people in and around the Sahara, says the artist. They were done between 1985 and 1988. Working in the style of mythical realism, the artist finds a challenging theme in the interplay between man and the environment. By far the commonest motif of the works is that of the cattle, the wealth and pride of the Sahel.

The works under the title, *Odjevve Ogba Erhwe* (Cattle Ranch Gate) are presented in various media, and are highlighted by spaced figurines and staffs. The heads of the staffs are made of cow motifs; they are closely followed by the *Edjo Aton* (Desert Spirits). The desert spirit symbolizes persever-

ance, hardwork and bravery, especially under extreme conditions.

Egbe Ghinu Ugwu (Dance of Courage) which appeared in both plastocast painting, (measuring 181.2 x 53.2 cm), and plastograph, (measuring 68.7 x

days at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, where he graduated in 1962.

Over the years the condition of the sub-region, dramatised by the bare and hostile landscape of the Sahel zone has impinged so much on his con-



• *Edjo Aton (Desert Spirits)*

23 cm), best sums the spirit of the exhibition. It pleads extra effort to overcome natural or man-made exigencies. It looks towards philosophies expressed in art, religion, music and dance to help people go through hard times, Onobrakpeya explains.

One of the exhibits titled "Towards a Greater Nation" attracted an offer of ₦200,000.00. It is made of four panels, all plastocast paintings, embracing *Egbe Ghinu Ugwu* (Dance of Courage), *Kure Iwe* (Plant Two Trees), *Ewewwe Barowe III* (May Hunger Keep Far From Me) and *Oghene Ovuavo* (One God).

The exhibition is deeply informed by Onobrakpeya's undergraduate

consciousness that it has come to represent for him a precise analogy of the condition of man. Using the medium of his Urhobo language, with translations in English, Onobrakpeya explodes into threnodic verses accompanying the pictures of his works in the book *Sahelian Masquerades*.

Onobrakpeya, is one of the colossuses who bestride the artscape in Nigeria. He holds many awards and prizes. The Solidra Award was bestowed on him for his "contribution to the cultural wealth of Nigeria and the happiness of man universally.... as painter, muralist, book-illustrator, print-designer and etcher." He has complemented his works with

explanatory publications as the *Ancestral Graves* dealing with his works between 1976 and 1986 and the current one titled "Sahelian Masquerades." Two forthcoming publications are *Feast of the Returning Spirit*, covering his works between 1978 and 1982 and *Mythical Realism*, a record of his art works between 1958 and 1967.

By Humphrey Bekana



• *Egbe Ghine Ugwu (Dance of Courage)*

Al Bishak takes a revolutionary stance in fiction

Title: *Mrs President*
Publisher: Delta Publications (Nig.) Ltd.
Author: Al-Bishak
Reviewer: Dili Ojukwu



THIS book, the first by the author, adds its eloquent contents to the clamour for change, towards a new political order that places the administration squarely on the shoulders of the working class. Call it a socialist arrangement. But it is a change that must transcend ethnic and religious loyalties.

Mrs. President is a tale of the battles against the have-nots, of the ruling class against the peasants, of the dominant male against the female of the species and of the successful challenge against these oppressive conditions.

Above all, it is a tale of love, the type that leaps beyond religious and ethnic boundaries as well as social strata. Amina, the heroine, is a moslem, of Hausa-Fulani stock, and of aristocratic background. Against all odds and opposition, she falls in love with and marries Abraham from a poor Christian Ibo family.

Abraham who has been detained several times by the government, finally loses his job after refusing to heed official warnings. The government fires him for "undue radicalism." He gets another job as a labour leader in which capacity, he continues the task of "mobilizing the workers and the peasants in a bid to broaden their insight into the political future of the country." (P. 228).

Government-sponsored arsonists set Abraham's house ablaze in the night and he dies in the fire. This

is followed by confusion, a military take-over and then the rejection of the coup plotters by the masses. Labour militants cash in on the stalemate and the leadership vacuum to install the government of the proletariat. They make Amina President in recognition of her role and that of her late husband in ushering in the dawn of the revolution.

Amina's ascendancy to the Presidency is not entirely accidental. She has always been a leader and a motivator of people. In her secondary school days, she headed most of her classes as a prefect. And in the university, she was unanimously elected the Vice President of the Students Union. Still on graduation, she continued to organise women groups like the Women in Council. She was once quoted by a newspaper as saying "... we have only two tribes in this country. The tribe of the very rich few and the tribe of the majority exploited poor..." (P.224).

Al Bishak, 28, a journalist with *The Guardian* attempted to portray in *Mrs President* the "divided nature" of the Nigerian press, especially on issues of national significance. When government agencies demolish some "illegal" buildings and kill some of their protesting owners, the incident is reported along religious and other lines by the newspapers. Headlines are as follows: "MUSLIMS MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD" by *The Voice of Islam*. *The Christian Pentagon* screams:

CHRISTIANS BUTCHERED IN DEMOLISHED CHURCHES. The Daily Alarmist: THE NATION SINKS IN BLOOD-BATH. The National Discard: STREET ROGUES ATTACK GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. The People's Vanguard: DEFENCELESS PEASANTS LOSE LIVES AND PROPERTY (Page 78). Whether this is a true and accurate reflection of the state of the Nigerian press is debatable. What may be incontestable however, is that the press has often been used by interest groups to foster their interests in Nigeria and elsewhere.

Mrs President, like Kole Omosho's *Just Before Dawn* leans towards the faction genre. It draws heavily on contemporary issues like the dismal record of the Second Republic politicians, the 1983 coup, the palace coup of 1985, the mysterious N2.8 billion episode, IMF debate, the controversial OIC issue and so on.

The book has a revolutionary intention, not solely through the invocation of or references to such names as Lenin, Marx, Castro, Nkrumah and so on, but by its courageous agitation for "some radical and drastic changes." It does not spare any seg-

ment of the ruling class. Abraham says while addressing a workers' rally: "We want to reiterate our stand that the military have no reason whatsoever to be in power. Their business is to defend the security of this country when the need arises. We like to state that the military have been cogs in the wheel of progress in this great nation ..." (p.231).

Even with the death of Abraham as the moving spirit behind the revolution, the seeds he had sown continued to grow. So fierce was the clamour for a change that even when one Brigadier Umar in consultation with my colleagues in the armed forces" took over the power, this intensified their opposition. "We — the citizens of this country" they affirmed, "have vowed never to support any military regime again. The military have disappointed us after intently making deceitful promises to us purposeful government to be controlled by the workers and peasants of the country..." (P. 234).

The book suffers a few defects. One of these are the grammatical slips which occur occasionally. Some paragraphs are long and boring, running into pages (Pages 42, 43-45). The use of pidgin (or broken) English without italicisation is unusual. Perhaps, the greatest flaw is the quality of production. The cover pages are dull and unattractive. Inside pages are covered top to bottom with type and lack conventional spacing.

These and other flaws notwithstanding, *Mrs. President* sparkles with revolutionary ideas and is a possible catalyst towards an egalitarian, secular and free nation. It won for the author the Delta Fiction Prize in 1985 and was published this year.

Professional Consultant indeed!

STORIES about the Nigerian journalist and brown envelopes abound, which is why you have to probably indulge us if we suffer you with one more. After all, a good gist is a good gist.

Well, it happened that on Monday, October 24, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Professor Ayo Banjo addressed gentlemen(?) of the press at a conference of the institution. Immediately after the V-C's address, the university's public relations officer (PRO) stood to announce that "the journalists present should come for professional consultation in my office." This announcement of course was said to the full house, with the V-C, his deputy, deans and other members of the University Community still seated. And what was the nature of the "professional consultation"? We hear you ask? Well, the institution's PRO first gave each reporter a white envelope containing UI souvenirs — an opener, a car sticker and a pen. Immediately after that, reporters were handed another envelope and this time, it was brown. Each brown envelope contained a single freshly minted ₦20 note. A reporter, (probably new to the job) asked what it was for and was lectured that it was money for refreshment or transport or both.

We think that the perspicacity of a university Vice-Chancellor who announced the discovery of a massive fraud at a press conference and whose PRO later gives out freshly minted naira notes in brown envelopes to reporters who attended the same press conference is called to question.

Constructive(?) anti-racism

Poor UNIBEN students. They must still be wondering at the set of circumstances which led to their institution gaining an honour to a man they would rather see pilloried along with Botha.

During King Moshoeshoe's visit to Nigeria, the man whose country is a speck in the vastness of South Africa, made a few fiery comments about the evils of apartheid (when the cat is away ...) and was given a doctorate by the University of Benin. The truth is, however, not so cut-and-dried.

We understand that the Federal Government contacted both the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (ABU) and The Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife (OAU) to discuss the possibility of giving Moshoeshoe the award. Wande Abimbola, OAU's Vice Chancellor was said to have assured the authorities that giving the award was a piece of cake. But it turned out to be harder than a rock. When he told the University Senate that he had acceded to the government order (?) the senate told him, no way! Things are not done that way, they reminded him.

Contacts with ABU met a similar fate. So government decided on a bit of the Maradona's game. Before you could say "Mandela", UNIBEN which appeared amenable to the idea had its resumption date extended. The reason, apparently, was to stop the "extremists" among the students from disrupting proceedings during the award. With the



radicals out of the way, the ceremony went ahead smoothly and the king became a "doctor". From UNIBEN, King (Dr.) Moshoeshoe hurried to Lagos, thence to South Africa where he dined and had an hour of talks with apartheid chief, Pieter Botha in an atmosphere described as "cordial and constructive". And

what's more, the two chummy friends issued a joint statement on bilateral relations and cooperation! What an award; what a way to fight apartheid.

A doctorate at home!

WE already know of the new craze of Nigerians (especially those of the upper crust) for American doctorate degrees from genuine(?) American universities. It now seems that after the prefixes of Chief or Alhaji or both before names of the famous (and sometimes, the infamous) these days, what remains is the prefix of "Dr.". But, from news reaching us from the oldest state in the southern part of the

TONY OUGLE/N



country, we have now concluded that Nigerians have surpassed even themselves in their lust for American degrees.

It happened quite recently in this southern state that a wealthy business magnate received a doctorate degree in Business Administration from a prestigious(?) university in California, U.S.A. You ask what is strange? We shall tell you that the Doctor of Philosophy was conferred on the business magnate in his country-home in one of the local government areas of the state by the Vice-Chancellor of the American university who also decorated the new "graduate" with an academic gown!

In his address, the American Vice-Chancellor said the business tycoon was being honoured for his contribution to the promotion of business both in and outside the country. We hear that the "convocation" ceremony was attended by university professors, Constituent Assembly members, top judicial officers and a sprinkling of diplomats.

Well, we hear that a justice of a second Armed Robbery Tribunal in the State was so overwhelmed by the turn out and the impressive ceremony that he announced: "This is very fantastic. I did not know a university campus existed here".

Well, it only goes to show that there are other dimensions to University degrees these days other than their being stepping stones or tickets to secure employment.



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