

Soyinka: When the noble and nobel met

AS a child in the historic town of Abeokuta, his interest rested in politics and religion. But about 40 years later when he was to receive the world's highest intellectual award, it was not the Papal's, highest honour at the Holy See and neither was it at the Buckingham Palace for

the famous O.B.E. award for being the "Obedient Boy of the Empire".

Today, he stands, not in

By TUNJI BELLO

the Papal's cassock nor in her majesty's knighthood, but as the blackman's number one noble laureate in literature, a symbol which he now holds — like 'KAKO', Onikunlola-Ekun, in late D.O. Fagunwa's 'Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo

Irunmole', a book Soyinka himself translated and adapted into English: A Forest of A Thousand Demons.

On July 13, 1984, while celebrating his 50th birthday in Ile-Ife, this 'Ijegba man by parenthood, internationalist by work, whom his friends prefer to call 'Kongi' and whom one Sierra-Leonean scholar once described as 'Our own W.S.' for sharing same initials with legendary William Shakespeare stunned his audience and guests, when he threw a bombshell: I belong to the wasted generation.

Although, Soyinka was then not explicit enough, the consensus of opinion amongst his listeners was that he probably was referring to 'how Nigeria has failed to tap from its flourishing arsenal of brilliant homosapiens. And if that consensus still holds today, it is not clear how this Noble laureate can continue to fit himself in. For if Soyinka once belonged to a wasted generation, today he has become an international property whose creative works, the world must cherish even after he might have gone beyond.

When his name was first mentioned in connection with the award three years ago, it was an indication that the world could no longer ignore one of Africa's intellectual giants. And by the time the Swedish academy landed him the laurel, he already had in his creative bag:-

A 'dance of the Forest' (1963) The Lion and the Jewel (1963) The Strong Breed (1965). The Swamp Dwellers (1965) The Road, (1965), The Interpreters (1965) The Trials of Brother

Jero (1965) Kongi Harvest (1966) Idanre (1967) The Forest of a Thousand Demons; translated from late D.O. Fagunwa's Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmole 1976. Before the Blackout (1976). A Shuttle in the Crypt (1972) Camwood on the Leaves (1972). The Bachae of Euripides 1972, The Man Died (prison notes, 1972). Season of Anomy, 1974, The Metamorphosis of Jero, 1974, Poems of black Africa (1975). Death and the Kings Horsemen (1975), Myth in literature and the African world (1976) Ake: Year of Childhood, (1983).

These do not include various articles dramatic sketches and plays which are either published in academic journal or various world collections, or staged for specific occasions, and circumstances. He has also written records and made films.

Since The Swamp Dwellers earned him the first prize at 1966 Negro World Arts Festival in Senegal, Soyinka has been the recipient of various awards and prizes, ranging from honorary awards from world reputable universities and arts institutes, to prizes including most recently, 1st winner of Agip International prize in humanities, and a few weeks ago was initiated into the American academy and institute of arts and letters.

To Soyinka, an artist is a mirror through which the society sees itself. And this is truly reflected in all his works.

In his poem 'Idanre' he vividly paints the picture of political violence in Nigeria or what Professor Kalu Uka of Theatre Arts department of the University of Calabar

once described as a moral issue resolves into a 'trial' of humanity in the 'Dance of the Forest' — a play written to mark Nigeria's attainment of independence.

In 'Death and the King's Horsemen where he portrays action as impossible and fulfillment as frustrating, or in what Kalu again called laughable dichotomies between old age and youth, strength and weakness, tradition and modernism,

Maunin and Specialist', Essays in Myths, Literature Myth and the African World, given to an extent in 'The Man Died'.

Soyinka too once admitted that he has a tendency towards an elliptic style of writing, but as he recently puts it after the Nobel Prize award. The question of obscurity is one thing which I can do all the time'...

He sighted the instance of a French man who won the



civilisation and primitivity in the Lion and the Jewels. And in the 'Trial of Brother Jero' where incompetent mediocres, in high places are, painted in their true colour, or in his famous Elpee, 'I Love my Country' where he caricatured the madness of Nigeria's second republic, or in his prison note 'The Man Died'...

Yet, Soyinka is an enigma, a multi-dimensional man meaning many things to different people he is an "all round artist, an essayist, novelist, poet, playwright, lyricist, singer, dramatist, satirist, social critic and politician.

These multifaceted parts of him have often made it difficult for analysts and critics alike to really place him in a perspective. A position that is not helped by what many see as idiomatic obscurity in most of his works like in 'Dance of the Forest',

award last year and whom the French President Mitterand said he never even understood one word in his writing. 'So the question of obscurity is relative' he said.

While Soyinka may not be understood by many, there is still one area where his impact is felt by all. As a social critic, social justice, crusader, and advocate for the oppressed, he stood upright, towering above his generation. He has used every medium and opportunity to chastise the foibles of successive Nigeria rulers and their institutional charlatanism.

Yet Soyinka to Chinweizu is a neo-colonial writer, to a radical ideologue like Biodun Jeyifo of University of Ife, Soyinka may be confrontational but is lacking in ideological commitment'.

But as the noble laureate once put it in his own reply, I

Continued on Page 13



Soyinka, accompanied by Prince Momah no longer a member of the wasted generation. Photo by TIMOTHY OYEOLA.

'THE UNBENDING BRANCH' OPENS AT PECREP THEATRE

SINCE Nigeria's first charitable theatre company, Pec. Repertory made its entrance some four or five years ago it has presented over 25 plays and 30 concerts of wide variety and of international significance.

Bearing the imprint of one of Nigeria's most dynamic playwrights Professor J.P.

DRAMA

Clark, Pec Rep has evolved a distinctive style which is demonstrated by the professional actors employed therein.

The press preview of the Unbending Branch which is one of the plays for Pec Rep's sixth season of plays for the month of October, took place sometime last week with a handful of mediamen as audience.

As with most drama sketches directed by Professor J.P. Clark, the artistic director, The Unbending Branch, a play by Efo Kodjo Mawugbe is unique in its simplicity of plot though some of the scenes tend to drag on for a while

By BETTY IRABOR

longer than they should thereby prolonging the play which would have concluded minutes earlier.

The Unbending Branch brings to two the number of Efo Kodjo Mawugbe's drama plays to be staged by the well known crew of Pec Rep. The first, The Struggle Continues or Aluta continua was staged four years earlier before a very impressive audience.

As usual, The Unbending Branch takes place in the author's favourite setting-Ghana and the minute the plot unfolds, all proofs that the various incidents being dramatised took place in Ghana are unravelled by the cast's dressing habit, their choice of names and mode of communication.

Though approached from a somewhat different perspective, The Unbending Branch runs parallel to the biblical depiction of the prodigal son story.

However, the playwright deviates from the biblical story because while the biblical son returns home amidst jubilations, Amamu,

the 'prodigal son' in The Unbending Branch returns home to a cold reception. His parents who are still smarting from the abominable behaviour of their 'wayward son' simply refuse to bend to accommodate their son who returns home in the garb of a city boy while clutching a suit case full of money.

At a glance The Unbending Branch is the story of a son (Amamu) who, disgruntled with his job as a farmer leaves for the city. His decision was viewed by his parents as a rejection and rebellion against the accepted norms of their society and they could not come to terms with this. In the ensuing argument, Amamu in a hurry to depart knocks his mother down, crippling her and leaving a mental scar in the hearts of his poor parents.

And so for six year, Arnega Kporvi (Oriasolle Enacholo) and his handicapped wife Mawuse (Toyin Ajetumobi) nursed the wound left behind by their only child.

The memories were painful especially as the poor folks were besieged by ferocious looking debt collectors, a man-Kofi (Peter Ijeh) and a

woman Adzovi (Ekuia M. Tandoh) who devised all tactics to extort money from their debtor.

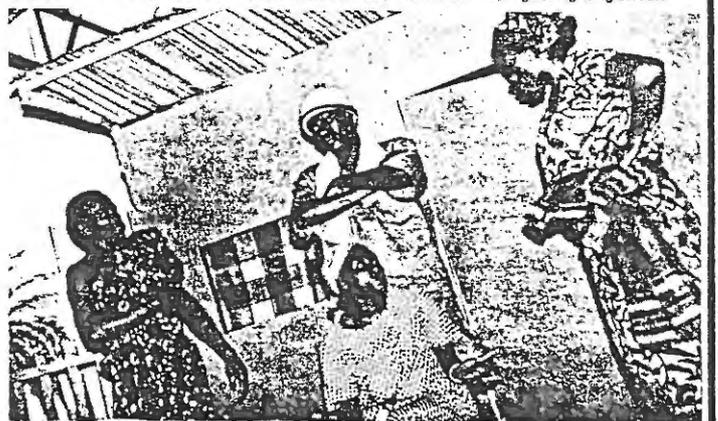
As the story progresses with a speed so fast, yet slow enough for the various actors to make an impact, we soon learn through a flash back to a day six years earlier of the immediate cause of the dissension between parents and son. We are told of how

Amamu had in the manner of the prodigal son sold for a pittance sum a family plot of land.

Having cleverly pacified one of two debt collectors, while the more obstinate one decides to pitch her tent in her debtor house until her fees of 10, 656 cedis and 12 pesewas were settled, the two lonely couple settle down. They allow their minds to drift to the day their son

gave them the entire length of his tongue. Through their reminiscences the hitherto ignorant audience gets a first hand knowledge of the events that led to the family scuffle which culminated in the exit of Amamu.

Only an adept at play directing could have successfully captured the mood which was achieved by a good lighting effect.



Arnega Kporvi and his wife Mawuse are besieged on either side by debt collectors.

YOUR LUCK TODAY

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19) A personal achievement gives you a lot of pleasure and satisfaction, and your future ideas connected with it will receive much closer attention.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) You'll need to exercise a certain amount of effort to put a new scheme into action. Otherwise, you can enjoy a relatively trouble-free and easy going day.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) You surround yourself with people you like today. Nevertheless, there is still a little in the ointment - and you don't know quite how to deal with it!

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21) Resist the temptation to spend too much cash on bits and pieces. You may not feel guilty about only spending a little at a time, but at those odd amounts soon add up.

GEMINI (May 22 - Jun 21) You are able to clear up a misunderstanding in double quick time today; and this puts you in a far happier frame of mind.

CANCER (Jun 22 - Jul 21) Why don't you try to instigate a new friendship, instead of always waiting for others to make the first move?

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23) You should be able to devote the day to purely pleasurable activities, although your conscience may provoke you into some action on the work or duty front.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) A surprise message starts your mind racing, and you may end up having got quite the wrong end of the stick.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23) You should certainly make sure you look your best today, for romance is in the air - and you don't want to be caught napping, do you?

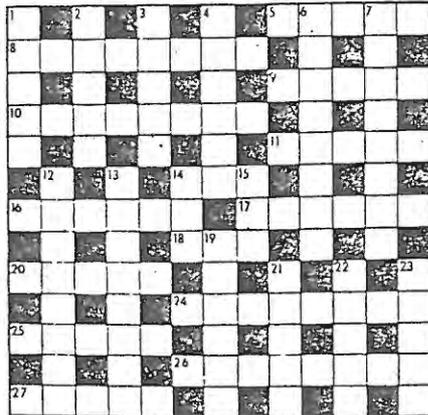
SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22) You foresee difficulties arising on the social scene. In fact, things will run particularly smoothly for you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22) A clash of personality could upset the applecart - if you let it. Surely you can put yourself above such trivial difficulties.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20) You'll be flattered by the attentions of someone of the opposite sex. But don't let your pleasure show too obviously.

BIRTHDAY LUCK: A rather splendid start to the year is envisaged on the business front, but this doesn't mean you can afford to sit back on your laurels later. Social activities will take up a great deal of your spare time, but you will find the hand of friendship most rewarding on many occasions.

QUICK 2



CLUES (No 6922)

ACROSS

- 5 Whim (5)
- 8 Gala (8)
- 3 Backbone (15)
- 10 Ward (8)
- 11 Sprite (5)
- 14 Skill (3)
- 16 Yield (6)
- 17 Take in (6)
- 18 Sin (3)
- 20 Principle (15)
- 24 Helpful (8)
- 25 Divest (5)
- 25 Municipality (8)
- 27 Rascal (15)

DOWN

- 1 Range (15)
- 2 Stream (15)
- 3 Defame (15)
- 4 Hurtle (6)
- 6 Evaluate (8)
- 7 Opposed (8)
- 12 Absurdly unselfish (8)
- 13 Large store (8)
- 14 Consumed (3)
- 15 Sailor (3)
- 13 Band (6)
- 21 Demon (15)
- 22 Battle (15)
- 23 Yawning (15)

QUICK 1 SOLUTIONS

Across

- 1 Far-fetched; 8 Pattern; 9 Basis; 10 Etc; 11 Contribute; 13 Urchin; 15 Dangle; 17 Pinpoint; 18 Idea; 21 Sauna; 22 Itemize; 23 Effeminate.

DOWN:

- 2 Antic; 3 Feed; 4 Tendon; 5 Habitual; 6 Dashing; 7 Asseverate; 8

(No. 6921)

- Presuppose; 12 Riffraff; 14 Censure; 16 Truism; 19 Drift; 20 Mean.

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REX ONDO: 7 & 9 p.m. 'ALL BABA' a sensational film with actions N1.00.

CHANGE OF NAME

IBRAHIM: I, Miss. J. Iyabo Ibrahim henceforth wish to be addressed as Mrs. J. Iyabo Macaulay. Former documents remain valid. Ondo State Teaching Service Commission note.

ILUOBE: I, formerly Miss. Elizabeth Omojarehio Iluobe henceforth wish to be known and addressed as Mrs. Elizabeth Omojarehio Akede. Documents bearing my former name remain valid. Nigeria Air-

ways Limited and the general public please take note.

OKEI: I, formerly known as Osamuyimen Okei now wish to be addressed as Osamuyimen Anthony Otiemere, Baptist High School Benin City and the public note.

FASASI: I, formerly Miss. Sakirat Mosunmola Fasasi henceforth wish to be called Mrs. Sakirat Mosunmola Umaru. Former documents remain valid. Ogun State Health Board please note.

ODUMOSU: I, formerly known as Miss. Olufunke Odumodu Oloko henceforth wish to be called Mrs. Olufunke Oluwayo Bamodu. Former documents remain valid. Ijebu Remo Co-operative Service Society please take note.

ATALA: I, formerly Mr. Samson Atala wish to be known as Mr. Samson Enock Atala. Former documents remain valid. Lagos State Ministry of Works and Transport, please note.

ALLI: I, formerly known and addressed as Miss. Moriamo Kikelomo Alli henceforth wish to be known and addressed as Mrs. Moriamo Kikelomo Akintola. Former documents remain valid. Ogun State Teaching Service Commission Abeokuta please take note.

ODUTAYD: I, formerly known as Miss. Bernice Toyin Odutayo henceforth wish to be addressed as Mrs. Bernice Toyin Dnabowale. Former documents remain valid. Obafemi/Owode Zonal Schools Board note.

ADESINA: I, Miss. Elizabeth Titilayo Adesina henceforth bear Mrs. Elizabeth Titilayo Ajewole. Former documents remain valid. Nigeria Oil Mills Ltd. & public note.

GRACE: I, Miss. Adeyemi Ana Olusola Grace now Miss. Grace Olusola Aina Ogunleye. Former documents remain valid. Eleyo High School Ikere Ekiti and general public note.

ADEAGBO: I, formerly known as Mr. Adetunji Abiodun Adeagbo henceforth wish to be known and called Mr. Adeagbo Abiodun Adetunji. All documents bearing the former names remain valid. University of Ibadan and the public should take note.

URGENTLY WANTED: FREELANCE SALESMEN/SALESWOMEN TO BE BASED ON COMMISSION. APPLY IN PERSON WITH YOUR APPLICATION TO THE GENERAL MANAGER NO. 7 LAWSON STREET OKEIRA AGUDA-TITUN AGEGE TOGETHER WITH SELF-STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE.

TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP: I Nengimotai Okolombiri is transferring the ownership of my cocoa farm at Oyobu at Oputuru in Otun in Yelga of the Rivers State, popularly known as Neki Koko-Kiri to first son Mr. Abi Neki.

Soyinka

Contd from page 5

an socialist, but not a Marxist, which has come to represent an admission of impotence which takes refuge in rhetorical verbalisation and forms of criticism which are not related to reality.

There is no reason, he argues, why the resources of the nation cannot be harnessed. The present legal system according to him is disadvantaged to the low income earners and what you might call lumpen proletariat. Housing, food and shelter should be equally accessible to all as well as educational opportunities.

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...yesterday.

PHOTO: INNOCENT OKAFOR

Soyinka demands justice for Giwa's killers

NOBEL laureate Wole Soyinka asked President Ibrahim Babangida yesterday to bring those involved in Dele Giwa's murder to justice.

*By Shaibu Adinoyi-Ojo
Staff Correspondent*

"If any of those who are even remotely by circumstantial events linked to this had been civilians, they would have now been under lock and key. But at the very least, those who are in any way by the slightest shred of circumstantial evidence, should be pushed aside from their positions to enable the public to have the slightest confidence in the investigations" he said.

that certain individuals are connected with circumstances leading to his death such people cannot be a part of the investigative process."

The literary giant who was at the Dodan Barracks to thank the President on the award of a Commander of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, said no stone should be left unturned in unravelling the mystery behind the death of the *Newswatch* editor-in-chief on Sunday.

Soyinka spoke of his meeting with the President when he met with the deputy editor-in-charge of *Newswatch*, Mr. Ray Ekpu, on a condolence visit on *Newswatch* grounds at Oregon Road, Lagos.

Soyinka who later visited the Oregon offices of the *Newswatch* to sign the condolence register said of the kill-joy Sunday tragedy:

"It was to have been a very uplifting thing to see people from all walks of life sharing a great euphoria of my experi-

Continued on Page 2

FORMER
General Sir
Comodore Philip U
Lagos yesterday
noon.

He flew out
today at 1.1.

They are at
the Murtala Mu
Airport Ikeja
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was unknown,
said he may have
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Mr. Justice
Hunponu-Wusu
chambers.

Commodore U
who was accompa
two aides, emerg
the judge's chamb
about 9.20 a.m.
spending 10 minut

Declining press
view, Commodore
told reporters: "N
Leave me alone."

His visit to the
might be connected
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\$75m for SFEM bidd

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will offer \$75 m
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tomorrow.

The amount is \$5
lion less than the \$80
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Thirty-three of the
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Continued on Pa

mother tells of a dream

Camera. By yesterday, Mrs. Giwa was being helped to a breakfast of pap and akara, her first meal since Dele's death on Sunday.

from a few relations. Dele's youngest sister, Abiba, 22, final year English Language student of the University of Sokoto, said her brother had asked to be buried in the premises of *Newswatch* in Lagos when he died. But she said there were moves by the family to bring his body home for burial.

Chief M.Y. Kanoba, the traditional ruler of Ekperi, said that the community met on Monday night and decided to

Continued on page 2

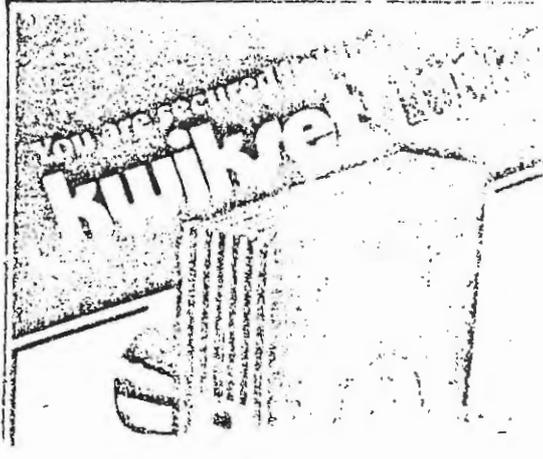
id she son's Radio news at night



Plank seller remembers Dele as letter writer

*By Shaibu Adinoyi-Ojo
Staff Correspondent*

PLANK seller Domme Ont, 69, told



give
in rec-
contribu-
community

world mourns Dele. The consolation is that the world is with you in this hour of need."

Dele's intelligence and flair for writing manifested very early in his life. His testimonial —

strange. It has no precedence in Africa," he concluded.
Mr. Samson Elutipe,

him. I have not even met him in real life" said Ogunleye.

Chinese troops killed

VIETNAMESE forces killed 250 Chinese troops when they repelled attacks in the far Northern Hanoi region, the official Vietnam news agency said yesterday in Hanoi. The agency said that Vietnamese forces fought off six successive attacks by a Chinese regiment in the Vi Tuyen sector. During these attacks "250 Chinese soldiers were killed"

Soyinka demands justice for

Giwa's killers

Continued from Page 1

ence and award, but it turned into ashes in our months when we heard the news of Dele Giwa's death.

"The finger of suspicion should be allowed to point to any one, no matter how high. If the people are not brought to book, then no one at all is safe".

According to Soyinka, the cowardice and the new dimension involved in this method of killing is sufficient to give concern to an administration which practises open government.

He said he left Dodan Barracks convinced that the President would do his best.

Replying, Mr. Ray Ekpu, *Newswatch's* deputy editor-in-chief, said a terrible precedence had been set with the parcel bomb affair and that he shared the view that the government has the responsibility of finding the culprit.

Ekpu assured Soyinka that Giwa's colleagues and friends would stop at nothing to uncover those responsible.

Soyinka signed the condolence register saying: "We shall not rest until justice is done".

He was conducted round Giwa's house and study in the company of Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi, *The Guardian's* Director of Marketing and Public Affairs. Visibly shaken by what he saw, Soyinka described the events of Sunday as "sheer butchery".

Soyinka also visited Giwa's wife, Funmi.

The renowned playwright was not alone in his call for public probe.

Film maker Ola Balogun said in view of "the grave and unprecedented nature of the assassination of Dele Giwa, it is incumbent on the Federal Government to institute an independent public inquiry of appropriate status into the circumstances of this "utterly potentially disruptive potentially disruptive crime, which has

not only claimed the life of the late Dele Giwa but has also victimised and brutalised every Nigerian citizen."

The Nigerian Bar Association, Ikeja branch, also asked the government "to institute a high-powered investigation forthwith to look into this cold-blooded murder".

University of Ibadan students through their president Mr. Babatunde Oduyoye and a communication consultant, Mr. Dokun Afamubode Oduyoye also "urged the government and its security agents to track down the culprits".

Journalist Gbolabo Ogunsanwo said Nigerians are the poorer for Giwa's death and that it is a tragedy beyond words that he would die the way he died.

"On the one hand, the fact that the system had to bomb him out of existence, is positive proof that he was a man who would not be bought, would not be cajoled, would not be blackmailed—a man who was shinningly incorruptible", Ogunsanwo added.

Novelist and black activist Naiwu Osahon thought the *Newswatch's* "damning expose on an American citizen's involvement in some dubious flour deals" could be a clue to Giwa's mysterious death.

Osahon said he had a "theory for the police to consider."

"Not too long ago," he went on, *Newswatch* carried a damning expose on an American citizen's involvement in some dubious flour deals which, of course clawed a tin bit at the international mafia ring.

"The foreign sources, using other previously aggrieved Nigerian connections, planted a story on Giwa and struck him down in the morning to divert and implicate our security systems during

the day. Then the bonus, or was it deliberate, for while keeping the most articulate Press in Africa busy at home, the international security triangle shut Machel down at mid-night.

"Obviously, they have won again. Nigeria died a little with Dele. But we are not finished yet."

Mr. Gamaliel Onosode led a *Thisweek* team of Professor Kwaku Adadevoh, Chief Hope Harriman, Abba Dabo, Nduka Obaigbena and company secretary Mr. B. Akin Adesola on the condolence visit to the *Newswatch* and Giwa's family.

Onosode philosophised that "what is not worth dying for is not worth living for", saying that the fear of the unknown would be the worst side effect of this murder.

The Ondo State council of the Nigeria Union

of Journalists declared a five-day mourning for Giwa and sent a delegation to the *Newswatch* and Giwa's family.

The state branch of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) said Giwa was a loss to Nigeria and the black race.

Other callers at the *Newswatch* office included Allhaji Babatunde Jose, a veteran journalist, Chief Bola Ige, former Governor of Oyo State, Mr. Tunji Braitwaite, prominent Lagos lawyer and former-presidential aspirant; Malam Haroun Adamu, *Punch's* general manager; and Mr. Patrick Ityogh of NTA.

Jose, who came into the *Newswatch* boardroom about 2.15 p.m. wrote: "You (Dele) lived well and died for your beliefs. We are grieved. We don't know, but Allah knows".

Ige who came in wearing a blue French suit, about 2.45 p.m. wrote: "Dele is not dead; the likes of him never dies".

Why Nigeria, Brazil counter trade, by minister

TRADE Minister Samaila Mamman said in Lagos yesterday that Nigeria entered into counter trade with Brazil to promote the spirit of South-South co-operation.

The aim is to emphasise the need for developing countries to avoid countries to on developed market economies, he said.

Speaking at the quarterly luncheon of the Nigeria-Brazil Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mamman said Nigeria had been enjoying favourable trade relations with Brazil. He said the country imported more than ₦22 million worth of goods from Brazil in 1981 and exported ₦300 million worth of goods. The imports rose to ₦153 million in 1984 with an encouraging export of ₦880 million.

Dr. Akinyinka Adabifa, acting Director-

General of the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) who was the guest speaker, admitted that the present international economic situation "characterised by stagnant growth, recessionary conditions and heavy debt burdens in both Nigeria and Brazil would normally affect, rather adversely, the growth prospects of both countries." He felt that efforts for renewed co-operation and further collaboration should be strengthened to promote trade and restructure the present profile of both countries.

The President of Nigeria-Brazil Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr. David Bolaji, said the ultimate aim of the chamber was to create favourable conditions for improved commercial, economic and industrial relations between both countries.

Oct 22, 1986, p. 2
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CONSCIENCE IS AN OPEN WOUND.
ONLY TRUTH CAN HEAL IT

— Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1816)

No more assembly plants

PRESIDENT Babangida's announcement last week of plans to produce motorized tricycles for rural transportation is very good news indeed, especially so because he promised that these machines would actually be "produced" here, not merely "assembled."

In the industrialised world, bicycles and tricycles are now used mostly for exercise and leisure. But in such nations as China and India which are still on the road to full industrialisation, and which in addition have huge populations to look after, bicycles and tricycles, with and without motors, are in wide use as essential transportation both for human beings and for goods of all descriptions.

It is one of the ironies of our development that even though bicycles have been in use in Nigeria for over half a century, we have never been able to produce or fabricate them here. All we have ever been able to do is to assemble bicycles from imported "completely knocked down parts" (CKDs). We cannot fabricate the frame, the wheels, the tyres or even the spokes. Nor can we fabricate the spare parts. We have no machine tools and no moulds for making any part of a simple bicycle.

With the motor car, the story is the same. The motor assembly plants were intended as the prelude to a major industrial effort whereby European automobile technology would be "transferred" to Nigeria. These plants were to train our engineers, technicians and craftsmen. Ajaokuta and Aladja were to provide the steel, and we were to move on to the second stage of importing the machine tools and moulds for fabricating these vehicles from scratch, replicating them and building our own. By the time this process was completed, we would have assimilated the technology and indigenised the industry.

This course was never followed. Nigeria has not yet gone

beyond the assembly stage, and does not seem likely to. Far from it, our foreign partners have threatened to pull out if the Second-tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM) makes the assembly uneconomical for them.

It has become quite clear that motor assembly plants represent a false start in industrialisation. The only thing the assembly policy can accomplish is to block the road to true industrialisation. A fresh and different start is required, and President Babangida may well have hit upon it. Bicycles and tricycles represent the sort of low to medium-level technology that we ought to have begun with in the first place. The machines for making them are less complicated, easier to operate, maintain, and of course cheaper to purchase. There is every likelihood that we can in a few years make the machines ourselves. This way, "transportation for all" can become a reality.

The saying that one must learn to crawl before he can run is as true for nations as it is for individuals. When oil showered more money on us than we knew what to do with, we abandoned the bicycle and jumped to the motor car. Now that the money has disappeared, we are discovering what a sad mistake we made. Nigeria and Nigerians must now bow to circumstance and return to the transportation modes of less prosperous times. If we humble ourselves and learn to walk, we will eventually, with the requisite hard labour and determination, learn not only to run without stumbling but even to fly.

Development is achieved one step at a time. There is no way you can fabricate a motor car if your technological and industrial infrastructure is insufficient to fabricate a bicycle, tricycle, motorcycle, sewing machine or some other relatively simple machines.

Let our motto henceforth be: "No more assembly plants."

Guardian editorial on UNIBEN crisis commendable

SIR, *The Guardian* Editorial of November 17, on the University of Benin dean struggle is very relevant. That the reported issue has managed to elicit comments from you and the *National Concord*, shows that it is a matter of great public interest.

Your even-handed treatment of the issue is certainly commendable but one disturbing fact which the conflict has brought to the fore, is the need to reinforce the law faculty. Though relatively young, it is my view that five years is enough time for the faculty of the university

to have an additional staff of a professional rank. There certainly cannot be that much dearth of academic lawyers in Nigeria.

Unless something is done immediately, I do not see any compelling reason why Miss Afeku, who currently is just a grade below Associate Professor, cannot be appointed to act as dean. I would rather stick to the rule that limits a dean to a maximum of two terms to any other spurious rule.

If the current procedure is to elect a dean, it does not mean that the university authorities cannot appoint one in the absence of an election.

C. Maku,
FESTAC Town, Lagos.

A book of Dele Giwa's writings, please

SIR, On November 8, you started publishing some old articles written by the late chief executive of *Newswatch* Magazine, Mr. Dele Giwa. I was delighted to read them, praying that they should continue.

Unfortunately, however, on November



Dare's belated apologetics

SIR, I read with utter dismay Olatunji Dare's article "Tribulation of a Chief Imam" in the September 23 edition of *The Guardian*.

I never expected such a renowned writer with an endearing writing style and perception would descend so low to

present such a trite, ill-conceived and sentimental piece on a highly sensitive issue for public consumption.

He castigated those he called "Christian fanatics" who latched on a fabricated sallah mes-

sage purported to have been issued by the Imam condemning Nigeria's OIC membership for selfish reasons.

He expended great effort in telling us, though with a questionable certainty, how devoted the Imam is to his duty. He went further to suggest we mount a media, air, land and sea search for the Imam's son — the originator of this fabrication — and when found, he should be made to explain "why he put his political affiliation not only above papa's divine calling but also above national unity and stability."

It would be dishonest and insincere not to agree with Olatunji Dare that it amounts to a flagrant violation of journalistic ethics to rush to publish an unverified pronouncement on a sensitive issue like religion.

But the point is, if he could be so much incensed and outraged as was evident in his article, then his sincerity is very doubtful.

Where was he when

Nigeria was smuggled into the OIC, or when Muslims burnt down churches at Ilorin and more especially the burning of the statue of the Risen Christ at the University of Ibadan.

Did these obvious acts not threaten national unity and stability? Why did he not come out with the same forthrightness as he did in this case to condemn these satanic events?

The perpetrators of these evils are still very much around. They did not abscond like the Imam's son and yet he hasn't advised that we summon them and accuse them of threatening national unity and stability.

To now be over particular about little things and lax in big issues is to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Dare's present agony is therefore belated.

I still doff my hat for religionless Wole Soyinka, Tai Solarin and *The Guardian* papers who were bold to tell the truth when it mattered. Osaigie Jacobs, Kaduna

Provide full information on stolen vehicles

SIR, often, one reads in the dailies about some stolen vehicles which have been recovered by members of the Nigeria police. The police do not elaborate further on the brands of vehicles recovered, their chassis and engine numbers, etc. They thereby leave the public, especially those whose vehicles are stolen wonder-

ing whether theirs are among the recovered vehicles.

I am therefore calling on the police to please ensure that full particulars of all recovered vehicles are published.

The cost of publishing such information could be borne partly or wholly by the owners of the recovered vehicles. Sam Ogbonia, Ibadan.

Emmanuel K. Ofori,
Lagos.

during his short life span as a journalist. I have no doubt in my mind that you will not regret it. After all, we now pay N5 or more for a copy of *Newswatch* or any other magazine that has anything about Dele Giwa. Eleazer U. Ukairo, Sokoto.

Publish all he wrote

known as Lord Rivers in Nigeria's Lawn Tennis circles, and Moshood Abiola, the Concord publisher.

The day also offered an opportunity for Oba Adekunmbi and his chiefs to garner funds for building projects, especially a facelift for his inconspicuous palace which stood hedged in between

... (Basala); Mr. A.A. Adigun (Baanoolu); Mr. Armstrong Ibikunle (Olumeye); Mr. Babalola Akin Odunsi (Mayegun); Mr. Sufianu Lawal (Otun Ajiroba); Mrs. Abike Ogunmarote (Osi Iyalaje); Mr. S.A. Uredi (Atunluse); Mr. Ademola Ajayi (Asiwaju Iwata) and Mr. Joseph Seni Ohieku.

meet due to inability to form a quorum.

Cabinet Office sources said the committee — comprising representatives of the Ministries of Transport and Aviation; Finance; Petroleum Resources, Trade and Industry as well as the department of customs and excise — could not hold its first meeting on April

tee had not been able to meet since that first attempt failed.

At the fifth meeting of the National Council of Ministers in June, the Petroleum Resources Ministry was ordered to provide the committee with "a comprehensive policy paper" for the 94 private jetties in the country.

Private jetties were

... in September. Bulani ad, re-opened the protests from the Ports Workers' Union other concerns.

The ill-fate scheduled for the office room of the Ministry of Transport and Aviation would have had a classification based on the line of action.

The National Council of Ministers asked the committee to deliberate on the matter as "the lack of fore-sight required for such jetties."

It would also be more light volume and equipment that be available at the volume of the project involved.

The committee discussing the projects, is expected to recommend the council for approval.

The need to the country with comprehensive policy operations of pri-

Soyinka's prize is for all blacks, says Ooni

THE Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuwade, has described Professor Wole Soyinka's Nobel Prize as being for all black people.

The Ooni said in Ile-Ife at the weekend that he was happy and had congratulated himself that one of his sons won the award.

A Lagos lawyer, Gani Fawehinmi, described the award as a pointer to

the immense benefits Nigeria could reap from her "radicals".

In an open letter to President Ibrahim Babangida at the weekend, Fawehinmi suggested seven ways through which the country could show "commensurate" appreciation and encouragement to Soyinka and "other black geniuses" who could "emulate the exemplary standard

already laid."

• rename a university preferably the University of Ife, after Soyinka;

• rename Broad street in Lagos as "Wole Soyinka way,"

• create a distinct Ministry of Culture and make Soyinka the sole administrator;

• recommend all Soyinka's books in all English and Literature courses in compulsory reading in higher institutions;

• exhibits his portraits in all libraries;

• display all his works in museums in all institutions and libraries;

• award him the Grand Commander of the Federal Republic of

(GCFR) as the present award of the Commander of the Federal Republic (CFR) "is not commensurate with the Nobel Prize."

The registrar of the University of Ife, Dr. Oyelami Adetunji, described Soyinka as "a rare breed whose type does not pass through generations more than once."

Adetunji said in Ile-Ife that authorities of the university received the news of Soyinka's Nobel Prize with delight.

He said "there can never be another Soyinka again," and that the university felt the absence of the laureate from the institution.

Newsprint firm resumes production today

THE Nigerian Newsprint Manufacturing Company (NNMC), Oku Iboku, Cross River State will resume production after a four-week closure, a spokesman of the company, Mr. Ekpeyong Ekpeyong, said at the weekend.

While the closure lasted, the company carried out a routine maintenance of its equipment, an exercise, which Ekpeyong said was originally scheduled for December.

He said the maintenance was brought forward because of the shortage of long fibre pulp, a vital input for newsprint, and that a consignment of about 100 tonnes was expected.

The closure, he said was not intended to force the Central Bank to open letters of credit for the company but to enable NNMC spread out the available stock of 10 tonnes.

Ekpeyong said the difficulties faced by NNMC would not affect the pro-

jected opening of its second paper machine which is expected to raise production to 100,000 tonnes of newsprint yearly.

Industries watch Second-tier market

THE country's major industries are yet to start asking for foreign exchange, three weeks after the take off of the Second-tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM).

Although some of the industrialists and importers indicated their willingness to support the economic policy, they are still uncertain as to what moves to make to avoid possible pitfalls in the market.

Most of the industrialists think that if foreign exchange is obtained at the prevailing rate of the naira, prices will not be competitive and will result in substantial losses.

They also said that the purchasing power of the naira would not encour-

Tive Denedo and Edetaen Ojo

age foreign investors, adding that the arrangement between local importers and their overseas counterparts had not encouraged industrialists-commercial banks transaction.

Industrialists, they said, were yet to enter into the transfer-of-goods contract and the actual remittance of the matching foreign exchange component of the transactions to the correspondent banks abroad.

General Manager of the Nigeria Food Company, Mr. Hamina Damaturu, whose com-

pany imports livestock and frozen meat from the Republic of Chad, said they were still watching the market for a rate that would make business profitable.

The situation at the Nigeria Flour Mills is not different.

Mr. James Fagbemi, the company's managing director, said his company could not even enter into foreign exchange deals since the importation of wheat and wheat related products had been banned as part of the regulations for the operation of SFEM.

The story was the same at the Spanish Ce-

ment Company's official of the company who wishes to remain anonymous.

"How can a deal in foreign exchange now when ₦50.00 bank overnight times below its value? We are watching the market."

Christlieb Gro Companies official pressed the same view about the value of the naira factor holding back foreign exchange deals with their banks.

The group's managing director, Mr. Momoh, said the company might as well wait for a foreign exchange week if the naira stays at its present level.

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THE STANDARD

Established 1902

A shot in the arm for Africa's writers

AFRICA's creative writers have been in dire need of a shot in the arm — and they got one in the awarding of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Nigerian playwright and novelist Wole Soyinka.

Soyinka, reacting to the award last week, said he felt that he had been chosen as a representative of a continent "which is often shunned and swept aside" and a continent the culture and creativity of which have "not always been rightly appreciated by other cultures".

Many of Africa's writers and other artists — the established and the budding — will agree with that assessment. And the irony will not be lost on them, too, that no sooner had the news of the Nobel award been beamed from Stockholm, Sweden, than Nigerian authorities announced the conferring on Soyinka of one of his country's highest honours, "Commander of the Federal Republic". Africa's creative talent, it would seem, only merits recognition in its own home after outsiders have proclaimed it.

This harks back to that adage about a prophet not being without honour, save in his own country. It is a situation Africa's creative thinkers have had to grapple with, sometimes at risk of death or severe personal sacrifice at best.

Soyinka himself has personal experience of this, having been jailed by the Nigerian government for two years for his stand on the Biafran civil war of 1967-70. And as an artist true to his convictions, he has remained, since the earliest days of Nigerian independence, a principled fighter against corruption and electoral fraud and remains, of course, well aware of the dangers.

He said last week "Writers have lost their lives or are in prison (in Africa) because they refused to compromise" but, he added: "I hope this prize has not been awarded because I have been a vigorous critic of my government and others. I don't want to think for a single moment it's because of my political stand."

On their part, the Swedish Academy, guardians of the literature award, described Soyinka's plays, novels, essays and poetry as works "of mental survival, human contact, anger and forgiveness one of the finest poetical playwrights that have written in English."

This should emphasise to Africa's yet-to-emerge writers that true art is essentially non-propagandistic; that the moment attempts are made to infuse writers, dramatists and other creative artists with ideological notions of whatever shade in an effort to make them reflect the official definition of reality (whatever such definition may for the moment be), art stops being art. It degenerates into mere sloganeering, an insincere parody of its true self and ultimately becomes a vehicle not for the expression and pursuit of man's nobler and liberating aspirations, but a noose round the collective creative neck. Propagandistic "art" deadens the spirit, and lacks that universal appeal that wins Nobel prizes.

Another factor that has stifled creativity in Africa is the perceived encroachment of educated "illiteracy". This is that phenomenon in which reading is confined only to text books for the sake of passing examinations — at whatever level in the education system — and thereafter perusal of books is done away with.

In such an environment the market for creative writing has steadily evaporated, leaving a palpable literary desert in much of tropical Africa.

If Soyinka's Nobel "win" can spur new interest in African literature, then this continent's budding Shakespeares, Dickens and Jonathan Swifts might at last shine as true stars in the galaxy of their literary destiny.

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Nobel – Alors que les esprits chagrins, au lendemain de l'attribution du Nobel de la paix, regrettaient que l'Afrique ait été oubliée. Ils n'auront pas attendu longtemps pour être satisfaits, et de quelle manière !

SOYINKA SUPERSTAR !

LE DRAMATURGE NIGÉRIAN Wole Soyinka, s'est vu attribuer, le 16 octobre, le prix Nobel de littérature 1986.

Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka est né, le 13 juillet 1934, en pays Yoruba, à l'Ouest du Nigeria, une région riche d'une tradition théâtrale qui inspirera largement ses propres pièces. Ses années d'enfance, il les retrace dans son célèbre récit *Aké*.

Il est encore étudiant, à la première université du Nigeria, Ibadan, quand il publie ses premiers poèmes. En 1954, il part étudier en Angleterre, à Leeds. Une double formation que relèveront les jurés du Nobel en saluant en lui « l'héritier des mythes, rites et traditions culturelles yoruba » et en soulignant « sa profonde connaissance de la culture occidentale ».

C'est en Angleterre que sera jouée sa première pièce de théâtre, *L'inventeur*, peu avant la création à Londres de l'un de ses chefs-d'œuvre, *Les gens du marais*, qui décrit la vie des habitants des villages sur pilotis, aux bords du delta du Niger.

Il revient au Nigeria en 1960, au moment de l'indépendance, et y crée sa propre troupe, *Masks*. Une troupe qui sera l'un des moteurs du nouveau théâtre nigérian, écrit en anglais, mais reprenant les plus anciennes traditions africaines. C'est elle qui créera *La danse dans la forêt*, fable philosophique – commandée pour la célébration de l'indépendance nigériane, le 1^{er} octobre 1960 – dans laquelle les villageois demandent aux dieux le retour de leurs ancêtres.

D'autres pièces suivront comme *The road*, qui décrit la vie le long d'une grande route des environs de Lagos, ou *Les épreuves du frère Jero*, fable satirique sur un charlatan qui transforma « l'armée du salut en salut par l'armée ».

Désormais très célèbre dans son pays, Soyinka va se faire connaître aussi par son combat politique. Il est emprisonné une première fois pour avoir proclamé au-micro d'une radio régionale que les élections avaient été truquées. En 1967, l'année de la publication de son long poème *Idanre*, préfacé par Senghor, il connaît à nouveau la goële pour s'être rendu en territoire rebelle pendant la guerre du Biafra.

le véritable berceau de leur civilisation et où il vit toujours.

A LA FOIS DRAMATURGE, romancier, poète et critique, metteur en scène et militant politique, Soyinka est, à 52 ans, la plus célèbre figure de la littérature particulièrement féconde : celle des pays africains anglophones. Il incarne cette génération d'écrivains noirs qui ont pris largement leurs distan-



Wole Soyinka

Il décrira son expérience de reclus dans ses *Poèmes de prison*, dans son recueil mystique *Une navette dans la crypte*, et surtout l'essai *L'Homme est mort*, ouvrage qui déclencha la polémique dans le pays et contraignit Soyinka à l'exil.

« Les livres ont toujours provoqué la terreur de ceux qui tentent d'étouffer la vérité » écrit Soyinka. « L'homme continue à mourir en tous ceux qui se taisent face à la tyrannie ».

Liberé en 1969, il reprendra le chemin de l'université où il enseignera le théâtre à Ibadan, puis à Ife, que les Yorubas considèrent comme

ces vis-à-vis de la négritude venue des pays francophones.

Cinquante ans environ après « l'invention » de ce concept – à la fois expression d'une race opprimée, revendication de l'originalité africaine instrument de lutte – Soyinka a répliqué par la tigritude. Par sa boutade célèbre : « le tigre ne proclame pas sa tigritude, il bondit sur sa proie et la dévore », Soyinka, comme le groupe de l'African personality dont il était le porte-parole, met en garde contre les risques de réduction de l'Afrique à la vision mythique de l'innocence originelle.

« La négritude est un luxe intellec-

quel, qui n'avait d'importance que pour l'élite», a-t-il dit plus tard. «Elle devait fatalement s'atrophier, car, contrairement au mouvement noir américain, elle ne correspondait pas aux aspirations profondes des peuples».

Cet homme engagé est cependant tout le contraire d'un idéologue. Ennemi de ceux qu'il stigmatise sous le terme de «dogmanoïdes», Soyinka affirme considérer les «crimes contre son peuple comme des attaques personnelles».

Son amour de la liberté se traduit, dit-il, par une «force de rébellion contre l'inexplicable propension des êtres humains à réduire les autres en esclavage», «la vie n'a pas de sens sans la plus large liberté, et bien que je sache que les mots seuls semblent incapables de garantir cette liberté, mes écrits sont de plus en plus pleins du thème de l'oppression».

ARRIVE le 17 octobre à Lagos – après avoir annulé sa participation au Festival de la Francophonie de Limoges et du Limousin (France), parce qu'il avait été «effrayé par le nombre de journalistes venus l'interviewer» – il a multiplié les déclarations.

Ainsi, en recevant les insignes de l'Ordre de Commandeur de la République fédérale – la deuxième distinction nigériane –, il a affirmé : «Je n'aurais pas accepté une telle distinction si elle m'avait été accordée par Buhari ou Shagari. Je pense, a-t-il ajouté, que le gouvernement du général Ibrahim Babangida est l'une des meilleures choses qui soient arrivées à ce pays depuis longtemps».

Au cours d'une conférence de presse, il a indiqué par ailleurs : «je me sens honoré, mais il s'agit d'un succès collectif de tous les écrivains africains. Je n'ai jamais pensé un instant que je l'obtiendrais un jour». Il avait d'ailleurs déclaré, au quotidien français *Le Matin* : «Il m'arrive de lire certains livres et de me dire : diable, ce salaud, comment pourrais-je avoir autant de talent ? Autrement dit, il y a des auteurs que j'estime meilleurs que moi et je considère mon élection comme un miracle».

Interrogé sur les autres auteurs africains auxquels il aurait aimé voir décerner le Nobel, Soyinka cite les Congolais Sony Labou Tansi ou Tchicaya U'Tamsi, le Malien Ouambo Ouologuem, auteur du *Devoir de violence*, «et bien d'autres encore qui forment» sa «communauté».



IRONIQUE. A la question de savoir pourquoi il a fallu attendre si longtemps pour qu'un Africain reçoive le prix Nobel de littérature, il a répondu : «ce prix ne nous appartient pas. Ce qu'il faut, c'est fonder notre propre prix et attendre 85 ans» avant de l'attribuer à un Européen. C'est en effet en 1901 que Sully Prudhomme se vit attribuer le premier Nobel de littérature. Ola Balogun, cinéaste nigérian, lui emboîte d'ailleurs le pas en déclarant qu'il était «paradoxal» que, malgré le nombre toujours croissant d'écrivains africains, «le continent africain lui-même n'ait pas vu la nécessité d'instituer un prix littéraire propre». «Quand l'Afrique apprendra-t-elle à honorer ses fils, et ses filles?» s'est demandé Ola Balogun, auteur de sept livres et neuf films de long métrage.

Son avenir sera-t-il encore fait d'engagement et d'emprisonnements ? A la question de savoir si le prix Nobel pourrait le protéger – alors que sa vie a été à plusieurs reprises menacée –, Soyinka a répondu que

«cette question est importante au regard de la situation politique qui règne chez nous. Il est important de se rappeler de quel pays nous parlons. Par exemple, sous le régime d'Amin Dada, personne n'était intouchable. Dans certains pays, il est difficile, c'est vrai, de toucher à des hommes connus. En Afrique du Sud, par exemple, il est difficile de toucher à Desmond Tutu. Dans certaines circonstances, la reconnaissance est indéniablement une protection».

CHARLES LEMAIRE

CREDITS PHOTOS

AFP : p. 11, 16
 Sory Baldé : p. 12
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NATIONAL NEWSRI

Homage to a great Nigerian



.... TH
THIS WEEK directors. Obieghun
G. Onosode (l-r) Nduka man, Abh.



Tributes to Dele Giwa

THE cream of Nigerian society continued to pay tribute to late Dele Giwa yesterday. Left, (l-r) Mr. Ben Obi and Dr. Tunji Braithwaith.

Below, Nobel prize winner, Prof. Wole Soyinka signs the condolence register.

Below right (l-r) Chief Bola Ige, Mr. Tunle Lawrence, Brig. Sotomi (rtd) and Mr. Bisi Lawrence.



NCWS raise

THE National Women Societies (NCWS) last Sunday raising ceremony i skills Development Sheraton Hotel, Ike

spect for another feast? I smell a PROBE!

WELL, MR MAGIC

if he felt the man had done wrong. He was just not afraid.

The point is: his professional enthusiasm was boundless and his patriotism

deep, deep dye. As a consequence, he was a doughty defender of fundamental liberties; a fierce opponent of all despotism and a pen-armed fighter for the freedom of the press. Abridge it; and Dele Giwa came at you with a pen dripping a viper's venom.

But above everything else, the man had style. Oh, he had style! Think Dele Giwa and apart from the spectacular journalism what do you remember? Silk shirts, my friend! Italian shoes, glamorous suits. He was a dresser; a ladies man so swift he was famous! Our man was *The Dude!*

You might even say that he died in style. But don't blaspheme! Not after what they did to that hitherto always magnificently packaged body. No, he did not die like he lived. But one thing is certain: Dele Giwa is dead, long live Dele Giwa. Someday his murderers will



Dele Giwa is dead, long live Dele Giwa. Someday his murderers will realise just what that means.



realise just what that means.

Farewell, then, our Mr. Magic. Don't eat worms, shun all creeping things. Eat what others eat in Heaven. Rest assured that we miss you profoundly, that Nigeria mourns you. May your soul rest most serenely. So long!

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total. And so it was that despite his many human failings he built a national following so huge it must have frightened him quite often. He said all. He gave all. He gave his all to his trade and his nation because innocently, oh so innocently, he thought we were all decent men and women. He thought everybody played according to certain fundamental ground rules. Then he was proved fatally wrong.

His style? He wrote with an abundance of elegance. Simple, lucid, riveting. He wove an oriental carpet with words. He delighted; he enchanted. It is a shame that he did not live long enough to write fiction. Ha, then he would have challenged Sydney Sheldon, Jeffrey Archer, etc. to a duel of captivating tales. It is a crying shame.

His ideas? He was not your typical intellectual type... dull, grey, ever reflective, ever perusing weighty books and ever contemplating weighty matters. No. If anything, he was a popularizer. But he was instinctively a liberal of a

LETTER TO THE
EDITOR
VANGUARD
P.M.B. 1007 ABARA

A family toast to Wole Soyinka with thanks to the President

LONG long ago it was said, "something new always comes out of Africa" — Semper est Africanum novum: Today, there can hardly be a more symbolic testimony of that prophetic saying, and probably not for sometime to come, than the recognition of Wole Soyinka as Africa's first Nobel Prize Laureate for Literature. Let us hope that Wole's universal acclaim may inspire the arousal of Africa from its stagnant slumber, into an era of variedly creative contributions, for the elevation of its people and to mankind.

And, since occasions do arise in life (and we firmly believe this is one) when people not only need to blow, but should also be seen to be "blowing their own trumpets": we are exceedingly joyful to observe, as members of Woles family (the Royal Lupo-Mosuleka Ruling House Family Union of Abeokuta, the Ogunbonas, Onitesis, Olubis, Olumides, Olunuyiwas, Meadows-Ogunbona, Kutis, Hewells, Lijadus, Williamses, Da-Costas, Johnsons, Abiolas, Macarthys, Ogunbona-Sodipos, Ogunbona-Soyinkas and the Ogunbona—Baileys) that the conferment of the CFR on Wole Soyinka by President Babangida has effectively defied the belief that 'A prophet is not without honour save in his own country.' We thank Mr. President for this monumental gesture.

Paradoxically and probably as an element of history repeating itself, Wole Soyinka's maternal ancestors had in earliest times from the foot hills of Olumo Rock, valiantly played their noble roles during the advent of Christianity in Nigeria — such unique roles must have contributed to the opinion long held by many that Abeokuta remains 'the cradle of Nigerian education'.

Finally, it has to be said that Wole as a man, came from a stock of cultured but mellowed discipline. Wole Soyinka as a literary prodigy, hailed from a noble leauey which naturally nourishes his intellect and motivates his ideals with such fertile and penetrating brilliance; and as a committed apostle of 'the rights of man', basic freedoms and fairplay, he has with time nurtured, cultivated and transformed these in-born attributes of his earlier years into an energised bastion of ideals and articulated tool of full time work of the redemption of Man and service to Humanity.

We have every faith that Wole having learnt from his youth to temper nobility with humility, winning the Nobel may very well be the beginning of things to come for noble Wole.

We severally raise this Family Toast in congratulation of Wole whilst sharing the boundless happiness that the occasion has particularly brought our dear cousin, and Wole's proud mother — Mrs. Soyinka see Kan.

**CHIEF HAROLD SODIPO
AKOGUN OF EGRALAND
AND HEAD OF THE
ROYAL LUPO-
MOSULEKA FAMILY
UNION
FOR THE FAMILY UNION**

Vanguard
24 Oct 1986, p 6

LIFE AND LEISURE

The Tiger Has Pounced

Soyinka wins the Nobel prize for literature

"A tiger does not have to declare its tigrity; it pounces." So said Nigerian playwright, Wole Soyinka, in 1962 of the Negritude movement, whose greatest proponents were poet and former Senegalese president Leopold Sedar Senghor, and West Indian Poet Aimé Césaire. Soyinka felt that the proponents of the movement shouted too loudly about their blackness, instead of getting down to the business of producing works of art to reflect their blackness. It could be said that the tiger who pounces catches the prey, for last week, Soyinka, 52, was awarded the 1986 Nobel Prize for Literature, becoming the first black writer to win the prestigious prize. In its citation, the Swedish Academy, guardians of the literature award, said Soyinka "fashions the drama of existence in a wide cultural perspective and with poetic overtones". The US\$290,000 award came after intensive pressure on the academy from literary circles to branch out from its traditional choices of European and American authors.

In Paris at the end of last week, Soyinka was reported as saying that the prize comes as a belated recognition of the richness of African culture. "I am very happy about it," he said. "African culture and creativity has not always been rightly appreciated by other cultures." The Swedish Academy's permanent secretary, Mr. Sture Allen, acknowledged that the committee had been slow to recognise the literature of the third world. "It has been a long process for the academy to orientate itself in this wide world of literature. . . We are working hard to broaden our perspectives as much as possible," he said in an interview in Stockholm.

Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka, the second child of Samuel Ayodele and Grace Eniola Soyinka, was born in July 13, 1934, in Abeokuta, western Nigeria. He spent his childhood in Abeokuta, his adolescence and early manhood in Lagos and Ibadan. In 1952, he joined University College, Ibadan, then moved to the University of Leeds, England, from where he graduated with an honours degree in English. In 1958, he was accepted as resident playwright for the Royal Court Theatre in London and wrote *The Swamp Dwellers* and an early version of *The Lion and the Jewel*. Soyinka returned to Nigeria in 1960 with a Rockefeller grant to research, write and direct drama. At the time, with Nigeria about to become independent, editors were anxious to fill



Soyinka: honour for all African writers

local magazines and journals with verse and literary criticism by Nigerians, and Soyinka joined, and soon became the leader of, an intensely creative community of young artists.

In the same year, Soyinka completed two radio plays and a stage play, *The Trials of Brother Jero*, and also produced *A Dance of the Forests*, a revised version of an earlier anti-apartheid piece, *The Dance of the African Forest*. For this production, Soyinka drew together a group of friends who were experienced amateur actors and actresses, and formed the group "1960 Masks". The group's first stage production, at the time of Nigeria's independence, challenged expectations concerning the future of the country and assumptions about the form Nigerian theatre in English would take. To some, this play revealed Soyinka as a writer who delighted in shocking and bewildering his audience; to others he emerged as an independent thinker with numerous theatrical skills. Thus began the ambivalent relationship between Soyinka and his audience, an ambivalence that still exists.

In 1962, Soyinka briefly held the post of lecturer in English at University College, Ife. These were turbulent times for Nigeria and Soyinka turned to satire to make known his feelings. Against this background, he produced his first major play of the mid-'sixties, *Kongi's Harvest*; he then went to London to read his long poem, *Idanre*, and to advise on the production of *The Road*. 1965 saw Soyinka's appointment as a senior lecturer at the University of Lagos and the publication of his novel *The Interpreters*. In October of the same year, Soyinka was arrested and charged with removing and stealing two tapes from the Ibadan offices of the *Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation*. Judgement was deferred until December 20, when he was released.

Between then and August, 1967, when he was re-arrested in connection with the Biafran war, Soyinka wrote mostly poetry and essays. His call for a ceasefire in the civil war led to his arrest and detention without trial. He was released 20 months later, and recounted his detention experiences in *The Man Died*. He took up the post of the director of the School of Drama at Ibadan. In March, 1971, his play *Madmen and Specialists* was presented in Ibadan. On the eve of the release of the film version of *Kongi's Harvest*, Soyinka left "Gowon's Nigeria" for what he intended to be a brief exile, but which lasted almost five years and took him to many parts of the world. This period drew from him several lectures and essays, and also *The Man Died*, a second novel, *Season of Anomy*, a compilation of African poetry and three plays — *Jero's Metamorphosis*, *The Bacchaes of Euripides* and *Death and the King's Horseman*.

In 1974, Soyinka left Europe for Ghana to edit the literary journal *Transition*, he returned to Nigeria in July, 1975, after Gowon had been overthrown. Since then, Soyinka has lived mostly in Nigeria but has been a visiting professor at Cambridge and Sheffield universities in Britain and at Yale university in the United States. He has also visited several European and American cities to direct his plays. During September and October, 1979 for instance, he directed *Horseman* in Chicago. The production was very well-received and was transferred to Washington DC, raising to a new level Soyinka's reputation in American theatre circles. Soyinka's popularity in the west is also demonstrated by the fact that in May, 1984, his production of *The Road* opened in Chicago and in December of the same year, *A Play of Giants* was premiered at Yale university.

It is probably this popularity with the

LIFE AND LEISURE Theatre

Talent Aplenty at Festival

Primary schools drama finals

... and the fact that some of Soyinka's writing, especially his poetry, is obscure and difficult to comprehend that has led to one view of Soyinka's work — that he writes with a western audience in mind. Compared with Achebe, for instance, who has been described as a "perfect narrator" and a critical realist, Soyinka, in his preoccupation with Yoruba mythology, is somewhat alienated from the general reading public. Whatever the case, however, the tiger has pounced; and, as one Kenya literature lecturer put it, "Soyinka has won the prize for us all; for Achebe, for you, for me, for all Africans."

Like the literature award, other Nobel awards this year were criticised — not because their recipients were undeserving but because recognition of their accomplishments had come so late. West German Dr. Ernst Ruska, 79, who shared this year's Physics prize for developing the first electron microscope in 1933, was long overdue for the award in the eyes of his colleagues. Two other scientists, West German Dr. Gerd Binnig and Swiss Dr. Heinrich Rohrer, shared the award for taking Ruska's ideas a stage further and developing a scanning, tunnelling microscope that can scan objects atom by atom.

Colleagues of Italian-American Rita Levi-Montalcini, 77, joint winner of the Medicine prize, also expressed regret that her work on growth factors in cells had taken so long to secure public recognition. The Chemistry prize went to what one of the laureates called the "lunatic fringe" of science, the study of what happens when molecules collide. The Economics prize went to American James Buchanan for theories marrying politics and economic decision-making. The Nobel Peace prize went to Jewish-American author and human rights campaigner, Mr. Elie Wiesel.

Soyinka returned home from Paris at the end of last week to a hero's welcome. Minutes after his arrival, Soyinka was told that Nigeria's military leader, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, had made him a Commander of the Federal Republic, bestowing on Soyinka one of the country's highest honours. Soyinka has twice in the past refused national honours from governments he opposed, but he said he would accept this one. "Babangida's government is one of the best we have had in years, although of course I don't agree with them about everything," he said. Of the Nobel prize, Soyinka said it was symbolic for all black African writers, particularly in South Africa. "My award makes the South African government more isolated than ever because it proves that others do not share their opinion of black people," he said. — *Wanjiru Ciira*

NANCY Wanjiru, 12, of Mahiga Primary School, Nairobi, sat in anticipation as the award-winners' names were read out. She could not help crying when she learnt she would not be getting the top slot, the price for best actress, which went to Jacqueline Kisato. Wanjiru had to be content with being runner-up. The ceremony was for the finals of the Kenya Primary Schools Drama Festival held last week at the Patel Brotherhood Hall, Nakuru. Wanjiru had the lead role in her school's production of *Wangu wa Makeri*. Her interpretation of the legendary Kikuyu woman chief captured the imagination of the adjudicators and the audience. She stole the show with a stout, unflinching performance worthy of a seasoned actress. She was to say later that she did not have much stage fright because she did not really see the audience as she was looking down the centre. Her prowess was particularly creditable considering that this was the first time she had ever performed on a real stage, or in a leading role, for that matter. Few people in the appreciative audience, could have guessed this. Her acting was infused with a maturity inconsistent with her age, even

when, for instance, she nearly came undone as she attempted to undress, only to discover a ruffled undergarment. She adjusted her dress calmly as if nothing had happened and continued with her performance. There was little doubt that she was in control of the situation almost all the time, earning her acclaim from the adjudicators as having "a lot of potential".

The festival was the climax of weeks and months of rehearsal and competition from district through provincial levels to this gathering of winners. The organisers emphasised improving standards as opposed to the sheer competition. This, as the adjudicators agreed, was achieved by and large. It was reflected too, in the fact that eight schools emerged within the distinction bracket, an unusual situation. Adjudicator Mr. Luka Wasambo-Were of the education ministry's inspectorate, who is also credited with initiating and organising the first primary schools' drama festival in 1980, said, "We are looking for overall excellence, not mere distribution of awards."

Be that as it may, the competition was intense, and the splendour of the award-

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THE BUREAU
WITH THE ULTRA MODERN
APPROACH

Wole Soyinka

The rebel with a cause

Fidel Odum pays tribute to Wole Soyinka, winner of this year's Nobel Prize for literature.

What struck me the first time I met Wole Soyinka was how real he was. After just a few minutes with him, I had this feeling of being in the presence of a man I had known for many years. I got the impression he, too, felt the same way. For a couple of hours we talked quite relaxedly in a side-street, central London pub. That was two years ago, in early December 1984. He was returning to Nigeria from Montpellier in France where he had just been conferred with one of his many honorary doctoral degrees by the University of Montpellier. I had to get an interview from the scholar/social activist on the havoc being unleashed then on Nigeria by the Buhari/Idiagbon dictatorship.

After a few snacks and a couple of glasses of wine — Wole insisted throughout on waiting on me and his publisher, Rex Collings — I switched on my tape and courteously cautioned him that the interview was on and that anything I got on the tape was most likely to go to press. He implored me to quote him without mercy. I was concerned for him because the Buhari/Idiagbon regime had a reputation for brutality. As the interview proceeded Wole, as he prefers to be called, spoke without reservation. The anger he felt for the Buhari dictatorship was so intense that you could decipher it in almost every syllable and emphasis in his responses to my questions.

He did not pound on the table as some might have done, but the expression on his face, his gesticulations and the vibration in his near-baritone voice were a testament to his rage against injustice and his genuine compassion for the victims of the military's injustice in 1984. He regretted that prior commitments had kept him away in Europe and the US, and that was why he could not have started much earlier his campaign against Buhari and Idiagbon. He spoke vehemently against what he saw as the "multiple standards" of the regime and its twisted notions of justice. He decried the detention of patriots like Tai Solarin, Haroun Adamu and the two journalist-victims of the infamous "Decree Four" which forbade the publication of truth if it negated state security.

Given the prevailing atmosphere of inverted justice, suppression of dissent and the oppression of those who had fought Shagari's "fascism," Wole saw himself and other Nigerians as, in effect, being "on parole," and it was only a question of time before he might be picked up. Surprisingly, when he returned to Lagos a couple of days after his interview with me, the story already on the front page of *National Concord*, he was not detained.

Those who will be reading Wole Soyinka's works, following his Nobel honour, in Europe, America and other continents outside Africa, are likely to go away with all sorts of impressions. Bookshops in London alone have reported doing very brisk business since the announcement of the award. One sold out its entire stockpile in a day. The most commonly held view of Soyinka in foreign circles is that he is a very unhappy and angry man. But those who know Wole well enough or have met him in person will agree that this impression of him is not fair. What can be said is that he is very unhappy and angry over the quality of the human condition (of the black man in particular), which forms the nexus of his art.

But, in fact, Wole Soyinka is a happy and highly fulfilled and satisfied man in his private life, to the extent it is possible for any rebel to find personal contentment. Besides, he has every reason to have matured into a happy adulthood. His childhood and origins as portrayed in one of his two masterpieces, *Ake: The Years of Childhood* (his autobiography up to his twelfth birthday)

were as normal as possible. Like many of us in Africa who may claim to have had a happy childhood, he had a very balanced upbringing in which he had a proper dosage of affection, discipline, supervision and independence. In fact, it can be submitted that this memorably fulfilled childhood which he found necessary to chronicle was the foundation of his immense compassion for the less fortunate and the "wretched of the earth" upon whom he has lavished so much of his attention.

Nonetheless, Wole has been fairly criticised for his style in the rendition of his message about injustice and the human condition. His writings have been said to be hard to read — too grandiloquent, said one expert. His language is too sophisticated for the ordinary reader who does not have more than an elementary grasp of history, politics and literature. For a man who is concerned about the underdog, these criticisms are unfortunately true.

Other critics say Wole is too pessimistic and too apocalyptic, and that he writes about situations as though all hope is lost. The Leftists even take this a step further by charging that Wole is ideologically bankrupt as he does not ground his analysis in the historical and social context of the human condition which, going by the usual Marxian methodology, should have guided him to scientific socialist solutions.

Much as some of the above charges are valid, the fact cannot be quashed that Wole has been highly successful in adapting his poetic genius in dramatising the realities of human existence as was implied in the citation by the guardians of the Royal Academy that chose him for the Nobel prize. What the Swedish Academy has done, after all these years when its directors did not look beyond Europe and America for deserving laureates, is to place Wole in his rightful position as a world man of the first order. That Wole has been a universal man, a citizen of the world, has been long established and accepted. His life and travels are equally divided among the continents of the world and he is for ever being invested with honours and awards. Only last month, he was made a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the third African to be so honoured.

As a deserving world figure, he excels above his African colleagues in the arts and literature. For while some of his colleagues are too insularised ideologically, or caged in by a myriad of cultural boundaries and restrictions, Wole invariably looks at the universal picture. Put differently, he applies as much perspicacity and candour in scrutinising the minutest local political issue as he does in examining the grandest international topic. And in doing this he exudes as much intensity of feeling.

He is a proud Yoruba man, but his participation in Nigerian politics is not determined by his ethnic origin, as was demonstrated during the Nigerian Civil War when he condemned the genocide against the Ibos as much as the secessionist war. On nationalism, he views Nigeria as merely a parcel of the overall reality of an indivisible Africa, which qualifies him as a Pan-Africanist. An example of his universalism was when he delivered the Herbert Read Memorial Lecture at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London last year. His lecture was acknowledged as a *tour d'horizon* of oppression in the world, spanning the resurgence of right-wing intolerance in the West and encompassing the apartheid in South Africa and the self-inflicted oppression of blacks against blacks in independent Africa.

The Nobel award to Wole Soyinka is a cause for celebration not only among the entire black race but for all those who believe in active rebellion against man's injustice to fellow man.



Nobel laurels for Soyinka

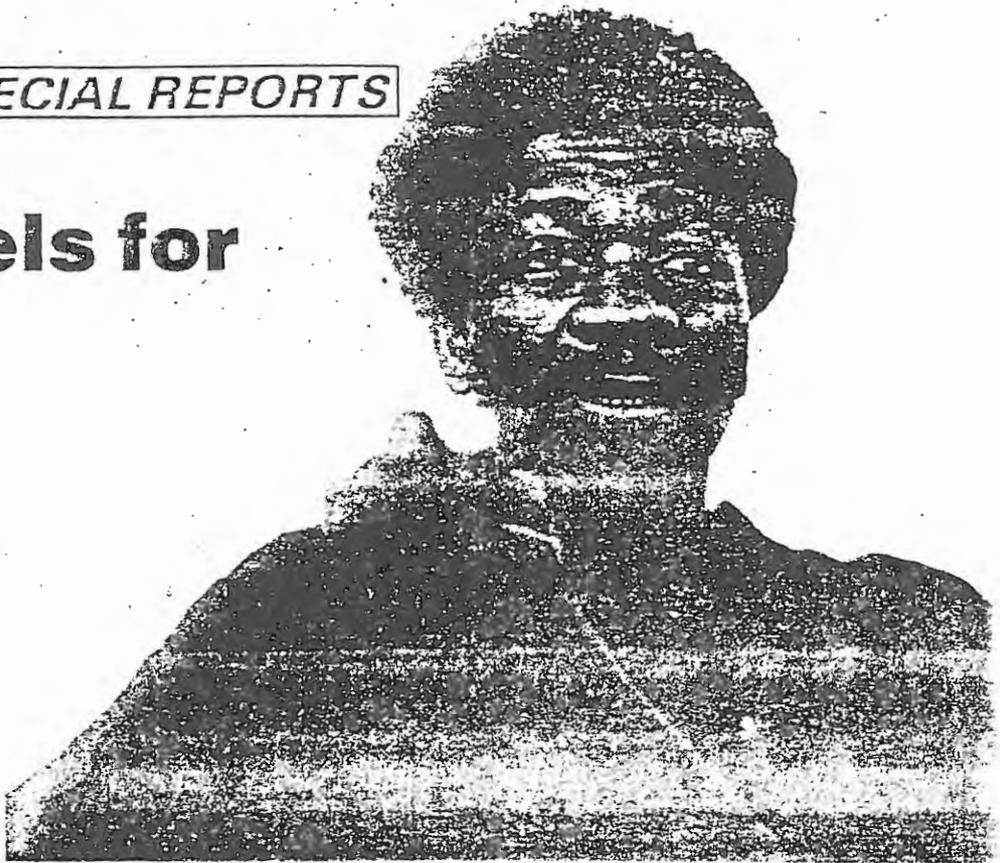
by Appiah Sackey

LEADING Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka has become the first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. This remarkable first in the 85 year long history of the world's most prestigious literary prize was announced on October 16 in Stockholm by the Swedish Academy, which confers the award. The Academy paid tribute to Soyinka's richly varied literary production and linguistic excellence, citing the 'wide cultural perspective' in which the writer 'fashions the drama of existence'.

As can be expected news of the award has been received with popular enthusiasm in much of Africa. Messages of congratulations and good wishes have poured in from all sides: from heads of state and politicians to cultural bodies and fellow writers. In Nigeria in particular the general mood greeting the award was akin to that of a national celebration. Minister of Information Tony Momoh must have been reflecting that general mood of his compatriots when, in an early reaction to the news, he declared: 'It is a great credit to Nigeria that Wole, our own son, was considered worthy of such an honour'. Soyinka himself could not hide his delight. Speaking from Paris, where he was at the time of the announcement of the award, he said: 'This prize is a recognition of our culture and our traditions in Africa and I am glad about it. African culture has not always been understood by other cultures, for instance in Europe'.

He added that the Nobel Prize was not an award for himself alone, but for all the others who laid the basis and constituted the source from which he could draw. 'It is the African world which can now be recognized, and I am thankful about that', Soyinka stated.

Flying home from Paris, Soyinka was received in Lagos by a large crowd of wellwishers. Prominent among the crowd was Tony Momoh, with news of further honours: Nigeria's second highest honour, Commander of the Federal Republic, had just been conferred on the writer. In a congratulatory letter to Soyinka, President Ibrahim Babangida stated:



Wole Soyinka ... 'the prize is a recognition of our culture'

'Your works are noted for their African inspiration, and their message has captured the imagination of the entire humanity for its universal relevance'. Expressing appreciation for the writer's extra-literary activities, the Nigerian leader added: 'You have never been contented with being a man of letters; you have come over the years to represent the barometer of the social conscience of the nation'.

African winners

The excitement that has been generated by Soyinka's prize is understandable, partly because in the entire history of the Nobel awards there have been only three African winners. In 1960 and 1984 respectively, the late Chief Albert Lithuli and Bishop Desmond Tutu won the Peace Prize, both of them for their contribution to the struggle for liberation and peace in South Africa. In 1978 the late President Sadat of Egypt shared the same Peace Prize with Israel's Menachem Begin in one of the most controversial awards ever made. Even though the names of a handful of African nominees have come before the Swedish Academy in the past, none of them have been awarded prizes in any of the other Nobel categories: chemistry, economics, medicine, physics and, until this year, literature.

Some observers have suggested that

the Swedish Academy has been under pressure in recent times to give the literature award to an African or Black writer. These observers have rightly noted that the Nobel literature prize has very rarely been awarded to writers from the Third World. In fact, the number of times Third World writers have won the prize can be counted on the fingers on one hand: India's Rabindranath Tagore in 1919, Guatemala's Miguel Angel Asturias in 1967, Chile's Pablo Neruda in 1971, and Columbia Gabriel Garcia Marquez in 1982.

But anyone who will intimate that the reason for the award of this year's prize to Soyinka is mainly gestural must obviously be deeply ignorant about the writer's work and its impact. For by any criteria, Soyinka's vibrant imagination and amazing creativity, his remarkable range and command in diverse genres, as well as his democratic spirit and concerns have all long established him as one of the most widely acclaimed literary giants, not only in Africa, but on the whole of the world literary scene. Over the period of almost three decades that he has been a literary practitioner, Soyinka has turned out over twenty substantial plays, four volumes of poetry, two novels, numerous essays, and works of critical discussion. He has directed and produced his plays on four continents, made a film, released an album of satiric songs, and also been active as a campaigner on social and political issues. Not only has Soyinka

AS we mourn the loss of one of Nigeria's finest journalists in this season of anomie, we must, whilst we count our loss, acknowledge the largely inscrutable paradox of this season. The paradox of a nation whose finest hour was wiped off by the tremulous fingers of assassins; the paradox of joy and sorrow; of evil and good and of a nation moving in a circle.

From these hotch-potch of events, a writer is at a great pain to write about this society. Anyhow, we must try.

We are reflecting today on Wole Soyinka our own W.S. whose Nobel Prize award gives us hope of a better day, a new day. A hope nurtured by our collective will to succeed in a world in which the white race has virtually conquered time and space. Soyinka's stupendous rise to world fame has its roots in will power and dogged determination. His vision is similar to that of the Russian youth whose name is

Dostoevsky the author of "Brother's Karamazov."

In 1839 this Russian youth wrote a letter to his brother which I quote here for your delight: "Man is a mystery. If you spend your entire life trying to puzzle him out, then do not say that you have wasted your time. I occupy myself with this mystery because I want to be a man" like the Russian youth, Soyinka believes that the essence of living lay in understanding life and indeed man, who is the prime mover in nature. More essentially, through Wole Soyinka, we got to know that the writer is an artist who must, as long as he lives study man, puzzle him out, and understand him, so that the writer can be a FULL MAN, a vintage man of his epoch.

Thus, in plots and sub-plots of Wole Soyinka's works, man

W.S.: Our ray of hope

comes out in all his hideousness, and his glory. Soyinka plunges into the depths of our sub-consciousness. We can clearly see man in full steam, the "landscapes within" and pictures of our reality. Reality defined in terms of our consciousness.

In essence, he is a writer that penetrates the psychology of our society, giving insight into our soul, the meta-psychic unity of mankind. To him the

By
IYIOLA FALOYIN

province of our inner life is only the vestibule of the kingdom of the spirit. Thus in his adaptation of "Igbu Irunmale" — A forest of thousand demons, Soyinka attempts to excite our psyche by highlighting the immortality of our soul. It would however be unfair

to assess Soyinka only as an artist dedicated to the agonising art of wordmanship. Wole Soyinka is a political agitator who believes in freedom. He hates tyranny and absolutism. It is no exaggeration to say that Soyinka is evidently seduced by this concept, poisoned by it.

Thus in his search for a better social order, Soyinka was at a point, during the tragic period of our life as a nation thrown into the dungeon for 27 months.

He emerged from the jail house to write a book "The Man Died" which again gives added impetus to his revolutionary commitment and zeal. His forays into popular agitation blossomed during the Buhari's fascist regime. He thus spoke his mind so freely that some of us believed he was out to commit Sepukku. Ironically the man survived all.

and today his heroic action during that terrible period would remain a commendable footnote in our history.

There is no doubt that Soyinka is yet to blossom as a genuine revolutionary, totally committed to the eradication of hunger, poverty, disease and squalor. A genuine crusader is that fighter who essentially believes in nihilism in a capitalist order. He is that writer (like Ngugi Wa Thiongo) who uses his pen to fight imperialists and their shameless collaborators.

In other words, a revolutionary may not see himself as a messiah or out on a mission of evangelism, he must nonetheless see himself as an agent that would propel a brave new order in which parasitism, imperialism, greed, brutal exploitation and other notorious features of a decadent capitalist system would be completely wiped off. Whilst Soyinka's apparent

ideological short coming is regrettable, we must acknowledge all the same the significance of the Nobel Prize award.

The award is a living testimony of the vitality of our culture and custom. The world has now acknowledged our culture which hitherto was considered savage and barbaric. For once, we are looking at the world from our cultural prism. For once we see our culture as a tool for self-actualisation. We see in it the essence of our being, the blossoming of the cultural unity of the dark skinned race.

As we celebrate whilst sipping our palm-wine, we must not fail to observe the lessons of Soyinka's award. The lessons are two fold: That man is capable of realising his goal, no matter the encumbrances on the way. Soyinka rose, if we recall from the obscurity of a Nigerian village to world fame. Secondly, that self actualisation cannot necessarily be achieved through morbid acquisition of wealth. To Soyinka, my very hearty congratulation.

What is AIDS?

AIDS is a serious condition characterized by a defect in natural immunity against disease. People who have AIDS are vulnerable to serious illnesses which would not be a threat to anyone whose immune system was functioning normally. These illnesses are referred to as "opportunistic" infections or diseases.

What causes AIDS?

Investigators have discovered the virus that causes AIDS. Different groups of investigators have given different names to the virus but they all appear to be the same virus. The virus is called human T-lymphotropic virus, type III (HTLV-III); lymphadenopathy associated virus (LAV); or AIDS related virus (ARV). Infection with this virus does not always lead to AIDS. Preliminary results of studies show that most infected persons remain in good health; others may develop illness varying in severity from mild to extremely serious.

What are its symptoms?

Most individuals infected with the AIDS virus have no symptoms and feel well. Some develop symptoms which may include tiredness, fever, loss of appetite and weight, diarrhea, night sweats, and swollen glands (lymph nodes)—usually in the neck, armpits, or groin. Anyone with these symptoms which continue for more than two weeks should see a doctor.

Who gets AIDS?

Ninety-four percent of the AIDS cases have occurred in the following groups of people:

- Sexually active homosexual and bisexual men with multiple partners, 73 percent;
- Present or past abusers of intravenous drugs, 17 percent;
- Persons with hemophilia or other coagulation disorders, 1 percent;
- Heterosexual contacts of someone with AIDS or at risk for AIDS, 1 percent;
- Persons who have had transfusions with blood or blood products, 2 percent.

Some 6% of patients did not fall into any of these groups, but researchers believe that transmission occurred in similar ways. Infants and children who have developed AIDS may have been

FACTS ABOUT AIDS

The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, or AIDS, was first reported in the United States in mid-1981. Since that time, the Public Health Service has received reports of more than 12,000 cases, about 50 percent of which have resulted in death.

AIDS is a serious illness, and a public health problem that merits concern. It has been named the number one priority of the U.S. Public Health Service. Researchers in the Public Health Service and in many major medical institutions have been working for more than four years to study AIDS, identify its cause, and develop treatments and preventive measures.

This fact sheet describes, in question-and-answer form, accurate information about the nature and extent of AIDS, the risk of contracting AIDS, the actions individuals can take to reduce spreading AIDS, and current research and related activities under way in the Public Health Service.

exposed to HTLV-III before or during birth, or shortly thereafter, or may

*In addition, a certain number of homosexual or bisexual men are also IV drug abusers.

have a history of transfusions. Some patients died before complete histories could be taken. Special studies of risk factors are under way with each of these groups considered to be at increased risk for getting AIDS.

How contagious is AIDS?

Casual contact with AIDS patients or persons who might be at risk for the illness does not place others at risk for getting the illness. No cases have been found where AIDS has been transmitted by casual household contact with AIDS patients or persons at higher risk for getting the illness. Although the AIDS virus has been found in saliva and tears, there have been no cases in which exposure to either was shown to result in transmission. Ambulance drivers, police, and firefighters who have assisted AIDS patients have not become ill. Nurses, doctors, and health care personnel have not developed AIDS from caring for AIDS patients.

However, health care and laboratory workers should follow safety procedures carefully when handling any blood and tissue samples from patients with potentially transmissible diseases, including AIDS.

How is AIDS transmitted?

AIDS is spread by sexual contact, needle sharing, or less commonly, through blood or its components. The risk of getting AIDS is increased by having multiple sexual partners, either homosexual or heterosexual, and shar-

ings. The occurrence of the syndrome in hemophilia patients and persons receiving transmission through blood. It may be transmitted from infected mother to infant before, during, or shortly after birth.

How long after exposure to HTLV-III does a person develop AIDS?

The time between infection with the HTLV-III virus and the onset of symptoms (the incubation period) seems to range from about 8 months to 5 years, and possibly longer. Not everyone exposed to the virus develops AIDS.

How is AIDS diagnosed?

There are no clear-cut symptoms that indicate the loss of immunity. The diagnosis of AIDS depends on the presence of opportunistic diseases. Certain tests which demonstrate damage to various parts of the immune system, such as specific types of white blood cells, support the diagnosis. The presence of opportunistic diseases plus a positive test for antibodies to HTLV-III can also make possible a diagnosis of AIDS.

Is there a laboratory test for AIDS?

As with most other infections, there is no single test for diagnosing AIDS. There is now a test for antibodies (substances produced in the blood to fight disease organisms) to the virus that causes AIDS. Presence of HTLV-III antibodies means that a person has been

infected with the AIDS virus; it does not tell whether the person is still infected. The antibody test is used to screen donated blood and plasma and assist in preventing cases of AIDS resulting from blood transfusions or use of blood products, such as Factor VIII, needed by men with hemophilia. The test is also available through private physicians, most state or local health departments and at other sites.

What are some of the diseases affecting AIDS patients?

About 85 percent of the AIDS patients studied have had one or both of two rare diseases: *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP), a parasitic infection of the lungs; and a type of cancer known as Kaposi's sarcoma (KS). KS usually occurs anywhere on the surface of the skin or in the mouth, in early stages, it may look like a bruise or blue-violet or brownish spot. The spot or spots persist, and may grow larger. KS may spread to, or appear in, other organs of the body. PCP has symptoms similar to any other form of severe pneumonia, especially cough, fever, and difficulty in breathing. Other opportunistic infections include unusually severe infections with yeast, cytomegalovirus, herpesvirus, and parasites such as *Toxoplasma* or *Cryptosporidia*. Milder infections with these organisms do not suggest immune deficiency.

Is there a danger of contracting AIDS from donating blood?

No. Blood banks and other blood collection centers use sterile equipment and disposable needles. The need for blood is always acute, and people who are not at increased risk for getting AIDS are urged to continue to donate blood as they have in the past.

How is AIDS treated?

Currently there are no antiviral drugs available anywhere that have been proven to cure AIDS, although

the search for such a drug is being pursued vigorously. Some drug is being pursued

Some drugs have been found that inhibit the AIDS virus, but these do not lead to clinical improvement. Though no treatment has yet been successful in restoring the immune system of an AIDS patient, doctors have had some success in using drugs, radiation, and surgery to treat the various illnesses of AIDS patients. Therapeutic agents are needed for all stages of AIDS infections, to block action of the virus once infection has occurred, and to build up immunity in patients who have developed AIDS symptoms. Eventually, a combination chemotherapy to combat the virus and restore the immune system may be the most effective therapy (*P. Xum Y@st@ @rini* pneumonia, for example, can be treated with antibiotics. Interferon, a virus-fighting protein produced naturally by the body, has been used with some success against Kaposi's sarcoma. Natural and recombinant interleukin preparations are being used in an attempt to repair the immunologic deficiencies in AIDS patients.)

Can AIDS be prevented?

Yes. Cases of AIDS related to medical use of blood or blood products are being prevented by use of HTLV-III antibody screening tests at blood donor sites and by members of high risk groups voluntarily not donating blood. Heat treatment of factor VIII and other blood products helps prevent AIDS in patients with hemophilia and other clotting disorders. There is no vaccine for AIDS. *Continued on Page 9*

These facts on the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) are provided by courtesy of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (Public Health Service).

Yet another award for Wole

Nigeria has honoured the man who has put African literature on the world map, reports a correspondent.

Ever since the Swedish Ambassador broke the news in Lagos that the internationally acclaimed playwright and poet had won the much coveted 1986 Nobel Prize for Literature, Nigerians have been in an ecstatic mood.

Soyinka, who was away in Paris when the award was broadcast flew to Lagos within 48 hours into the waiting arms of Nigeria's Information Minister, Tony Momoh, who announced that the playwright has been made Commander of the Federal Republic by President Babangida. This is one of the highest honours in Nigeria.

In a letter to Soyinka, President Babangida wrote, "Your works are noted for their African aspiration and their message have captured the imagination of the entire humanity for its universal relevance.

"Believe me, Wole, when I say one of the most pleasant exercises of my power as a President is to confer you one of the highest honours this nation can confer on

any of its illustrious citizens, the Commander of the Federal Republic (CFR) which echoes the deepest feelings of this great nation and her people."

Momoh himself commented that the international award was a "recognition of the African perspective in literature; a recognition that, now we in this part of the world can tell the world what we are through what we do."

Soyinka's reaction

Wole has dominated the scene, for more than 25 years. He is an institution in his own right. He has been surprisingly consistent; he has been an irredeemable believer in human rights — Wole's themes seem to have been the recognition of the human person and that has been reflected in everything he has been doing, in his writings, and even in his songs."

Speaking to newsmen later, Soyinka said

he had not given a thought to what he would do with the \$290,000 prize money. He said: "I don't know how much the money is. I was concerned with the symbolic importance of the prize," he then added humorously: "I think I will send a message to President Babangida to send his financial consultants so that we may sit together and work something out."

Asked if he foresaw in which direction African literature would go as a result of the award, Soyinka replied: "It will follow the direction which literature normally follows in all cultures. It is shaped by events, individual genius, and inspiration. The visceral response which all creative human beings have to their environment. So I cannot predict any particular direction for African literature. African literature is unique in its context but not in the very peculiar nature which all works of art tend to impose on those who practise them."

In reply to criticism that his works tended to be rather obscure and complex, Soyinka retorted by giving the example of

Soyinka, polished but remote

Kofi Buenor Hadjor, publisher of the London-based *Third World Book Review*, gives his reaction to Soyinka's Nobel Prize win.

As a fellow African, without sounding Chauvinistic. I am excited that the most prestigious award for literature has at last been given to an African writer. But I would like to add that the writings of Wole Soyinka are not meant for readers in his own society. They are meant for consumption by the Western literary establishment.

That is why it is no accident that the citation for the award emphasised how polished Wole Soyinka is in the English language. For me what is required of an African, nay a Third World, writer of relevance, is that he must work for popular literature. In my view a literature is popular if it provides perceptions and ideas in which ordinary people can recognise themselves. Popular literature should be based on the experience of everyday life and should provide a moral, spiritual and aesthetic idiom for the self-expression of ordinary people. If this kind of literature is truly popular, it will invite involvement and participation by ordinary people and in the process help bring about their liberation.

I see a striking difference in Wole Soyinka's writings and those of other Third World Nobel laureates like Pablo Neruda and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. With the latter writers, their works were popularly



Publisher Kofi Buenor Hadjor

acclaimed by their own people before the elite Swedish Academy recognised them. This to me is the literature of relevance, because in their writings ordinary people could recognise themselves. In other words, I am saying that elite literature is irrelevant to the developmental needs of Africa.

Popular African writers, in my view, should redirect their work towards the masses. If writers and other artists want to go beyond the confines of an elite audience, they have to adopt a form that is accessible,

direct and clear. Such an approach cannot rely simply on artistic skill: it demands a process of interaction with an evolving readership. Literary production becomes too exclusive if it depends simply on the creativity of intellectuals.

It is the job of writers to encourage the creativity of the masses to help them enhance their power of expression and perception. Now that Wole Soyinka has become a Nobel Laureate, he should deploy his immense literary skills to help raise the awareness of his people and thereby arm them with the correct ideas to fight against the forces that subjugate them to a position of underdevelopment.

At the same time, I pray that the new generation of African writers do not use Wole Soyinka as a model. I think African readers need popular writers. For Africa to decolonise its mind, to paraphrase Ngugi wa Thiong'o, we need more popular writers and fewer elite writers. We need more writers like Ngugi, Sembene Ousmane and Cyprian Ekwensi, because in our circumstances they are the writers of the people and therefore of relevance.

I also consider Soyinka's isolated acts of political heroism as irrelevant and unnecessary. It is a revolutionary programme executed by a revolutionary organisation that needs headlines and not individuals. Wole Soyinka, the writer-activist, must act not as an individual but as an activist of a revolutionary organisation.

Wole Soyinka's approach of his art

THE NOBEL EXPERIENCE

...to exceed the people!" asked the
 ...Wole Soyinka
 ...ly, friends
 ...here" (as
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 ...out 27 in-
 ...people!" asked the
 ...man.
 ..."Oh, because we
 ...can't really bring one
 ...million," Prince
 ...Momoh replied
 ...without any hesitation.



Wole Soyinka, laureate of the Nobel Prize for Literature

There is a Nigerian nominee, Wole Soyinka, who saw a formidable obstacle to the coveted prize. The appeal of the award was offering him an award which was a "local" ruse to "damn with faint praise" as it were. His mentor, who saw the award whose citation was a writer of "West African" English.

The size of the award, which he defended, gave some particular to which the Minister provided a answer, through as though the summer in which

he handled it. It was clear that not all the members of the delegation could obtain the ticket to attend the presentation ceremonies, a situation that could have generated some disquiet within the body of the party. But the Minister looked on the positive side and sought strength in an adaptation of the triumphant words of Julius Caesar.

"We are glad, at least, that we all came," he said, "and even if we did not all see, because we have won the prize, we all conquered!"

As it happened, we all saw — even if some did only on television.

The Nobel Prizes of 1986 went to ten laureates within the five categories — three for Physics, three also for Chemistry, two for Physiology or Medicine, and one each for Literature and Economic Sciences. There is really no prize for the Social Sciences, or disciplines like Architecture or any other art form. The Prize for Literature therefore stands as representative, as it were, of the highest recognition for artistic excellence.

This fact confers a "blue ribbon" aura on the Literature Award, though each prize is held to be the equal of any other. The romance and the glamour of the "Literature Nobel" combine to make it the most coveted because it is many a time won by someone who has communicated with a very wide readership, across the boundaries of nationality and barriers of language. Unlike in the other disciplines, some of the winners in the Literature class had become world-famous before the award. This is the prize with which most people can identify, the one they can touch and be touched by.

It is therefore not totally surprising that there have been suggestions that subtle manoeuvres sometimes emanated from certain quarters to ensnare the prize. Such "manoeuvres" would indeed have to be very "subtle" indeed. The Statutes of the Nobel Foundation are most strict about any form of "lobbying", and their terms make them virtually impervious to only the most ethical influences. But it is still a human institution administered by human beings.

A personal report by Bisi Lawrence



For instance, I was informed (not too reliably, I must admit) that there was a subtle ploy even this year, to lessen Wole Soyinka's chances of winning the award. It took me no time at all to debunk the idea, though my source sounded plausible enough. He was a studious type who ran into me in a bookshop in downtown Stockholm, and proceeded to feed me with the following mush.

There was an American nominee, according to my informant, who saw Wole Soyinka as the most formidable obstacle between him and the coveted prize. The "Americans" thereupon decided to narrow down the appeal of the Nigerian writer by offering him an award which would proclaim him as a "local" writer — a clever ruse to "damn with faint praise", as it were. And that, went on my mentor, was why they gave him an award whose citation described him as a writer of "West African" English.

Although I really was not in a position to put such clever footwork beyond our Yankee friends, I felt that the scenario was a bit far-fetched. Fortunately, I remembered that Alexander Solzhenitsin, who was honoured for the ethical force with which he has pursued the indispensable traditions of RUSSIAN literature... I passed the information on to the fellow who had begun to call me his "friend", thus terminating what I found

a particularly oppressive association, in spite of its brevity.

That encounter, however, made me more curious about what seemed to be the general notion that the award of the Literature prize is always affected by the extent of the appeal or appreciation of the writers considered for the award. That of course may be an additional asset. But it would seem that the emphasis has always been on the high quality rather than the wide appeal, on the scholarship over and above the popularity.

The fourth Nobel Literature laurels, for instance, were shared by two people, Frederic Mistral of France was honoured "for his poetic production which faithfully reflects the natural scenery and native spirit of his people..." The other winner was Jose Echegaray Y Eizagirre of Spain "for his brilliant compositions which... have revived the great traditions of the Spanish drama." That was as far back as 1904. Alexander Solzhenitsin, earlier mentioned, was the laureate for 1970. The accent is on excellence and has been consistent through the years.

In our laureate, Wole Soyinka, the elements have been happily mixed. His creativity springs from the wells of his cultural and classical heritage to model a noble response to inhumanity and injustice from the soft approach of his art.



...the elements have been happily mixed

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Bisi
Lawrence



From the lofty appre

Our own journalism guru, Bisi Lawrence, was there in Stockholm, the day the Lion got the Jewel. Today we bring you the first part of the report of the Nobel Literature Prize award to our own Wole Soyinka, done in the inimitable way only Bisi Lawrence could write it. Only in Vanguard!

THE NOBEL EXPERIENCE

posed no great terror to me immediately. In fact, I was almost singing, or whistling gaily as we trooped into the opulent foyer of the hotel. There were some rumblings about "conversion" and the "rate in dollars", but they did not touch the proud heart of this Nigerian. I went as far as to obtain the number of my room, receive my key from the reception desk and step into the soft sumptuousness of my palatial chambers.

laureate to exceed thirty. In fact, Wole Soyinka's "family, friends and publishers" (as described and enumerated by the Swedish Press) all came to about 27 in number.

people?" asks Pressman. "Oh, because couldn't really be hundred million," Tony Momoh without any ha



Wole Soyinka: won the palm for the category of

And then the contents of the earlier rumblings became a bit clearer, as I got the full impact of the rates. Nine hundred kronen came to about 130 dollars, which is about four hundred naira. Great SFEM! I hastened — ran, actually — to the lobby where I found quite a number of the members of our delegation looking a bit down at the mouth. In the end, accommodations that were more suitable to our plebeian position and purse were found for us in a hotel called "DOMUS," which was promptly rechristened "The People's Republic" by the Minister himself.

However, the Press had also inflated the size of the official delegation to a "plane-load" of delegates. The actual number was, of course, much less than that. That embellishment notwithstanding, the size

"You can ur that, can't you? first time ever... It was not the only time: t Minister had display the grasp he had significance"

There was an American in according to my informant, Wole Soyinka as the most fo obstacle between him and the prize. The "Americans" th decided to narrow down the a the Nigerian writer by offering award which would proclaim "local" writer... a clever "damn with faint praise," as And that, went on my men why they gave him an awar citation described him as a "West African" English

of the Nigerian party was enough to give rise to some excitement to the extent that one journalists asked the Minister about it. "But why did you bring as many as about forty

mission. The delegation, rightly defen rise to one question to Minister p prompt answ the open man

THE sunshine warmed our hearts. Above us the sky was bright and blue beneath us the clouds were dark and dull. We were 37,000 feet above the earth, twenty minutes away from Stockholm. We plunged into the gloom below and said goodbye to the sun.

having won the palm for the category of Literature. The delegation had royalty as its Leader, Prince Tony Momoh, the Minister of Information. However, not all the members were able to stay in the retinue which was lodged in the Sheraton. It was not our wish to desert the Minister. In fact, several members of the delegation vowed to stay with him at the Sheraton through thick and thin — and from some accounts, things really did tend to get rather thin later on. All the same, the stalwarts held on magnificently. This is what happened.

During the bus-ride from the airport, we had been casually informed by an official of the embassy that it would cost us no less than 900 kronen for each night that we spent at the Sheraton. That

The time of the Nobel Memorial Awards falls into early winter in "the land of the Midnight Sun". It is observed on December 10th, which is the anniversary of the death of Alfred Nobel ninety years ago. The land enjoys as much as twenty-two hours of sunshine during the summer, but almost none at all at this time of the year. Stockholm was grey from the Arlanda airport to the Sheraton Hotel in which reservations had been made for the Nigerian delegation to the award of the Nobel Prizes, our own Wole Soyinka

That was crude forgery

THE article in the December 17 Vanguard, "Home Truth About US Military Doctrine," purported to have been written by Steven Momoh, in a crude forgery. I am distressed that a highly responsible and respected newspaper such as the Vanguard could allow itself, its readers, the American Embassy, and the people we represent to be victimized by this fraud. I am sure that the publication of this piece was inadvertent, and confident that you will set the record straight. However, the larger questions you must ask yourself on behalf of your readers are: What sort of person forges another's name in a story he is afraid to state on his own? who profits from the malicious attempt to sow distrust and confusion? How can responsible journalists keep this from happening?

becoming aware that they are being used in a conscious, well-planned, and well-financed campaign to influence public opinion through lies, slander and forgeries of just this sort. As M. V. Kamath, the respected Indian journalist and former editor of the "Illustrated Weekly of India" has written: "Newspapermen — whether they be reporters or sub-editors or news editors — have to be constantly on the alert lest they be taken for a ride by interested parties... we in India do not have to be suckers... This is a free country; only the air is full of 'disinformation'..."

Trusting in your good judgement and good faith, I request that this letter be printed in its entirety.

Steven Momoh, Acting Director, United States Information Service, Lagos.

Journalists around the world are

Soyinka: When the noble and nobel met

AS a child in the historic town of Abeokuta, his interest rested in politics and religion. But about 40 years later when he was to receive the world's highest intellectual award, it was not the Papal's highest honour at the Holy See and neither was it at the Buckingham Palace for

the famous O.B.E. award for being the "Obedient Boy of the Empire".

Today, he stands, not in
By TUNJI BELLO

the Papal's cassock nor in her majesty's knighthood, but as the blackman's number one noble laureate in literature, a symbol which he now holds — like 'KAKO', Onikunmo-Ekun, in late D.O. Fagunwa's 'Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo

frumole', a book Soyinka himself translated and adapted into English: A Forest of a Thousand Demons.

On July 13, 1984, while celebrating his 50th birthday in Ile-Ife, this 'Ijeba man by parenthood, internationalist by work, whom his friends prefer to call 'Kongi' and whom one Sierra-Leonean scholar once described as 'Our own W.S.' for sharing same initials with legendary William Shakespeare stunned his audience and guests, when he threw a bombshell: I belong to the wasted generation.

Although, Soyinka was then not explicit enough, the consensus of opinion amongst his listeners was that he probably was referring to 'how Nigeria has failed to tap from its flourishing arsenal of brilliant homosapiens. And if that consensus still holds today, it is not clear how this Noble laureate can continue to fit himself in. For if Soyinka once belonged to a wasted generation, today he has become an international property whose creative works, the world must cherish even after he might have gone beyond.

When his name was first mentioned in connection with the award three years ago, it was an indication that the world could no longer ignore one of Africa's intellectual giants. And by the time the Swedish academy landed him the laurel, he already had in his creative bag:-

A 'Dance of the Forest' (1963) The Lion and the Jewel (1963) The Strong Breed (1965) The Swamp Dwellers (1965) The Road, (1965), The Interpreters (1965) The Trials of Brother

Jero (1965) Kongi Harvest (1966) Idanro (1967) The Forest of a Thousand Demons; translated from late D.O. Fagunwa's Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo frumole 1976. Before the Blackout (1976). A Shuttle in the Crypt (1972) Camwood on the Leaves (1972). The Bachae of Euripides 1972, The Man Died (prison notes, 1972). Season of Anomy, 1974, The Metamorphosis of Jero, 1974, Poems of black Africa (1975). Death and the Kings Horsemen (1975). Myth in literature and the African world (1976) Ake: Year of Childhood, (1983).

These do not include various articles dramatic sketches and plays which are either published in academic journal or various world collections, or staged for specific occasions, and circumstances. He has also waxed records and made films.

Since The Swamp Dwellers earned him the first prize at 1966 Negro World Arts Festival in Senegal, Soyinka has been the recipient of various awards and prizes, ranging from honorary awards from world reputable universities and arts institutes, to prizes including most recently, 1st winner of Agip International prize in humanities, and a few weeks ago was initiated into the American academy and institute of arts and letters.

To Soyinka, an artist is a mirror through which the society sees itself. And this is truly reflected in all his works.

In his poem 'Idanro' he vividly paints the picture of political violence in Nigeria or what Professor Kalu Uka of Theatre Arts department of the University of Calabar

once described as a moral issue resolves into a 'trial' of humanity in the 'Dance of the Forest' — a play written to mark Nigeria's attainment of independence.

In 'Death and the King's Horsemen' where he portrays action as impossible and fulfilment as frustrating, or in what Kalu again called laughable dichotomies between old age and youth, strength and weakness, tradition and modernism,

Myajiner and Specialist', Essays in Myths, Literature Myth and the African World, even to an extent in 'The Man Died'.

Soyinka too once admitted that he has a tendency towards an elliptic style of writing, but as he recently puts it after the Nobel Prize award. The question of obscurity is one thing which I can do all the time'...

He sighted the instance of a French man who won the



civilisation and primitivity in the Lion and the Jewels. And in the 'Trial of Brother Jero' where incompetent mediocres, in high places are painted in their true colour, or in his famous Elpee. 'I Love my Country' where he caricatured the madness of Nigeria's second republic, or in his prison note 'The Man Died'...

Yet, Soyinka is an enigma, a multi-dimensional man meaning many things to different people he is an "all round artist, an essayist, novelist, poet, playwright, lyricist, singer, dramatist, satirist, social critic and politician.

These multifaceted parts of him have often made it difficult for analysts and critics alike to really place him in a perspective. A position that is not helped by what many see as idiomatic obscurity in most of his works like in 'Dance of the Forest',

award last year and whom the French President Mitterand said he never even understood one word in his writing. 'So the question of obscurity is relative' he said.

While Soyinka may not be understood by many, there is still one area where his impact is felt by all. As a social critic, social justice, crusader, and advocate for the oppressed, he stood upright, towering above his generation. He has used every medium and opportunity to chastise the foibles of successive Nigeria rulers and their institutional charlatanism.

Yet Soyinka to Chinweizu is a neo-colonial writer, to a radical ideologue like Biodun Jeyifo of University of Ife, Soyinka 'may' be confrontational but is lacking in ideological commitment'.

But as the noble laureate once put it in his own reply, I

Continued on Page 13



Soyinka, accompanied by Prince Momoh no longer a member of the wasted generation. Photo by TIMOTHY OYEOLA.

'THE UNBENDING BRANCH' OPENS AT PECREP THEATRE

SINCE Nigeria's first charitable theatre company, Pec, Repertory made its entrance some four or five years ago it has presented over 25 plays and 30 concerts of wide variety and of international significance.

Bearing the imprint of one of Nigeria's most dynamic playwrights Professor J.P.

DRAMA

Clark, Pec Rep has evolved a distinctive style which is demonstrated by the professional actors employed therein.

The press preview of The Unbending Branch which is one of the plays for Pec Rep's sixth season of plays for the month of October, took place sometime last week with a handful of mediamen as audience.

As with most drama sketches directed by Professor J.P. Clark, the artistic director, The Unbending Branch, a play by Efo Kofu Mawugbe is unique in its simplicity of plot though some of the scenes tend to drag on for a while

By BETTY IRABOR

longer than they should thereby prolonging the play which would have concluded minutes earlier.

The Unbending Branch brings to two the number of Efo Kofu Mawugbe's drama plays to be staged by the well known crew of Pec Rep. The first, The Struggle Continues or Aluta continua was staged four years earlier before a very impressive audience.

As usual, The Unbending Branch takes place in the author's favourite setting-Ghana and the minute the plot unfolds, all proofs that the various incidents being dramatised took place in Ghana are unravelled by the cast's dressing habit, their choice of names and mode of communication.

Though approached from a somewhat different perspective, The Unbending Branch runs parallel to the biblical depiction of the prodigal son story.

However, the playwright deviates from the biblical story because while the biblical son returns home amidst jublations, Amamu,

the 'prodigal son' in The Unbending Branch returns home to a cold reception. His parents who are still smarting from the abominable behaviour of their 'wayward son' simply refuse to bend to accommodate their son who returns home in the garb of a city boy while clutching a suit case full of money.

At a glance The Unbending Branch is the story of a son (Amamu) who, disgruntled with his job as a farmer leaves for the city. His decision was viewed by his parents as a rejection and rebellion against the accepted norms of their society and they could not come to terms with this. In the ensuing argument, Amamu in a hurry to depart knocks his mother down, crippling her and leaving a mental scar in the hearts of his poor parents.

And so for six year, Amega Koorvi (Oriasolie Enachola) and his handicapped wife Mawuse (Tovin Ajetumobil) nursed the wound left behind by their only child.

The memories were painful especially as the poor folks were besieged by ferocious looking debt collectors, a man-Kofi (Peter Ijeh) and a

woman Adzovi (Ekuu M. Tandoh) who devised all tactics to extort money from their debtor.

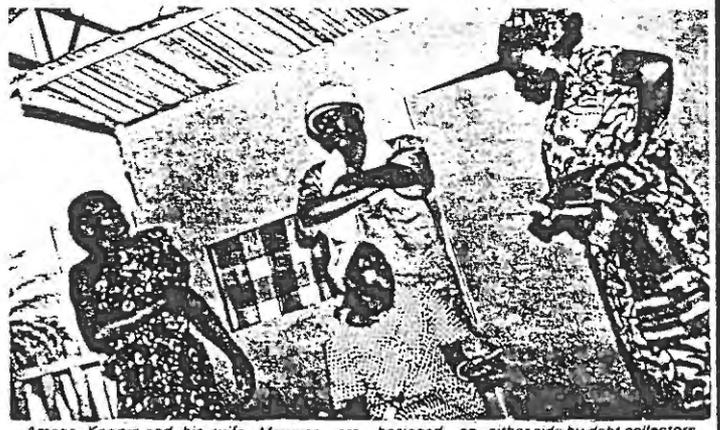
As the story progresses with a speed so fast, yet slow enough for the various actors to make an impact, we soon learn through a flash back to a day six years earlier of the immediate cause of the dissension between parents and son. We are told of how

Amamu had in the manner of the prodigal son sold for a paltry sum a family plot of land.

Having cleverly pacified one of two debt collectors, while the more obstinate one decides to pitch her tent in her debtor house until her fees of 10, 656 ceedis and 12 pesewas were settled, the two lonely couple settle down. They allow their minds to drift to the day their son

gave them the entire length of his tongue. Through their reminiscences the hitherto ignorant audience gets a first hand knowledge of the events that led to the family scuffle which culminated in the exit of Amamu.

Only an adept at play directing could have successfully captured the mood which was achieved by a good lighting effect.



Amega Koorvi and his wife Mawuse are besieged on either side by debt collectors.

Listener, 20 Oct 1986, p. 25

'Strange that Soyinka is so little heard of. We are supposed to be in favour of writers.'

Dennis Walder

The most striking thing about the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to the Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka is that it has taken so long for an African writer to be thus recognised. It is now some 40 years since Léopold Senghor's *Chants d'ombre* alerted outsiders to the potential of African writing, and some 30 years since Chinua Achebe's classic novel, *Things Fall Apart*, confirmed the force and originality of the new African literatures—'new' because of course there are older literatures, in European and indigenous languages, which go back centuries before the rise of the ex-colonial nation states whose borders now confine Africa's many cultures.

But the appropriateness of the award is undeniable. Not only has Soyinka displayed the range, commitment and sheer staying-power which make him unique even among such large talents as Senghor or Achebe, but he has done so by reshaping his own particular cultural inheritance into a vision for our times. In his first confessedly 'serious' play, *A Dance of the Forests*, performed as part of Nigeria's independence celebrations in 1960, he began the elaboration of Yoruba mythology which has subsequently pervaded his work. The central figures of that mythology are Obatala, who represents the passive, accepting impulse in creation, and Ogun, who represents dynamism and (tragic) rebellion. The Dionysian Ogun is Soyinka's chosen deity, his patron saint; but together, Obatala and Ogun provide him with a

cosmic framework within which to develop our awareness 'of a particular moment in a people's history', a moment simultaneously imbued 'with a hovering, eternal presence'. When Nigerian history darkened into civil war and an uncertain aftermath of successive military regimes, Soyinka became more pessimistic, angrily exposing a world ruled—in the words of one later play's title—by *Madmen and Specialists*. This development caused some last-minute hesitation among the Academicians in Stockholm since, after all, Nobel specified a prize for literary work remarkable *dans le sens d'idealisme*. But Ogun is a many-sided god, subject to multiple interpretations; and so his famous celebrant won in the end.

Soyinka addresses humanity. This is why he has chosen a universal medium, drama; it is also why he continues to write in English, although a growing number of African writers—such as, most notably, the Kenyan novelist and playwright, Ngugi wa Thiong'o—believe this bypasses the pressing needs of their own local communities, and prefer to use their native languages once again. Yet, as was shown by Soyinka's arrest and two-year detention during the civil war, for single-handedly trying to persuade General Ojukwu of the folly of Biafran secession, he is no merely detached observer. On the contrary, he likes to be in the thick of things, and his writings—which include poetry, novels, criticism, autobiography and 'prison notes', as well as nearly 20 plays—resonate with a human concern which is often wry and bitter, sometimes misguided and obscure, but always deeply felt. On the publication of his prison book, *The Man Died* (1972), he commented: 'All humanity seeks power, and to have power you must have victims'. But the more he has come to admit such truths, the more he has wanted to resist them. 'Even after a revolution has taken place a handful of people will still have to stand aside and question every move of the new regime. As a writer, I have special responsibility ...'

Soyinka is, in the best sense, a writer's writer: commitment to his craft carries with it all other commitments. Strange, not to say scandalous, then, that he is so little heard of, read or performed in the English-speaking countries, especially Great Britain. We are supposed to be in favour of writers. Soyinka is fêted in Moscow and Berlin, he is known in New York, what happens in London?

His plays have not been performed here since the mid-Sixties; only a handful are in print; even those formally obliged as students of literature to attend to the great works of our



Wole Soyinka: addressing humanity

time do not come across him. Yet, as I have said, Soyinka writes in English and, indeed, so many Anglophone intellectuals of his generation, was educated and received his dramatic apprenticeship within the English system. Ibandan, Leeds (where the Shakespearean critic G Wilson Knight was a formative influence); the Royal Court. The narrow parochialism which has come to dominate life in this country in recent years, or the continuing legacy of colonial attitudes, or both, must lie behind the general ignorance of, and indifference towards, a writer of Soyinka's acknowledged stature.

A few pockets of enlightenment have been apparent, it is true. In 1973, Soyinka gave a series of lectures during a spell as Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge (subsequently published as *Myth, Literature and the African World*), and he was simultaneously invited to accept a Visiting Professorship at the University of Sheffield, an institution which does teach a full programme of African literature. A handful of other universities, polytechnics and colleges also teach some African writing, smuggled in under the name of 'Commonwealth' or 'African and Other' or 'African and Caribbean' literatures. Heinemann Educational's pioneering 'African Writers' Series' imprint (which was edited by Achebe) has recently been revamped to counter the competition of relative newcomers such as Macmillan's 'Pacesetters' and Longman's 'Drumbeat' series as well as aimed at the huge African market rather than towards Britain. In America, academic and public interest is demonstrated by an active African Literature Association; here a group of teachers founded the Association for the Teaching of Caribbean and African Literature (ATCAL) to promote their common interest by means of a series of annual conferences—after eight fairly successful years ATCAL now languishes.

This is a sorry state of affairs. One can only hope that Soyinka's Nobel Prize encourages everyone interested in literature to sample the riches of the English-speaking, and not merely the English, world.



Ngugi wa Thiong'o: turning against English

THE GRIOT

IN ANCIENT AFRICA

'GRIOTS' WERE THE COUNSELLORS OF KINGS, THEY CONSERVED THE CONSTITUTIONS OF KINGDOMS BY MEMORY WORK ALONE...IT WAS FROM AMONG THE GRIOTS THAT KINGS USED TO CHOOSE THE TUTORS FOR YOUNG PRINCES...FOR WANT OF ARCHIVES, (THEY) RECORDED THE CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS AND GOVERNMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF KINGS....

SUNDIATA, DJIBRIL T. NIANE

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The journal solicits articles relative to any disciplinary perspective in the humanities which further enhance our knowledge of the Africana (African, African-American, Caribbean) experience. We will also publish poetry and reviews of books about the Black experience. Typed articles submitted for publication should normally not exceed 20 pages, and they should conform to the MLA style manual (or the manual in the author's discipline). Please send two copies of original manuscript. Each submission should be accompanied by a brief autobiographical sketch and a stamped, return addressed envelope. The GRIOT is a semi-annual publication of the Southern Conference on Afro-American Studies, Inc. Annual membership fee is \$15.00. All members of SCAASI receive the journal free.

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Credits: Illustrations throughout this issue are by Charles Davis, Assistant Professor of Art, Shelby State Community College, Memphis, TN.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

This issue of THE GRIOT is dedicated to Dr. Howard J. Jones, whose untiring and unselfish dedication has helped keep The Southern Conference on Afro-American Studies, Inc., a viable organization.

The editor also wishes to thank the following persons: Charles Davis, for providing the illustrations for this issue; Ousseynou B. Traore, for lending his critical acumen and untiring assistance in editing the final manuscript; Joyce Singleton, our overworked but loyal and efficient secretary in the Department of English at Alcorn, for typing the final manuscript; and the acting departmental chairperson, Joyce Jenkins, for supporting our efforts.

Due to budgetary restraints, we resorted to the reduction process of the original manuscripts. In future issues we hope to utilize typesetting, if the budget permits.

- ⁴⁰ Tulsa Tribune, June 5, 1921.
- ⁴¹ Tulsa Star, September 19, 1914.
- ⁴² Wheeler, "It Happened in Tulsa," p. 16.
- ⁴³ Halliburton, "The Tulsa Race War of 1921," p. 337.
- ⁴⁴ Tulsa Star, January 1, 1920.
- ⁴⁵ Mitchell, Race Riot in Black and White, p. 54.
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- ⁴⁸ Jimmy L. Franklin, The Blacks in Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), p. 8.
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- ⁵¹ Tolson, Black Oklahomans, p. 169.
- ⁵² "Impact Raps With . . . W. D. Williams," p. 34.
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- ⁵⁴ Edwin S. Redkey, Black Exodus (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 304.
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BOOK REVIEW

Wole Soyinka's *Ake*

Wole Soyinka, *Ake: The Years of Childhood*. New York: Random House, 1981. 230 pp.
Reviewed by O. B. Traore

Ake is an important work of African literature for two major reasons: it ranks high among African works of childhood literature, and sheds light on the undocumented early life of a controversial author [most African authors being scantily, if at all, biographically documented]; *Ake* is also a masterfully structured narrative that reads like Soyinka's novels, The Interpreters and Season of Anomy.

Soyinka's sharp intellectual curiosity and voracious reading appetite are clearly impressed on the reader as crucial formative elements in the first eleven years of his life. Major personal influences like Essay (a pun on his initials, S.A.) the head master and Soyinka's father, and Wild Christian, the author's beautifully nicknamed mother, are incisively characterized. While both parents, through a rigid code of conduct, instill moral and ethical values in young Soyinka, Essay's influence is primarily academic and pushes a rather tender youth into the adult world of lettered competition and on to the road to high achievements. Soyinka's closeness to his mother, and his help as messenger and tutor for the self-help societies created by Wild Christian's friends allow him to witness and even take minor part in the women's revolutionary movement against colonial misuse of political power. This movement coincides with a more general African political unrest, right after the Hitlerian period that produced such leaders of the struggle for national liberation as Zik and Awolowo. Soyinka's political consciousness and education surely have their roots in this important experience, at least in part. The Narrative of *Ake* is structured around abrupt time/space shifts, which allows Soyinka to bridge the gap between past, present and future, thus establishing a free flow from and into these realities. This device has already been successfully tested in Soyinka's literary works (poetry, drama, fiction) and thus breaks with the chronological and objective modes of the typical autobiography. The time/space shifts blend discrete, unrelated events and characters that share thematic content. This kind of structure transcends factual and fictional modes to get at the complex essentiality of things, people and events.

Ake is chockfull of brilliant vignettes of the socio-cultural milieu that one finds in Soyinka's literary works: the Yoruba worldview, history and oral forms, among other things. The episode of the abiku girl is particularly revealing as a personal experience of Soyinka's and connects thematically with his early brush with the spiritual and deadly world of the *oro*. That Soyinka's narrative often takes a poetic and metaphorical flight, demonstrating a nimble manipulation of language, is no surprise to those familiar with his literary works. The kinds of oral poetry pieces Soyinka embeds in *Ake* are, in fact reminiscent of the authors own elliptical verse and animistic spells. The samples vary from the following song set in a story told Soyinka by his father:

The gourd has no arms.

Tere gungun etc.
 The gourd has no legs
 Yet the gourd is pursuing the tortoise.

to the rhythmic children's song accompanying "a dance of shame"

Bed-wetter, bed-wetter,
 With a piss-pot for a head-cover
 Excretes on the mat and cleans her anus
 with fibre.

Some of the verse, such as the mature and irreverent rebellious women's song aimed at the oppressor, borders on the x-rated. Here it goes

Atupa's vagina started the strife
 Alike, with penis of a poison rat.

The examples of Yoruba verbal art are numerous, but the preceding are fairly representative.

Ake ends as Soyinka is getting ready to go to Ibadan for further studies, at the age of eleven. The work stands on its own as an accomplished literary addition to the Soyinka corpus, already impressive in quality and quantity. I hungrily await the volumes that are bound to follow Ake from the master's fine-honed pen.



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Ch'Indaba

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"Soyinka's play echoes historical ritual event."

GUARDIAN, 25 January 1986, p. 10

U. Lagos production of DEATH AND THE KING'S HORSEMAN.

YOUR LUCK TODAY

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19): A personal achievement gives you a lot of pleasure and satisfaction, and your future ideas connected with it will receive much closer attention.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20): You'll need to exercise a certain amount of effort to put a new scheme into action. Otherwise, you can enjoy a relatively trouble-free and easy-going day.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20): You surround yourself with people you like today. Nevertheless, there is still a fly in the ointment - and you don't know quite how to deal with it!

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21): Resist the temptation to spend too much cash on bits and pieces. You may not feel guilty about only spending a little at a time, but all those odd amounts soon add up.

GEMINI (May 22 - Jun 21): You are able to clear up a misunderstanding in double quick time today; and this puts you in a far happier frame of mind.

CANCER (Jun 22 - Jul 23): Why don't you try to instigate a new friendship, instead of always waiting for others to make the first move?

LEO (Jul 24 - Aug 23): You should be able to devote the day to purely pleasurable activities, although your conscience may provoke you into some action on the work or duty front.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23): A surprise message starts your mind racing, and you may end up having got quite the wrong end of the stick.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23): You should certainly make sure you look your best today, for romance is in the air - and you don't want to be caught napping, do you?

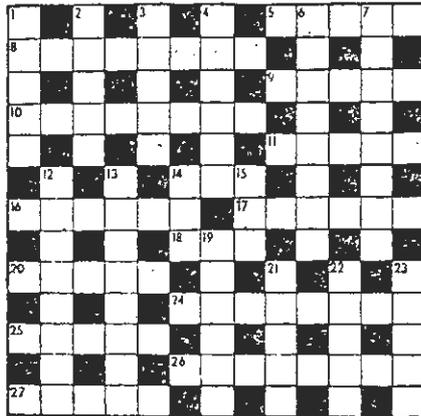
SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22): You foresee difficulties arising on the social scene. In fact, things will run particularly smoothly for you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22): A clash of personality could upset the applecart - if you let it. Surely you can put yourself above such trivial difficulties.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20): You'll be flattered by the attentions of someone of the opposite sex. But don't let your pleasure show too obviously.

BIRTHDAY LUCK: A rather splendid start to the year is envisaged on the business front, but this doesn't mean you can afford to sit back on your laurels later. Social activities will take up a great deal of your spare time, but you will find the hand of friendship most rewarding on many occasions.

QUICK 2



CLUES (No 6922)

ACROSS

- 5 Whim (5)
- 8 Gala (8)
- 9 Backbone (5)
- 10 Ward (8)
- 11 Sprite (5)
- 14 Skill (3)
- 16 Yield (6)
- 17 Take in (6)
- 18 Sin (3)
- 20 Principle (5)
- 24 Helpful (8)
- 25 Divest (5)
- 25 Municipality (8)
- 27 Rascal (5)

DOWN

- 1 Range (5)
- 2 Stream (5)
- 3 Defame (5)
- 4 Hurtle (6)
- 6 Evaluate (8)
- 7 Opposed (8)
- 12 Absurdly unselfish (8)
- 13 Large store (8)
- 14 Consumed (3)
- 15 Sailor (3)
- 16 Band (6)
- 21 Demon (5)
- 22 Battle (5)
- 23 Yawning (5)

QUICK 1 SOLUTIONS

Across

- Across: 1 Far-fetched; 8 Pattern; 9 Basis; 10 Etch; 11 Contribute; 13 Urchin; 15 Dangle; 17 Pinafore; 18 Idea; 21 Sauna; 22 Itemize; 23 Effeminate.

DOWN:

- Down: 2 Antic; 3 Feed; 4 Tendon; 5 Habitual; 6 Oathing; 7 Asseverate; 8

(No. 6921)

- Presuppose; 12 Riffraff; 14 Censure; 16 Truism; 19 Drift; 20 Mean.

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ways Limited and the general public please take note.

OKEI: I, formerly known as Osamuyimen Okei now wish to be addressed as Osamuyimen Anthony Otanere, Baptist High School Benin City and the public note.

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ADESINA: I, Miss. Elizabeth Titilayo Adesina henceforth bear Mrs. Elizabeth Titilayo Ajewole. Former documents remain valid. Nigeria Oil Mills Ltd. & public note.

GRACE: I, Miss. Adeyemi Aina Olusola Grace now Miss. Grace Olusola Aina Ogunleye. Former documents remain valid. Eleyo High School Ikere Ekiti and general public note.

ADEAGBO: I, formerly known as Mr. Adetunji Abiodun Adeagbo henceforth wish to be known and called Mr. Adeagbo Abiodun Adetunji. All documents bearing the former names remain valid. University of Ibadan and the public should take note.

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Soyinka

Contd from page 5

am a socialist, but not a Marxist, which has come to represent an admission of impotence which takes refuge in rhetorical verbalisation and forms of criticism which are not related to reality.

There is no reason, he argues, why the resources of the nation cannot be socialised. The present legal system according to him is disadvantaged to the low income earners and what you might call lumpen proletariat.

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