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The AFRICAN

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# Guardian

A WEEKLY NEWSFEATURE MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 12, 1988

## The Military and 1992

# Will They Ever Go?

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FIRST CHICAGO

**T**HE list of banned politicians is so long. Nig-ricians just might be lucky to have any drama left for the proceedings of a projected Third Republic. Yet now, there has been a warning: new-breeds who prove to be surrogates of the old hands shall similarly be excluded from the process. Well, if the banning spree gets rather ungovernable, would it not all look like a ploy to perpetuate military rule?

But that is only one way, perhaps a cynical way, of looking at the problem. Much more fundamentally, the question is being asked whether indeed we could expect a military whose traditional insularity has been so gravely violated in as many as five successful political treacheries in 18 years, to volunteer a complete retreat and restitution.

Governor Mukhtar of Kaduna State, believes like his boss, the Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-General Abacha, that in the long run, only a good civilian administration can forestall coups. But as a most significant point of departure, he then makes the observation that good government may need to be complemented by a willingness of the soldiers to remain restrained. Very bright chap, he believes that this restraint can be achieved through appropriate political education.

In the meantime, retired generals like Theophilus Danjuma are skeptical of democratic government ever

happening in their life time, even as the Assembly becomes frosty with all manner of trifle suggestions on ways to prevent future usurpers of the reins.

Indomitable Abdul Oroh and Paul Nwabuike who are beginning to weave a masterly partnership in political analysis, have drawn an in-



teresting inspiration for the thread that runs through this cover from a somewhat "little" joke of a statement made recently by the Ghanaian military leader. Hear them: "When Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings visited Nigeria during the NAF Day celebrations, he didn't mince words about the inevitable role of the Atri-

can Soldier. Pointing to NAF officers who had put up an impressive display of aerobatics, Rawlings said he was surprised that General Babangida was thinking of handing over power to civilians. Rawlings added to the amusement of some and the consternation of virtually everybody that he was not too sure how 'these' people (the NAF Officers) could be denied, or kept out of, political power. According to him what Africans needed was a militant culture, which of course meant that soldiers must continue to play a role in the political process".

Minister of Defence General Domkat Bali, a respected Sandhurst graduate, was reported not long ago as saying that the country needed no additional laws against coups, because as it always was, a coup is already illegal. When it succeeds, we acknowledge an aberration but, nevertheless, its *de facto* authority.

So, it may well be that the real question is not whether the soldiers will go for good but whether or not we are willing to allow them come back.



## International

A wave of racial discrimination seems to be welling up against Blacks in Japan recently. But the Japanese ambassador in Nigeria denies it all.

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## Economy

As the Structural Adjustment Programme squeezes harder on the populace, consumers resort to cheap goods. But it could be a futile course.

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**Bendel: Gods own state?**

YOUR cover stories (August 15,) were a trip down memory lane. The intrigues that marked the creation of Midwest Region (now Bendel state) showed the kind of politics played in the First Republic — politics of blackmail and oppression.

But that the dream eventually came true is enough consolation for all the persecution and discrimination suffered by those nationalists who fought for it.

*Kingsley Bekaran  
Jos, Plateau State*

THE success that is Bendel state has more than justified the call for the creation of more states. No doubt, if the area had remained under the former Western Region, with the negative attitude of the dominant tribe, it would still have been suffering from political suffocation.

But it surprises me that with all the obvious advantages of state creation many Bendel state citizens, especially the Itsekiris are still opposed to the creation of Delta State.

*Monch Ebumac  
War, Bendel State*

IT is very sad that 24 years after the creation of the Midwestern Region (now Bendel state) the issue of assets sharing with the old West has remained unresolved.

It is particularly disheartening that the governments in Benin have treated the issue with levity. It has become imperative for the issue to be thrashed out once and for all. The Federal Government has a role to play in the matter.

*Enc Ewurumoro,  
Asaba, Bendel State*

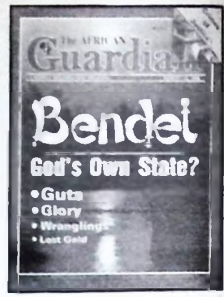
Can your magazine also cover other states of the federation the way it covered Bendel during its silver jubilee anniversary? Such coverage is more authentic than what we read in heavily edited history books. Bravo and up Bendel!

*Onanabe Ozoar,  
Benin, Bendel state*

I hope the Bendel story is not meant to end, and will not, generate ill-feelings among the people of the former Western Region. Really, I see the story as a lesson for others aspiring to have their own state.

It is, as you noted, a good historical piece, since no history book has been so encompassing to accommodate all the facts you assembled.

*Beatrice Omovie,  
Akure, Ondo State*



Bendel is indeed the leading state in Nigeria. The state really deserved the coverage it was given. It should inspire other states to greater heights. Bendel is a challenge to other states.

*Emmanuel Ezech,  
Mushin, Lagos*

**Who is the real Maryam?**

Nigeria's First Lady, Maryam Buhari said she has been giving the Nigerian press enough time to understand her before she'll grant a press interview (August 15). But for how long will the press wait? For three years or more? Well, it's because the press can't wait that they make news from her muteness. Her appearance — what she wears, how it fits etc. — becomes a juicy alternative.

Let the First Lady talk. Silence in this case may not be golden. It creates room for speculation and aggressive reporting to force out speech.

*Melissa Eze,  
Oyo, Lagos*

**Hard road to justice**

When it comes to equipping the police we go to the advanced countries to borrow their training programmes, weapons and even uniform. But the humane treatment given to suspects in custody in these advanced countries we ignore. Why? Is our police still living in the savage age where life was worthless? The police must shed the colonial approach in the performance of their duties.

*Mark Odigie,  
Sapele, Bendel State*



The story on the dehumanising condition of suspects in police custody (August 15) is blood-chilling. I call on the Civil Liberties Organisation to not only work for the release of these suspects but to sue for damages on behalf of those who may be found innocent.

*Isa Lawal,  
Ketu, Lagos.*

It is bodies like the Civil Liberties Organisation that philanthropists should donate to because the prison is open to all irrespective of what one is in society.

One only prays that the organisation will not come under the federal government's hammer like other associations fighting for the oppressed in our society.

*Talbot Ikien,  
Ikola, Lagos.*

If an elite association like the Nigerian Bar Association begins to boycott the courts on issues such as the dehumanising treatments meted out to suspects in prison or police custody, judges and other arms in charge of justice will take a hard look and reform the present appalling conditions in our prisons.

This is one of the best approaches because it seems our system only yields to force.

*Michael Oke,  
Ibadan, Oyo State.*

## Wasted Talents

I register my unlimited joy over your cover story (August 8, 1988) Please, continue with your sensitisation of indigenous technology. That is the only economic survival means left for Nigeria. The Indian example hits the point correctly. I must confess that I only subscribed to *The African Guardian* because of your neat coverage on indigenous technology. So publish every month at least one major news item on the development of indigenous technology.

You should also popularise indigenous technology and focus on new products.

*Dada Odazim  
Gschinnweg, West Germany.*

Address Letters to the Editor, typed, written 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.

## Making up for lost time

**I**N the unpredictable petroleum industry, where prices go flip-flop for any reason that catches the market's fancy, diversification has always been a kind of insurance. Nigeria did not catch on until recently. But she seems to be making up for lost time.

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), for example, has made deals with foreign groups for the purpose of acquiring equity interest and participation in refining and marketing of petroleum products and other downstream activities. Since last January, NNPC has been selling about 450,000 barrels per day to six foreign refineries — Fibro Oil, Atlantic Richfield, Mapco Oil (all US outfits), Petro-Med and ERT in Spain. The NNPC has an eye on equity interest in these refineries.

Recently, three more mega-oil firms — Elf Aquitaine and Total International (of France) and Shell International of the Netherlands joined the other six. Total International, one of the latest additions, would be allowed to lift 50,000 barrels of oil to Septine in France. The terms of NNPC's deal with Elf stipulate that the French firm will lift 800 million barrels of oil for 30 per cent equity in its non-African mining and marketing capacity. Elf is primarily state-owned. At present, it controls 300 million barrels of Nigeria's reserves.

Petroleum Minister, Rilwanu Lukman has indicated that between 70,000 and 100,000 barrels of Nigerian crude oil will be used in down-stream activities abroad. In all the transactions, OPEC ceilings on petroleum production, say government sources, will be respected.



• Lukman: Expanding Nigeria's oil market

## Fit for the force?

**L**AGOSIANS are not exactly a panicky lot. Last week, however, even the most hardened had to scurry more than a few times for dear life.

Almost on everyday of the week, gun-totting policemen in battalions were seen on the streets. And the impression conveyed was that mere anarchy had been let loose upon the land. Of course, for a people to whom the slogan: **THE POLICEMAN IS A FRIEND**, is yet to have a meaning, the fear was not exactly unfounded.

However, as they say, there was no cause for alarm. The police has been trying to beef up the numerical strength of its crack mobile arm — the Mobile Police (MOPOL). Like everybody or institution in Nigeria today, the NPF has decided to look inwards and "source" its mobile unit from within. Only men from the regular arm of the force, and not outsiders, are being considered.

But even with this decision, fitness still had to be tested for. Which was why policemen took to the streets last week. What happened was merely a test for the most fit. That, indeed, should have scared nobody.

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## Burundi: Another grim harvest

**A**NOTHER gory chapter was added two weeks ago to the perfect calendar of woes that has been the lot of the Hutus of Burundi since the Nilo-Hamitic people whose descendants constitute the contemporary Tutsi crossed over from Ethiopia in the 10th century, took over their land and reduced them to vassals. An estimated 24,000 Hutus fell to the bullets, bayonets, axes and cudgels of the all Tutsi army and their civilian kinsmen in yet another orgy of violence, allegedly in retaliation for the killing of an unspecified number of Tutsis by Hutus. At least another 40,000 Hutus, fearful that a repeat of the 1972 massacres was underway, streamed across the border to seek refuge in Rwanda and Tanzania.

Their fears were well grounded. Few modern parallels exist of the savagery with which the Tutsi, constituting no more than 15 per cent of Burundi's population of five million, put down the 1972 uprising by the majority Hutu. At least 100,000 were killed. Educated Hutus, including school children, were the special targets of the Tutsis bent on retaining power and privilege. So were the token Hutu elements in the Burundi armed forces.

Then, as recently, Hutu refugees poured in their tens of thousands into Zaire and Tanzania. One year after "peace" was officially restored, Hutu refugees were still streaming into neighbouring countries. Convinced that they constituted a threat to Tutsi sovereignty even in their destination, President Michel Micombero who had masterminded and presided over the slaughter, sent Burundi air force planes to bomb them in their camps.

President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, ever so principled, denounced the massacres. But he was almost alone. Other African countries had their own version of the Tutsi-Hutu feud, their own record of savage repression. Being just as mired in sin, they could not cast the first stone.

The Organization of African Unity, smug and complacent took refuge in Article 3 (n) of its charter which for-

bids interference by member-states in the "internal affairs" of one another, conveniently losing sight of a preamble to the same Charter which states that *freedom, equality, justice and dignity* are essential for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples.

Jean-Baptiste Bagaza who toppled Micombero in 1976 set out on a policy of national reconciliation. He tried to end arbitrariness and nepotism in the public service. He encouraged the return of thousands of Hutu refugees. He abolished the head tax required of Hutu male adults, denouncing it as symbolizing in a pernicious way "the right to live". He abolished the custom whereby landless peasants and their descendants, mainly Hutus, offered unpaid labour to a landowner, mainly Tutsis, in exchange for a small piece of

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***"The state is an abstraction; human beings are real. The OAU must not condone the sacrifice of the people of Africa to an abstraction."***

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land. Those who actually worked the land, he insisted, ought to own and control it.

But centuries of repression cannot be ended overnight by legislation and good intentions. The gulf of privilege that has for ages separated 800,000 Tutsis from 4.2 million Hutus remained as wide as ever. Bagaza found it hard even to maintain the iniquitous *status quo*, much less reverse it. Old antagonisms remained and new ones developed. Last September, Bagaza was overthrown while he was away in Canada attending a summit of French-speaking countries.

His successor, Pierre Buyoya, promised, as Bagaza had done, to end the feuding and cycle of vengeance that has made the country's history a study in gratuitous blood-letting. But nothing really changed. The Tutsis remain firmly in the saddle in every sphere of national life. They are in total control of the coercive apparatus of the state. They are not

prepared to share power. They will brook no challenge whatever to untrammelled power that acknowledges no responsibility beyond self preservation and group perpetuation.

Their obsession places them squarely in the same dock with South Africa, a country whose apartheid system has been condemned by the United Nations as a crime against humanity.

Member-states of the OAU are again silent in the face of a squalid, barbarous crime by Africans against Africans. The international community is shocked, but quickly puts the slaughter of innocents down as yet another instance of the incapacity of black people for self-governance. There is no Nyerere to order in his troops as he once did against the regime of the murderous huffoon who goes by the name of Idi Amin. Neighbouring Rwanda where the Hutu majority had in 1959 shaken off the yoke of Tutsi domination in a bloody revolt has so far provided only an attractive model and refuge for ethnic Hutus in Burundi.

The OAU charter, it is true, categorically forbids interference by member-states in the "internal affairs" of one another. But mass murder cannot be the "internal affairs" of any state. No country can claim the right to wipe out a substantial section of its population, for any reason whatever. Whether in Kampuchea, racist South Africa or Burundi, this practice must not only be denounced, it must be halted by countervailing force.

The state is an abstraction; human beings are real. The OAU must not condone the sacrifice of the people of Africa to an abstraction. If the OAU will not act as a body, individual African countries must bestir themselves to put an end to the grim harvest in Burundi. African countries who keep silent in the face of the running genocide in Burundi forfeit the moral right to condemn the iniquitous and murderous rule of the minority Boers in South Africa. They must wish for the endangered Hutus of Burundi exactly what they wish for the oppressed black majority in South Africa.

## DIPLOMACY

## Bashing the Blacks

Ambassador Donowaki denies racial discrimination in Japan

**A** LLEGATIONS of Japanese racial attitudes towards Blacks have, in recent times, been featuring in international press reports. The *Time* and *West African* magazines of August 15 and September 4, 1985, for instance, reported how Blacks were cast as bad light in Tokyo, through the display in department stores, of little Black (Sambo) dolls, fitted with ludicrously large lips.

The already widely-reported case of close economic ties between apartheid South Africans and Japanese apart, there were recollections, by the magazines, of past discriminatory statements against Blacks by former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone and Michio Watanabe, described as a potential Japanese premier and at present senior strategist in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Nakasone had accused Black (and Hispanic) Americans of lowering the US intelligence and literacy scores, while Watanabe suggested that Black American businessmen, unlike Japanese, were irresponsible since, according to him, they are wont to declare themselves bankrupt so as not to pay their debts.

Although the offensive Black Sambo dolls have reportedly disappeared from the shelves of the supermarkets, and in spite of the fact that Watanabe tendered public apology to Black Americans, the dust raised by these and other incidents have persisted. *The African Guardian*, therefore, sought the views of Tokyo's representative in Lagos, Ambassador Mitsuko Donowaki. His basic explanation was that such alleged discriminations were mostly unintentional (as in the case of the Black Sambo dolls), and not a reflection of official, or even general Japanese feelings towards Blacks. Besides, such cases of racial prejudices, said the ambassador, were universal, and not peculiar to the Japanese people who, he pointed out, were themselves discriminated against by Americans and others during the World Wars.

On why Japan remains one of apartheid South Africa's biggest trading partners, Ambassador Donowaki said that the situation was embarrassing to the Japanese government as it, perhaps, is to the rest of the world. He explained that although Tokyo sees apartheid as a "despicable system," the problem is

that since the government does not run a state-planned economy, it cannot control trade (activities of the Japanese firms). What the government has been doing, according to Donowaki, has been to "urge the various companies trading with Pretoria to behave, not to assist apartheid".

These appeals, however, do not seem to have produced results. There are reports that Tokyo banks offer generous assistance — credit lines, guarantees, loans, and so on — to the booming Japanese — South African trade which 1988 figures show is still on the increase.

In fact, the wind of disinvestments, which began to blow across Pretoria a few years ago in the spirit of economic sanctions was said to have quietened down earlier in the year when it became known that Japanese firms were swiftly replacing European and American firms that agreed to wind up their operations.

Donowaki does not, however, agree that the Japanese-South African trade relations have grown stronger within the past few years. Statistics compiled by the Japanese trade ministry, insisted the Ambassador, showed that in 1981 alone, the volume of trade stood at \$4 billion. But, by 1985, within a period of four years, the figures had fallen to \$2.5 billion (about 30 per cent decrease). This trend, according to

• Donowaki, Japanese once suffered discrimination too



Donowaki, has continued till date, although the recent tremendous appreciation in the value of the yen (Japanese currency), over the dollar, tends to produce trade statistics that suggest otherwise.

Donowaki is also of the view that it is the independence of Japanese companies from government control that makes it impossible for the authorities to wade into such allegations of discrimination against Black Americans by some Japanese motor firms in the issuance of car dealerships in the US. The ambassador, however, assure *The*



• Dolls on display: The dust has disappeared

*African Guardian* that public awareness, the only solution to such embarrassing situations is growing in Japan.

Just as some Japanese businessmen come under flak for alleged racism, the authorities in Tokyo, it is also alleged, have ruled out Blacks from the list of foreign labourers (preferably from neighbouring Asian countries), who some Japanese economists argue should be allowed to enter the country to pick up the menial jobs being increasingly rejected by Japanese. But, Ambassador Donowaki insists that such allegations were unfounded since Japan has a "general (not regional) immigration policy which applies to all countries". "Nothing," he said, "prohibits Africans from attending Japanese technical, and other schools".

Ambassador Donowaki further dismissed suggestions that the relatively low level of Japanese involvement in Nigeria's economy in terms of investments, and so on, was deliberate. He pointed out that compared to America and some of the European nations, Japan, which 44 years ago was itself still a developing nation, was a new comer to the scene.

WESTERN SAHARA

## Peace signals beam

Morocco, Polisario accept UN plan to end war

**T**HE acceptance of the United Nations Secretary-General's peace initiative on Western Sahara by both Morocco and the Polisario movement last Tuesday (August 30) came as a big surprise. This is especially so in respect of Morocco which has been reluctant in the past 13 years to agree to peace moves. Both parties, according to a UN spokesman, accepted the plan "with certain remarks and comments" that would further be tabled for discussion before the plan goes into operation.

It is likely that the plan, which calls for a ceasefire and a referendum to self-determination for the people of the phosphate rich area, will take effect before the end of this month. What was more surprising was the fact that the Moroccan Foreign Minister Abdelatif Filali was the first to tell UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar that Morocco had agreed "in principle, to accept the UN plan." He said that referendum could be organised "in a relatively short time."

Both factions are at variance in respect of certain conditions which will inevitably pose some difficulties for the peace move even before it starts. The UN plan is to have 75 per cent of Moroccan

soldiers in the disputed territory leave, placing the remainder along with Polisario forces in bases controlled by UN observers. Up till now the number of troops on both sides remain unestablished. Polisario claims it has 20,000 men under arms. UN estimates of troops, however, range from 5,000 to 8,000. Morocco, on the other hand, says it has 80,000 troops in Western Sahara, but the UN estimates that hers are between 180,000 and 200,000.

For the referendum, a panel of demographers, closely acquainted with the pattern of population movement in the Sahara, will be dispatched to identify native Saharawis born in what was a Spanish colony until 1975. The two belligerents have agreed that referendum be based on 1974 census conducted by Spain a year before it abandoned sovereignty over the territory, showing a population of 74,000.

The deputy leader of the Polisario Front, Bechir Mustapha, made it plain on Tuesday that his organisation is accepting the UN proposals under certain conditions which he said are basically "to focus the debate once and for all on what is primary for Polisario".

What is left to be done, at least, as far as it is concerned, is specification of de-



• Perez de Cuellar: Takes up a difficult task

tails of the withdrawal arrangement. Polisario leaders are actually pinning their hopes on a provisional "international administration" to be jointly supervised by the UN and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The monitoring body will have to ensure this and make sure Saharawis from Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Niger are excluded from the electoral roll. According to UN sources, any disputes arising from this would have to be settled with political decisions.

Reactions from abroad have been generally positive. Algeria which is backing the Polisario sees the acceptance as one that could foster a stronger bond of friendship within the Maghreb — the pursuit of which, in recent times, has been the bedrock of its foreign policy. Spain (Western Sahara's colonial master) has also welcomed the move with a promise to give all necessary technical assistance to ensure peace in the region.

By George-Ola-Davis

NIGER

## Verdict on a failed coup

Planners of a coup to oust Late Kountche jailed

**W**HEN Niger's leader, Colonel Ali Seibou decided to try the 24 people who had been in detention since the coup attempt of 1983 to overthrow the late Seyni Kountche, he gave fresh hopes to the growing number of Nigerienes that have continued to see him as a liberal leader. Most of the 24 had been languishing in jail in Niamey and, until Kountche's death last November, no one dared talk about them. It was even rumoured that a good number of them were already dead, but on assumption of power, Seibou confirmed that they were alive and promised that the law would take its course.

For seven days starting August 22, a special military tribunal, made up of

senior military officers and three advocates held trials in camera at the military base 10 kilometres outside Niamey. At the end of it all, 21 people were acquitted while three received life imprisonment. Among those who received life sentence is Ahmadu Seidou, former commander of the para-troop regiment. Seven of the accused were tried in absentia, as they now live in exile in France.

The 1983 attempt took place when the late President Kountche was attending the annual Francophone conference in Paris. It was the third in 10 years since Kountche's government attained power. Although, Kountche dismissed it as a minor affair, he never thought of

trying those arrested. He accused his special security adviser, Lieutenant Amadou Oumerol and several other officers of having instigated that plot. Besides, it was alleged that their attempt was not without some public support.

During the attempt Seibou, then Army Chief, was arrested and detained, but loyal forces quickly broke up the plot and released him.

Last week's verdict to release the 21 was because evidence showed that they were acting as junior officers under the instructions of their superiors. But their release was temporary, as they were all re-arrested as soon as they left the tribunal court-room. According to sources, the military hierarchy is unhappy about the verdict. Unfortunately, it cannot change it instantly. By Wednesday last week, Seibou was not back from the provinces to decide on their fate.

IRAN/IRAQ

## Hassles of a cease-fire

Peace talks deadlocked over positions on withdrawal

**A**GE-LONG animosity between Iran and Iraq was the reason why their agreement two months ago to opt for a negotiated settlement of their eight-year old conflict, was taken with a pinch of salt in some quarters. Last week as their Geneva peace talks threatened to collapse over disagreement on ceasefire on land and sea, it was clear that final reconciliation is, in fact still a long way off.

The issue was that of whether Iran's immediate acceptance of the principle of the freedom of navigation and clearance of the strategic Shatt al-Arab waterway are the next steps in the peace process, or whether, as the Iranians counter, Iraq should first withdraw its troops to internationally recognised borders. The 200 kilometre waterway is its only access to the Gulf.

Baghdad wants it made safe for navigation because, according to it, Iran is already benefitting from the ceasefire agreement by way of having its oil transported out of the Gulf without military interruption.

Teheran is actually very eager to re-

gain lost territories. There are claims that Iraq occupies over 1,000 kilometres of its territory. It is also widely believed that Iraq had the upper hand in the war before the ceasefire arrangement. Thus apart from the fact it has hundreds of Iranian prisoners of war (POWs) to exchange, the general impression is that it (that is Baghdad) is the side that has more captured territories to give back — and of course, to bargain with. Iran, it is believed, is merely using the waterway situation to augment its bargaining chips.

Baghdad has always claimed sovereignty over the water way. An understanding between both countries later put their boundary in the middle of the water way, such that Iraq had control over just its eastern part. Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein tore the agreement on television, five days before he declared war on Iran in September, 1980. Baghdad went into the accord to improve the position of its army against the Kurdish rebels, supported by Teheran at the time.

Last week, UN Secretary General

IRAQ

SAUDI ARAB



BONE OF CONTENTION

Javier Perez De Cuellar tried to deal with the unexpected controversy. He agreed that clearance and reopening the waterway is part of the issues that have to be tackled. However, said De Cuellar, it is not the only one. Later, he

WORLD

## Mayhem in the air

A week of plane crashes in three continents

**F**OUR air mishaps in four countries, within just one week! It was as if an invisible hand was at work last week in West Germany, Belgium, Hong Kong and the United States, pulling down civilian passenger-aircraft, and sophisticated military planes manned by superbly-trained air-force pilots.

What promised to be a spectacular display of masterly aerobatics in Ramstein, West Germany, last Sunday (August 28), by the Italian Air Force national stunt team — the Freccia Tricolori (Tricolour Arrows) — ended in smoke. Three of the display planes collided mid-air, killing the pilots and no fewer than 49 of the thousands of spectators.

The same day (August 28) and in

similar circumstances in Belgium another air mishap occurred. The pilot of a Finnish (Finland) trainer aircraft was said to have crashed and died in front of 50,000 people during an aerial display in Northern Belgium. He had lost control of his "Redingo" propeller plane as he attempted pulling out from an intricate aerobatic manoeuvre during the display which also involved another "Redingo" aircraft. Unlike the Ramstein accident, however, spectators did not lose their lives.

There were also two other plane crashes last week involving passenger aircraft in normal flight operations.

At Dallas, Texas International airport last Wednesday, a Boeing 727 jet-

liner, with 105 people on board, caught fire on take-off, and crash-landed, killing 13 of the passengers. Experts said the rest of the passengers, who climbed out to safety from the flaming fuselage, were saved particularly because the plane had not ascended very high before crashing. Again, it did not hit any obstacles on touching the ground.

Eighty-three out of the 89 people on board the Chinese airliner, which plunged into Hong Kong harbour, August 31, were also said to have escaped death because only the front part of the plane was submerged. Six crew members who sat at the front were killed while eleven passengers, that reported by had their seat-belts unfastened, sustained mostly face injuries. The plane, belonging to the Civil Aviation Authority of China, had tried to land in bad weather, but over-hot the runway that jets into the Hong Kong harbour.

By Emenike Okoro

IRAN



MIDDLE EAST

## Harvest of fortunes

*PLO gets set for government-in-exile*

**T**HESSE days, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) boss, Yasser Arafat, must be all smiles. For good reasons. Since the Jordanian monarch, King Hussein, relinquished control of the West Bank mid-July, the political tide seems to have continued to rise in favour of the PLO.

The Jordanian decision, to wash its hands off the troubled West Bank, which it ruled from 1950 until the 1967 Six-Day Arab-Israeli war, was by itself, like a strong political wind in the sail of the PLO. It set the organisation on the course of filling the political and administrative vacuum left by Amman, and above all else, proving itself as the sole legal representative and mouth-piece of all Palestinians — a dream it has nursed for well over one decade.

Yasser Arafat's smiles, however, must have got even broader a fortnight ago, with the unexpected windfall from Tripoli. The Libyan strongman, Col. Muammer Gaddafi, extended hands of friendship to the

PLO chief, a moderate leader, described in the past by Gaddafi as "unfit" to lead the organisation, and even as a "sell out." Despite their past quarrels, Tripoli, in what analysts see as a highly significant gesture, offered to host a Palestinian government-in-exile. Arafat also got good news from the United States, Monday. The US Justice Department had, in the last minute, backed down from appealing against a June 30 New York Federal District Court's ruling that the PLO's UN observer mission should not be closed down. Washington had wanted the office shut, because according to it, the PLO should be taken as "terrorist" organisation.

The mood, therefore, appears just right, for the PLO to make the long-anticipated political move: declaration of a Palestinian government-in-

exile. This, observers believe, would logically be preceded by the proclamation of an independent Palestinian state in the occupied territories. Arab diplomatic sources say, however, that although Arafat, mid last month in Baghdad, Iraq, endorsed a set of preliminary measures accepting full responsibility for the occupied regions, he is taking his time, carefully weighing all the options.

Indeed, the PLO Ambassador in Lagos, Samir Baker, told *The African Guardian* that not until the meeting of the Palestine National Council (PNC), PLO's highest organ, later this month, would the political horizon become clearer. "Until the PNC decides," said the ambassador, "every other thing you hear is speculation."

Even so, the determination of the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, to use all his might to crush any PLO attempt to establish a government in exile, or declare an independent state in the occupied region, is no rumour.



• Baker: Until the PNC decides everything is speculative

Recent reports are that the Israeli authorities are beginning to succumb to extremist pressures to annex West Bank "should any maniacs raise the idea of a Palestinian government."

Diplomatic sources, however, suspect that the PLO leadership may try to preempt Tel Aviv by allowing leaders of the *intifada* (uprising) now in its 10th month in the West Bank to make the historic proclamation of the Palestinian state, instead of the PLO. This, it is expected, would not only remove Israeli pressure from the back of the PLO, but also win greater international support for the Palestinian state since the PLO is still regarded by some Western nations as a "terrorist group."

was to confirm that the talks were deadlocked. In fact, it was not even possible to get Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, and his Iraqi counterpart, Tarek Aziz, to talk again during the week, after their initial August 28 meeting — three days following the opening of the talks.

The deallock is widely seen as a bad sign because it arose over the interpretation of the very first paragraph of the 10-point Security Council ceasefire resolution. De Cuellar later said at a press conference that he had appointed a special representative to attend to the finer details of the negotiations. He had shuffled back and forth, according to him, proposing ideas in a bid to bring about a real compromise rather than simply extracting concessions from either party. He warned that time was "running out", adding that permanent members of the Security Council would be asked to decide on how to break the deallock.

Observers believe that concerted efforts at this level will be most helpful. Iran (the only belligerent in the conflict with potentials for extreme behaviour) is so battered, it cannot stall the peace process for too long. Besides, it has assets — seized by the United States in 1980s — to repossess.

By Chukwuemeka Gahla

By Emenike Okorja

# How much of the answer is MAMSER?

**T**HIS September is the second anniversary of the Mass Mobilization for Economic Recovery, Self-Reliance and Social Justice, with the fluent acronym of MAMSER. In the two years since its inauguration, the directorate has come under a storm of criticism from Nigerians whose its mandate as suspect and regard it as poorly tuned to discharge the ambitious objectives. One of the directorate's imaginative proles proclaims that "MAMSER is the answer". Unimpressed Nigerians have retorted with cynical comparisons of the jingle "If MAMSER is the answer, then what is the question", and "MAMSER is not the answer."

MAMSER's problems go quite deep. The directorate was conceived by the Political Bureau as a complement to a socialist direction for the country. As it turned out, the Federal Military Government rejected socialism — on the grounds that an ideology was best not legislated — but embraced MAMSER. So from curv in its life, many critics predicted that the directorate's lack of ideological direction would be a source of abortion.

Besides, MAMSER is viewed by some as a subterranean political movement. The directorate is also dreaded by some who see it as an instrument that may divest them of long accustomed privileges. But perhaps the most serious problem of the directorate is the failure to cultivate and sell to Nigerians a credible rallying myth — an idea, a personality, or even a symbol. MAMSER may be the answer, yes, but the directorate appears not to have found a winning rhythm to connect Nigerians to the idea.

Dr Jerry Gana, the directorate's chairman, led a team of MAMSER officials to a forum with *The African Guardian*. Apart from Gana who speaks in the compulsive style of an evangelist, there were Mr Ralph Opara (of Shakey-Shakey fame), easily one of Nigeria's finest broadcasters; Colonel Rowland Omowa, rather reticent but confident, and Mr. Wole Adamolekun, Gana's message — which left everyone unimpressed — is that MAMSER intends to break out of the shell and soar high. *The African Guardian* team at the dialogue were Mr. Andy Akporogo, editor-in-chief; Mr. Nduku Ibrahim, editor; Mr. Chuk-

wuemeka Gahia, head of the International Desk; Miss Tayo Atolabi, and Mr. Okey Ndibe. Dr. Eddie Madunagu, Mr. Odu Ofonson and Dr. Fred Onyeoziri of *The Guardian's* editorial board were invited to participate. Excerpts:

**The African Guardian:** You try to sensitize people to their rights, to liberate them from their feudal lords in some parts of the country and one wonders whether you haven't run into some attacks from interested parties. Also it seems a little bit contradictory that a

people, because over the years, they have benefited from the ignorance of the people. I want to tell you that they are forces that are very powerfully marshalled against MAMSER. In fact, part of the agenda of the meeting in Kaduna the other day was a paper that was tabled against MAMSER because MAMSER succeeds, they are in trouble. But while we have been offered police and military escort several times we said the best way we can be protected is to do our job well, to do our job to the extent that the ordinary people will see us as fighting for them and they will defend us. The whole idea of having a police escort sits with me. I see a coming between me and the people I am going to mobilise.

Now how do we maintain the balance? It is true that for a government



\* From left: Gana, Akporogo, Boyrwaide and Adamolekun at *The African Guardian* forum

government would want to set up an agency to teach people their rights, the rights that they must demand from the very government. It seems most governments would rather the citizenry was docile and didn't raise a voice. How have you managed to keep a balance? Moreover it's okay to raise the consciousness of people but what happens thereafter? Some people think it is more frustrating when you know your rights and you can't enforce them.

**Jerry Gana:** I agree entirely with you that our job is risky. There is no doubt at all. No doubt there are risks involved and in fact half of the attacks are coming from the areas where they oppose the whole programme of enlightening the

set up an agency to enlighten the people is a two-edged sword. It can cut both sides. The enlightenment we are trying to give the people would give them the ability to ask questions that are embarrassing even to the present government itself. And already in our MAMSER forums in a number of situations, questions are asked of government officials which they think very embarrassing.

We believe that this is the beginning of something profound that should be encouraged because when the people ask the right questions and are willing to stand by such questions then a change is coming which will be good for accountability, which is a scarce commodity in Nigeria.

But mobilisation is not just for the masses but for the government as well. Once we enlighten the people they will expect more of government.

Now, we want the people to ask the questions. That will bring into being certain forces within a certain time that can bring about a change.

Another question is how do you manage the consciousness you raise to achieve some goals? You don't seem to have that structure to manage the energies you have unleashed towards achieving specific goals?

The sense in which we see ourselves is as the midwife of a new order which would have its own ideology and defined by the new consciousness we are raising. And then we create the structures to direct the energies of the masses in that direction. In other words, we are facilitators. The one we were now trying to do is to raise the consciousness in such a way that the people themselves would examine and say, okay, if we move in this direction, it would serve Nigeria. It means they may decide to change direction, but it is not a decision taken by a few elites. It is rather coming out of a popular consciousness. We are the midwife trying to create a new social order that will also be able to have the ideological direction. So we are in the interim trying to bring today that new order. Of course that is for tomorrow. For now that consciousness is having some implications for the present order.

Is it not the case that part of MAMSER's unstated briefs is to sell the government's programmes, including SAP?

I want to say quite clearly and categorically that as at now, the Directorate for Social Mobilisation has been given the free hand to map out its strategies, its programmes and so on. There is no dictation whatsoever as to the content and direction of our programmes. I think we have to be very fair to the government. All whatever you see in our programmes is put together in Abuja, using resource panels. We have a resource panel of self-reliance, a resource panel of family and social relations, a resource panel of mass education. Whatever we design in the course of the programme has really come from the Directorate and no directive has ever been given as to the content of our programme. So I must say that there is that independence or autonomy from government. Secondly, they backed it by a decree which is the highest they can do in terms of law. Thirdly, they are trying to fund it, although inadequately, for now. They have allowed us to design



• Dr. Jerry Gana expounding a point

our programmes and the direction we want to take in terms of this particular mobilisation. The greatest supporter of the Directorate of Social Mobilisation is the President himself. If not because of that we would have given up already because there are very powerful forces in the society that are opposed to mobilisation of the people. Very, very powerful, and they write petitions upon petitions on us every week for reasons which I am sure you will understand. Because when the masses are mobilised and organised, God save those who want to manipulate them in future. Government is fully backing this. But I want to say that a number of actions taken by government agencies, instead of aiding mobilisation, they have been demobilising. I want to agree with you that maybe the scrapping of ASUU is one such thing. And we tell government, what business have you got scrapping ASUU? The answer does not lie in scrapping it because they have other ways of mobilising and they are really mobilising. And you know, there are some forces even within government itself that may be acting without the authority of government. I am not here really to defend. As far as we are concerned, we ourselves are not happy with certain decisions that may have been taken which may not facilitate mobilisation.

Has MAMSER recognised the uses of propaganda and the need to create a body of myths to rally Nigerians?

Well I believe the strategies for mobilising the people are being worked out

carefully. When you want to do this kind of thing, you don't want to rush everything. You could run into problems with the reputation of personalities you want to use. But we do know that propaganda is very important in everything you are doing and it's an aspect of information, especially in mobilising and organising youths, for instance. But like I said, something like this must be looked into because we don't want to be accused of the kind of rash, very loud and extremely unfortunate propaganda.

We are interested in getting more clarification of this myth point; or it may be just the presidency, as in America. What is it in Nigeria that you can use as a focal point for this kind of mobilisation?

I agree entirely that mobilisation usually is facilitated immensely where you have symbols who can really galvanize the people in a particular direction they are moving towards. Well, where is the moving spirit of this mobilisation? The search continues. Our political education panel is really discussing this issue. But what we are using in every Nigerian community that we have gone to is the message that this is the only country we have got in the entire world. You may run it down but we owe it a duty to really transform it and make it better so that we can hand it over to other generations.

One gets this impression that MAMSER is working in the grass-root and educating the people so that they can know their rights in a civilian dispensation, and not the type of government we have

right now. When do we then start accepting the reactions from the people?

Quite honestly, right now the reactions are there. I wish we could invite you to one of our MAMSER forums in a village setting and you just compare the kind of questions people ask a governor directly now and what the situation was a few years back. A number of these villagers, when you bring them before their officials, to be able to ask questions directly, is an interesting change.

It does not appear as if you are in a position to say folk, this is wrong, it must stop. You don't advise on issues like that of ASUU. From what you have said, it appears you are now beginning to explain on behalf of the government. You say somebody else, not the President, takes these decisions, as if that person does not ask? Is the directorate not keeping mum because the government set it up?

I do want to say that there is a sense in which it is impossible for us to be able to advise a government seriously and at the same time write on the pages of newspapers. We have done a number of things on behalf of a number of organisations, a number of people. Yesterday, just as an example, we came across a situation whereby somebody was detained wrongly. And so a member of our directorate immediately went to the relevant bodies involved and the person was released. In other words, it is not fair for us to go to the public tomorrow. Oh! it will be nice or me. I would like

## Special Report



• Rash Coats and Lt. Col. Omoya, participants at the forum

the public to know the number of times I have written against a number of things and government later on changed its position. But once I castigate and ridicule government on the pages of newspapers, do you think they will listen to me next time. I want to advise them? So what I am saying is this. There are a number of ways in which we are opposed to certain things that government is doing which are not facilitating

mobilisation.

I think that you are not being fair to the historical roots of the Directorate of Social Mobilisation. It was not government that set it up. It was after a year's debate by ordinary people in Nigeria, including some of ourselves here, in fact a distinguished member of *The Guardian* was a member of the political bureau. They went round and at the end of the day they recommended that if the new order of democracy is to be sustained the masses need to be mobilised and given political education; government accepted. So are we now accusing government of accepting a popular recommendation? So government accepted that there's a political process that people have set out for the new order to succeed.

People have to be empowered through knowledge, through information, through organisation, through consciousness to be able to maintain support for that system, the new order we want to create. And government said, we believe in that, go ahead. So should we use it as if it were speakers' corners in Hyde Park? Life is more serious than that for me to waste. I mean, I had a good job in ABU as a teacher. Ralph Opara was a zonal Director of ERCN, we do not want to waste our time on frivolity. If there is no serious business of consciousness raising to do, I will resign if it is only for such frivolity.



• Dr. Gana

# The sweep of a new broom

Rasaki's radical measures jolt Lagosians

**D**URING his maiden tour of Epe Local Government area, July 30, Col. Raji Alagbe Rasaki, 41, newly crowned governor of Lagos state, accosted a secondary school pupil and asked him to spell the word hospital. The boy muttered two inaudible letters and went blank. Rasaki was said to have been visibly shaken, and so were his horde of officials. Though the unimpressive result of the brief encounter between the governor and the pupil may not be a yardstick for measuring the standard of education in the state, aides say Rasaki's mind is already made up in favour of making admission into public schools tougher.

If this wind of change is yet to blow, Rasaki who was sworn in as the eight governor of Lagos State, July 27, following the recent redeployment of 14 governors and re-assignment of others, has taken some radical steps that have earned him the epithet of "action governor."

Before now, the consensus was that Lagos is a state of unlimited riches. But on August 9, when he addressed the state's commissioners and directors-general, Rasaki painted a sorry picture of a state whose account is in the red: "I have discovered that contrary to the impression people have, demands on the resources of the state government far outweigh the quantum of those resources... I am, therefore, left in no doubt that the finances of the state are very tight and need belt-tightening", said the governor.

Consequently, Rasaki has embargoed the award of fresh contracts, payments and recruitment of fresh hands into the state's civil service. He hasn't given an inkling about his intention to suspend any of the multi-million naira projects (like the ₦30 million Lagos House) initiated by his predecessor, Navy Captain Mike Akhigbe, but Rasaki has been insisting on judicious use of scarce funds in the execution of these projects. Apparently to accentuate his resolve to husband funds, he has reconstituted and redesignated the state's funds management committee. The body which approves the disbursement of funds, now becomes the Fund Allocation Committee, with the governor as chairman.

Indeed Rasaki has an intriguing leadership style, and Lagosians seem jolted.

He will deliberately ask a commissioner to brief him on the progress of a particular project, but before this time, he would have made a nocturnal visit to the site of the project to see things for himself.

On the eve of his visit to Ikorodu, August 17, he quietly sneaked into the ancient town by 2 a.m. without the pomp and pageantry associated with state power, to have a feel of the town. One aide said he opened a tap, but no water flowed. Predictably, in a welcome address presented to the governor, August 18, the people, among others, highlighted the water shortage in the area. From his high table, the governor chuckled. He told a bewildered audience that he was in the town during the wee hours of the morning to see things for himself. He promised to sink more bore holes and provide other basic amenities in the town.

Some of his officials say his radical actions and pronouncements cast him in the mould of late General Murtala Muhammed, and he has lived up to that image. On August 18, he ordered the state Commissioner for Health, Dr. Adekunle Desalu, and Chief Bayo Dejonwo, former managing director of Apex Nigeria Limited, now chairman of Epe Local Government Area, to explain why a ₦1.4 million X-ray equipment which Dejonwo supplied to Ikorodu General Hospital (before he became a council boss) had not been installed.

Apart from swearing to abolish street trading in Lagos, he has also ordered the demolition of illegal structures in the state thought to be blocking the drainage system. "When we finish the demolition, you can take us to court and we will come there and answer," he boldly told owners of the illegal structures. He also threatened to deal "ruthlessly" with local government chairmen and councillors who defy the ban on political activities. Last week, Rasaki asked Messrs Tarmac Engineering Company Limited handling the ₦21 million Animanshaun Road extension works in the Lagos metropolis to hands off the project for tardiness.

But some of his actions have provoked public outcry. Last week, over 500 semi-nude market women displaced from the sprawling Oshodi railway line market in Lagos mainland, marched to



• Rasaki: Everywhere, every time

the governor's office in Alausa Ikeja, to protest against what they described as "callous acts by some council officials and military men." The traders alleged that council officials, on Thursday, burnt their goods worth thousands of naira at the market.

Rasaki, aides say, is a tireless administrator. He is tough-minded and a go-getter. "I told him last week that he looked tired and needed a rest", said one aide. But the governor jokingly responded that time was against him. He may be right. According to the political transition programme, he has only twenty-six months to implement his programmes and those already started by his predecessor.

By Mike Ubani

# A sharp shot

Federal Government fires Enugu council chairman

EVER since he was elected the Chairman of Enugu Local Government Council-Anambra State last December, Sam Orji has consistently been under the spotlight. Last week it was the laser beams fully on him as he became the first elected councillor to be suspended by the Federal Military Government.

His suspension, endorsed by the Chief of General Staff, Augustus Aikhomu, was prompted by three reasons: Orji's indictment by the findings of a Government white-paper on his activities as sole administrator of Anambra State-owned Vegetable Oil Company at Nachi, his "persistent conduct" — an unveiled reference to his regular disagreement with the Anambra State Government, and conduct inimical to good government. All these, in the Federal Government's reasoning, are likely to disrupt the transition to civil rule programme.

If anything, Orji's suspension appeared the government's way of putting paid to the simmering debate on whether the military government can remove any of the elected councillors. Only recently, National Electoral Commission's (NEC) Chairman, Professor Eme Awasad that the government cannot remove an elected council chairman. And the belief had been that the only way a councillor could be removed was by litigation, if his election was unlawful or through the Recall System which stipulates that the councillors were only to be removed with a vote to that effect by two-thirds of all registered members of the electorate in a constituency.

Last week, however, Awa concluded that the "government is supreme over issues involving state security" — a reference to the Federal government's explanation that Orji's removal was to prevent his conduct from disrupting the transition to civil rule programme. "Elected or not," said Awa, "the security forces deal with any person who may jeopardise the transition programme."

Aikhomu's order for Orji's removal said that he would remain suspended until investigations into his deeds at Anambra Vegetable Oil Products Limited (AVOP) were concluded. The government white paper on the administrative board of inquiry into the

affairs of AVOP when Orji was its Sole Administrator had indicted him and recommended, among other things, that about N13,200 spent on an alleged buying of three air conditioning units, the N25,000 spent on a contract for financial appraisal of AVOP and the N42,113.55 paid to Orji for "business travels" be recovered from him. These recommendations were accepted by the state government.

In fact, the administrative inquiry into AVOP was not the first to indict Orji, and thereby threaten his political career. In 1976, he was indicted in the government white paper on the report of the board of inquiry into the affairs of Nigeria Water Supply and Construction Company Limited of which he was



• Aikhomu, Welding the judge

chairman.

The government of the then East Central State (Imo and Anambra States) had accepted the report of the board of inquiry that Orji and two others defrauded the company of several thousands of naira. And the two state governments particularly promised in the paper that "the sum of N200,985,000 which is the overpayment on the purchase of Wirth B2 Rig will be recovered from Dr. Orji."

This being one of the many instances of indictments by government white papers, observers believe Orji should not have been allowed to contest the last Local Government election in the first place. Moreso, a pardon which he allegedly claims he got from the military government before 1979 was never

gazetted.

However, the most instructive of the reasons given by the Federal Government for Orji's removal was his "persistent conduct". This, of course, was a direct reference to the fact that the local government chairman has been queried twice this year alone by the Anambra State Governor, Robert Akonobi, for "official misdemeanour" and for ignoring the state-owned Universal Insurance Company while engaging in an insurance deal for the Ogbete Main Market in Enugu.

Besides, since he became Enugu Local Government Chairman, Orji has acquired the reputation of a controversial litigant. He went to court to stop the government from releasing the contents of the white paper on AVOP because, according to him, he was not given a fair hearing during the investigations.

He has also contested the right of the Anambra State Sanitation Authority (ASESA) to collect tolls from motor parks.

If all these give Orji out as controversial, reports from Enugu also paint the picture of a cult figure. Last June, reports had it that the Enugu Local Government was being run with *two* while the councillors had sworn to an oath of secret allegiance to Orji, the Chairman. If anything, all these had made Enugu the most visible of the 204 local government councils in Nigeria and Orji the most controversial Chairman.

Meanwhile, following the report exclusively in *The Guardian Express* and later *The Guardian*, of Orji's suspension last week, *The Guardian's* correspondent at Dodan Barracks, Kunle Sanyalola who was relieving Kelechi Onyemombi, was banned from the beat until the substantive correspondent resumes duty.

Duro Onibule, Chief Press Secretary to President Babangida said this "punitive measure" was taken against Sanyalola for breaking the "protocol of embargo" with his report. The story did not have Sanyalola's belief and his defence that he never wrote the story failed to impress Onibule. However, having taken the Enugu case so seriously, observers believe the Federal Government has demonstrated its degree of sensitivity to the transition programme and, more importantly, succeeded in dictating the direction of the debate (if it will continue) on whether an elected council chairman can be removed by the military government.

By Debo Adesina with reports from  
Chukwuemeka Onyiah

# Sound off

## Col. Mark cuts telephone lines, consumers protest

**C**OLONEL David Mark, the Communications Minister is one who would like to be taken seriously. But on August 10 when he ordered that all telephone subscribers on Victoria Island, Lagos, irrespective of need, should have the International Direct Dial (IDD) system installed on their lines or do without telephones, the subscribers were convinced that he was joking. He had to be, they reasoned, for a great number of them were civil servants who by quirk of fate were living in the choicest area of the city overlooking the sandy beaches dotted with coconut palm — a haven for the rich, and the sophisticated. The 21-day ultimatum was hardly honoured.

Thursday last week, the Minister made good his threat. By 8.00 a.m., the over 3,000 adamant subscribers were cut off from the rest of the world.

Having been used to receiving services only when requested, the subscribers saw the directive as not only irrational, but illegal. Councillor for the Victoria Island district, Mrs Abimbola Kuforiji argues that the Minister's announcement which requires subscribers to pay N3,500 for business lines and N1,500 for private use, was not a part of the original agreement drawn up between Nigerian Telecommunications (NITEL) and its subscribers. A protest letter was despatched to the Chief of General Staff, Rear Admiral Augustus Aikhom last week. Says the councillor: "You cannot force a man to pay for

what he does not think he needs." It would have been understandable, she adds if NITEL had asked its subscribers to pay in instalments.

Brushing aside Mrs Kuforiji's argument that the new directive was not contained in the original deed, NITEL's General Manager (International) Bayo Lateju retorts that policies and operational conditionalities are never static and are subject to changes with the times. In the light of the present economic reality and other responsibilities entrusted on NITEL, he holds that the company has to find alternative ways of generating revenue.

Ironically, the same reasons proffered by NITEL for introducing the new policy explains why the subscribers are refusing to play ball. Beyond illegality, money is the key factor. The civil servants' earning capacity is low. The highest paid civil servant receives less than half the salary of his counterpart in the private sector. Another argument held by those affected is that they earn just as much as their colleagues who live in less classy areas. Lateju however makes no apologies, maintaining that those who can afford to live on Victoria Island should be able to foot the bills.

Irked by the suggestion, a senior government official described the concept as "absolutely disgusting." To make it mandatory he continues, will be to commit the error of presuming that everyone who lives on the Island belongs to the "bourgeois class."



• Mark: No joking matter

For NITEL's image maker, Osagie Anyaru, it is not an issue of being rich or poor. It is simply maximizing the use of a system that is already configured into the exchange in order to generate fund. Even then, subscribers believe that this should not be at their expense. To make them pay for services not requested, they say, is "asking for a few things too many."

NITEL's records have not helped its case either. In the eyes of the subscribers, NITEL is a bottomless pit of fraud. Says Anyaru: "It is easy for the public to shout fraud. We can only appeal to it not to collude with touts to defraud the company."

In August, a firm of Insurance Brokers, Clavvils Ethonoven, discovered that its lines had been disconnected after being presented with a NITEL bill of N16,400. An inquiry indicated that a NITEL technician and a worker at the Federal Ministry of Information had colluded to tap the company's line to make several international calls. Such practices, it is feared, cannot be completely ruled out in the operation of NITEL's new policy, not even Anyaru's assurance that any member of staff with itchy fingers will be immediately dismissed.

Of the over 10,000 subscribers on the Island, with the exception of the 7,000 in the parastatals, not many have showed interest in the IDD. Apparently, NITEL, believing that it is holding the trump card has said that the installation of the IDD is not a question of choice. But would the subscribers succumb?



• Kuforiji: NITEL's action breaches contract



• Osagie: NITEL needs money

By Josephine Akarue



• Kalu: Continuing the IMF game?



• Ajibola: Fresh hopes

## No retrenchment yet

THE government appears to be blowing hot and cold at the Nigeria Railway Corporation (NRC). Last Tuesday, it ordered the immediate retrenchment of 8,000 workers in Nigeria's oldest parastatal. Transport minister, Dr. Kulu Idrisu Kalu, who announced the government directive in Lagos, said the reduction of workers from over 32,000 to 24,000 was necessary "to eliminate redundancies".

However, twenty-four hours after the minister's statement, Major General Paul Tarfa (rtd), NRC managing director, made a conflicting announcement. He told a meeting of the NRC branch of Senior Staff Association of Statutory Corporation and Government owned Companies (SSASCGC), that the lay-off was being shelved pending an agreement between the government and the SSASCGC.

The association supports the purge of fraudulent workers and those who have served the organisation for 35 years, but it insists that those to be affected by the exercise must be promptly paid their benefits. Kalu said on Tuesday that ₦42 million has been set aside to pay gratuity and other benefits.

The corporation earns ₦5 million monthly, but pays a wage bill of about ₦17 million. About 1,256 locomotive

drivers are employed to operate 40 locomotives and 9,000 workers employed to service the locomotive.

## Coal mines may collapse

IN 1949, there was blood-bath at the Enugu coal mines when British Colonial policemen shot and killed some miners who had gone on strike to back up their demand for enhanced condition of service. Thirty-nine years after, the miners' condition has improved considerably. But the miners face another serious problem.

There is a palpable fear that the mines would collapse except an urgent reactivation work is carried out at the mines. Last week, Col. Robert Akonobi, governor of Anambra State breezed into Lagos to solicit federal government's financial assistance to salvage the mines.

## Ogunkoya stays on

THE stormy tenure of the sole administrator of the dissolved Nigeria Labour Congress, (NLC), Mr. Michael Ogunkoya, expected to have ended in August, has been extended to December 30. Labour and Productivity Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Umar, said last week that the extension was necessary to allow Ogunkoya complete his assignment. Ogunkoya was

appointed February 29, after the dissolution of the executive council of the NLC.

He was asked to examine the machinery for the conduct of elections into the congress, to review its constitution and look into the causes of the crisis in the NLC. He was also expected to organise a special delegates conference at which a new executive council of the NLC would emerge.

## Karin B. roams along

JULY 30, at the sleepy port town of Koko, Bendel State, Works and Housing Minister Brigadier Mammah Kottungera, waved good-bye to the German vessel, MV Karin B, which carted away about 150 (20' footer size) containers, each stuffed with the lethal toxic waste illegally dumped at Koko by an Italian company. But for over one month now, the ship is yet to discharge its cargo. European countries have refused to accept the waste.

The ship arrived Spain last Wednesday, but Spanish authorities asked the crew to be chased off some British shores and is reportedly left at sea with its 2,000 tonnes load of toxic waste.

## ASUU, NANS live

BARELY three days after President Ibrahim Babangida, marked his third year in



• Ogunkoya: Extended mandate

office. August 27, there are positive signs that the proscribed unions in the country will spring back to life. Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Prince Bola Ajibola, told delegates who attended this year's annual conference of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), in Kaduna, that the president had assured him that the ban on Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), and the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), would soon be lifted.

Ajibola explained that a government has a duty to maintain public order and safety, though some people may suffer in the process.

NANS was banned in 1986 at the wake of Ahmadu Bello University students' crisis, while ASUU was sent to the cooler, July 1988, after university teachers had gone on strike to protest the delay in implementing the new salary structure for university teachers.

## Thatcher's empty threats

It is pathetic that Britain, unable to wean itself from the distant past of colonial exploitation and glory, has threatened to ban American oil companies from explorations in the North Sea if the economic sanctions against apartheid South Africa being contemplated by the United States Congress were to prove harmful to British firms. According to the London based *Sunday Telegraph* of August 28, the British acting Charge d' Affaires in Washington, Mr. Mubrain Crone was reported to have sent a letter to the US congress stating that if America imposed sanctions, "the British Government would certainly come under strong domestic pressure to retaliate against US oil companies operating or wishing to operate in the North Sea."

In a most vulgar *whitemail*, the British acting Charge d' Affaires hinted darkly that "given the very substantial participation of US oil companies in the North Sea — this (economic embargo against the racists) is a situation which we very much hope will not arise".

Now, if that threat had come in the days when every Albion believed that Britannia ruled the waves and that its Imperial sun would never set, then the *whitemail* would quite possibly have made some sense. But not anymore.

If anything, the threats from Britain have underscored one point. Those who were gullible enough to believe that the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, had been opposing sanctions against the racist regime on account of the welfare of the Blacks in South Africa, can now confirm for themselves that they have been labouring under an illusion, albeit a costly one.

That point was well made by a British embassy official who *Sunday Telegraph* quoted as saying that "the legislation could have considerable influence on British interests and we are therefore defending these interests". In other words, Britain's opposition to sanctions against South Africa are actuated by one consideration alone — naked economic self-interest. Critics of the conservative Thatcher have persistently pointed out her purblind position to no avail.

History alone should sufficiently instruct Thatcher that no matter how long a people have been oppressed, they must ultimately attain freedom either through peaceful or violent

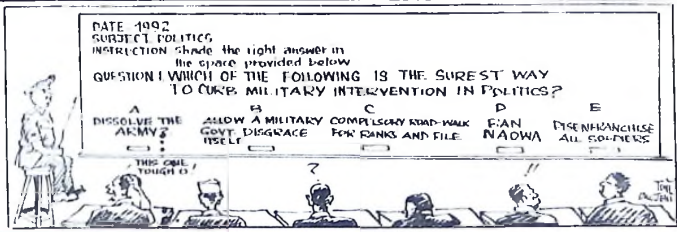
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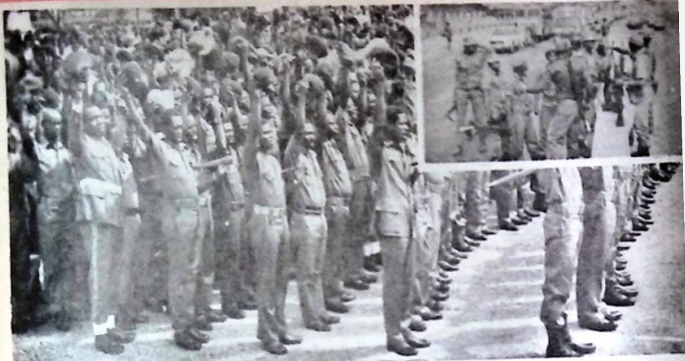
Now, there's nothing to indicate in its utterances and action that the conservative government of Thatcher is actually protecting the interest of Britain. A government that purports to protect those interests would have realised that in the long run, South Africa is bound to be free and that these economic interests would best be served if Britain contributed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict now. Commonsense alone should teach Thatcher that those who, through their action, fuel the feelings of the oppressed Blacks to see violence as the only way, are bound to lose those economic interests they are so desirous of preserving.

All these aside, the British threat to the US Congress is truly laughable. Here was a former colonial power whose sun has since been eclipsed by its former colony, the United States of America, arguably the richest and most powerful nation on earth. It is all too obvious, except to Britain, that she does not now possess the political, economic or military clout to threaten anybody, least of all, the United States. We think it would pay Britain infinitely well to realise that other countries that are desirous of seeing the restoration of human dignity to the Blackman in South Africa are equally capable of inflicting economic reprisals on her. Here again, history should be a guide.

Back to the United States, we consider it a moral duty of that country to champion the cause of freedom of all oppressed peoples in the world, given its enviable inheritance of democratic traditions bequeathed not only to it but to much of the world by the founding fathers. More than this, no country is so eminently placed both economically and militarily to serve as the global bulwark of freedom.

In this regard, we urge the US Congress and its people to pursue vigorously not only sanctions, but all other means that could bring the obnoxious racist regime in South Africa to its knees. In this task, the US cannot afford to be distracted by diversionary antics of former colonisers like Britain who see what ought to be a global concern not only from a parochial interest, but more painfully from the short-run benefits.





• Army parade and (inset) Civil day duty: Is the last yet to come?

# Will they ever go?

*Nigerians wonder if the military will ever let go*

■ It has a familiar ring to it. Nigerians wake up one morning, do the early morning rituals and tune on to Radio Nigeria. A tune rarely played, but now familiar, blares from the magic box. Presently, a voice hints of an "important" announcement. The voice is a familiar one, that of the regular continuity announcer. It urges citizens to stand by. The familiar tune returns to the airwaves ominously like a dirge filling citizens with anxiety, apprehension and expectation. There is no mistaking it. It is the Messiah again. "Good morning fellow countrymen and women," he begins with a stern, intimidating and martial voice. He announces his name and rank, informs the citizens that "I make this announcement on behalf of my colleagues in the armed forces." The Messiah goes on to reel out an array of crimes committed by the fallen regime.

The crimes are legion and quite familiar. They include bad government, mismanagement, corruption and insecurity. He talks about their patriotic duty as custodians and protectors of the nation's sovereignty to halt the national

drift. He talks of the imminent doom of the ship of state if they did not intervene. He clamps a curfew from dusk till dawn and at least one instance from dawn till dusk. He warns sternly that public disturbance will be met with death. The operation, citizens are told, was accomplished without bloodshed, (that is if some officers escape unhurt) and exhorts citizens to remain calm and stand by their radio sets.

Members of the avian regime, and unfortunate lot, the losing faction of the same failing class, are advised in their own interest, to report to the nearest police station. The broadcast, like all such broadcasts, is loaded with messianic pretensions, mystification of the soldier's readiness to lay down his life for his country and promises of milk and honey. Then another announcement soon follows. It may be the same recording, or another one, exhorting Nigerians to remain calm for "we are together."

In the next few hours, depending on who is gaining the upper hand, another strongman, the real power emerges, accepting the "challenge" vested in him by his comrades-in-arms. He announces

a suspension of the constitution, give more reasons why the good Lord has entrusted the destiny of Africa's most populous country in his hands and makes more promises and pledges. No Nigerian can mistake this scenario. Although he is never consulted, he knows that it is a coup again.

Since "Operation Damisa" 21 years ago, Nigeria's political history has been that of "soldier go, soldier come" affair. In the nation's 28 years of existence as an independent nation, the soldier, for 18 years, has held sway. He has four more years to go. If he goes, would he come back? Would he ever go? These are the questions that beg for answers.

The answers, have come from those who should know. General Theophilus Danjuma is a man no Nigerian can afford to ignore. He has been part of the ding-dong process of soldiers coming and going. He is said to have participated in every coup that has succeeded; the last until he bowed out in 1979 as army chief. Said he: "I do not think I would see democracy in Nigeria during my life time and I am not being pessimistic." Gen. Danjuma is not alone



• Murtala Mohammed (right), Idiagbon and Babangida: Soldier go, soldier come



• Ejor: "You cannot guarantee a stable government unless injustice is redressed"

The late sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, before he passed away, had expressed the same fear.

The fears of these two eminent Nigerians cannot be waived off. They had been in positions to know. Would they go? Would they not? The truth today, although the nation is on the threshold of a third attempt at democratic rule, is whether Gen. Danjuma and Chief Awolowo will be vindicated. Nigerians, rightly, have been gripped with a perpetual fear of coups d'etat. Today, the Nigerian sleeps with eyes open and tunes to Radio Nigeria, with apprehension and fear of his protector, his master, coming like a thief in the night, to alter his political destiny, the destiny of his homeland. How long will this continue?

The President, General Ibrahim Babangida, who has a well oiled reputation as a master in the game of coup planning and (at least in the case of Lt. Col. Dimka) foiling, believes his, would be the last military regime. But that of course is predicated on a smooth transition. Said he while marking his third year in office: "The military had never pretended to be above politics because we take political decisions almost every day in our attempt to improve the effectiveness of governance and fashion a new political order." The president, optimistic as he is about his mission, is aware that the role of the military and how far it will go in the nation's political future is still in question. But he appears not to be worried. "I must", he says, "make bold to assert today that we in the military have resolved our crisis of mission."

Have they? The president thinks so: "I once enunciated the characteristics of our mission in politics as consisting of a willingness to return to the barracks after our decisions are accomplished," he said, adding that the military, in pursuit of this, had ensured that there is "the absence of an independent political military organisation with the desire to stay in power."

The president may be right in his analysis but not many Nigerians believe the armed forces have abandoned the "desire to stay in power." At least General Hassan Usman Katsina, former military governor of Northern Region and Chief of Army Staff, does not think so. His view is based on the logic that a cancer can not just be cut off, once it has infected various sensitive organs of the body. "When the 1966 coup took place, Obasanjo (Gen. Olusegun), was my witness. I told him that I wish it did not happen because it would continue," he told the Kaduna-based *Today* newspaper. But Katsina, like his contemporaries, did not shy away from benefitting from the gains of the coup. He accepted the governorship of the North but wished the army be kept together as a single entity.

Gen. Katsina is not alone in his anxiety about the propensity of the military to come back and stay for ever. His successor as Army Chief of Staff, General David Ejor, does not foresee the military quitting the stage soon. "As long as there is dishonesty all over the place and people are not loyal to the country, we should not expect any government to be stable and so long as the government is not stable, some people would always



• Danjuma: "I don't think Nigeria will see democracy in my life time"

want to wrest power from those who are there."

Col. Fred Chijuka, director of the Army Public Relations Directorate (APRD) agrees: "The fact remains that this may continue to be a phenomenon unless our political culture changes." Chijuka says unless the people evolve a political culture that would accommodate the views of others and make the transfer of political power possible through the ballot box, "the only alternative left to the people to fall back on, is the military." Said he: "If you pervert the government, you pervert the course of law and justice, you pervert the people being governed and if you do this, you lose the legitimacy to be there and the only people who will stop this at the risk of their lives are members of the armed forces and this is because we



• Oduyo: Military intervention is a visit



• Sesan Johnson: All we are seeing are more dictators

rule.

Mike Ikbariala, a senior law lecturer at the University of Lagos, believes the ambition of every young officer today is to live in the Government House. General Emmanuel Abisoye, who was chairman of the tribunal that tried and convicted Dinku and his fellow coup plotters, says ambition and the lure of Government House cannot be discounted. "The insecurity of the military is in the military itself. If we join the army together on the same day, and become lieutenant colonels on the same day, if by accident or what have you, you become a governor and I become the commander of the Brigade in the province, what the public does not know is that the very best are not given political appointment, they are kept in

want rule in a colonial and neo-colonial set up is coercion and this is necessary to ensure the people's compliance with the wishes of the ruling class. The need to maintain the appropriation process of the international bourgeoisie and its comprador accomplices requires a machinery that must constantly remind the people that they must obey the state." In this case according to Momoh, the State is represented by the military which is "the mediator in the crisis between the comprador and the international bourgeoisie."

The military as the wielder of the instrument of coercion, he says, plays a strategic role. "It is mystified as being patriotic. It has the advantage of being seen as professional," he says. General Domkat Bali, Minister of Defence and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff says prevailing social conditions necessitate military intervention. "If you follow the trend," he told *The Guardian*, "the first reason for any change (coup d'état) especially the changes that involve the civilian regime is always to restore peace. That is the first priority, no others fall in line." Gen. Bali says, however, that the restoration of peace in the polity is not always a necessary condition for a coup. "We did not take over from the Buhari regime first because there was no peace. The coup against (General Murtala) Mohammed did not happen because there was no peace. A military regime taking over from a military regime is substantially different from a military regime taking over from a civilian."

Political historian Rupert Emerson said in his book *From Empire to Nation, The rise to Self-assertion of Asia and African peoples* that democracy can be eroded if there is "lack of national unity which in virtually all the new countries threatens disruption and is met by enforced centralization." In addition to the lack of national unity, Emerson says the most basic explanation for the failure of democracy is "the almost universal absence of what have been assumed more to be preconditions for its success."

These preconditions, according to the revered historian, are mass literacy, relatively high living standards, a sizeable and stable middle class, a sense of social equality and a tradition both of tolerance and of individual self reliance. The conditions, he submitted, are essentially lacking in developing countries like Nigeria because the countries are characterised by peasant masses living at the subsistence level; overwhelmingly

have a responsibility also to maintain the general order of the system."

Ejor believes that more often than not, civilians have been responsible for military involvement in the politics of Nigeria. He told *The African Guardian*: "Don't forget that most of the military coups are sponsored by civilians, those civilians who are aggrieved, for example those who have lost through the ballot box, they keep preaching to the soldiers: 'look, the country is going to the dogs, you're just here in the barracks doing nothing, won't you have to?' That is how it is started and the pattern has been repeated." This may be true in the case of Gen. Aguiyi Ironi who was virtually invited by the crumbling Balewa Administration to take over power when Major Nzeogwu and his comrades struck, but this cannot be said to be the

the barracks but you as governor will not know this. There are lots of pet-quisites in the governorship, you don't buy petrol for your car, you can easily get a plot of land in Victoria Island. If you are the acquisitive type, people will give you favours even if you've never asked for it. When I come to Lagos from the province, I am pushed out of the way for you by outsiders with tens, what do I do? I will start having ideas that "look at this man, he doesn't merit what I merit and I will be having ideas. This is the insecurity in the military."

Although there are as many varied reasons as there are potential coup plotters, coups cannot succeed unless the social conditions are created in the system. Abubakar Momoh, a lecturer in political science at the Lagos State University (LASU) Ojo, says: "The domi-

illiterate, unacquainted not only with the great world, but also with their country, accustomed to a high degree of social stratification, and with slight middle classes that more often than not are alien to the realities of their country. The emergent rulers in a country with these traits, he says, are neither the product of the mass of the people, nor of the evolutionary development of the society as a whole.

General Abisoye agrees with this view, citing "settled democracies" like Britain. In Britain, he says, people who form the officers corps of the military and the political class are drawn from the aristocracy who have already attained a certain level of contentment. "It is not everybody who comes forward wanting to join the army in Britain that is accepted, but in Nigeria, so long as they meet the minimum standard, they are accepted." Abisoye says for a country to have a stable democratic system, there must be necessary conditions for a durable democratic culture to evolve. The state, he contends must provide something for everybody. This, according to him, enhances a sense of belonging. He says because people who form the military and political class go there to look for subsistence, they tend to "bastardise the system, sell their conscience and create room for instability which leads to coups." Ejoor shares this view, saying "insofar as the people in government are trading with government, insofar as governance is now for trading and making money, why should somebody stay behind and not take his own share?"

**S**ECOND Republic presidential political adviser Dr. Chuba Okadigbo says even the military which is quick to brand the civilians as corrupt is not made up of saints either. He asks: "In Nigeria, can we honestly say that the military has provided this thing (honest leadership)? There are crooks in the military as there are crooks in the civilian government." Which ever way the dice comes up, a common feature is that politicians and political parties are usually denounced by military coup plotters as being corrupt. While politics is denounced as evil, the military is glorified as representing the unified and creative national force necessary to promote common good and rescue the country from slipping into the abyss.

The coup plotter insists that only a good government will keep him at bay, but this appears to be a stale argument. Col. Abdulahi Sarki Moukhtar, a lawyer and governor of Kaduna State,



• Bali "Military regime is much more unstable"

in debunking this argument, says that a good government is not enough to keep trigger-happy and ambitious soldiers at bay. A necessary condition to keep the soldier in barracks, he says, is to have a military that knows and sticks to its role in society and realises why it must be subject to the fundamental laws of the land. Governor Moukhtar who, as brigade major of the Brigade of Guards, carved a niche for himself for swiftly mobilising troops to foil the Dimka plot described coups that overthrow legitimately elected governments as "momentary acts of illegality" while those who oust existing military regimes only "further an already existing act of illegality."

Moukhtar, like Ejoor, blames the populace for giving "initial encouragement to military take-overs without due regard to the most fundamental of bicaracies to the body politic." Abisoye wonders why no Nigerian has ever stepped forward to challenge the legitimacy of a coup in a court of law. "At least the court would grant the person a hearing and he would register his point", he says.

Captain Umaru Suru, an elected member of the Constituent Assembly representing Dakin Garin in Sokoto State, told *The African Guardian* that within the officers corps, there is that feeling of preferential treatment given to those who participate in coups. Consequently, those who did not take part in coups would not mind to attempt, when next there is need for it. Capt. Suru who quit the army after 18 years,

should know. Recent events, are instructive. When Gen. Babangida took over, his pointmen, Major Abdul Mumuni Aminu, Major Abubakar Umar and Major Lawal Gwadabe, all credited with the arrest of General Muhammadu Buhari were made state governors and subsequently promoted as Lieutenant Colonels while Major Sambo Dasuki, who was also a member of the team that stormed Dodan Barracks, became the president's Aide Camp before he went abroad on course. Umar voluntarily relinquished his governorship to further his studies in the United States.

Captain Suru believes Nigeria will not see one last military coup in 1992. "I don't think 1992 will be our last experience of the military take-over. The junior officers are also interested; secondly the good government they are talking of cannot be realized if the resources are not there". Dr Segun Johnson, lecturer in Political Science at the Lagos State University agreed with Capt. Suru. "The militarymen are not even planning to go now, all we are seeing are mere placations. In essence, the military regime has carefully laid a minefield for the civilians coming and this will explode as soon as they come in, thereby giving the army the opportunity to come back". Dr Johnson points to the government's economic programme which he says, would worsen and make it impossible for an incoming civilian administration to survive.

Major General Olufemi Olutoye

(rtd), a member of the Constituent Assembly, commenting on whether the basis for the unpopularity of the Third Republic has been set because of the economic policies of the federal government, especially debt rescheduling, says anybody who subscribes to that line of argument is just ignorant of the facts. He admits that military intervention, "is like a virus which will disappear when the conditions conducive to its appearance disappear."

A retired Sandhurst-trained Brigadier who wants to remain anonymous points to two issues that he believes would inevitably draw the military back to the political arena. The military, he argues, is not as cohesive as it used to be, stressing that its exposure to politics has divided its rank and file along political, religious and ethnic lines. The Northern Moslem officers, the Brigadier predicts, will attempt a coup, if Shania laws are not enshrined in the con-

stitution at the federal level. He believes Southern officers and Northern Christian officers who are opposed to Shania are also likely to attempt a coup if sharia is introduced. The Brigadier wants soldiers insulated from the political scene as soon as possible. "They should even be denied the right to vote," he says. The Brigadier's other potential source of coup is the Nigerian Army Officers Wives Association (NAOWA). The body, the war veteran says, should confine its activities to the barracks and get off the television screen.

The association, he says, may on the surface appear as a philanthropic organisation of concerned women but "in actual fact, it is the invisible government that pulls the strings." He contended: "If their husbands quit the stage, they would have lost the television cameras and this would prompt them to pester their husbands to stage a comeback."

Ominous as these possibilities may be, the fear of the military perpetuating itself in power will be more pronounced in the behaviour of the civilian ruling class that will succeed the politicians. Mr Justice Emmanuel Araka, the retired Chief Judge of Anambra State, says that the civilians are most likely to invite the military to come back.

"The Shagari administration which up till today is still on record as the worst government Nigeria ever had, needed something like a military revolt to send the whole lot of them out of office." The Shagari crowd, the learned judge says, "did everything possible to rig themselves back into office and they spent three months in office (after the 1983 elections), when Buhari and Idiagbon threw them out of office — much to the delight and happiness of all Nigerians."

Professor Bade Ommodde of the Department of Economics, University of Ibadan, believes that in many cases, the

It was a rather lengthy sentence in the President's rather lengthy appraisal of his administration's three years in power. It went thus: "... Consequently, 'the men', the 'newbreed' of the 'unspoiled men' who believe that government's confidence placed on them was or is misplaced may sooner or later have to be made to join those affected by Decree 25 of 1987 unless they retrace their steps and shun the anti-democratic and anti-racial attitude of the politicians of yester-years."

More than any other aspect of the President's speech, it grabbed the headlines. And it left many wondering if the portion of the country's population with access to elective offices was going to be depleted even further. Considering that leftists and the "old brigade" of politicians had been shored aside, there was certainly cause for worry.

But Burkhari Bello, a nominated Constituent Assembly member from Sokoto State, waves away the very suggestion: "Of course, they are not serious. They cannot do anything".

Hassan Sani Kontagora, publisher of *Hotline* magazine is not very much bothered about whether government intends to carry out the barely veiled threat. Rather he is perplexed about the rationale behind Babangida's statement. He says, "Honestly, I don't understand what the President was saying. All the banned politicians have been made Chairmen and Board members of parastatals by government so I don't know how the newbreed are

## Checking banned politicians

*Babangida's warning receives mixed reactions from Assembly members.*

going to delodge them and get supporters. If the government believes the banned people are bad, it should have given them a blackout."

Gesticulating the controversial Kon-

tagora asks rhetorically: "How do I convince others these people are bad?"

Etad Ekayagba, who represents Sagbama, Rivers State in the Constituent Assembly considers the government



• Haruna Banned?

excesses and abuses associated with democratic practice in Nigeria derive from the dialectic cleavage between political power and private property. "Such flagrant political excesses like violation of the constitution, frequent election rigging at all levels of government, even military coups and counter-coups as well as narrow abuse of office for private material interest such as frequent embezzlement of public funds often derive from motives of power and property." Onimode says persistent lack of accountability is partly responsible for the erosion of democracy and the myriad of political excesses that plague Nigeria.

In spite of the past probes instituted by past governments to ensure accountability, it appears the military, except during the Murtala era, has remained a sacred cow. Gen. Bali admitted this much in his interview with *The Guardian*: "Well I think the military regime



• Abisoye: It is the society that is undisciplined

is most reluctant to probe another military regime... but you see, the military regime, like I said earlier is much more unstable than civilian regime." Why? Gen. Bali was asked: "Because the players are part of the same system. So if you probe one part you are only causing your own..." Bali says he probed the Ministry of Defence when he took over but he did not say if the outcome of the probe was made public or whether it was a "state secret". Even the probe panel sat in camera and it lacked power to examine military purchases, like weapons, communication equipment, construction of barracks and others.

Apart from the perpetual fear that the military has come to stay, Nigerians are also debating the possibility that General Babangida may shelve the khaki for *aghbada* and become the civilian president. Although the president has insisted that he hopes to retire to Minna and if possible pursue an academic

largely in order on the issue. According to him: "It is true that some of us are being influenced by some of the discredited politicians. But it is only in some states. And if the government does not act, it means the very purpose of lifting the ban would have been lost."

Ekiyegha's reasoning tallies with that of Gideon Onyia, another "newbreed" CA member whose constituency is Enugu, Anambra State. However Onyia says there is a distinction between categories of old politicians. "There are some of them like Abubakar Rimi and Balarabe Musa who are progressive and who were fighting to emancipate the masses."

Whatever government's motives are, the pronouncement, if only because of the timing, is somewhat difficult to understand. Ever since the President inaugurated the Constituent Assembly last April, the meetings, alliances and political activities of all types that have taken place have been among the worst-kept secrets in the country. Like its 1978 version, the present assembly provides the most logical forum, an opportunity for old and aspiring politicians to test their political muscles. Elsewhere in the country, they have been more circumspect. But anybody with an ear to the political ground has more than a fair idea of the personalities and groupings with a keen interest in politics. So why did the administration issue its threat at this time, when the ban on political activities will be lifted next year?

A member of the CA thinks that the



• Onyia: A distinction between categories of politicians

Babangida: administration is in possession of information which proves that there has been a heightening of political activities. Especially galling was the presence of old politicians at Abuja who are widely believed to be consolidating their positions as power brokers.

Kontagora sees no merit whatsoever in the government position: "Politics cannot be done in a vacuum. To dislodge somebody who has made a name, you should have a spring-board. But the Federal Government is encouraging the banned. The President says he knows where they meet, he should have arrested them... It is the Federal Gov-

ernment that is encouraging them. 90 to 95 per cent of chairmen of CA Committees are nominated members. Most of these are banned politicians. Major-General I. B. M. Haruna (rtd) and Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki are examples..."

Rather obvious sources of information for government are the security agents. At Abuja for example, it is well known that several of those who hover outside while deliberations of the CA are going on are members of the State Security Services. A CA member recalls how he was accosted by a CA staff who wanted to find out what he and his colleagues were discussing one evening at the International Conference Centre, Abuja. "I told him it was not his business," he concluded.

Olutoye is one of those who share the President's ideas on the issue: "Any newbreed who is so diffident as to betray the confidence reposed in him should be removed!"

How many will be left when some aspiring politicians like the old politicians and the "extremists" are shoved aside. Says Olutoye with an enigmatic smile: "The centre will hold."

But it is not that simple. Many of the local government chairmen, councillors and CA members in the country today are beneficiaries of the material and moral support of the "old brigade." It is not like that the umbilical cord will suddenly be severed because of the administration's apprehension that the "old" will contaminate the "new".

By Paul Nwabulwu

career, many Nigerians are sceptical. They point to the president's decision to shift the handover date from 1990 to 1992 and his "Maradona image" which is more at ease with politicians than military men.

Chief Bolan Akanbi, Managing Director of Bolan Group of Companies Lagos, does not discount the possibility that General Babangida would want to run for another term after seven years in power. "Well, the possibilities are there but it will be a dangerous thing to do," Chief Akanbi says. "Nigeria is different from Liberia and this is important," adding: "If Samuel Doe was able to do it in his country, it may not work here." Justice Araka who also sees the possibility says General Gowon had almost worked his way into the history book until he reneged on his promise to quit the stage. "For the meantime," Araka says, "we say very little about Babangida administration."

Speculations that the president may fire the part of Gen. Evedema of Togo, Field Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire and other military-turned-politicians, became rife when Ghanaian leader Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings visited Nigeria and expressed surprise that President Babangida is contemplating handing over to civilians. Political analysts interpreted Rawlings' call for a permanent role for the African soldier and a "militant culture" as a call on the man on the horseback to perpetuate himself in power.

Whether President Babangida bought the Rawlings' idea or not is still not clear. But as Nigerians ponder their future amid the ever present possibility of the military's constant intervention in politics, both the government and the populace have offered suggestions on how to keep the military to its traditional duties of defending the territorial integrity of Nigeria. General Bala says the only solution to coups is to reorientate the "whole social structure." Said he: "There is nothing that you can do within a few years. I think the whole social structure, the whole social set up and the education and awareness of the population, I think MAMSER may be in the right direction. I think people should be aware of what they have got at stake and defend those rights."

But then how does an unarmed population, a highly illiterate population, stratified and marginalised, defend itself against a military that has dictated the tune for 18 years? Col. Chikwaka thinks it is possible. The military, he says, will support the people and pre-



Field Marshal Chikwaka MAMSER

vent an unwanted military regime. Chikwaka says, the army did it during the Dimka and Yatsa coups. All that is needed, he says is for Nigerians to imbibe MAMSER which is geared towards creating political awareness. But Gen. Katsina is sceptical about the prospects of MAMSER. Says he: "MAMSER which they say is supposed to mobilise the people, one cannot see physically the progress it has made despite the huge sums of money spent on it." General Aboshe also does not believe MAMSER is the answer: "The Nigerian soldier, he says, is very politicised. He knows what happens everywhere, you cannot lie to him. The problem really is societal. The soldier is not necessarily undisciplined, it is the society that is undisciplined, you cannot separate the soldier from the society. This country will never make it unless there is a political will on the part of the leadership to show discipline, unless there is corporate and individual discipline."

General Ejor says as long as there is a deliberate policy on the part of the leadership to lord it over other parts of the country by monopolising the political (presidency) and the military leadership, there will never be peace. He fears that if the trend continues, an insurrection akin to that of Major Isaac Adaka Boro in the Niger Delta during the 60s cannot be dismissed because an "oppressed people who produce the bulk of the nation's wealth cannot be held down forever." Says he: "What I am saying is that the population that owes allegiance to Nigeria, that is loyal to Nigeria, that produces the bulk of the wealth is smaller than the population that is disloyal to Nigeria. With this, you cannot guarantee a stable government in Nigeria unless the injustice in terms of representation in government and development is redressed."

Dr Johnson of LASU believes un-

less the people are mobilised to react to military coups, the military will not be comfortable in the barracks. Gen. Olufoye says until "we aspire to remove those ingredients conducive to coups by ensuring we have fairness, justice, accountability, welfare and keeping the army fully busy and performing its statutory function", it will continue to intrude into politics. Chief Akanbi says since "no matter the amount of contributions the military may have made, 20 good military juntas cannot be equated with one bad democratically elected government," there must be a constitutional provision (there is one in the 1979 constitution) to keep soldiers off the political terrain.

Dr Ogunade wants soldiers who make forays into politics arrested and tried for high treason, when they relinquish power as it was done in Argentina. Dr Cee Ess Momoh of the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos, argues like Rawlings that a political role be found for the soldier. Said he: "In Nigeria, it's not part of our military culture to find things to engage our soldiers. And in a situation where the military is not engaged most of the time, it has a legitimate right to behave like a hungry dog who can bite its owner." Dr Momoh says retired generals should be recalled to give the present crop of military leaders a sense of direction devoid of politics.

Fola Sasegbon, a legal practitioner, wants Nigerian soldiers shipped to Southern Africa to confront the racists, instead of keeping them at home "rotting away," adding that Cuba, a small country of 10 million has sent its troops across the seas to defend Angola from the South Africans. "Where were our armed forces?" he asked. Chief Olu Awolowo, a minister in the Shagari regime, wants an incoming administration to probe the military to ascertain who is more corrupt. This, he says, will deter trigger-happy soldiers with ulterior motives from attempting to take over government.

Said Justice Akintola Aguda last week: "One thing which is clear is that such a long period of military administration (18 years) cannot be healthy for development of a democratic form of government in this country." Whether the Nigerian military will respect the wishes of Nigerians and allow democracy to take root in Africa's leading country is better left for the future to decide.

By Abdu Orah with Paul Nwamburke, Debo Adeleke, Wale Akin Alina, and Dili Ojukwu.

# The lure of power



*"The question is, if the military intervenes to save the rest of us from bad politicians, who — pray — may deliver us when the military sinks to the abyss as well?"*

BY OKEY NDIIBE

**T**HE subject of power has intrigued scholars ever since man left the state of nature and organised himself in social groups. Power, a mere five letter word, is a compulsive subject because of the way it touches profoundly on human societies. Political power (with which we are here concerned) is, after all, the ability — won in an electoral or bullet contest — to compel obedience to one's will. Or, perhaps, we may say that this is, in a practical sense, the purpose of political power.

The ends to which power is set are what, finally, lead many to suspect the motives of those who seek power. "Power," a sage has warned us, "corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." It is a clearly apocalyptic view of power, and while harsh experience points up the wisdom of that opinion, we must, in order not to get altogether too cynical, seek to modify the wholesale indictment implied by the sage.

We must then suppose or hope or pray that power corrupts only those minds already fitted out for evil, and absolute power absolutely corrupts only those pre-disposed to excessive malevolence.

We began by suggesting, indirectly, that power was invented when man began to come together under a more social ambience. This is, of course, not true. Power has always existed; indeed, it existed in more unbearably malignant forms in the jungles of those dark times when the law of survival meant that man had to prey on his fellows. In those remote times when man was still cave-bound and the world was evolving and things had a charmed ring of surprise and danger, the golden rule was a covenant written in blood: survival of the fittest.

But with society's coming into being as a conscious social unit, with rules, rulers and the ruled — the three components in the social dialectic — power began to take on a more benign, beneficial, and less arbitrary tone. It became, in its new phase and face, a bestowable instrument, and one mediated by the implied obligation that it must be exercised in the common good. This, at any rate, was the hope of the social contract.

A lot of power — to corrupt a well known saying — has since fallen into bad ways. The examples are far too many, but contemporary illustrations will suffice: think of, from

the African continent alone. Idi Amin. Jean Bedel Bokassa. Kamuzu Banda, Siad Barre, Daniel Arap Moi, the hideous regimes in Latin America.

Is the corruption of power then an abiding malaise in human nature? The argument would end if it were. But we have seen, side by side with the absurdities of power, fine examples of a healthful exercise of power. What power does to the wielder is, perhaps, a function of one's preparation for it. Yes, it is true that power is an intoxicant which could push the mind to wicked deeds. But is it not often because the mind had not, in the first place, firmly trained itself on lofty goals?

Power corrupts in varied ways. There is sometimes the lure to abuse, to exercise power without recognising the imperative to account for its exercise. There is also the tendency to see one-self — once in power — in the light of an infallible deity whose words and deeds are placed beyond the pale of reproach.

In Africa, and much of the Third World, there is the syndrome of sit-tight leaders, who, in order to maintain their continued tenure in discredited power, seek to crush real and imagine opposition with a force that cannot fail to impress potential opposition.

The consequences of abuse of power can be dire and deep. The phenomenon of coup d'etat has become a recurring decimal in, let us say, Nigeria. But coups which were, at first, a consequence of political misdemeanour by politicians, have, by their frequency, become a part of Nigeria's political problems, hardly the solution. And the hottest question on the nation's agenda now is, will the military ever leave?

The first instinct is to answer with a straight no! Soldiers always intervene, here as elsewhere, on the excuse that the civilians have failed to live up to the minimum requirements of responsible leadership.

No, it is not true that bad government by civilians is the sole source of coups in Nigeria. The leaders-in-uniform have not demonstrated any inclination to dignified conduct. The lure of power — vulgar, visionless, sometimes vicious — has a lot to do with it, too. The question is, if the military intervenes to save the rest of us from bad politicians, who — pray — may deliver us when the military sinks to the abyss as well? We must listen to the voice of the slain Salvadorean poet, Roque Dalton.

*The President of my country is today called Colonel Fidel Sanchez Hernandez.*

*But General Somoza, President of Nicaragua, is also President of my country.*

*And General Stroessner, President of Paraguay, is also a little the President of my country, although less*

*than the President of Honduras, who is General Lopez Arellano, and more than the President of Haiti, Monsieur Duvalier.*

*And the President of the United States is more the President of my country than the President of my country who, as I said, is today called Colonel Fidel Sanchez Hernandez*

We must hope, after reading these haunting lines, that the Nigerian situation never gets quite as absurd.

# Recipe for recovery

Experts weigh options on resuscitation of the economy

**T**HREE years after restructuring programmes the African continent is worse off than before. Such was the conclusion of a recent World Bank study. And it appears that Nigeria, neck-deep in the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), is being handed a score-card that mirrors its bad old ways in search of an answer. Mallam Haroun Adamu, publisher of *Nigerian Economist* thinks the solution lies in debt repudiation. Says he: "Nothing short of our determination to say, sorry we cannot pay, would solve our debt problems, some frivolous, some unaccounted for."

Not every one shares this extreme view. Dr. Bade Onimode of the University of Ibadan suggests that a return to fixed exchange rate that is adjusted from time to time would bring the ugly side of SAP in check. Last month, these proposals were put before a crowd, spilling all over Nigerian Institute of International Affairs Auditorium that gathered to listen to a panel discussion organised by First Bank of Nigeria Limited on "Nigerian Economy: Prospects and Retrospect 1978-1992".

But before the debates warmed up to an inconclusive end, the experts took a trip down memory lane to trace the genesis of Nigeria's economic ills. Chief Oluwale Adeosun, Managing Director, First Bank, said that 1978 was the peak of the boom period and the beginning of the down turn. Significantly also, it was the year that Nigeria took its first external loan having been, before then, a net creditor to external bodies. Ten years after, that singular step is still being translated into an economic nightmare.

The statistics being churned out is not encouraging. The neglected agricultural sector is still in the doldrums. For example, cocoa production in 1979 was 210,000 tonnes. By 1982 production had plummeted to less than half this figure. Last year, only about 105,000 tonnes was produced. SAP was introduced to correct all these and other anomalies. "Have we found the answer to our problems?" asked Chief Adeosun.

Chief Omowale Kuye, Secretary to the Technical Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation thinks so. For one thing, Nigeria has a government that has got the political will to

attack the roots of the illness afflicting Nigeria. For another, policy measures are now more continuous. Citing the present seven-year tariff regime, Rear Admiral Aikhomu, the Chief of General Staff said industries worth protecting would now have a longer planning horizon with minimal shocks. Though some industries are complaining of high tariffs, Dr. Dapo Fafowora, President of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) agrees with the C.G.S. that Nigeria should build the industry first before liberalising tariffs as the Indians and Brazilians did.

Even as SAP is being endorsed as the



• Adeosun: No solutions to problems yet

best thing that could have happened to the country, not all agree with the philosophy behind it nor the implementation of the programme. The government is dismantling bureaucratic controls in the foreign exchange market and taking its hands off non-strategic investments through privatisation and commercialisation, but these do not seem to go down well with some economists. Dr. Onimode asserts that the rate of fluctuation of the naira has shown that flexible, market-determined exchange rate is not good for Nigeria. Rather, the country should adopt a fixed exchange rate since it has too much external dependence. Attempts must be made, therefore, to reduce the link between, say, the dollar and the naira. Ultimately, part of the solution lies in pegging the debt-service ratio to about 10 percent.

Also the privatisation programme, in-

spite of the fragmented ownership structure entrenched in the guidelines appear a bit suspect. Asks Onimode "who gets what?" Indigenisation promoted inequality in the society, therefore, care should be taken that privatisation does not leave too few individuals in control of the tax-payers investment. While ownership of privatised companies is seen by some as a way to restructure the efficiency level of the economy, others like Haroun Adamu hold very strong ideological views, we should be wondering whether the ideological path we have chosen is the right one.

Because the Nigerian economy has been programmed since independence to service foreign interests, the current thrust of SAP, some economists say, is likely to run aground. Consider, for instance that the more the Third World tends to export the less revenue they get as commodities prices have crashed. Also the Lomé Agreement under which loans are disbursed to Sub-Saharan African countries by the European Community has now been put under IMF conditionalities. These, Onimode points out, is proof of the developed countries' strategy of political and economic control of our country.

He may have a valid argument. Creditors may in fact not be as sympathetic to our economic restructuring programme as they say. Nigeria owes money but so do Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. Why is there more pressure on Nigeria than Latin America? President Babangida told the nation last week that our creditors have not been meeting their obligations. In the same vein Professor Dotun Philips, Director-General of Nigeria Institute for Social and Economic Research, highlighted the problem thus: SEEM was supposed to have taken off on two legs with the World Bank providing one support. To date the World Bank has renege on the agreement. It has become obvious now that international support will neither come nor solve the problems because if and when it does come it will be late and useless.

The general consensus is that the country must anchor its revival programme on self-reliance and it appears the government is on the right path. But government must limit budgets to earnings and for good measure de-politicise economic policy initiatives, a situation that has created enough intractable problems already, in retrospect.

By Herbert Ojah with Lucky Flakpa and Chinedu Soronedi-Ofioro

# It's cheap, it's bad

Low prices lure consumers to fake goods

FOR a brief moment, Mr. James Sinusi Olaniyan could not believe the evidence of his eyes. A while ago, he had strolled from his office at Secretariat road, Mushin in Lagos, to buy a tin of Nescafe, for use while at work. When he opened the tin, what he found was not the usual brownish coffee, but a white substance. A closer examination revealed that the contents of the tin were garm. Overcoming his critical shock, Mr. Olaniyan returned to the nearby retail shop to ask for a replacement from the lady shop-keeper who was well-known to him. The lady, offering profuse apologies, offered another tin of Nescafe. Again, a repeat of the disquieting spectacle. One tin after the other, all the 48 tins of coffee she bought from her regular suppliers in a Lagos market were discovered to contain white garm instead of coffee. She had been duped!

The fake coffee incident is a recent case of the increasing wave of fake goods now flooding the markets across the country. Five years ago, many Nigerians watched in disbelief as container loads of sardines from Thailand were delivered at the Apapa port instead of rice. On May 14, 1987, the Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON) impounded 200 cartons of substandard and fake cable wires worth N40,000 from various stores in Alaba market also in Lagos. Seven traders were taken away for questioning over the seized items.

Yet, the police, in Oshisha Anambra State, last March, swooped on a wholesale shop in the popular Ochanja market where kilogrammes of sawdust were neatly packaged and sold as Omo detergent. At Oshodi bus stop in Lagos State, vendors rent the air with microphones as they beckon buyers to purchase their "gbanjo bata" (imitation foot-wear).

Only recently, electronic goods, watches and clocks, baby food, leather products, drugs, cooking equipment and vehicle accessories have swollen the ranks of fake goods readily available in most markets in the country.

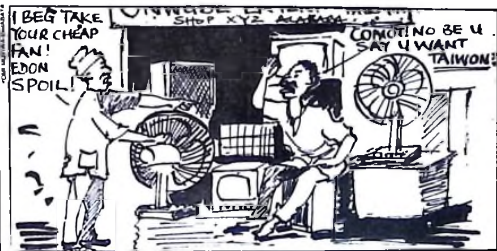
An African Guardian sample in Alaba, Jankara, Tejuosho, Idumota and Oshodi markets, in Lagos State shows that electronic goods such as electric fans and cables top the list of these fake goods. At Alaba market for instance, the usually popular KDK electric fans

now sells in two types. While the original model assembled in Nigeria by Adebowale Electrical Company has three blades, the fake one has four blades. At Idumota, SMT, CMC, CEMC and CEMCO are the imitation models of the SMC brand ceiling fan.

Also, Alaba market now parades new kinds of electric cables under the brand names of *Lion*, *Golden Tiger* and *Tarch*. These cables whose actual thicknesses range from one millimetre to 2.5 millimetre are smartly concealed for thicker and with higher voltage capacities ranging from five millimetres to 10 millimetres. Olufemi Orekoya, a quali-

tween N180 to N200. Here also, the various brands of fake SMC ceiling fan sell for between N200 and N250 while the original model sells for between N750 and N800.

Similarly, while the original Seiko model wrist-watch cost between N250 and N400, one can easily pick up the *Sieko* brand for between N60 and N65. The cost of *Sieko* wall clock is at par with the wrist watch, a sharp contrast with Seiko wall clock which costs between N800 and N1,000. Like the "gbanjo bata" vendors, wrist-watch and electronic goods sellers are quick to explain their different price structures. Mike Ilobo who sells electric fan on Idumagbo street, Idumota in Lagos says, "Only very few of us can import the original models of the electronic goods we sell because of their excessively high prices. Moreover, many buyers prefer



ty controller at Kablemetal Industries, Lagos says that this practice is capable of misleading electricians into installing the wrong cables in homes, offices and factories which usually result in fires or explosions.

Wall clocks and wrist watches are not exempted in the book of fakes. A popular brand, Seiko now has two duplicates — *Saniko* and *Sieko*. There are also fake leather products such as hand bags and sandals. At Oshodi market, *Playtime*, *Playtamer* and *Play-Tennis* stand out as the adulterated versions of the other-wise popular foot-wear-playtime.

The variegated prices of some of these goods easily establish the difference between the genuine and the fake. For instance, at the showroom of Adebowale Electrical Industries, Onipanu, Lagos a KDK standing fan sells for N720 while the same model of table fan goes for N550. But at Alaba market, the four-blades KDK table fan sells for be-

tween N180 to N200. Here also, the various brands of fake SMC ceiling fan sell for between N200 and N250 while the original model sells for between N750 and N800.

His explanation is in line with a popular notion that the prohibitive prices of the original models has opened an alley for fast business men who collaborate with fakers to flood the market with sub-standard goods. Obafemi Ajai, Marketing Manager, Adebowale Electrical Industries also believes that the predominance of fake models is a reaction to higher prices brought about by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and a depressed naira value at the Foreign Exchange Market (FEM).

Market watchers are baffled that fake goods could abound in the market under the watchful eyes of the Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON). They argue that SON has not intensified its periodic market raids and that the single raid on Alaba last year only succeeded in pushing up the prices of the fake goods since owners want to recover the amount lost during the raids. Moreo-

er, they argue that SON has not spread its dragnet outside Lagos State from where these goods escape into other parts of the country.

But Malam Ibrahim Aliyemade, chairman, Governing Council, SON, strongly holds that his organisation has done its best within its limits. According to him, the country's borders are too vast for only 60 scientists working with the organisation as at 1986 to cover. Moreover, he says SON has not enjoyed the full co-operation of the customs and excise department which often frustrate its monitoring efforts. According to him, SON, with its meagre man-power has the task of casting an eye over locally made goods as well as police the borders to prevent the dumping of fake or inferior goods. Today, only 250 made-in-Nigeria goods have passed the eagle-eye tests of SON while 1,000 are on the waiting list.

Last year, Colonel Anthony Etukudoh, chairman of SON, announced plans by the organisation to go into pre-shipment inspection as well as check imported goods at ports as an additional measure to ensure the goods meet the right specification. Last February, SON floated a six-man committee on baby food, and announced the establishment of 240 standards covering the fields of electronic technology, civil engineering, mechanical and automobile engineering, textile, food, drinks and beverages, chemical, plastics, leather shoes, paper and allied products.

While concerted efforts are on to stamp out fake products from the markets, some opinions are counselling that a distinction be made between imitations, fakes and counterfeits. Peter Nwosu, a motor parts dealer believes that some imitation models have some economic value though they may not be as durable as the original ones. Besides, they sell faster since they are cheaper. He believes that Nigeria should be encouraged to imitate some products since they have chances of perfecting them. According to him, some vehicle accessories such as plugs, carburetors, gaskets, piston, engine cylinders and re-bored engine blocks have been made by Nigerians who only need more time to perfect. On the other hand, he believes that faking and adulteration amount to sabotage perpetrated by dupes. This he says should be stamped out entirely. But, that is a task SON and other regulating bodies in the country seem ill-equipped to do.

Chinedu Soranndi-Ottaaro with reports from Lucky Flakpa and Herbert Ojiah.

## Job Guardian

- Chief Accountant with six years working experience and a member of ICAN. Contact: Establishments Officer, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

- General Manager with 10 years experience and a registered member of COREN with B.Sc. in Civil Engineering or its equivalent. Contact: The Managing Director, P. O. Box 317, Lagos.

- Accountants preferably with ACA, ACMA or ACCA certificate and aged between 25 and 35 years. Contact: Executive Selection Division, Coopers and Lybrand Associates Limited, P. O. Box 4220, Lagos.

- Assistant General Manager (Computer Services) aged not below 40 years and a minimum working experience of 10 years. Qualification: B.Sc. or H.N.D. Computer Science or A.I.B. Contact: The Assistant General Manager, (Staff), First Bank of Nigeria Ltd., P. O. Box 52th, Lagos.

- Assistant Directors of Research and Chief Research Officers with 10 years experience. Qualification: Ph.D. in either Chemistry, Biochemistry, Engineering, Microbiology, Computer Programming or Leather Science and Technology. Contact: The Director, National Institute for Chemical Technology, P. M. B. 1042, Zaria.

## Merchant Bank of Africa

Merchant Bank of Africa closed its books for the fiscal year December 31, 1987 with ₦55 million in gross earnings, up 150 per cent from the previous year. Pre-tax profit jumped by 180 per cent to ₦10.6 million while total assets went up 90 per cent to ₦607.5 million. The company is declaring a 50 kobo dividend per 100 kobo ordinary share.

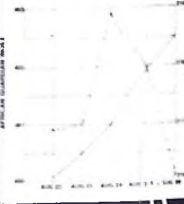
## Naira still low

Last Thursday the Naira went down by 13 kobo against the US dollar at the 61st bidding session of the auction's foreign exchange market. For the next fortnight one US dollar will exchange for ₦4,750. The Deutsche Mark, with the strongest showing, appreciated by 4.4 per cent when compared to the 67th bidding session.

## LEADING CONTRIBUTORS TO AFRICAN GUARDIAN INDICES AS AT AUGUST 26, 1988



## SUMMARY OF NISE & AFRICAN GUARDIAN INDICES AS AT AUGUST 26, 1988



## August 1988 Price Gain Leaders

	% Gain	Price Gain Aug. 26 (K)	Close 26 Aug. 88 (K)	High 26 Aug. 88 (K)	Low 26 Aug. 88 (K)
P. I. Manufacture	28.85	15	67	172	
1. Cocoa	21.06	10	50	4	2
1. Tin	17.33	16	134	33.8	
1. JAFN	13.33	2	17	1.5	
1. Coca Cola Bottlers	12.94	11	95	10.5	
1. Bank of Africa	12.90	3	27	2.5	
1. JAFN	12.50	5	82	17.6	
1. Nigerian Breweries Ltd	11.37	17	181	17.9	
1. F. B. Bank	9.09	5	60	6.5	
1. Guinness (Nig.) Ltd	8.53	10	122	4.84	100
1. Sunair	8.50	4	58	8.0	
1. NICE	7.47	11	178	27.0	
1. Africa	7.30	10	187	15.0	
1. Nigerian	7.18	5	71	8.5	
1. Oceanic Parks	6.12	6	104	14.0	
1. NICE	5.49	9	173	36.6	100
1. WAFCD	5.19	7	142	11.5	
1. Thomas Wyatt	4.28	7	170	20.0	
1. Guinness Bank	4.07	5	130	16.0	
1. Poly Products	3.77	2	55	7.5	

Actual analysis based on The African Guardian's analysis of Nigerian Stock Exchange transactions from August 1, 1988 to August 26, 1988.

The AFRICAN

# Guardian

## Advertising industry in Nigeria

### An Overview

The origin of advertising goes back to before 1450 when Gutenberg invented the printing press. Advertising was said to have been mainly practised by the word of mouth, hawking, shouting and crying.

The historical development of advertising in Nigeria can be traced back to 1928 when the former West African Publicity company, now Lintas, was incorporated. Lintas' experience and success story led to the emergence of other advertising outfits such as Hornblow, Cox and Freeman, Cillies West Africa, Auger and Tunner and Nigerian Bureau of Publicity, mainly owned by foreigners.

However, during the period of 1930s and 40s, the initial problem was the absence of local expertise and insufficient publishing houses. From 1928 to the end of World War II, the press medium began to play a minimal role in Nigerian advertising. In fact, there were only three daily newspapers which were available to the advertisers then, and these were the *Daily Times*, *Lagos Daily News* and *Nigerian Telegraph*. It was not until the 1950s and 1960s that advertising began to become popular.

The 1970s witnessed the emergence of indigenes on the advertising scene. There are more professionals with increased standard of performance, with the expatriates still at the helm of affairs. However, with the Nigerian indigenisation decree of 1972 Advertising became the exclusive preserve of Nigerians, and the gate was thrown open to Nigerians to take control of this capital intensive industry. This led to the emergence of new advertising outfits either formed jointly or individually. The oil boom of this period added a new impetus to this business. Advertising agencies became a lucrative business although, relatively, advertising in Nigeria is still in its prime.

The economic initiative of the present administration of President Babangida has meant that both clients and agencies have now resorted to comprehensive planning, more resourceful orientation and economy of scale. No more money to throw around, with increase in rates which some publishers have justified as a result of the devaluation of naira, hike in spare parts and all printing materials, it meant that only selected media will be patronised since companies cannot afford to increase their publicity allocation. The resultant effect is a cut on the number of insertions, frequency and reach. Advertisers have now resorted to radio and out-door advert campaigns rather than using newspapers and television. However, the newspapers are not relenting their efforts to convince consumers that they should maintain their



From left, May Nzaribe, Joe Finlay Jr. and Femi Adeniyi-Williams: Gurus of the advertising industry.

loyalty with the stable; their old friend and companion.

In order to present a comprehensive report of the industry, we sent questionnaires to the agencies. From those who completed and returned theirs we present their views on major issues.

On the effects of SAP on agencies, there was a consensus of opinion that SAP is a two-edged sword. Positively, they all agree that the introduction of SAP has led to a kind of discipline not only in advertising but also on the side of macro economics. Agencies are now more creative and aggressive in dealing with their clients who want advertising expenditure to be justified before giving their approvals.

SAP has led to increased advertising expenditure by clients on some brands. Negatively, it has also led to the demise of weak and uncompetitive agencies as well as clients who could not defend their market shares. It has also placed extra constraints, especially on production.

On the problems of the industry and how they can be solved, all the agencies who sent in their questionnaires recognise unethical or unprofessional practices between clients and agencies, from agencies to agencies, media to agencies and agencies to media as the main problem facing the industry. Others are dearth of skilled experts, proliferation of agencies and reduction in circulation of newspapers. They all believe that it can be solved through re-orientation, training and a bit of understanding from the support



It takes  
**PAL**  
to sell a pair of shoes  
to the lame



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institutions.

Should there be government control of this industry? The general trend is 'yes' but with a clause that control should only be limited to recognising the industry as a professional body and setting the standard. However, they feel that qualification of membership should be the responsibility of the Association of Advertising Practitioners in Nigeria (AAPN) though a substantial number of respondents say that they don't welcome such control.

Changes that they want to see in the industry include more research-based planning, preparation and placing of advertisement, more of AAPN's sanctions on erring members, establishment of more institutions for manpower training and more ethical considerations in the pursuit of business.

Here are excerpts from an exclusive interview with Mr. Ayo Owoborode, President of the Association of Advertising Practitioners in Nigeria by *The African Guardian* on various issues affecting the industry.

On the question of government control of the industry and its practitioners.

He feels that government control is necessary in order to do the following: To accord the industry professional recognition before the law, which he



■ Shobajio, M.D. Insight Communications

■ Owoborode, AAPN President

helps would help to streamline the practice; define advertising and its practitioners and facilitate recognition to individual advertising practitioners who may be working outside the agencies as well as providing a legal backing to discipline of erring members.

On the relationship between agencies and publishing houses

Mr. Owoborode confirms that it is cordial but there is room for improvement. He added that there is necessity for the media houses to see advertising agencies collectively as an organisation that they can trust because the two have mutual benefits to derive from each other if they both can come together and work like a team; as partners in progress. He however does not favour the general polarisation of agencies when it comes to settlement of bills but argues that individual agencies needs to be treated on their credit worthiness. He however advised the media houses to make their credit control more efficient.

On the accusation that it does the industry no good if an agency handles two competitive brands.

He does not see anything wrong in that because it is acceptable anywhere in the world especially if an advertiser feels that such agency, irrespective of the accounts it handles, is still considered as the best to handle his product or service. After all, there are many departments within a reputable agency which handle different accounts, he added.

In addition, he indicates that it is courtesy for an agency to tell the client if it is going to handle the same brand that is in direct competition with its client.

On the issue of membership.

He says that the Association has 57 names of registered members. He states that Conditions for membership are not strict and for any serious advertising agency to fulfil. He hopes that government control of the industry will lead to more recognition of the industry and its membership. The President indicated that there is a committee that investigates allegations of unethical behaviour levelled against any of its members and once this has been proved beyond reasonable doubt, AAPN has never failed to punish

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Of That Special Time in Your Life"

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# How to know an agency that really cares

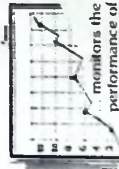


You know an agency really cares when ...

It is involved in the complete marketing process of your product/service.



... has experienced creative people handling your account.



... monitors the performance of your product/service during and after a campaign.



... produces campaigns that create awareness and improve sales figures.



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**Sunrise**

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such member.

**U**NTIL the formation of the Association of Advertising Practitioners in Nigeria (AAPN) in 1971, what is today known as the advertising industry was virtually non-existent in the country. And ever since then the advertising industry has been growing though not without hitches. Chief among the problems of the industry is its free-for-all nature.

Despite the gloom in the economy, the rate at which advertising agencies spring up cannot but leave one wondering what magic there is. It is also wondered whether there are any laid down guidelines by the government.

According to Dr. A. C. Daramola, a lecturer at the Mass Communication Department of the University of Lagos, there is really no advertisement in Nigeria in the actual sense of the word if one takes a look at the billings. To him a hundred million naira out of five billion naira billing is not much. He sums it up by saying that advertising still has a long way to go in Nigeria.

He further explains that what we have now is a kind of mixture of a few well-meaning, articulate minded practitioners largely webbed among crooks whose sole concern is to make money while exploiting the ignorance of the teeming population. Or how can one explain the practice of an agency sponsoring two opposing and competitive products?

Daramola criticises the way accounts are being given or won by agencies and the 'flight-by-night' agencies. Although, he supports a mixed-grill, both local and foreign materials for our advertisements, he however points out that some purely foreign adverts are really harmful to the Nigerian audience because they are illusory and unattainable, adding that what most of these foreign ads do is to raise hopes but only to dash them later.

However his is not a blind condemnation as he equally proffers suggestions on how to make the industry survive and flourish as in other lands. He suggests that government should standardise the industry while the AAPN as it is, requires a cordial re-organisation for better results. And that "flight-by-night" agencies should be made to sit-up and provide adequate, well qualified staff and up-to-date infrastructure.

He reasons that SAP and FEM have really put

sanity to the industry. But its adverse effect is that it has so much diminished the size of money available for campaign to the point of hampering and limiting effective campaign. He wants government to engage in enlightening the citizenry on what advertising is all about as well as making advertisers know their promotion freedom and how far it can go. In a nut-shell, he wishes to see journalism adhere strictly to the tenets of truth. But he believes that government has a large role to play through regulations as well as enforcing them. Because as it is now, even on occasions where there are laws, they are scarcely adhered to.

#### The problems and solutions

**T**HE advertising industry in Nigeria is still in its inchoate stage. Therefore, it is not out of place that the industry has problems. Some of the problems plaguing the industry, according to May Nzeribe, Managing Director, Sunrise Marketing Communications Limited, include unstable management and staff, proliferation of agencies, accumulation of accounts (even when an agent knows that he cannot cope, he still wants to service such account), infra-

Others are inadequate trained personnel, infrastructure, support institution, editing, printers and recording equipment. The available inputs are not enough to service the industry. Another problem is the absence of credible market research. Nigeria still uses the 1963 census figures to compute its development. Lack of credit controls by the media houses which has led to some agencies' refusal to release monies that have been paid by clients is creating a bad image for the financially prudent agencies and the industry as a whole.

Solutions to these enumerated problems include re-orientation, training and change of attitude by practitioners. More understanding and consultation with the support systems in Nigeria.

#### Prospects for growth

Even if there are 10,000 agencies in Nigeria today, it will still not be enough to satisfy demand for their services, taking into consideration the population of Nigeria as the largest market in Africa. However, it is not numbers that determine good values for money, but the perception of the industry by its customers must. Being a service industry, advertising practitioners must

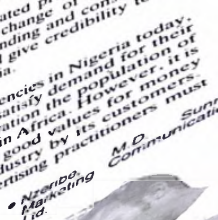


• Adegbiji, M.D. Kilburn Advertising Ltd.

• Babalola, M.D. Creative Concept Ltd.



• Omukunle, M.D. Vision Link



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the unconventional is  
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not only be qualified but must have experience in the field. This will enhance the credibility of the industry. The way the industry perceives itself will also determine how it is seen by the public. More creative, aggressive media executives hold the key to the development of the industry. There is no doubt that there is a future for this industry as long as we keep producing, consuming and marketing. One lesson from SAP is that the unorganised, shoddy, lazy and dull ones have started to fall by the way side in the advent of computerization and introduction of modern techniques in advertising while the able and organised ones will keep enjoying public rapport.

By *Taiwo Rotimi* with report from *Tunde Akinola*

#### VISION LINK NIGERIA LIMITED

Visionlink occupies a magnificent building at 11A, Adebambo Street, Obanikoro, Lagos. The Agency's organogram shows an Executive Director and Client Services and Creative Director. They operate a group system which ensures an almost complete separation of accounts so as to minimise conflicts, preserve trade secrets and maintain distinct creative jobs for each client.

This system has been known to work in the past and is still working. Their philosophy is the dedication of the agency's existence to producing compelling and outstanding advertisements for clients, while laying the foundations for the highest standards of excellence in all disciplines. Visionlink works by creating a clear and desirable brand identity which is unique and unassailable. Some of their objectives are:

To serve clients, at all times, more effectively and efficiently. To continue to give honest and sincere service.

#### Kilburn advertising Limited

Kilburn Advertising Ltd is an impressive set up on Oweh Street, Fadeyi Lagos that teems with experienced and highly skilled professionals. Their creative approach is fresh. They believe that the beginning of success in advertising is to be different and that the creative function is paramount. They see research as a powerful ingredient in campaign planning. The company has a blue-chip but decidedly manageable list of clients that affords personal service.

Kilburn started off in October 1984 at Ilaka Street, Ilupeju. They have technical partners in the United Kingdom and United States of America. According to the Chief Executive of Kilburn Mr. Oluwasegun Adegbiyi, "The first five years of an agency should be dedicated to action and not for holding talks." It is his opinion that a good agency should be able to say no to a new business if it is incapacitated. "With open mind, a spirit of healthy competition and considerations to their style, Kilburn, L.T.C, Macsell and Sunrise will put severe pressure on the other big agencies in the next two or three years," Adegbiyi, concluded.

Kilburn's creative high score is demonstrated in the TV programme — "Match of the Week" they created and coordinated for a year, and the current TV commercial for MAMSER which is unique, original and well put together.

**NMT**  
WOOD-WORKING LATHE  
- the master craft - man of prized furniture fame!

Every furniture maker whose customers are today's trendy market must own the master craftsman and woodmaster NMT Wood Working Lathe. NMT Wood Working Lathe is a master sculptor. It can shape and trim furniture to radiate beauty little wonder then, every furniture shaped with NMT Wood Working Lathe becomes a prized one. Give our Marketing Manager a ring today.

These Machines are fabricated by NMT without foreign assistance.

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P.M.B. 4343, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria.  
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Save foreign exchange, order your industrial Spare Parts, from NMT

Nigeria Machine Tools Ltd ... the catalyst for industrial development



Seoul Sports Complex. Under 24-hour surveillance

## Ready, set....

South Korea appears ready to host trouble-free Olympics

**C**OULD the latest stirrings of students' protest represent the darkest hour before dawn for the Seoul Olympics? With barely 10 days to the games opening in South Korea many sports enthusiasts are expecting an unconditional nod of assurance. But a mist of uncertainty continues to hover on world expectation.

Last week the safe arrival of the Olympic flame in South Korea served to fire the anger of two students who protested on the Olympic torch relay route in the Massan province. Their arrest by the police was not enough to repress apprehensive athletes and visitors who are bound for Seoul. Police recovery of nine homemade bombs and bomb making equipment from the home of another arrested student has been the source of renewed uneasiness about the games.

The confrontation between the South Korean government and its students predates the Olympics. Korea emerged from the Second World War split

into North and South between the United States and the Soviet Union. Attempts at reunifying North and South Korea have since then been deadlocked. Radical South Korean students who are pro-North welcome the Seoul Games only as a platform from which more student agitation for reunification can be launched. Recently, however, the students appear to be fighting the government of President Roh Tae Woo alone.

Communist North Korea's uneasy relations with the South, initially viewed as the greatest threat to the games, appear to have cooled. The hope, however, is that the North would not be hiding any aces up its sleeves. Unfortunately, past experience leaves little room for cheer. The North was considered responsible for the bombing of a South Korean jetliner last November. All 115 passengers died. North Korea has also made futile attempts to convince other communist nations to boycott the Seoul games.

The North's bid to co-host has also crashed.

Despite North Korea's promise not to disrupt the Seoul Olympics, there are still fears of a possible terrorist attack on athletes. There is also growing fear of possible terrorist acts at the Olympic sites. Determined not to leave anything to chance, the South Korean government has beefed up its security forces. The Olympic sites have been under 24-hour guard for the past nine months. To avoid the channeling of time bombs into South Korea, Japan has, since two weeks ago, been checking parcels destined for South Korea in 13,000 post offices. Indeed, some Olympic watchers tend to believe the Games would not run into any hitches.

The presence of Soviet and Chinese athletes is seen as a deterrent to North Korea which, hope-

fully, would not risk courting the wrath of its communist allies. Besides, the magnitude of the Seoul Olympics, with athletes expected from 161 countries, the highest number ever, would most likely overwhelm, and command the respect of any opposition.

Ironically, the focus of world attention on the games would be the great opportunity any trouble maker could ever hope for. The Olympics have always been threatened by varied political events. In 1968, over 200 rioters demonstrating against Mexico's ruling party were shot dead by security forces. 11 days to the opening of the games. The 1972 games in Munich, West Germany was a tragic ruin following the massacre of 11 Israelis by Palestinian commandos. The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet, was a bitter pill which the United States found hard to swallow. Along with its allies, the US boycotted the 1980 Moscow games on account of the invasion. Not to be outdone, the Russians and their communist friends gave the US the finger and avoided the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984.

As it working toward the success of this year's Olympics, President Ronald Reagan had long holstered his smoking Presidential pistol and met with "Perestroika" Gorbachev on several occasions to chart the course of world peace. North and South Korea are expected to take a cue and embrace each other. The world would applaud the peaceful resolution of the bickerings between these two countries, which share a common ancestry, history, culture and language.

By John Nwaobi



# Wanted: Quotes from IBB

Nigerians call for memorable speeches from the president

GOING by professional standards, the manner in which President Ibrahim Babangida delivered his state of the nation address on August 27 is considered an improvement on his past performances. The argument is that at least the President did not propel himself through the 31-page address, a style that has almost become identified with him in the deliverance of his speeches. Considering that the August 27 address was recorded in one take, with a break while the Nigerian Television

Authority (NTA) State House Correspondents and film crew, using 20 minute-video cassettes, changed tapes, this is viewed as a plus.

But this is where the pluses end. For one, public relations analysts complain that the President's speech appeared a bit disjointed. "I don't see why he should talk of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in the early part of his speech, move to other things, and return to SAP later. It does not say much for impact," says a public relations executive.



• President Babangida: A speechwriter of sorts

Another feels that the President fails to infuse candour in speech reading: "He just goes flat out, no emphases where necessary". This perhaps explains why there are no memorable quotes after the President's speech, a blame analysts readily attribute to Babangida's speech writers. But it seems that the President is his own speech writer. According to a Dodan Bar-

racks source, drafts of a speech are given to the President either by his political adviser, Dr. Tunji Olagunju; his Chief Press Secretary Duro Onabule or from the office of the Secretary to Government, Chief Olu Falae. "It depends on what topic the President is going to speak on, and he polishes up the drafts himself", says the source.

This, the source says, ex-

## Eyes on the crown

Lasisi beats Allotey, prepares for World title

IF it had been a street brawl, Joe Lasisi would have been promptly arrested for "attempted manslaughter." But Lasisi's triumph, three weeks ago, over Ghana's Joe Allotey at the sports hall of the National Stadium, Surulere confirmed that a tuning fork had been applied to the rhythm of his gloves. With the victory, he retained his title as the African Boxing Council (ABC) light-heavyweight champion.

The 12-round-title bout lasted only five minutes and 11 seconds. Both fighters had sized up themselves in the first round with Lasisi scoring several good body punches. But the second round had hardly begun when the fistful face-off abruptly ended with Allotey's surrender. "I

was not seeing Lasisi," complained Allotey after the fight. "Each time I duck to the left to avoid a punch, another comes flashing at me from the right. I didn't want to be injured." Wise decision.

Since turning professional in 1983, Lasisi has won all his 18 fights; 17 by knock-outs, most of them barely lasting the third rounds. But by far the most exciting event of the night was the 12-round-title bout

• Lasisi (left) Two rounds too long for Allotey

between Victor Enyika and Rufus Adebayo in the national Bantamweight category. Enyika, who emerged the new bantamweight champion, exhibited such "cocky" confidence and skilfulness that Rufus was in trouble most of the time.

Among other victors were Vitalis Ejimolor who scored a 2-1 split decision over Waidi Bello in their eight-round encounter. In the national middleweight challenge fight, Collins Onwuzoga, scored a victory over Yisa Ade.

Convinced he can out-punch any candidate for

the World Boxing Council (WBC) and International Boxing Federation (IBF) titles, Lasisi is scheduled to trade punches with James Kitchen for the IBF light heavy title next month. But he has come up against a wall of opposition from the NBB of C. "It is illegal. You (Lasisi) cannot take the fight," rules the board which along with the Supreme Council for Sports in Africa (SCSA) have sour relations with IBF for maintaining links with apartheid South Africa.

Unruffled, Lasisi countered: "I don't care what anybody says. I'm going to bring back those titles (IBF and WBC)." As Nigerian boxing buffs wait to see whether Lasisi would go ahead to bid for the IBF title, they would also be anticipating the excitement to be generated by the NBB of C's reaction.

By John Nwaobi



## Assault on masked men

The Adesanyan brothers say armed robbery can be contained through co-operation

plans why there are ink marks and cancellations "even on the original texts". If memorable quotes of the President are not recalled after his speech, it could be that his white 'army regulation' singlet which appeared just below his neckline during the telecast was a source of distraction. According to analysts, the colour of the singlet somehow interfered with the attention of those listening to the speech. "He could have covered it up, whether it was army regulation or not. Where I watched him on screen, people talked of his singlet rather than listening to what he was saying," points out an observer. According to him, the President's green uniform appeared quite sombre on the television screen, enough to make the portion of "white" below his neckline seem out of place.

But the President's regulation singlet was not only a source of distraction. Analysts also say that his eye glasses appeared to change the image of the President. Though Dodan Barracks sources say that the glasses are mainly for reading, analysts feel that they water down the impact of eye-contact necessary to hold an audience to the kind of speech he delivered. Says a public relations expert: "Normally, you would be distracted by the glasses with steel frames that reflect in the glare of television lights. I would advise that he does away with glasses and uses a teleprompter. It will do more for his image".

But an NTA executive feels a teleprompter might not be well used by the President: "Even here in NTA where we have people well trained to use this equipment, they sometimes falter in relaying news".

By Wale Akin Aina

THE world premiere of *Vigilante* by Deji and Afolabi Adesanya, two weeks ago, was not exactly a rehash of the common place raw violence found in most imported films.

The confrontation between a group of residents and invading armed robbers subtly captured the insecurity of Nigerians. The sympathy inducing portrayal of a hand-cuffed police force touched a chord of empathy in Muhammadu Gamba, the Inspector General of Police.

It was no surprise that he sat through the 106 minutes duration of the film. Rather than whip out a pair of handcuffs for the Adesanyas, Gamba promised to underwrite part of the production cost of the *Vigilante*, but not before he cross-checked with his financial controller. He has since made good his pledge with a ₦25,000 donation. In addition, the film has won a place in the syllabus of all police colleges in the country.

It was not only Gamba that was full of commendation for the film makers. Miss Lola Femi Kayode the

creator of *Mirror* in the sun said with a smile of content: This is a fine film. It's a fair attempt for a first timer. Still, "it could be better" was the verdict of Lanre Idowu the editor of *This Week*.

But Kolosa Kargbo of



• Gamba

Prime People thinks "the plot is weak and not well developed." He represents some critics who think the film unsuccessfully redefined violence as it is ordinarily known.

If only Olu Jacobs — the

lead actor — (represented by his wife) broke his self-restriction of avoiding premieres, he would have been overwhelmed by the applause of the impressed audience when the actor came on stage to take their bow. Still, as the spectators treped home caught up in a debate of the film's controversial end — the burning of an apprehended robber — there remains the lingering thought that *Vigilante* siduously endorses jungle justice.

The film is likely to cause ripples across the land and probably beyond. Who knows? It might be a strong contender for the Lagos State Ministry of Information instituted Pa Olorunsola Martins award for the best movie.

### Landmarks

Transition: Sir Alexander Onyeador, first indigenous senior staff in Shell Oil Company, August 18, in his sleep.

Award: Gani Fawehinmi, Senior Advocate of the Masses (SAM), by students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, August 27.

Elected: Mike Okereke, Public Relations Adviser of United African Company (UAC), President of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR).

### Overheard

► Babangida score card: Onosode, Fafowura and others speak... But Fawehinmi's views are unpublishable.

— (Head line of *National Concord* of Saturday, August 27, 1988)



• Solanke

► ... women should be applauded for taking time off to have babies and thus ensure the survival of the human species. Childbirth is, therefore, a national service.

— Chief Folake Solanke (SAN) on legal protection for women from discriminatory treatment on "maternity grounds".

► I don't want to leave anybody under the illusion that it is not going to come. I said it will come. It's a matter of time.

— IIB on cabinet reshuffle

► I made a few additions and changes but I must say I couldn't persuade him to have a barber make him more presentable.

— Mrs. Elizabeth Ibunoh of Didi Museum, on Artist Olu Ogube's dreadlocks, at the opening of his art exhibition.

## For knowledge

AS a teenager, he tramped several kilometres to a plantation where he tapped rubber trees to make extra munny to enable him to go through secondary school. Today, Paul Eboese Ehizokhale's philanthropic gestures are motivated by his aversion to "promising human assets being allowed to waste due to financial constraints." He has, to date, financially aided the progress of about 24 Nigerians through universities abroad, both at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

dialer from England, and D Efthymatos from Greece; sponsored law and accountancy visiting Professors to lend technical assistance to BENSU; donations of rare Law and Accountancy books; 10 scholarship awards given in perpetuity.

## Ahmed the dream

HIS jobs, hooks and upper-cuts sliced through the air, and you could almost imagine the resounding thwack of his gloves bounding off his victim's body. Six-year old Ahmed Olabisi two weeks ago threatened to bring down the roof of the Sports Hall of the National Stadium, Surulere. Not only did the hall reverberate with applause, Ahmed practically carried out his fistie show-off on a green carpet at Naira notes laid out for him by impressed spectators.

Youthful enthusiasm? Not quite. "I like boxing," admits Ahmed, a primary one pupil of the Army Children School, Dodan Barracks, Obalende. Ahmed's father, Jimah Olabisi, is in full support of his son pursuing a boxing career. Why? "That is what he likes," retorts Mr. Olabisi.

When school work permits, Ahmed trains on



• Olusegun: No changing of job

Saturdays and Sundays with his coach, Femi Jacobs. If Ahmed's shadow-boxing exhibition was anything to go by, Nigeria may be on the way to another world champion.

## Double win!

SAM OLUSEGUN is no new customer at police stations. "I've been locked up over 20 times", he says with a grin. And when it comes to assaults, Olusegun hasn't been spared either.

You may wonder what this poor guy has done to deserve such treatment. It's nothing criminal; Olusegun's encounters are in the course of his duties. A photographer with *The Guardian*, his powerful

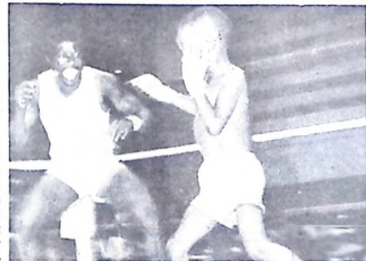
lenses capture photographs that tell stories. He has a particular interest in taking snapshots of any uniformed person behaving in an arbitrary manner in public.

He may be doing his honest work, but his 'victims' are often unimpressed. Of these unpleasant incidents, he says that "there's no question of me changing jobs. Instead I'm encouraged to continue to expose these men".

His 10-year photographic career has had happy moments too. Nigeria's first lady, Maryam Babangida, impressed with his works, once sent him a gift. Last month, more recognition came his way. Olusegun won the first prize of N2,600 during a National Photo Festival (Fotofest '88). The winning snapshot was of a Mercedes-Benz car in flames, with the caption "Money to burn".

The roving photographer puts his good fortune not only to "good news judgement", but also to the birth of his baby girl, Olutayo, during the competition. And he says: "I'm saving it all for her". Well, it's double congratulations for one who's had such a chequered career.

By Omatayo Afalabi and John Nwaobi



• Ahmed taking tutorials from coach Femi: "I like, boxing"



• Ehizokhale: No to brain drain

Though an electronic engineer by training, Ehizokhale, 42, is at present involved in the air travel business. Recently, he was made a "Rotarian honoris causa" (honorary rotarian), in Benin City in recognition of his contribution to education.

The Bendel State University (BENSU) Ekpoma is one institution to which he has turned his eyes of generosity. The school has received an endowment of two professorial chairs; a sponsored three-year teaching visit of Professors Richard, and Nwa-

## Dogging the radicals



It remains a classic case of "once bitten, twice shy". Not too long ago, on July 12 to be exact, a senior editor of the Ondo State (owned) Radio Vision Corporation, (OSRC) Mr. Olu Owutade aired an interview with a personality —

Mr. Alao Aka-Bashorun, President of the Nigerian Bar Association, whom by journalistic standards was newsworthy. While Owutade might have been expecting a pat on the back for a good copy, all he got was a kick in the backside. He was sent on indefinite suspension for talking with a radical. We hear however that Owutade's propensity to interview Aka-Bashorun was earlier discussed at an editorial conference in which he was given the go ahead, but shortly after the airing of the programme, the secretary to the Ondo State military government, Mr. Omosolunan Modupe was said to have called up the station and demanded an explanation as to why a radical should show his face and worse still talk on the government medium.

Lawrence Oni, co-ordinator of the station was said to have promised to retrieve tapes of the interview and rectify the situation. According to a station source "naturally, as expected in a government controlled medium, everyone becomes agreeable when bricks are flying".

On August 9, Mr. Owutade was recalled (his God was awake) with a warning "not to allow such a mistake occur again and to impress on you the need for discreet exercise in professionalism and good judgement in handling such programme of national interest".

Now Mr. Owutade's colleagues are celebrating his come back to the station and, are demanding (silently) that the state government furnish the station with a list of radicals, so they can easily identify them and stay away from them. We do not know if the state government would accede to this demand, but we expect that a sign post may soon be erected on the premises of OSRC with the warning that radicals should keep off as they have been determined injurious to the well being of staff.

## Quality tale-bearing

PERHAPS you may not have come across Moses the tamed raven, that character in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, who elevated tale-bearing to an art. If you haven't, no problems. Right in Lagos, there's a version of Moses (this one's not a bird) that performs that role creditably.

Intact, we are informed that this quality medium (sorry, Lagos Moses) has performed to well in one of its juicy tales that, unlike Moses who never came to harm's way, it has incurred the ire of one of those double-barreled tile holders in the proverbial corridors of power. We hear the man is so incensed that he has sent word across, retract the tale, apologise profusely and cap it up with ₦350,000. On the last but, we are not too sure whether the entire outfit is worth this mouth-watering sum of money.

But pray, what's all the brouhaha about. Well, we are giving you this bit off the record, even if the power source insists it should be put on record. Sure, all of this should remind you of the off-the-record specialist at the time the "elder brother" of Lucas Moses went to chat up the power

source itself. Enough of the digression anyway.

What we do hear, however, is that this particular Ameho (tale-bearer) hinted that our double-tiled off-the-record specialist, fearful of being swept aside in an anticipated announcement shuffle because of an unpleasant smoke hangover over the portion of his corridor, scampered off like a jibba-Ode to firmly his seat through some extra terrestrial means.

Well, you might ask, what is wrong in a man preparing his portion of a cake? Not much, we are tempted to say unless this is a case of a *bravachakra* of the more you look, the less you... ..

## Lessons for boarding

HERE are some useful (?) tips for prospective *been-there-and-whisper* who wish to check out. Andrew style and especially those who would like to make the trip on the Flying Elephant (variously known as Nigeria Airways, *Shi Powerless*, Nigeria Airway, etc). Firstly, never stay on the queue to obtain a boarding pass at the Nigeria Airways counter at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport. The reason is simple: you will never get one.



Secondly, always make sure you have extra cash (in foreign currency, the better) to "persuade" counter staff on the need for you to have a boarding pass and why your excess baggage should not be weighed. Thirdly and most important is, never play the smart Alec by berating chaos, and corruption at the Nigeria Airways stand. You will never get on the plane.

You don't believe in these tips? Then indulge us a *business with a true life situation*. For the London-bound Nigeria Airways flight W1 806 with departure time of 1 quarter more on Saturday August 20, passenger had arrived at 7:25 p.m. on Friday night for possible checking in. But before you could say *Hupona*, the whole Airways counter became a war zone as passengers became involved in a life and death struggle for boarding passes. Now some of the passengers whom we suspect already have knowledge of these tips we mentioned earlier, called aside officials of the Airways and "negotiated" for boarding passes from prices we hear, ranged from ₦50 to ₦100.

We hear also that almost ₦10,000 accrued to the pocket of these staff. When the plane finally left on full that Saturday morning, passengers on queue with time O.K. tickets were left behind. Promised one of them, Dr. Tony Afejuku from Port Harcourt: "I will become really friendly with counter staff from now on. I was a simpleton but next time... .. Do you get his drift?"

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