

**WANTEREGH PAUL IYORPUU UNONGO OFR 1935-2022: THE
PASSAGE OF A LEGEND, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
BIOPIC AND ESSAYS**

EDITED BY:

Wilfred Terlumun Uji

&

James Msughter Adzande

**WANTEREGH PAUL IYORPUU UNONGO OFR 1935-2022: THE
PASSAGE OF A LEGEND, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
BIOPIC AND ESSAYS**

© Wilfred Terlumun Uji & James Msughter Adzande 2024

**All right reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any
means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the
prior written permission of the copyright owners.**

ISBN: 978-978-56712-5-2

**Ufewave Publishing
24 Second Avenue Off Uke Wende Street High Level
Makurdi Benue State**

Dedication

**This work is dedicated to Late Wanteregh Paul Iyorpuu Unongo, the great
Tiv iconic leader who joined his ancestors in 2023**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	iii
Table of contents.....	iv-vi
Chapter One:	
The Man Wanteregh Paul Iyorpuu Unongo.....	1
Chapter two	
The historical basis for a Tiv yam festival-Iniongo I iyou mbihev Uji, Wilfred Terlumun.....	38
Chapter Three:	
Tiv Question in Contemporary Nigeria Uji, Wilfred Terlumun.....	47
Chapter four:	
Tiv Commercial Elite and the Community Development of Tiv Society: Colonial Era to Post Independence Uji, Wilfred Terlumun.....	60
Chapter Five:	
The Tiv Nation under External Threats, Intra-Clan Conflicts and Insecurity Uji, Wilfred Terlumun	78

Chapter Six:

Tiv Survival in Contemporary Nigeria: The Perspective of the Church Rev. Fr. Dr. Chris I. Utov.....	114
--	-----

Chapter Seven:

Politics and Public Service: Challenges of Tiv Nation in Contemporary Nigeria...	122
--	-----

Chapter Eight:

Where Do We Go From Here: Cultural Imperatives and National Development Tyohdzuah Akosu.....	133
---	-----

Chapter Nine:

Youths, Cultural Values and the Development Question in Tivland Doki, Gawon Ama.....	148
---	-----

Chapter Ten:

The Man Tiv, Has Died Wanteregh Paul Iorpuu Unongu.....	167
--	-----

Chapter Eleven

Changing Patterns of Famer/herder Conflict in North Central Nigeria.....	180
James Msughter Adzande	

Chapter Twelve

Where Do We Go From Here? Wantaregh Paul Iyorpuu Unongo.....	209
---	-----

CHAPTER ONE

THE MAN WANTAREGH PAUL IYORPUU UNONGO

Uji, Wilfred Terlumun & Akaazua Liambee Nathaniel

The birth of great people is often rich with experiences and landmarks. The legendary Paul Iyorpuu Unongo hailed from Turan, one of the clans in Tiv land in present day Kwande local Government area of Benue State. The people of Turan were among the Tiv at Swem who later migrated to settle at present location in kwande. Turan comprised major districts like Barakur, Kumakwagh, Mkomon, Moon, and Mbadura. The five districts are subsumed into Nanev, shangev-ya and Ikurav-ya. Wanteregh Paul Unongo's genealogy is tied to Mbatyav of Kendev under Barakur district of Turan Clan.

Wanteregh Paul Iorpuu Unongo was the son of Unongo Kwanyise who married Wankukwa of Etulo tribe in Benue Benue State. Unongo and his wife Wankukwa had two children, Kwaghemba (daughter), and Iyorpuu (son). Wanteregh was born on 26th September, 1935. It is said that, after the fourth day of birth, he got missing on the bed only to be found after three days, with something tied to his hand (Kwamegh). Although, Unongo said that, his birth compound a lot of mystery to him, he never disappeared. He further explained that, it was his uncle Jato – Kumbur who took him away. He note, Jato - Kumbur and his wife had no children and so they dotted on him with the intention that he would inherit

all the spiritual powers, as everything about Jato.-kumbur and his wife was connected to snakes.

Like Samson nobody was allowed to touch Paul's head not even shaving him, nobody would beat him on the head. If for any reason he was hit he would experience very serious pounding headache; his eyeballs would pop out and the veins in his body would definitely stand out such pains would only subside when his uncle treated him. According to Adejo, at this early stage in life, just under five years, Paul was exposed to all sort of wonderful sacrifices, incantations herbs and divination Technically he was been raised by a master witch doctor, a master magician and one who controlled spirits of darkness and indirectly he was been groomed to inherit the immense powers. Wantaregh Paul in all these takes the semblance of amessianic leader, whose birth and upbringing had been ingrained with controversies and full of temptative

Challenges

Paul Unongo rise in life can be analytically explained in the context of the missionary activities in Tiv land⁷. This is for the fact that, when Jato-Kumbur was miraculously converted to the new faith, in 1945 or thereafter a white missionary visited Jato-kumbur and talk to him about another most powerful man who made and controlled everything. Jato-Kumbur could not believe that there was any other man on earth who surpassed him in supernatural powers. Jato-kumbur succumbed to this White man's preaching and Jato called Paul and told him of his encounter. Unongo was at 10 then and Jato-Kumbur could have probably considered him man enough to reason with who knows either it were circumstances. Yet Paul

could have had experience superior to what Kumbur wanted telling him about the white. Jato-kumbur then invited all Turan people, to accept the Whiteman's God. As a mark of his conversion he handed over Paul over to the missionary to go and learn the great ways of the white man. This was the time Unongo's exposure to the general society/public began.

Paul Iyorpoo Unongo began his primary school in Mbayion clan elementary school Gboko (now Gboko central school). Tarka Nachi, late Joseph Tarka's father was the headmaster. He gave Paul great courage. From Gboko, he went to Benue middle school; believe to be a ground of intellectual training in Katsina-Ala from where, in 1952, he left for Government College Keffi, Paul strongly believes that Government College, Keffi actually made him whatever he is today. He was there six years and proceeded to the Nigerian college of Arts, Sciences and Technology, Zaria. Unongo had intent to study medicine in Ibadan but failed physics. He relates the story of that failure in a very interesting manner. Unongo as one of the best in his class, at this point started keeping around him his intellectual apostles pre-eminently, Akiga and Laurence Toba, whom were being assisted academically by Paul.

Iyorpoo proceeded to university of Ibadan to attempt medicine. However, the Northern Regional Government then needed science teachers and requested Paul and those in his category to change to read Chemistry or Zoology to prepare for the class room. Paul objected to change but had to withdraw from the university into the Regional Civil Service as a social warfare officer in training. Individual interest about him developed. Mr. Douglas Green admired and suggested for him to read

Psychology but that was contrary to Paul's intention to read Psychiatrist and become a missionary to help people in life.

Paul gained scholarship award to read Psychology in London but did not like London because of the feeling he had towards English people. He preferred the United States and thus refused to sign the bond. For such an independent decision, he was denied the scholarship abroad. Paul Unongo was later on swept by the first wave of odysseys to Europe and the Americas. The young Unongo bagged two degrees in Psychology from the University of Calgary and Edmonton in Canada.

It was then that the civil war broke out in Nigeria. Dr. Adetoro, a Minister under Gowon was in Canada and appreciated the effort of Paul Unongo on matters of civil war. As he put it forcefully:

Should the activities of the tribal chieftains and the inordinate ambitions of megalomaniacs, who see themselves as larger than life and the corrupt and mindless application for their stupendous wealth to the weakening activities of Nigeria now going on shamelessly moves the fate of the nation- state of Nigeria into possible realms of disintegration, then the people of Benue must state and do state emphatically that they will pick up arms once more and stand up firmly behind the abnormality going on in the nation.

Unongo continued to patriotically believe in his philosophy of Nigerianism. Unongo assisted Gowon regime even on matters of propaganda, psychological warfare and intelligence gathering. He was a

tremendous service to the Gowon regime. Even before his return to Nigeria and established the Department of Psychology at the University of Lagos, but ended up frustratingly, as he puts it "in fighting idiots."

Paul in matters of civil war could not effectively render services of lecturing, though have been elugised for that. He could not even settle down to go for further studies- his PHD which he started in Canada before returning to Nigeria. He decided to quit academics and submitted his resignation.

There was no way Paul could hide from public recognition and full political activities. As young man after Government College Keffi; he was a teacher an activist and undisputed leader of Tiv students. As from 1968 he began take position against the abnormality going on in the nation, to carve an image for himself to get away from Tarka, by creating the Tiv cultural association. That association gave life to the Middle Belt Association in 1969. Simon Imobo elucidates that:

Paul Unongo is, no doubt, a man of immense Socio-political stature. If his face does not pop out of television screens now and then, or his comments do not make screaming headline inthe national media, it is simply because yester -days men are somehow not dear to the heart of media professionals⁹.

For the older generation that saw the full blossoming of his rise and his political spirit, this may seem trite, but for the younger elements who know Paul Unongo only in his after - glow, this back-grounding is very crucial.

Wantaregh Paul Unongo, lived in different parts of the world. Unongo was in Gboko, Makurdi, Jos, Ghana, Seira-Leone, Ethiopia Canada, London, Germany, France, UK, America etc, his movement has anally been triggered and ginged by his unrelanted efforts towards greatness, yet Unongo still return his consciousness as a Tiv man, as he always emphasised 'I am a Tiv Tribes man.'

Unongo and Partisan Politics

The study of political participation of Wantaregh PaulUnongo is very crucial for the understanding of his act, style and dividends of politicking. What usually attracted people to him most was his amazing ability to mobilize electorates for any political party affiliated to. Through his participation in politics, he communicated his people's needs and burning desires tothe government. He has also established sustainablerelationships between his people and those in the authority. In addition, he has held responsibilities as well as contributed to the creation of political awareness among his people.

Political participation refers to those activities by individual citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the action they take. Although in Nigeria, democratic politics or partisan politics has both positive and negative connotations. Many Nigerians hold the view that partisan politics is a bad and dirty game characterised by evil vices such as blackmailing, murdering, rigging of election, victimization, vulgar language and so on. It is flowing from this background that late Rev. Fr. Moses Adasu, one time governor of Benue contends that '*Politics is another sphere for providing service to the people just as it is down in the*

priesthood and it is not a dirty game per se, but its individuals that made it dirty¹,

To him, politics is accompanied with developmental services encompassing economic gain political power, social prestige, influence respect, power, authority etc which is manifested through lavish receptions and crowds (psycho fans, praise singers etc) that accompany politicians who are in power while on tour. Whatever view people hold about Nigerian partisan politics, it is indeed two different sides of the same coin one cannot exist without the other.

A recap of Paul Unongo into partisan politics can be dated as far as, 1954. Between 1954 -1957, then young secondary school lad traveled through the country, calling on all educated Tiv elites to unite under one solid voice of "the enlightened," to tackle the myriad of Tiv problem he identified and isolated.

Holding strongly the idea of a name from President Charels De Gaule of France, who impressed his youthful zeal for freedom, by changing overnight, centuries of the old French African deceitful colonial polity of assimilation, the one of "full independence" if wanted right now" for all French African territories who wanted to be independence of metropolitan France, this school lad stored away in his brain a name created by Charles De Gaule for probable use, if he became successful. This French President who impressed this school child of yester-years named the Association that resulted from the amalgamation of the newly independent French African Territories Community of French African Nations.

When the appeal to the Tiv elites succeeded Unongo decided to name the resulted outcome - Community of Tiv Students, (CTS). In his restless political spirit and capacity as grassroots mobiliser and motivator himself in an ambience moon shining, as the Personal Secretary (PS) and Personal Assistant (PA) to Joseph Sarwuan Tarka, the celebrated leader of Middle Belt politics.

In this privilege position, Unongo wrote the paper (which represented the position of the middle belt, at the resumed London constitutional conference of 1957-1958, respectively. And as Secretary to the leader of the United Middle Belt Congress UMBC, Unongo Urged Joseph Tarka, to insist and London prevail on resumed constitutional conference of 1957, nationality question, on the agenda.

It obvious to state clearly that such demand is for the metropolitan colonial administration to provide for and create all the minority regions requested for, before ceding power to an independent Nigeria in cognizance to its future democracy, fair play and justice to the multi ethnic tribes.

In all these his thoughts focused always on the need to uplift the life of his people and state. His election into the Constituent Assembly in 1977 to draft a new constitution, which was published on September 21, 1978, and to Paul Unongo, it holds the basis of Nigeria constitution just to be amended as been done. As a Benue representative amongst others like Suemo Chia, Paul Belabo became major actors in the second Republic. The feeling that follows members of a body entrusted with powers to draft constitution was that, having been the ones that made laws, they should

naturally be the ones to implement them. Using this logic, many associates had it that taking up the role of a draftsman, that if he (Unongo) came back from the Constituent Assembly without becoming a full-time politician he was definitely not human. Right from the beginning as Tor Melabu observed Paul had an eye on the horizon. Unongo invigorated himself in a political career that eventuate him in a political wilderness some years later.

As discussed in the preceding, the Benue state political gladiator at this juncture zoom himself into the track of contest. He contested the gubernatorial election of 1983 in Benue as the Nigeria People's Party (NPP) candidate against the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) led by the then incumbent, Aper Aku. That election witnessed the highest level of brinkmanship and dastard act of thuggery and election perversion. NPN declared itself the winner even in the face of clear indicators of the victory of NPP³.

However, Unongo as Jibo rightly observed, must be commended for his mature way in which he restrained his supporters after the results of the election were announced. Jibo says:

It is to Unongo's credit that rather than call out his supporters to fight (and many of them were itching for it) he went to the High court and filed an election petition'.

In a rare show of cultural political behaviour and intellectual maturity, Paul kept his cool and went to the court of Appeal after the Makurdi High court gave a its judgment, but Paul went to the Supreme Court which ordered a rehearing of his petition. Ironically, the Makurdi High court was

doing this when the military overthrew the civilian government on December 31, 1983. As Jibo rightly asserts that '*The military coup of 31st December 1983 was a great relief to the people of Benue State particularly the Tiv*⁵'

This coup indeed brought a lot of solace to the people of Benue state since that 1983 gubernatorial election between Mr. Aper Aku of NPN and Paul Unongo of NPP was controversial and likely to generate another political upheaval or chaos in Benue particularly in Tiv Nation again after any court' verdict on the issue. The coup brought an end to the second republic.

After the military junta of 1983, which General Muhammadu Buhari emerged as the leader of the Supreme Military Council (SMC), the country's new ruling body. The Buhari government was peacefully overthrown by the SMC's third ranking member, General Ibrahim Babangida in August 1985.

President Babangida demonstrated his intent to encourage public participation in decision making by opening a national joust on proposed economic reform and recovery measures. Although to others like Paul Unongo, such national debate were geared towards extrapolating from ideas of the intellectuals without constructively utilizing such ideas and described them as brigands which is indubitably.

Head of state, Babangida, promised to return the country to civilian rule by 1990 which was later extended until January 1993. In early 1989 a constituent assembly completed a constitution and in the spring of 1989 political activity was again permitted. In October 1989 the government

established two parties the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), other parties were not allowed to register.

The implication of these two political party developments, were that, why the NRC was a conservative party the SDP was progressive and liberal in nature, character and dynamics. Wantaregh Paul Unongo decision to join the SDP as a presidential aspirant alongside Moshood Kashimawo Olawele Abiola, was not so much a personal one but as part of a collective decision by all those that adhere to the ideology of social democrat.

Unongo in this wise remained a "social Democrat." Democracy as philosophy implies a system of government that is a bit leftist, a government of the masses designed to cater for them and had no interest in the accumulation of maximization of profits or does not believe in the existence of the accumulation but in its redistribution of that which has been accumulated. The decision to establish a formidable socialist party that could liberate the Nigerian general masses was quell by the anniversary of June, 12, 1993.

Wantauregh subscribes to June 12, as an expression by Nigerians to live together forgetting their primordial tribal, religious and regional limitations. Enthusiastically June, 12 also signifies the desperate and genuine desire of Nigerians for change and genuine democracy and above all June 12 is commitment to national unity and not national disintegration. But in his view, by the nature and line of the campaign June, 12 converted to a national disaster with different meaning to different people, it has been

"captured by tribal jungoist" and converted by the some people into a war song and slaughter slab for the butchering of the nation-state of Nigeria and the promotion of primitive ethnicirredentism. It was equally as he added, became a matter of prestige, as he asserts that;

Yesterday autocrats and despots who during the tenure of office were shamelessly, blatant about their distaste for democracy, with right and all features that advance democratic ideas and the cause of democracy, found a comm.- on denominator with the mentor of Jun, 12 the sudden possession of monumental wealth un- imaginable?

To him, that is why the NCC was a necessity because it was a contrivance where Nigerians discussed with each other, eyeball to eyeball without bitterness and resolved that knotty issues that have played this country since independence, including designing a brand new way of how Nigerian may wish to live together and be governed.

This political dispensation aborted as General Babangida annulled the June 12th 1992 Presidential election between MKO Abiola of SDP and Bashir Tofa of the NRC. Babangida later formed an interim government headed by Ernest Shonikan after more than 100 people were killed in riots before the event of August 27, 1993. The Ernest shonikan interim government was overthrown by General Sani Abacha led coup of 1993. Abacha could be described as dictator rather than genuine public participation in their affairs.

General Sani Abacha also lifted the ban on politics in 1995 and five political parties were registered. These were United Nigerian Congress' Party (UNCP) Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM) Consensus for

National Convention (CNC), Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN) and National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN).

Wantaregh Paul Unongo still consistent in his spirit of political baptism to correct the political skirmishes of the Nigerian political system joined the NCPN as a Senatorial aspirant in the Benue North East Senatorial district. The NCPN which Wantaregh joined was a political organization that believed that this country is a great country worthy of preservation. Its membership unequivocally holds that Nigeria has given the people the atmosphere to be what they are, by not regimentising anybody's political behaviour. It is obvious to maintain that the NCPN was a very peaceful party and had a harmonious relation with other parties. The high level of political maturity and understanding displayed among the party members was actually worth reckoning. This Democratic dispensation ended up in the tragic manner with the sudden demise of the head of state General Sani Abacha in 1998. His death paved way for General Abdusalami Abubakar who assumed office as the head of state of Nigeria.

General Abdusalami Abubakar became the next head of states of Nigeria and immediately lifted the ban on political activities which was placed as a result of Abacha's death. New political parties were again registered among which were the All Peoples Party (APP) Alliance for Democracy (AD), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) etc. Paul Unongo OFR, joined the APP with chief E.A, Atongo, shugabaam-Ayali Jp, Senator Dr. Jack Gyado, Chief Thomas A. Degar, Pa Iyoryousgh Nor, etc.

Unongo maintained as senatorial aspirant in Benue State and unshakable political status as the elder of the party in Nigeria at large.

When the 1999 elections took place, the APP failed to form the government in Nigeria, PDP won the majority seats in the country and thus, formed the government. That notwithstanding, the election of 2003 also witnessed the active participation of wantaregh Paul Unongo, as gubernatorial aspirant on the platform of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) against the then incumbent governor of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) George Akume. Unongo at this time, considered it wise to re-crest a Benue with industries, factories that could actually harness the abundant resources left untaped. According to him: *‘I do not need federal allocations to make Benue self sufficient if I get the people’s mandate to become the chief executive in 2003.’*

Unongo who stated this during his formal declaration for the position explained that Benue has the material and human resources to sustain itself. To him, the oranges, mangoes, soya beans, groundnut, Tice, palm produce, beniseed and so on that are produced in the state can generate enough revenue for the state if properly utilized. "I will not allow our mangoes, oranges, etc to go out of Benue, what for? I will set up industries that utilized them". By the Grace of God, I will not go cap-in-hand asking for increase in federal allocations or loans, why should I?" Unongo queried.

This election as a matter of fact, left a lot of Benue politicians in doubt as to what actually was becoming of the Benue politics, the pronouncement of the popular adage of Government in power which

implies that, to no avail will it be possible for an opposition party to take over power from a government that has been formidably formed even at the centre. Yet, even at this point in time, the Benue state political enigma and institution has largely remained stronger to power or rather has been shut out from its gilded inner sanctums as. George Akume was victoriously announced for the second term in office as the Governor of Benue State. If anything, was discernable from the 2003 Akume-Unongo challenge besides the post-elections mantra of accusations and counter accusation, it was that winning elections may not be part of Unongo's otherwise enviable destiny after all.

However, not believing that the INEC returned results tallied with the popular verdict and having faith in the judicial process, Unongo opted for litigation, alleging sundry sins like rigging, voter intimidation, hoarding of electoral materials and the incumbency factor. But the courts did not favour Unongo.

This was not the first time however, that the elder statesman felt cheated out of his "popular given mandate" would sort judicial redress and got disappointed. A philosophic intellectual with awesome oratorical skills that began to even verge on the demagogic, Unongo obviously felt pained that his political life has sadly been of serial electoral definition rejections classic disappointments. Hence, his repeated attempts strenuous exertion to redirect the arc of his political career and thus rehabilitate his people; defecting from the ANPP to the PDP later.

Wantaregh Paul Iyorpuu Unongo, a political enigma, was amongst the top notches that started the foundation of people's Democratic Party

(PDP), the largest party in Africa. Unongo that he even: participated in writing the party's constitution. However, betrayed by his kinsmen made Unongo to "step aside" and pitch tent with the all Nigeria People's party where he became a powerful opposition to the ruling PDP. Now back to PDP with all his followers. In his declaration speech tagged, "let my people go", at a colourful ceremony at the IBB square in what could be described as the biggest political event of the times, Unongo disclosed that he is back to PDP in order to ensure that Benue people experience true peace, reconciliation rehabilitation and reconstruction which has eluded them since the inception of the present dispensation. Though Unongo stressed that the action was against his political philosophy of over 40 years, he had to submit effectively what might be termed a retirement notice from politics.

It is imperative to note here that, if Nigeria was a country that favours intelligence with opportunity, Unongo's political trajectory, and by extension, that of Benue, nay Nigeria, would be markedly different. And if Nigeria were a nation that respects her senior citizens, a personage of Wantaregh Paul Unongo's socio-political stature would not be in the competitive arena of politics, or at least, not engage in the practice at the state level. But as it were, save for his brief spells in the corridors of power as Minister for Steel and National constitutional Delegate, Unongo has largely been an outsider to the power game.

Paul Unongo and Political Development

Paul Unongo was the undisputed leader of the Community of Tiv Students after his studies at Government College Keffi; in this position

Unongo's adherence to the philosophy of 'Aluta continua', actually instigated him to agitate vehemently for the social justice, equality and freedom of the Tiv students. Wantaregh Paul Iyorpoo Unongo would equally commit all to his disposal to harmonization and unity of the Tiv students, and that notwithstanding for the welfare of the students.

Unongo printed his feet in the sands of history. He saw many things before they happen in Nigeria. On Nigeria's Independence he asserts:

I urged him, very strongly, that the British would be leaving us with an unstable Nigeria, which would have serious intractable problems, at independence, if they insisted on granting independence to their precarious tripod Nigeria, based on the recognition executive dominance of political action by the three major tribes, in their various Regions, the mega tribes of Igbo (in the East), Yoruba (in the West) and Hausa/Fulani (in the North)?!¹⁰

Unongo foresaw a Nigeria in disunity and instability. It flew smack in the face of that modern form of government we were adopting called federalism. Federalism is publicly canvassed and touted as the most suitable form of government for our multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-national pluralistic state by our pro-independence leaders. Why should they oppose the restructuring of the country to reflect the reality of our condition? It is cogent to note here that, even as a youngster, he was able and capable of predicting the about the troubled future of the Nigerian political hedonist. Wantaregh Paul Unongo in the face of present realities remained a political lord until his demise.

Contributions to Societal Development

Individual persons have in the past, contributed to the development of their various societies, their influence as a matter of fact, distinguished them and rated them above their contemporaries. It is in line with these visible facts, that the contributions of Wantaregh Paul Unongo, deserves utmost importance to be analyse, showing how he positively impacted on the lives of his people. This positive development to socio-economic, political and religious advancements has been to uplift his people receiving greater benefits of developments either from the government or individuals themselves. He identified and suggested projects, principally, self help projects like Tiv land Operation Development (TOD); the possible inauguration of Tiv land Development Society (TDS) and launching of Tiv land Development Fund (TDF), way back in 1968 Paul Unongo was visionary enough to suggest the establishment of community bank in form of cooperative Bank of Tiv (CBT) in Gboko. The central issues in his desire is to achieve a situation where the Tiv would pull advancements, has been to uplift his people receiving greater benefits of developments either from the government or individuals themselves.

Unongo, also established hotels under his JULADACO conglomerate in Katsina-Ala, Jato-Aka and Jos. Some of these were demolished or vandalized. These hotels significantly were and are accommodative residents for both home and foreign business men, and serve as entertainment and refreshments centres for the general public.

The JULADACO conglomerate also founded schools in Jato-Aka, Katsina-Ala and Kassa in plateau State. These giants strive to education

brought about enlightenment, liberation and emancipation of the people whom might have found themselves in this odyssey as it seek to educate and civilize the people.

Wantaregh Paul Unongo, in the aspect of religion and belief holds that he believes in the existence of a supremepower of his ancestors, our God AONDO ABAVERJUAR. He has also contributed creditably to the propagation of the Christian faith, This he demonstrated in the construction of St. Jude's Catholic church, St. Jude's monastery/ Retreat centre, St. Jude's Priest office, St. Jude's priest house, St.Jude's priest guest house, St. Jude's Boys Quarters/priesthouse store, St. Jude's convent St. Jude's Catechist house, St. Jude's public square all in Unongo village Turan in Kwande Local Government, the ancestral or cradle of Tiv race.

JULADACO conglomerate forwardly established the most elaborate and effective transport organization in the1970s called JULADACO Express. It was his experiment that most state of the federation emulated in forming transport corporations that were able to convey people to the nook and crannies of the country. He completed the Paul Unongo foundation Community market, linking communities together for the purpose of trade, regulated by forces of market principles. Unongo in his unrelentless efforts holds that development should be scattered beyond any cernueagitae for the division of the Tiv. As he argues:

If we were to move forward rapidly as an aggrieved people who are impatient with their social and economic backwardness then we the Tiv people must require our government to take

certain basic policy decisions in connection with the existing institutional arrangement in Tiv land¹²

He advanced that there were inherent defects in the local administration and it was logical that additional institutional approach to delivering to the people both social, economic and political fruits of Nigeria's continuing rising position commensurate with the peoples' aspiration.

Paul advanced then as he has always done, that the Tiv area be split into several administrative units for grassroots local government. He reasoned that Tiv division be split into six new divisions; Gboko Division, (Tiv central Division), Tiv Eastern Division, Tiv- South Eastern Division, Tiv North-Eastern Division, Tiv South Western Division, Tiv Western Division. All these he proposed could have second class chiefs, except Gboko Division with Tor Tiv.

Opposition, no doubts, greeted the laudable thoughts and suggestions of Wantaregh but that never deterred his conviction to be of good use to his people. His drive, as he indicated, was not politically "the only motivated because the only thing is, I am an empiricist by academic indoctrination."

However, wantaregh Paul ran into practically advocating and championing the cause for the creation of Katsina-Ala State. Some parts of the arguments for the Creation of Katsina-Ala state included those which stated that the first three populous ethnic groups in Nigeria - Hausa/ Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, already had 8, 5, 4 states respectively (at the time) if their request at the time for more states were granted by the

Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) they would have 4, 10. 8 states respectively:

Therefore that there is no rational reason whatsoever for Tiv people who are the fourth major ethnic group to have no state at all, or be herded in huge concentrations at best, not only one state,¹⁴

Secondly, it was observed that neighbouring ethnic group carve out some local governments and communities from Tiv land to join them in order to make up the requirements for the creation of their own so-called Carve more states. For the Tiv as a whole, Wantaregh was convinced that they alone are populous enough to constitute three or more states.

The direction was clear when on September 20, 1995 at a Press conference on the Katsina-Ala state matter Wanteregh Paul Unongo asserted:

The request for Katsina- Ala movement must not be ignored regardless of wheather a traditional ruler support it, there are causes of consistent pattern of some Northern Emirs and chief' opposing state creation from their domain out of fear of the unknown and or selfishness. That has however never stopped states from beingCreated out of such Emir or chief domains.¹⁵

In a letter to the head of state on September, 21, 1995, a day after the press conference, he appealed to General Abacha to ignore whatever farours that were generated on the issue he said that "contrary to press speculation, alleged to have emerged from the Tor Tiv palace the Tiv

people of Nigeria who are solidly behind his Administration support most enthusiastically, in the open, the creation of Katsina-Ala state and any number of addition state, His Excellency may wish to create out of the land." He requested the head of state to know that state creation, your excellency, is a highly political matter and not cultural nor a traditional nor a customary matter:

*I claim therefore sir, that of all Tiv people living including His Royal highness, the Tor Tiv, I am the only man properly mandated by the Tiv people in the open to speak on their behalf on matters adjudged political, such as the issue of the creation of state.*¹⁶

He however was quick to acknowledge that it is not to say that traditional ruler should not express how they feel, in the heat of the matter some few individual rose publicly to say something in support of Wantaregh Unongo. Iyorwuese Hagher, then a delegate from Katsina-Ala, Ukum constituency at the NCC said;

The reports have been created to some politician in Benue and Taraba that the katsinaAla state movement is a false proqanda by Wantaregh Paul Unongo for self aggradisement and cheap popularity⁷...Unongo is definitely on the side of history more than any of these so-called politician these critics are mainly those who have lost credibility with the grassroot because of their false lifestyle and deceitful politics whether katsina-Ala state is created or not, whether the procedure is right or wrong nobody can deny its desirability like all state creation movement, there can be no unanimity⁸.

To professor Hagher, Paul Unongo is a visionary who for whatever his faults, cannot be faulted for his political diagnostic approach. He revealed that over two decades earlier he had proposed that Tiv division be split into six and he was called unprintable: names. In admission Hagher noted:

Our people hate to hear of separation in whatever form The Tor Tiv and the Tiv Traditional authority are against it because they feel it is just an attempt to break Tiv unity, Strength and the perpetuation of the atomistic backanization¹⁹.

As far as wantaregh Pal was concerned he has been consistent in his advocacy and behaviour, however it became manifest when in a Radio Benue personality programme - *On the Line* of February 22 1997, a caller wanted to know about Wantaregh tainted relationship with the Tor Tiv. Initially Wantaregh attempted to be nice and indicated that there was nothing the matter but it was clear from his retort that the relationship was actually sour and whatever it was, the case had gone beyond the traditional boundary into the law court.

Wantaregh said he was not against the Tor Tiv, that as a matter of fact, the selection of then his Royal Highness, Alfred Akawe Torkula, was done in his house. He noted that he does not lack or act like a child because I am a political leader and that whatever was the matter, which has taken two years to resolve had nothing to do with him as a person but that which affected the life of the Tiv people as a whole. To him as a person he could risk being unpopular. He proclaimed that he is the only person who can ask the critical question on behalf of the Tiv nation

because I stand to lose absolutely nothing! Wantaregh Paul does not consider himself a typical Tiv man or Typical Benue person who spends all his time writing silly things. What bothers him is that as he puts it:

I see a possibility of a new religion coming out of the things going on in Tiv land. A down grading of Christ and Islam. No more swearing of the Bible or Qur'an in the so-called swearing in of people in Tiv land, it is now swearing of some fetish object brought by Yoruba²⁰

He was bitter that the Tor Tiv is usurping the lawful function of Tiv traditional council (TTC) because of financial gain and doing certain things against the land which set up the institution. According to him, the Tor Tiv is a creation of the law and cannot be set above the law:

If anything comes to distort the character of the Tiv who else is better qualified to say that the law is broken someone has to say the law is broken and that person is only Paul Unongo. If anyone taught me it was Tarka. Tarka was even vulgar in abusing Tor Tiv. I was Tarka's Secretary²¹

Wantaregh has never taken it kindly with those who constitute stumbling blocks on the path of progress. As mentioned in the earlier part of this work his 1969 disposition has remained virulent. He lamented that most Tiv, educated ones and the uneducated alike have for too long a time hit all the serious decisions that have had real consequences to them, their children and their land to too few people in the numerous times of great moral crises in Tiv they have stoutly maintained their strange neutrality and aloofness. While he eulogized his people as highly easily

organization people from whom he derives benefit, he does not run away from the fact that he was above being abused. He emphasized that when he asked;

Do you know that most Tiv are even backward in their thought as a result of petty and primitive Jealousies? ... rather than try to climb up to the level of the successful Tiv, other normal Tiv spend a great deal of their energies trying desperately to pull to one who is up there down. Nobody wants anybody to be better than they are²²

As a collaboration, Rev. Father Moses Adasu confirm this when he noted that the state (Benue) harbour in great number saboteur, otherwise blackmailers. For them blackmail is a business to be practiced but only on and with Benue indigene. To these:

Political saboteur, the success of other fellow is their down fall ... Gospel is that all Benue people must be the same poor materially, poor morally etc at their meeting, they pick up a fellow brother, sister and vow to make him/ her like one of them¹³

In all these matter Wantaregh Paul has remained unruffled even when treats to be against him made rounds.

Principally too, is in the aspect of conflict resolution Wantaregh Paul played significant roles in quelling tension among Nigerians. Wantaregh Paul Unongo as a nationalist, saw in it, a good cause for him to fight for the unity of the Nation- State of Nigeria, as he will never allow the country to be in ruins of disintegration and that he will not give up as he rightly puts: "this Nigeria is not the Nigeria I give up on so casually and, so easily! NO NOT NOW, NEVER."

Wantarehg Paul Unongo, during the 2003 Nigerian general election commenced bitterly to the federal Government under the leadership of Olusegun Obasanjo (OBJ), on the destruction incurred on his kwande people. This political chaos in Tiv land particularly kwande people was carried on by the people Unongo refer to as "Tiv Defence corps" that receive it training from a former military officer. Wantaregh in his patriotic spirit called on the federal government to put a stopped to such dehumanised and oppression by the Benue State government under the leadership of George Akume. As he posited: *'I plead for immediate relief for the unfortunate Victims of this pogrom. Relief must be found and be brought urgently to the afflicted areas of Kwande, and elsewhere, in Benue²⁴'*

It is in respect of this that Unongo however, stated categorically of the priority number one which he must be attended, to immediately so that we can begin to make efforts to comfort the afflicted and look after our refuges, is the unconditional immediate 'Removal' of the brutal illegal army of occupation, of George Akume, the Tiv Defence Corps, which has taken over in Kwande, and has killed mercilessly, and terrorized everyone, continuously, for over, two months now! Now they have to be removed.

Wantaregh as a title was not presented to Paul in sense that others title are awarded. It existence in Tivland dates to the 1970^s when Paul Unongo's contributions to his people naturally made him attract the admirable qualification of 'the son of the soil' the dear one', or the endeared of the people, people naturally hailed him as the wantaregh anywhere he went. Apart from that he had gone through all the initiation in

wearing some of the traditional apparels of authority by right. Tiv elders performed it and celebrated it, they even insist that he wears it.

I worked with Wanteregh Paul Iyorpuu Unongo for nearly thirty years as a member of his intellectual think-tank together with reputable scholars like late Prof. Tyodzuah Akosu and Prof. Steve Ugbah. It was regular and routine tradition of Wanteregh Unongo, in his hare days to organise a congregation of intellectuals through symposiums and conferences to brainstorm on the Nigeria nation and interrogate the issues that affect the Tiv wider society. In the annual gatherings, Wanteregh Unongo instituted what has become his *magnum opus* – Where Do We Go from Here? This attempts attracted reviews that focused on the broad theme.

It is against this backdrop that I became intellectually involved with Wanteregh Unongo and benefitted immensely from his political mentorship. Before his demise, I was priviledged through his consent to work on his biography as well as a collection of essays that captures his worldview. It is quite a task to document a personality with tall credentials like Wanteregh Unongo. This project was ongoing and at least, he read the manuscript before his demise in 2022. To follow up, Prof. Ugbah reached out to me and requested that the book should be published as tribute to and a memorial, posthumously for Wanteregh Unongo. It is to honour this request and for the love of the man we all call “Father” that this book has been published.

Who is Wanteregh Paul Unongo? On one hand, it is easy to assume that Unongo was a Tiv man, influenced by primordial politics like every

other Nigerian politician. On the other hand, writing on the personality of Wanteregh Unongo can attract volumes of books, largely because in the course of over fifty years, Wanteregh Unongo became a political institution as well as a “Tribal Hero” that cannot be exhausted in just one collection. Wanteregh Umongo’s contribution to the Nigerian project is larger than life and occupies a critical position in leadership studies in Nigeria and Africa.

It is important to look at the society that Unongo lived in, at the local, national and global levels and how he interfaced with society, how society also interfaced with him, thereby producing his legengery acts. It is a two-way thing, like the chicken and the egg; man and society, which comes first? This is subject to polemics and debates, but it is obvious that society and man are two sides of a coin.

As far back as the 1950s, under the Northern Region of Nigeria, Wanteregh Unongo began his career as the Secretary to Joseph Sarwuan Tarka of the United Middle Belt Congress. This is about the time the Richard Constitution of 1946 and the Macperson Constitution of 1954 splited Nigeria into regional blocks. These were Northern, Western and Eastern Regions. The centripetal and centripetal forces that rocked the Nigerian nation were largely defned by ethnicity, religion and class interests. Politics in Nigeria from the beginning of the modern nation is defined by primordial sentiments. This impacts political recruitment and followership.

The JS Tarka led UMBC provided a platform of resistance by minority ethnic groups against the ruling Nothern People’s Congress, that

was led by the Hausa/Fulani Oligarchy of the Sokoto Caliphate, Sir Ahmadu Bello. The central ideology was anchored on the propaganda that the NPC led government was desperate to islamise ethnic minorities in the region. This well hacked propaganda fired the zeal and imagination of both leaders and followers of the UMBC against the NPC and the UMBC led the Tiv Riots of 1960 -1965.

Waneregh Unongo however had a u-turn when he interacted with the Premier of the Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello in the 1960s in Kaduna. Unongo had gone to serve a petition against the Premier for using state funds and powers to annihilate the Tiv people. On the contrary, Waneregh said the encounter revealed the Premier as a simple and honest man; a patriot and nationalist. The genocide and warfare in Tiv land, instead was orchestrated by NPC party loyalists within the Tiv Division, exploiting the sentiments and support of the Native Police Authority and the Tiv Traditional Council.

The above illustration reveals some of the fundamental tenets and principles of Waneregh Unongo's persuasion as a radical and progressive political thinker. He belonged to the School of Social Democracy; promoting the ideals of social justice, egalitarianism, communalism, equity and fairness. The contradictions of the First Republic (1960-1965) snowballed into the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970). General Yakubu Gowon who became the military Head of State after the collapse of the First Republic created the first twelve states. This was the end of the regional governments. Benue Plateau State was created and this provided the platform for mobilisation and recruitment of elites in the new state to

sustain the war efforts of the federal government against Biafra. JS Tarka was appointed as a Federal Commissioner and Wanteregh Unongo served as Secretary to JD Gomwok, then Governor of Benue Plateau. In addition, the Federal Government enlisted the services of Wanteregh Unongo in the early formation of Nigeria's security intelligence and as Ambassador at the United Nations, to galvanize support for the federal government. He explored his background as a Psychologist, leading at the University of Lagos and supporting the experience and his involvement in national politics, espoused him to the objective realities of the Nigerian state and the damaging effects of elite politics in Africa. In a summary, the elites in Nigeria had conspired with the West to underdevelop the continent through primitive accumulation of wealth and prebendal politics.

Wanteregh Unongo wrote two books after the civil war that captured his experiences, imaginations and aspirations in Africa and Nigeria. The first book, *Say it Loud I am Black and Proud* was a pan-africanist expression, raising hope that Nigeria, the biggest populous black nation on the earth, will become a great power. He factored his assumptions on the ingenuity of the Biafran phenomenon through the innovation of military wares and domestication of military technology. It was his firm belief that the ingenuity in science and technology was going to promote a great Africa. The second book and his magnum opus – *Where Do We Go From Here?* was an epistle to his Tiv kinsmen. During the civil war, foot soldiers were demobilized without adequate compensation. This failure of the Nigerian state marked a watershed in the escalation of criminal activities and violence across Tiv nation. Many of the

demobilized soldiers became the thugs of the ruling elites. *Where Do We Go From Here?* Interrogated the elitist posture of the political ruling class of the Tiv nation and their isolation from the plight of the masses. Wanteregh Unongo interrogated the emergence of two social extremes; the poor and the rich as a basic contradiction to development.

With the return of politics in the Second Republic – 1979 to 1983, Wanteregh Unongo joined the political camp of a great panafricanist, Nnamdi Azikiwe; then leader of the Nigerian People's Party. Azikiwe's political principle was the push for a united Africa and Nigeria. As Nigeria's President in the First Republic, Azikiwe's stance of social justice and nationalism was remarkable. In NPP, Wanteregh Unongo served as the General Secretary. Alongside Solomon Lar, they fashioned a federation where minority ethnicities could assert their identity and freedom in nationalistic jurisdiction. In 1976 when Benue State was carved out of the Benue Plateau arrangement, the opportunity for identity assertion was given to the Tiv, Idoma and Igala people among other tribes, to bring home development. In the federal election of 1979, Shehu Shagari of the NPN won the presidential election and in order to form a broad coalition government, at the centre, the NPN entered into accord with the NPP and formed the government of national unity. That arrangement produced Wanteregh Unongo as the Minister of Power and Steel. His emergence provided the ground for the kind of opposition that Benue State saw in the era.

Wanteregh Unongo became the leader of opposition politics in the last thirty years of his political career. He fought for the rights of the masses

against bad leadership. He was a tall figure of opposition transcends civilian administrations. He was fierced even against the military dicatatorship. He was incaserated thirty seven (37) times; no political leader in Nigeria's history dead or living matches Wanteregh Unongo's political resilience and prosecution.

Back home to Benue State, Wanteregh Unongo had a firm belief in rotation or zoning of leadership structures across lineages and tribes. He identified the Ichongo and Ipusu where he advocated for rotational slots for the governorship seat. His belief was that the position be extended to the Idoma and Igede ethnic groups as well. Since the creation of Benue State in 1976, the Ipusu block of Tiv nation has produced five executive governors in the persons of Aper Aku (1979-1983), Moses Adasu (1990-1993), George Akume (1999-2007), Gabriel Suswam (2007-2015) and Hycinth Alia (2023). This certainly was not the thinking of Wanteregh Unongo about a modern Benue. He opined that the situation as it was lopsided and inimical to the development of the state. He argued that the rotational presidency as well as other major offices in the nation was the bond that holds Nigeria together as a common sovereignty. He said if this was the case, Tiv people can emerge as governors in Nassarawa, Plateau, Taraba and Niger States. Wanteregh Unongo was loud in agitation for more states like the proposed Katsina Ala and Apa states out of the current Benue state.

How Wanteregh Unongo did became involved in the politics of the Arewa Nothern Group? Throughout his lifetime, he fought battles for the oppressed abd was hated aristocracy who had to some extent politicize

Nigeria's development along primordial sentiments. He was not known in joined forces with the feudal elements in the north against the masses. It is mentioned in this introduction how his contact with Sir Ahmadu Bello redefined his political thoughts. Another northern oligarchy that influenced Unongo's entry into the elite Arewa Group was General Sani Abacha. He was betrayed by the National Democratic Coalition forces in the aftermath of the annulment of June 12 and his appointment as Special Adviser to Abacha became a springboard on his grand entry into the Arewa Group. He argued that MKO Abiola stole the SDP mandate and that he was not adequately rewarded as the one who laid the foundation for the party. These events and causations pushed Wanteregh Unongo from the Leftist politics to the Right. In other words, consistent betrayals and disappointments of progressive forces in Nigeria drove Wanteregh Unongo into the aristocratic quarters. He remained in the Arewa Group until his demise in 2022. He says: "The reality of politics in Northern Nigeria is that the minority tribes need the Hausa/ Fulani Oligarchy to succeed and not the other way around." He cited the political marriage of convenience between the northern Nigeria and the western Nigeria, as one example.

His other reason for his joined forces with the Arewa Elders Forum was to find a lasting solution to the crisis involving the farmers and herders of Tiv and Fulani extractions respectively. He once paid a reconciliatory visit to the Sadauna of Sokoto, His Eminence Saad Abubakar accompanied by a contingent of Tiv elders with a herd of cattles, symbolizing peace and reconciliation.

His thoughts on the Tiv nation, Wanteregh Unongo said there is a symbiotic relationship between the Hausa/Fulani and the Tiv people that is historical, sociological and even philosophical in nature and character. Relationship between the Tiv and Hausa/Fulani nations has existed for over 300 years of mutual trust. The mutuality has being social, political and economic. Politically, both belong to the same political structure – north. The Tiv nation does not belong to the west or east in terms of political affiliation, direction and vision. It is a disservice to the Tiv nation when the two fight. Wanteregh even in his days consolidated his stand that the farmers and the pastoralists need this mutual tolerance to exist. Grazing routes and resources as well as farmers/herders crisis have been politicised, by desperate politicians and security agents who cash in or profiteer on crisis.

REFERENCES

1. Wuam T. *Religion politics and Development* Makurdi: Aboki Publishers Ltd, 2004 p. 55
2. Interview with Iiambeeshande, 79 Tsheshande Usar Adikpo, Politician 19/10/2010
3. See Mvendaga Jibo, *Tiv politics since 1959* Zaria, ABU press 159 Zaria, ABU Press 1993, pp 48-50
4. Ibid. 50
5. Ibid. 51
6. Wantaregh Paul Unohgo "Where should Benue be on the eve of the National Constitutional Conference?" Press Conference at NUJ, Makurdi June 18, 1994
7. <http://www.zoominfo.com/people/UnongoPaul>
8. The Targeted National Independent Newsmagazine October, 2006 Vol. 10 No. 10
9. Wantaregh Paul Unongo *Our Tiv Heritage in Iongoiyombi Hev* USA: published by Big Hat Press Lafayette. 2009 p.59
10. Ibid. 6
11. Armstrong M.A. *The Man, the Myth Makurdi: Abal: publishers' Ltd* 1997, p, 30
12. Nead Paul Unongo, *Where Do We Go from Here?* Lagos; Megida book, 1969 p. 13
13. Ibid. 14

14. Wantaregh Paul Unongo "Create KatsinaAla State Now" a press. Statement at the NUJ Centre, wed 20/9/95, in Makurdi
15. Ibid.
16. Wantaregh Paul Unongo "TorTiv, the Tiv Traditional council and the entire Tiv people support the Creation of KatsinalAla and Any other Additional State you may wish to carve out of Tiv land" a text of a letter to GeneralSaniabacha, September, 21, 1995
17. Read national Truth Newspaper April 6-15, 1995 p. 8
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid
20. Wantaregh Paul Unongo "on the line" a Radio Benue live phone in show Feb. 22, 1997, in makurdi.
21. Ibid.
22. Paul unongo, where Do we go from Here
23. Moses O. Adasu, *press Involvement in Politics* : a case of Benue State MakurdiCovenant Books, 1995 p. 20
24. Wantaregh Paul Unongo, the wayforward for the state and the Nation' presented to senate committee on the Benue Crisis, wed, 16th June, 2004
25. Paulunongo, *Our TivHeritage* IniongoiyoumbiHev' p. 72

ENDNOTES

1. Interview Joe Kech 65 Retired Civil Servant Turan
2/5/2011
2. YuaTeratar87 Retired Civil Servant Adkpo 2/3/2011

3. Paul Unongo Politician Jato-Aka 15/10/2010
4. DzendaZeu Retired Civil Servant Usar (Tiv N.A.) 1/3/2011
5. Paul Unongo 75 Politician Unongo Village 15/10/2010
6. Wantaregh Paul Unongo, The man, The Myth Makurdi:
Adikp Publishers, 2007
7. Orazar Kura 79 Farmer Tutan 1/3/2011
8. All Africa com: Nigeria Paul Unong a Political Sunset? P.1
9. Tor Melabu “the long Distance “Runner” National Truth
April 6-15, 1995 p.15”
10. All Africa. Com. P. 1
11. Discussion with Unongo Himself at Jato-Aka 15/10/2010.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL BASIS FOR A TIV YAM FESTIVAL:

Iniongo I iyou Mbi Hev - Wilfred UJi

Introduction

During the Third *Iniongo I iyou Nibi Hev*, last in 2010, a renowned Professor of Political Science pointed out that nowhere in History, did the Tiv people, collectively as a whole nation celebrated the harvest of yams as a cultural festival. To a large extent, he was right and correct in his criticism and opposition to the idea of a Tiv Yam Festival, a cultural event which Wantaregh Paul Iorpuu Unongo has, come to institute in the life of the Tiv nation in contemporary times. To be factual, there is no historical basis or reference point where the entire Tiv people together in cultural affinity, celebrated a Yam festival.

However, what the professor ignored is the fact that even though the entire Tiv collectively did not feast together, there were scattered pockets of evidence, here and there, that attested to the fact that at the individual level, the *Ashagba aiorin* Tivland, the men of substance and affluence, towards the end of the 19th century, had begun to import into Tivland some cultural impulses from their neighbours such as the Jukun, Etulo, Bekwara and Idomas. For instance, the idea of "Drum Chiefs" the evolution of a military warrior class in chieftaincy class was adapted by

the Tiv from their Jukun Neighbours. As a matter of fact, even yams as an agricultural product were diffused from the Bekwara (Udam) to Tivland. Eventually, yam was domesticated in Tivland alongside some indigenous species that were locally grown in Tiv land. It is most probably that the diffusion and domestication of Yams by the Tiv went side by side with the idea of a yam festival, initially practiced by individual households, the *Uya* and the *Ashagba aior*. Individual households and compounds under the various house heads practiced and celebrated the feast of yams in their individual and several ways.

Yams have continued to be the greatest symbol of agricultural existence of the Tiv people. It is both a cash crop and a food crop, a symbol of the prestige of their economic prosperity. It is the symbol of the idea that Benue is the Food Basket of the Nation. In this regard, the conceptualization of the Tiv Yam Festival, even though a historical, is a welcomed cultural dynamism and innovation. After all, all world cultures are dynamic, innovative and evolutionary. Culture is not static. Societies and people diffuse cultural ideas and values at the level of language, dress codes, science and technology, marriages etc.

Above all, there is no doubt that the Tiv nation is in dire need of a platform that can help define the collective existence and survival of the Tiv people. As of now, there is no cultural platform or festival that acts as a basis for the unification of the Tiv people or for a collective discourse and engagement of the various and several Tiv minds that make up the Tiv nation. Against this backdrop, the Paul Unongo Yam Festival innovation is a welcomed idea and invention that could lead to the promotion of a

collective Tiv consciousness and identity. Politics and events at the national level, in contemporary times have clearly shown that what the Tiv people need to survive in the Nigerian polity is a cultural unity and common sense of Purpose. The yam festival fulfils this need. Where the Mzough u Tiv, which is almost dead and non-existent, had failed the Tiv nation, we need some collective platforms where the entire Tiv people can come together and chart a common agenda for the Tiv nation in the 21st century.

Tiv Celebration of Agriculture

The Tiv migration and spread in the Benue Valley between the 8th and the 9th Centuries brought the Tiv people into contact and relations with several ethnic groups like the Jukun, Bekwara, Idoma, Alago, Agatu, Hausa, Fulani, etc. The exchange of relations between the Tiv and these ethnic groups brought a lot of socio-economic changes and transformations in the socioeconomic setting of the Tiv people.

The diffusion of Yams into Tiv land, with its attending consequences was one of the major highlights of the Tiv relations with the Bekwara neighbours, referred to as *the "Udam"* a derogative term used by the Tiv people in describing their Ogoja neighbours. The diffusion of Yams was the major highlight in the exchange of economic relations between the Tiv and their Ogoja neighbours. However, it is important to note that some species of Yams were indigenously domesticated by the Tiv as earlier pointed out. There is no doubt that the Tiv may have copied the idea of a Yam festival from their Udam neighbours, particularly Southern Tivland

that borders the Ogoja as well as the Jukuns and Etulo. Some Tiv clans in this region diffused the Feast of Yams in the celebration of the gift of Yam.

The exchange of economic relations between the Tiv and their Ogoja neighbours also introduced into Tivland the export of slaves from Tivland to the Ogoja Atlantic Sea, in the famous Trans Atlantic Slave Trade. In the 19th Century, there was the clear presence of slave lords in Tivland such as Tor Abagi of Shangev-*Tiev* and Abul Benga of Ukan, who traded in slaves with the Hausas and their Ogoja neighbours. On the Southern-Western Tivland, markets existed such as Tsar Market in Mbaduku which provided the Southern outlet an entreport between Tivland and the Atlantic economy in the Southern parts of Nigeria.

Commercial relations between the Tiv and their Ogoja neighbours, as well as the Jukun and Hausa, transformed some Tiv men of substance into powerful lords and individuals in Tivland. These great men of substance and wealth celebrated their success in different ways and styles including the display of slaves, the marriage of several wives, the throwing of parties and feasts, including the celebration of Yams and cereal crops. The changing commercial climate marked a gradual breakdown and the disappearance of Tiv communalism and mode of existence and prepared the background for the takeoff of colonialism in the 20th Century. Individualistic as well as selfish greed, were emerging values of the pre-colonial era before the age of European colonialism. Bayer Dzeremo, in his book *"Colonialism and the Transformation of Authority in Central Tivland"* Proved the point that the commercial relations had began

to emerge across Tivland before the advent of the British colonialism in the 20th Century.

In the field of agriculture, the earliest indigenous celebration of agricultural Success was the feast of grains and cereals. In the feast of grains and cereals, the Tiv threw lavish festivals in which alcoholic beverage, imported from the Jukuns, and was used as the basis for refreshment.

The men of affluence or *Ashagba aior*, threw such feasts and invited the entire clans to such celebrations. These were the earliest cultural frameworks that laid the basis for a collective Tiv festival in agriculture that could also -promote a Tiv unity and consciousness. During this earliest period, Yarns were not as pronounced as cereals but towards the colonial age, and during the colonial period, Yams had overtaken cereals as the Tiv basic cash crop. Apart from agricultural festivities, other cultural celebrations existed such as the organization of the 'Amar' or dance festivals as well as the rites of Marital Purification known as "ler".

The Significance of Agricultural Festivals and Tiv Unity

The cultural feast or the several agricultural celebrations acted as the basis for Tiv unity and collective existence. It was not as if individuals lacked food or what to eat, but the festivals provided the entire clan the basis for unity, solidarity and exchange of ideas. It is within this context that the Paul Unongo Feast of Yams has a lot of significance. Each one of us can feed himself but the Feast of Yams *is* rather symbolic providing the

basis for a Tiv nationalism and unity. The Tiv celebration of agriculture in the past provided the bond of fellowship that glued the entire Tiv nation together. The festivals were also vehicles of cultural mobilization, brotherhood and group action.

The entire clan fostered a common sense of existence and purpose in which the collective survival of the clan was seen as greater than the individual good. This is one important lesson that Tivland must learn today to survive in contemporary Nigeria. As individuals, we have made a lot of progress, but collectively as a nation we are relegated to the backwaters of Nigerian politics. For instance, how can we explain that the Tiv with a population of 3.5 million people have continued to play a second fiddle to the Idomas with a population of just about a million?, or even the Ijaws and the Itsekiris of the Niger Delta who do not have the kind of population the Tiv have.

The point *is* that the Tiv collectivity in the celebration of feasts and festivals has always been symbolic; they were the vehicles by which society was mobilized and galvanized towards a common brotherhood of the Tiv man. The cultural feasts, like the Yam Feast, were symbols of nationalism, platforms that provided the basis for the cultural consciousness, awareness and identity of the Tivman vis-a-Vis that of other ethnic groups.

It is the decline and near absence of such a cultural awareness and consciousness that has relegated the Tivman to the backwaters of national development in contemporary Nigeria. How can you explain the near extinction of the Tivman by national and federal forces in

contemporary Nigeria? Where is the Tiv principle of *Ya na Angbian* in the share of political appointments in Benue State and at the national level? For example, when will a small Tiv clan like the Masev people ever be either Governor or be appointed as Minister at the national level ever? What has happened to the Tiv national slogan "Ayatutuka Uno"?; looking at how the Tiv people in recent Times slaughter their brothers in the name of politics or communal feuds? Where can you place the politics of primitive accumulation that has so characterized the behaviour of the Tiv elites who most at times boast of being youngest billionaires, having fleets of cars, chains of houses in Europe and America without any corresponding relevance to the survival of the ordinary Tivman in Benue State today? The Tiv values and principles of egalitarianism, brotherhood, and communal existence have all disappeared in the face of individual greed and selfishness. Why are the Tiv unable to confront their common enemies on all flanks, the Fulanis and the Jukuns, who have continued to attack the Tivman from all sides, making the Tiv man a refugee in his own country? Why is Tivland backward despite the tremendous human and natural resources of the Tiv people? The answer to all these questions lies in the fact that at the moment, in contemporary Nigeria and Tivland, there is no central body or platform that seeks to unify the Tiv nation, promote a sense of consciousness and identity. The Tiv Traditional Council has failed in this respect, the same for the *Ijir I Tamen* as well as the *Mzough U Tiv* With the exception of Paul Unongo, no Tiv son, at the present believes in the idea of bringing together all Tiv sons and daughters, irrespective of their party divide and

affiliations, to a common Tiv unity and intellectual discourse.

It is against this backdrop that the Paul Unongo Yam Festival has a lot of significance and cultural relevance to the Tiv in contemporary Nigeria. The Yam Festival is a symbolic feast that provides the opportunity for an open dialogue and discourse on the Tiv man - where do we go from Here?

REFERENCES

- Makar, Tesemchi, *A History of Political Change among the Tiv in the 19th and 20th Century*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd.1994
- Dorward, David Craig, *A Political and Social History of the Tiv people of Northern Nigeria: 1900-1939 ...*
- Orkar, John, "A Pre-Colonial History of the Tiv People of Central Nigeria: 1500-1850" unpublished PhD Thesis.
- Sai, Akiga, *Akzga:r Story: The Tiv Tribe as Seen I?J One of its Member*. London: Oxford University Press, 1939.
- Dzererno, Bayer, *Colonialism and the Transformation of Authority in Central Tiuland*, Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2001

CHAPTER THREE

TIV QUESTION IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

BY Uji, Wilfred Terlumun

Introduction

Since the independence in the 1960, one of the greatest challenge that confront Nigeria as a modern nation state is how to integrate the centre and the subunit which constitute Nigerian federation on an equitable and fair basis in the share and allocation of national resources. The contraction as well as convulsion of central petal and central fugal forces has often given birth to several crises that threaten the very foundation and survival of Nigerian nation. There have been several of these kinds of crises such as the Nigerian civil war which was as a result of contractions at the epic centre of the Nigerian nation, the Niger Delta militant which were reactions of central fugal forces, the Boko Haram, the IPOB movement in the south-east for the realization of sovereign state of Biafra are among the several crises that manifest the contradictions of Nigeria's federalism.

The Tiv question, the question of how the Tiv people can be integrated into the Nigerian state on a free, fair and equitable basis represent one of such interplay of forces between the central petal and central fugal dynamics of Nigerian state. The Tiv question is the search for

identity of the Tiv nation as well as the share of resources with the Nigerian federation vis-à-vis entrenched majority interest and groups at the centre such as the Fulanis, Yorubas, and Ibos. This lecture will adopt the concept of the Eastern question in looking at contemporary realities in Nigeria as it affects the survival of minority ethnic groups in the country.

Theoretical issues

The Eastern question is a concept adopted by European historians in describing the relationship between the weak Uthman Empire and her minority ethnic groups in search of self-determination by the 19th century and 20th century. The Uthman Empire was refer to as the sick man of Europe obviously for several reasons, largely because the empire was in a steady decline, in a state of deterioration, unable to accept reforms, unwilling to protect and safeguard the safety of and survival of her ethnic minorities such as the serves, aremians, amenians, etc. The Uthman Empire at Easternbul Turkey rather recurs to repression through ethnic cleansing of minority ethnic groups.

Nigeria shares similar historical parallels with the Uthman Empire in several ways. First, Nigeria was defined and conceptualised from her initial foundation as the constituent of three major ethnic groups that came to dominate the centre of Nigeria's politics. The tripartite system was also synonymous of three regions namely the northern region, the western region, and the eastern region. Although, a mid-western region was carved out of the west, the tripartite structure still remains in Nigeria up to date

and form the basis for the share and allocation for national resources. These regional structures hardly take into cognizance the survival of minority ethnic groups under such regions. Although, by the 1960 down to the 1990s, state creation is supposed to have given minority groups sense of belonging in the share of national resources, but the regional structure still overshadows the politics of Nigeria up to the present era. It is the regional structure control by the entrenched majority groups that determine the outcome and the survival of the sub-unit in which minority groups belong in Nigeria. In other words, the centre of Nigerian politics is still controlled by the tripartite system and often over shadowed the interest of minority groups at the sub-unit, peripheral to the centre. The federal system in Nigeria is design in such a way that power, both economic and political is over concentrated at the centre, and is often used to undermine the existence of the sub-units that make up the federation.

The Tiv people of Nigeria by the tripartite system and arrangement belong to the northern region overshadowed by the entrenched interest of the Fulani ruling class at the centre. From the foundation of Nigerian state, the northern region was defined and conceptualised as a metamorphosis of the Sokoto caliphate. The Fulani ruling class from the Sokoto caliphate took advantage of the regional structure to extend the second colonialization of minority groups in the north. This process of colonialization has been on going in the northern region since independence, and how minority ethnic groups react to such

colonialization is an important basis in understanding contemporary ethnic minority struggles in the north.

Nigeria, particularly the northern region can be refer to as the sick man of West Africa looking at the relations between the ruling political forces at the centre and minority ethnic agitations in contemporary Nigeria. To what extent and how ready and willing are the Fulani class in the north prepare to protect and safeguard the existence and survival of ethnic minorities in the north? Or how prepare and willing have the Fulani ruling class provided an equitable and fair basis in the share of national resources among minority ethnic groups in the north?

Since independence, political leaders from the north of Fulani extraction drawn from the Sokoto caliphate have in one way of the other failed in the integration of minority ethnic groups in centre politics of Nigeria. Although there are cases of minority ethnic groups that were involved in the political leadership at the centre, they were more or less manipulated and exploited by the Fulani ruling class to wedge war against other majority ethnic groups. One of such good examples was the recruitment of ethnic minorities in the north led by General Yakubu Gowon to wedge war against Biafran republic.

The Tiv nation has paid a dear price as a result of the contradictions between the centre and sub-unit politics of the northern region. In the 1960s, the Sir Ahmadu Bello regime in the north devastated the Tiv nation in the disguise to suppress the Tiv riot. During the first republic, much of

Tiv society was overshadowed by political violence that did not attract any meaningful development to the Tiv nation. During the Nigerian civil war, the youthful population of Tiv society was forcefully conscripted to fight a civil war to preserve the ruling status quo in the north. During the era of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the second republic, the Tiv nation through her political elites was manipulated and exploited by the Fulani ruling class not primarily to develop Tiv society, but the preservation and sustenance of Fulani hegemonic ruling in Nigeria. During the military regimes of General Mohammed Buhari and General Ibrahim Babangida of the 1980s to the 1990s, military officers of Tiv extraction who were not loyal to the courts at the Sokoto caliphate, using the disguise of coups were purged out of the Nigerian army.

I would like to say that Major Gideon Orkar was a victim of the politics of treachery and betrayal of the unending conflict between the central petal and central fugal forces of Nigerian politics. Major Orkar and Colonel Nyam, using the military machinery attempted a minority ethnic protest that was overwhelmed and squashed by entrenched majority forces. The Major Gideon's Orkar revolution is the reflection of the civilian arm of minority ethnic protest in Nigeria. It is a military movement, a civilian equivalent of the call for restructuring of Nigeria in contemporary times. It is a sad reminder of the unbalanced federation of the northern region, the call by minority groups in the north for recognition and identity against the oppressive and cruel antics of the Fulani ruling class both in the military and in politics.

The Origin of The Tiv Question

A critical examination of the history of the Tiv suggest that the putative single ancestral Tiv people originating from the ancestral figure called Tiv may have been a recent creation in the history of the Tiv people, probably during the colonial era, to give the Tiv people a collective sense of identity and existence. On the surface, it appears that Tiv are a homogenous group, but a closer look at contemporary realities and politics in Tiv society suggest that the Tiv are a heterogeneous group who are a product of fusion and assimilation of diverse ethnic group into a common Tiv nationality. Scholars like Joseph Iyo in a critic of a pure tribe theory suggested that Tiv nationality is a product of fusion and assimilation. John Orkar pointed out that Tiv genealogy as it exists in contemporary literature is engrafted genealogy that does not actually represent the biology putative roots of the Tiv people.

The above argument is critical and important in looking at the identity of the Tiv people. It appears that the Tiv people suffer from a crisis of identity both in their domestic politics as well as in their external relations in Nigeria. The fundamental question is who are the Tiv people based on their collective acceptance and agreement? And what is the Tiv interest in their domestic politics and external relations?

The issue of Tiv identity is very critical and vital in understanding the Tiv question in contemporary Nigeria:

- What is our domestic interest? What guides our domestic politics? What are the critical values and principles that define our domestic politics and development? Are the Tiv people guided by the principle of egalitarianism and common brotherhood and the just system of “ya na angbian” based on equity and fairness? Who are the Tiv political elites since independence? What are the guiding principles of their struggles and is it aimed at primitive accumulation or service and emancipation of Tiv nation?

- What is the fundamental interest of the Tiv nation in her external relations with majority ethnic groups like Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo? Do the Tiv people have national interest or is it interest driven by individualistic forces? Where is the identity of the Tiv nation vis-à-vis the entrenched interest of the majority ethnic groups? Do we intend to give up more lands to Fulani to occupy at expense and displacement of local population or do we intend to assimilate a Hausa culture both in language and dress code? Or perhaps look like the Yorubas and Ibos.

This lecture cannot sufficiently address all the questions raised above; these are question posers that intend to open up the debate of the Tiv question and to help the Tiv man to face the contemporary realities of Nigeria politics. I will go down into history to use certain events and happenings in Tiv history to discuss the crisis or identity of the Tiv nation. To me, the crisis of identity is pivotal in understanding the Tiv question.

Historical Illustration of The Question

In modern history, the first crisis of identity that revealed the Tiv question in Nigeria was the Tiv riot of 1960 to 1965. The central and the central fugal forces of the first republic pitched the Tiv people in the United Middle Belt Congress led by J. S Tarka as against the Northern People's Congress led Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sadauna of Sokoto. The struggle of the Tiv people like several other minority groups in the north was the fight for actualisation of the middle belt region as a separate unit of identity from the northern region that was dominated by the Fulanis. The search for a middle belt region was driven by several forces but basically it was a search for identity in which minority ethnic groups in the north sought for a sense of protection as well as exploitation from the Islamic Sokoto caliphate led by the Fulanis. Two factors were critical in the struggle; the control over national resources and the preservation of group identity.

There are divergent views as to the remote and immediate causes of the Tiv riot but what is central is that it was a protest against the domination of Tiv nation by the Sokoto caliphate to overshadow the identity of the Tiv people. The Sir Ahmadu Bello led regime in the Northern Province exploited the crisis by attempting to wipe out the Tiv nation from northern Nigeria. Colonel Odumegu Ojukwu who was at that time in command of the military garrison in the north pointed out that the directive of the Sultan of Sokoto Ahmadu Bello was that the military should wipe out the Tiv nation. Despite the resistance by Ojukwu, Sir

Ahmadu Bello despatched a military expedition to the Tiv native authority at Gboko that was to annihilate the Tiv nation.

As earlier on said, since independence, the challenge in Nigeria is how the nation was defined that gave advantage of entrenched majority over minority groups. Majority groups at the centre like the Fulanis in the north exploited minority groups to their own advantage and did less in the preservation of ethnic identity of the minorities or even in the share of national resources. Although, the ruling northern people's congress appointed Tiv sons into the cabinet at the centre, these Tiv political elites were more or less stooges of the Fulani ruling class to stamp an Islamic identity on the Tiv nation. For example, a few ministerial appointments during this era of Tiv people in the federal cabinet were men such as Lushakyaa Anja and Takeru Oradi who had compromised their religious faith. The Tor Tiv at that time, both Makir Zakpe and Gondo Aluor were always dressed up in Hausa regalia as a symbol of loyalty to the Sokoto caliphate.

The promotion of military men to the top command of military in Nigeria is an important scenario to look at, the politics of exclusion and inclusion of the Tiv people in politics of the north. Officers of the Tiv extraction enjoyed promotions under the top military command that was dominated by the north. Some Tiv military officers even enjoyed lucrative appointments in the military command. However, despite the contribution of Tiv people in Nigeria civil war, it was difficult to find soldiers of Tiv extraction control the top command of military in Nigeria. There were few

examples of Tiv soldiers who control the top command of the military such as Colonel Joe Akaahan, the Chief of Army Staff and General Victor Malu also as the Chief of Army Staff however, the contractions of the politics at the centre in which the entrenched majority will always have their way short lived the tenures of Tiv military officers. For instance, Colonel Joe Akaahan died a mysterious circumstances betrayed by the Yoruba as well as General Victor Malu was sacked in controversial circumstances by General Olusegun Obasanjo. There are examples of Colonel Shande who was betrayed at war front during civil war by soldiers of western extraction in Nigeria.

The story of Major Gideon Orkar and Colonel Mike Iorshe is not too far from this complicity of the series of treachery and betrayal of entrenched interest at the centre of Nigerian politics. These are salient happenings and events in Nigeria's politics that brings to the fore the Tiv question in contemporary Nigeria. Where is the place and position of the Tiv nation in contemporary Nigeria politics? Have the Tiv nation learnt any lesson from the past? How can the Tiv nation break into main stream Nigerian politics and be part of mainstream politics at the centre? What are the forces both at the domestic front and national politics that inhibits the effective Tiv participation in Nigeria's politics?

In recent times since 2012 to the present, the herdsmen invasion of the Tiv nation has once again open up the debate on the Tiv question. The events and happenings of the herdsmen invasion have thrown up several questions about the Tiv nation both within and outside. The fundamental

question is what the stand and position of the Tiv nation is at home in Benue State, Nasarawa, and Taraba, and what is the position of political Tiv elites at national front? Who are the allies of Tiv people in the struggle against Fulani domination of Tiv nation or to what major ethnic group can the Tiv ethnic group turn to?

It is important to note that the Yorubas in the west and the Ibos in the east have their own full share of minority ethnic groups who are in protest against the entrenched interest of the Yorubas and Ibos. For instance, the Niger Delta militants and their struggle for resource control pose a threat to both the Yorubas and the Ibos. In the same way in the west, there are struggles of minorities like the Edos to control the central Nigeria politics like the Yorubas. The Tiv nation must be aware of these struggles rather than complex nature of politics at the centre. This background is very important as the Tiv political elites seek to align or re-align themselves with entrenched majorities at the centre in search for solutions to the Tiv question. A look at hand side will help the Tiv nation to avoid the mistake of the past.

During the first republic, J. S Tarka constructed an alliance with the Action Group led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the west. In the outbreak of the western crisis, the good intentions of the Action Group did little or nothing in the protection of Tiv people against Fulani in the north. In the second republic, J. S Tarka entered into alliance with the National Party of Nigeria led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari, J. S Tarka was not only betrayed in

his dream to become president of Nigeria or even the senate president but also J. S Tarka lost his life in the process.

It appears there is a cyclical theory of history that faces the Tiv nation. The challenge of the herdsmen invasion in Tiv society today has brought the Tiv nation to a major crossroad in her national history. It appears once again been repeated in the Tiv nation. the question of identity has erupted up demanding that the Tiv nation must decide where they stand based on their common identity. I will adopt the phrase from Paul Unongo, “where do we go from here” in search of national allies and how to control resources at the centre. What direction in our national politics taken by the Tiv nation will preserve our identity, give us national relevance, and drive home the benefits of development? Do we go to the Sokoto caliphate, the Ohaneze Ndi Igbo or the Afenifere?

Conclusion

The Tiv question is applicable to every other ethnic minority group in Nigeria. The issues discussed in this lecture are applicable to all ethnic minorities. The Tiv nation must of necessity learn from other ethnic minorities and adopt their frameworks for national survival. One ready and good example are the Idomas and the Igedes who are our neighbours but effective minorities in national politics. The Tiv nation must learn how to push and expand outwards and compete for resources at the centre. In recent times, the Tiv nation is on a retreat, shrinking in size day by day. We must explore the frontiers of international relations exploitin our

diaspora links in Europe and America. Back at home in Benue state, we must create deliberate economic and political zones in order to expand the frontiers of the Tiv nation and avoid over concentration and pressure on Makurdi and Gboko towns for social and economic survival.

CHAPTER FOUR

TIV COMMERCIAL ELITE AND THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OF TIV SOCIETY: COLONIAL ERA TO POST INDEPENDENCE

Uji, Wilfred Terlumun

Introduction

In recent times, the United States of America, under the Barrack Obama organized a stimulus package plan that was designed to save the United States private sector from total wreckage. The importance of state intervention in the stimulation of the growth of private sector cannot be over emphasized. In all western European nations of Britain, France and Germany, similar approaches, state interventionism in economic management, were adopted as measures to cushion poverty and stabilize the polity; The idea of state interventionism brings to the fore the subject matter of this discourse, the role that politics, or the state can play in the transformation of enterprise and economic development.

Since the end of the World War II in 1945 the economic theories of David Richardo and John Keynes clearly amplified the need for state regulation of the private sector in order to create a just and equitable distribution of wealth in society as well as the strategic reduction and alleviation of poverty.

In Nigeria today, with our focus on Benue State, there is a great challenge to alleviate poverty, create employment through the stimulation of the private sector. There is the urgent need to create small and medium scale enterprise (SME) owned and controlled by the indigenous population. The balance-sheet of trade in Tivland clearly shows that Tiv commercial economy is dominated by migrant groups, the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba who have enjoyed the overwhelming domination of the economy since the colonial days. This poses a great challenge for development in that an economy that is externally controlled, that lacks an indigenous participation and competition cannot stand the test of time in modern economy. The point is that wealth creation and generation is more in the hands of migrant groups, leaving indigenous population in poverty and impoverishment.

The above syndrome is as a result of the exploitative activities of middle men in the retail of agricultural products as well as industrial products. The middlemen of the Brenda in Tiv language play an important factor in the transformation of trade in an economy. They usually occupy the position between the producer and the consumer of final items. By this role and position, the middlemen usually exploit two sides of the trade chain distribution. That is the producers on one hand and the consumers on the other hand.

This chapter intends to bring out some fundamental issues concerning Tiv economy and commercial enterprise. To answer important question such as, who controls Tiv economy? What are likely implications of such

controls? How can the Tiv population address poverty in the face of such control and domination? What role can the state or politics play in addressing or reversing this ugly trend? Do we leave the economy entirely to market forces or advocate some sense of state interventionism?

Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

Joseph Kotkin in his book, *Tribes, How Race, Religion and Identify Determine Success in the New Global Economic* postulated some essential qualities necessary for modern enterprise. These qualities are:

- i. A belief in scientific progress, the desire to open up to scientific innovation and change.
- ii. A desire to dispose across-trans-national lines
- iii. The mobilization of ethnic kinship and family tribes.

These qualities, he argued, were quite essential for success in modern enterprise. Kotkin focused his analysis on some “global tribes: such as the Jews, British, Chinese, Japanese and Indians and how these racial groups have been able overtime to achieve success in modern enterprise. For instance he said, these racial groups were willing to adapt to changes in the economy and environment, must be mobile and expensive, and must open up to scientific belief and changes. This brings us to the central principles in modern enterprise namely, innovation, creativity and frugality. In addition, there must be readiness on the part of the ethnic group to mobilize its ethnic resources through the building of solidarity networks and kinship tribes.

In Nigeria, the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba during the colonial era were quite willing, and mobilized their ethnic resources combined with the willingness to adapt to change and accepted changes in the economy and environment to denigrate other minority ethnic groups in commercial enterprise. This explains why the economy of Tiv land since the colonial period has been dominated by those migrant groups. Some of the reasons for Tiv's lack of apparent success in modern enterprise are also found in the Kotkin assumption as the chapter later demonstrates.

In Nigeria, the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba do not just emerge out of the blues, just on the content of their ethnicity, to dominate other ethnic groups. At one time or the other particularly in the Post colonial era, the various regional governments, through their Banks such as Bank of the North, African Continental Bank all now defunct were established to provide the bedrock for the emergence of an entrepreneur class among the Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. In addition, rising the Federal Might in the share of the national cake as well as the granting of export and import licenses, these ethnic groups have come to dominate minority/other ethnic groups in modern commercial enterprise. It is in line with this wisdom that the Governor Aker Aku Regime of 1979 to 1983 established the Lobi Bank as a resource base for the creation of Tiv entrepreneurial class. Success in modern enterprise is more of a function of state politics than the will of the individual. The recent Wall Street collapse in the United States that had vibrations 'across Europe in which the Obama administration directly intervened is a recent testimony of state intervention in the resuscitation of

the private sector. The Obama stimulus package once again brought to the fore the ideals of liberal economist such as Ricardo and Ken in the state intervention and regulation of private sector.

The concept elite is a Latin root word meaning the enlightened class transformed by the process of education – learning. The elite are the light bearers, the carrier of civilizations, in whatever meaning, to the ignorant worlds, where darkness and ignorance prevails. The term elite used in the context of this discussion refers to the intelligentsia found in the areas of politics, law, business, religion, education, etc. They are the beneficiary of western enlightenment through education, both formal and informal, who owe a debt to their respective communities, where the elites originated, to plough back the gains of enlightenment and civilization to their communities. It is within this context that the European elite of the 18th and 19th centuries, in the spirit of Pax Europa, brought the entire African continent to colonial subjugation and domination in the name of bringing civilization to the savage and barbaric races. The spread of western education, business infrastructure, and administrative state infrastructure were the principal instruments by which the European elite civilized the continent of Africa. In the same way, the European colonization created African elite who came to view their rural communities as barbaric and savage. But unlike the European elites, the Africa elites were unable to evoke a conscious policy of engaging their communities in development.

The concept of community development emerged with the establishment of United Nations with its auxiliary bodies that were to

supervise development in Africa all from 1945. The idea of community development was rooted in the philosophy of “Self Help Project” in which the rural communities were to mobilize their resources, organize themselves and identify their priorities in terms of need, at the local government on how to resolve their common developmental challenges. The communities were the focal point in development not treated as adjuncts, but responsible for their development. This approach to development, adopted inputs from external sources, recognized the role that elites can contribute to the development of their respective communities.

Tiv Elites and Commercial Enterprise

The studies of several European anthropologies such as Paul and I aura I3ohanna, AC Abraham and David among others have shown that Tiv economy and material development was at the communal mode of production before colonialism. The works of some Tiv scholars such as Makar, Dzeremo, Agber also confirmed the fact that material development of the Tiv people was at the communal mode of production prior to contact with Western Europe.

The mode of production theory states that communalism as a mode of production was incompatible with the capitalist mode of production introduced into Tiv land with the advent of colonialism. Communalism as a mode of production had farming as its predominant and basic economic activity Land was regarded as the most important factor of production. In

addition, communalism emphasized values such as collectivism, egalitarianism and equal access to means of production and the sharing of wealth. In other words, communalism provided a level playing field for social co-existence and control of factors of production. In this regard, people or the community existed in the large on the basis of equality and fraternity. Brotherhood, Kinship ties and the extended family system played very key and crucial functions in communal relation.

The creation of Benue Plateau state in 1967 was another major event and development that accelerated the growth and diversification of Gyado enterprise. The creation of Benue State opened the door for Gyado to get contracts in the building and construction sectors. As a major contractor, Gyado reaped huge financial benefits which became the bedrock of his enterprise. For instance, in 1960s, under the Gyado group of companies, the construction of Gboko road was awarded to his firm. The contract and several others marked a major springboard in the triumph of Gyado enterprises. The contract system constituted an important factor in the accumulation of capital, thus providing a strong platform for the business success of Gyado.

The Gyado conglomerate invested massively in the building and construction of secondary schools, Hotels and housing units in Tiv land. Two secondary schools were established namely Tilley Gyado College, Makurdi and Tilley Gyado College, Ihugh, his hometown. Tilley Gyado Hotels was established at Gboko and also an important commercial building in the heart of Makurdi town known as Tilley Gyado House.

These investments in education, commerce and social service diversified the base of his enterprise into several directions. Fave Uchichi is another important and great businessman in Tivland. As sources indicate, he migrated from Gaav clan to Zaki Biam because of availability of fertile soil in that part of Tiviand. It has already been discussed that poor fertility of soil or the leaching of soil was an important source of internal migration in Tivland during the colonial period. Uchichi therefore, settled at Zaki Biam where he embarked on the cultivation of plantation farm. Through his trading and business activities in Tiviand, Uchichi came into contact with United African Company (U.A.C). The company employed him as an agent in the distribution of the company's products in Tiviand. The close association with the company gave him open doors in the expansion of his commercial enterprise. The company, in rewarding the hard work and diligence of Uchichi, gave him enough credit to purchase a lorry. The pioneering entrepreneurs such as Tilley Gyado and Tondo Kajo also acquired fleets of lorries and buses for transportation of passengers, goods and services in Tivland.

There are several other Tiv businessmen who began their business enterprise quite differently from the earlier ones discussed. Tondo Kajo and Denen Tofi began their commercial enterprise as petty bourgeoisie farmers who depended upon the sale of agricultural products as their major source of income. Kajo began as a middleman between the primary producers and the trading firms such as John Holt. He began his trade by buying grains during the harvesting season when the prices were cheap.

He devised a system of grain storage until the peak of the raining season when the same products were in high demand and attracted very high prices. Through his system of hoarding grains, Kajo was able to reap off tremendous profits that provided the basis for his gradual accumulation of capital. The sheer sense of discipline and the thrift culture enabled Kajoto attain success as a trader in the buying and selling of grains. In the same way, Denen Tofi began his commercial enterprise as an owner of beans plantation which was influenced by the rich soil fertility content of the area, Tofi, in addition to the cultivation of beans also embarked on the deliberate buying, storage and hoarding of beans and other grains until the peak of the raining season when prices were high. Indeed, Tilley Gyado, Tofi and Kajo laid solid foundations for their modern day enterprise in Tivland.

Tofi, Tondo, and Tilley Gyado also diversified their business enterprise by extending their enterprise to the establishment of schools, hotels and hospitals. These aspects of enterprise created avenue for the generation of employment and consolidation of wealth. On educational development, Tofi High School was established in Gboko in 1975 while Kajo High School was established in Adikpo in 1976. The schools have contributed significantly to the development of Benue State.

A prominent businessman in Makurdi town, Tihi Umah states that he and his wife began a small retail shop in the sale of general goods in Makurdi during the civil war era. Umah remarked that:

The Nigerian Civil war of 1967 marked the height of Tiv enterprise in that the war gingered several Tiv traders to enter into enterprise as a way of substitution, replacing the exodus of Igbo trader from Tivland. The war opened doors for Tiv businesses and precipitated enterprises higher than the period before that war.

The point is that the exodus of Igbo traders from Tivland in the war period created a vacuum that Tiv businessmen had moved readily to fill up. Tiv traders moved into an area that was once dominated by the Igbo commercial enterprise. The war was therefore a great catalyst in the growth of Tiv commercial enterprise. Umah lamented that the end of the war and the subsequent return of the Igbo reversed all the gains that were made by the Tiv commercial class. He argued that many people left business because of the stiff opposition and competition they faced from the Igbo commercial enterprise.

The creation of Benue state in 1976 was an important landmark development that attempted a revival of Tiv commercial enterprise. The creation of the state presented enormous challenges and opportunities to businessmen and entrepreneurs. Umah argued that after the state creation, a lot of building and construction works was carried out. The state embarked on the construction of roads, the building of hospitals, offices, schools housing and accommodation in Makurdi. He pointed out that these construction works provided several business opportunities for businessmen. In meeting the challenges of his time, Umah bought a truck

tipper instead of investing in the buying up of a filling station. In his assessment, trucks were relevant to the construction business than a filling station, which is far less rewarding. In order to further boost his business potentials, Umah also registered as a major contractor in the state. The award of contracts provided the source of revenue and capital that was needed for his business expansion. Subsequently, he also expanded into new fields such as the construction of guesthouses in Makurdi, housing units for rental purposes and building of a hotel at Ihugh. The table below shows the Tiv domination of schools and hospitals enterprises in Tivland as against other ethnic groups.

Schools and Hospitals 1960-1970

Town Ethnic Groups

Town	Yoruba	Hausa	Igbo	Tiv
Makurdi	5	2	3	20
Gboko	2	1	2	25
Katsina-Ala	2	-	5	
Zaki Biam	-	-	-	10
Adikpo	--	-	-	4
Vadeikya	-	-	-	15

Source: Ministry of Trade and Industry Directory and Registers

Benue State was created in 1976 and this marked a major turning point in the discourse between politics and commercial success in Tiv

land. Between 1976 and 1979, the military administrators that were appointed in Benue State were not Tiv and did little in the promotion and success of Tiv entrepreneurial class. Rather, these sole administrators exploited the economy of Benue State to enrich themselves and their kinsmen in Tiv land.

A major turning point occurred in 1979 to 1983 when Aper Aku became the first civilian Governor of Benue State Governor Aper Aku understood the Tiv problem, the need to create a commercial class as a way to compete with other migrant groups, arrest capital flight Out of the Benue economy, empower small scale and medium enterprise, improve the pricing of agricultural products thus empowering the rural agriculturalist, poverty reduction and wealth creation through the provision of loans and access to capital facilities. To achieve this objective the Aper Aku regime embarked on the following.

1. The establishment of the Benue State investment company as a profile to attract foreign and local investment into Benue State.
2. The Korean mission resulted in the establishment of the state owned bank, Lobi Bank and the building of an international hotel, Sheraton Hotel in Makurdi town for local and international businessmen.
3. The establishment of collective farm settlement across Tiv land, the land clearing scheme system, the establishment of large agricultural plantations backed up with major agricultural inputs such as tractors, harvesters, fertilizers etc.

4. The establishment of state owned industries such as the Benue Brewery Company (the More Beer), Taraku Mills.

The Aper Aku regime, since 1983, has remained a reference point for state intervention in job creation aid poverty alleviation in Tiv land. The outcome of the Aper Aku's empowerment programme created several millionaires in Tivland and established a virile and formidable Benue entrepreneurial class. Even though the Lobi Bank and other state industries later on collapsed, owing to poor management, and the political indifference of successive military regimes in Benue State, the Aku's legacies have stood a test of time to the present. The governor Adasu, regime of 1990 to 1992, even though short-lived, attempted to resuscitate some of the gains of Aper Aku. The Adasu's regime was more worried about the domination of the Federal civil service in Benue state. Governor Adasu was poised to reverse this trend and to enable Benue sons and daughters dominate the federal civil service in Benue State as it is applicable in other states of the federation. The point is that the pivotal issues that determine the Benue economy rotates around the following issues;

1. The resuscitation of small scale and medium enterprises as a panacea to wealth creation and wealth distribution.
2. The foundation of a formidable indigenous commercial class that can compete favourably with migrant groups.

3. The commercialization of rural agriculture and the empowerment of the agricultural class made up of producers and the middle men or blender.
4. The arrest of capital flight out of Benue economy through the activities of J-Iausa, Igbo and Yoruba middlemen as it is manifested in the number of trucks and Lorries that move out yams, Akpu, groundnuts and other agricultural commodities in Tiv land.
5. The provision of saving and investment scheme, as well as a loan scheme for farmers, middlemen; that is the Tiv Beranda and small scale commercial entrepreneurs.

The regime of Governor George Akume attempted to keep pace with what his predecessors have done before him. The regime attempted to bring on board certain industries like Makurdi plastic industry, fertilizer blending plant, the Tomato justice industry. Governor Akume had a programme of building cottage industries that would transform agricultural produce into finished products thereby eliminating waste and also enhancing job creation. The fertilizer blending plant was to provide fertilizer inputs to farmers at the grassroots and thereby domesticate and tame soil infertility in the rural areas. Despite these laudable objectives, Governor Akume was unable to access and make available over ten billion naira fund that was meant for small and medium scale entrepreneur in Benue State. Equally, in the agricultural sector, the billions of naira that were meant for farmers and Tiv Brenda were not accessed and not

properly applied. The Benue Cement Company the source that empowered Tiv millionaires in Tivland and projected the Tiv business class nationally as well as their participation in national politics was sold out. This political decision has adverse effects on Tivland to the present. The same thing is applicable to the killing of Taraku Mills, the collapse of Tiv control of these industries has the following effects on Tivland:

1. A systematic decline and retardation of Tiv industrial class.
2. The collapse of linkage benefit to Tiv commercial class
3. The acceleration of capital flight out of Tiv economy
- 4 The deepening of poverty and the crisis of deprivation in Tivland.

Benue state is an agrarian society and any Governor cannot ignore that ‘vital sector’s role in employment creation and food security, It is important to note that without the manufactured sector economy, which migrant groups dominate, the only section that Tiv people are in large participation is the agricultural sector. It is the source of security, income and wealth distribution for the Tiv people. The challenge of rural development must be taken seriously too. I am glad that his Excellency, the Executive Governor of Benue State, Rt. Hon G.T. Suswam has taken giant strides in this direction. To be candid, Suswam is the first governor in recent history to have given the rural sector a genuine attention and regard in terms of development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the following can be implemented towards the economic transformation of Tivland;

1. The establishment of a state reform team that will be charged with the responsibility of ensuring the reform of the attitudes and values of Tiv people towards modern commercial enterprise. We have established that one of the central principles in modern enterprise is change and innovation in consonance with changes in the economy and environment. Tiv people are still living in the pre-colonial past and must wake up to the realities of a modern competitive economy. Somewhere between 1999 and 2007 under the UNDP programme assisted by the DFID, which was headed by the late Dr. David Atoato Girgi, the state reform team was established but later on disappeared.
2. Government should, together with the Tiv Brenda, farmers, and traders find ways of establishing either multipurpose cooperatives, or local thrifts and saving society that can enable Brendas, farmers and traders to save money using the instrumentality of the Tiv Brendas as a central regulating body coordinating both farmers the on one hand and traders on the other.
3. The enactment of state legislation that would compel migrant entrepreneurs in Benue State such as Dangote in I3enue Cement Company and other industries operating in Benue State, Banks and other profit making organization to make corporate contributions to the development and transformation of Benue State. Such legislation should prevent individual or groups from receiving linkage benefits from companies and industries in Benue State particularly the Benue Cement Company.
4. To reverse the trend of migrant domination of modern market at Makurdi and their edging out of this indigenous groups.

5. To establish an export zone in Benue State that can export yams, garri and groundnut instead of the flight out of the Benue economy.
6. To lobby for more indigenous commercial group to have access to import and export licenses.
7. To establish a bureau of unemployment and job creation to coordinate policies of unemployment and generate data for the state, to provide a central data system for the unemployed that can replace existing vacancies a both state and national levels. In addition, that can pay welfare stipends for the maintenance for the unemployed graduates.

REFERENCES

- Benue State Developmental Plan 1979 – 1983
- Benue Advance Plan, 1999 – 2007
- Doward, David Craig, *A Political and Social History of the Tiv people of Northern Nigeria: 1900-1939*.
- Gyado, Tilley “Oral Interviews, Age 66, Ihugh 2005
- Joe Kotkin, *How Race, Religion and Identity Determines Success in the New Global Economy*.
- Makar, Tesemchi, *A History of Political change among the Tiv in the 19th and 20th Century*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Pub.
- Muemue, Akaazua “Oral Interviews, Age 61, Ihugh, 2005
- Paul and Laura Bohauna “*Tiv Economy and Farm settlement*. Evanston: Northern University Press. 1968.
- Sai, Akiga, *Akiga’s Story: The Tiv as seen by one of its Member*. London: Oxford University Press. 1936.
- Tofi, Denen “Oral Interviews, Age 55, Gboko, 2005
- Uji, Wilfred “The Migrant Factor in the Economic History of Tivland 1900-2000” Unpublished PhD Thesis University of Abuja, 2009.
- Umah, Tihi “Oral Interviews, Age 60, Makurdi, 2005
- Uji, Wilfred (ed) “*Feast of the New Yams: Issues and Reflections from the Tiv National Conference* Vast Publihers, Makurdi 2012.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TIV NATION UNDER EXTERNAL THREATS, INTRA-CLAN CONFLICTS AND INSECURITY

Wilfred Terlumun Uji

Introduction

The Tiv people of Nigeria are found predominantly in the North Central Nigeria across the states of Benue, Nassarawa, Plateau, Niger as well as Taraba and Adamawa in north eastern region of the country. The Tiv people are also found in large settlements population in south western region, in the Yoruba dominated states of Osun, Ekiti, Ogun and Oyo states. According to population estimates, the population of the Tiv people is pegged at over 10 million with a projection to hit over 20 million by 2023.

In north central Nigeria, the Tiv people have lived together with their neighbours such as Jukun, Alago, Eggon, Kutev, Egbirra, Nupe, Gwari and Angas since the pre colonial era. Also in north eastern Nigeria, the Tiv people have lived together with the Chamba and Fulani ethnic groups since the pre colonial days. In south west Nigeria, the migration and settlement of Tiv people in that region began during the colonial era and has been sustained over time into the post independence period.

The Tiv relation with their neighbours has often been characterized by conflicts and cooperation, aggression and friendliness, hostility and peace building, fused together in an unbroken network of social economic ties

that makes each ethnic group mutually dependent on another for both political and economic survival. In the pre colonial setting, though rigid state boundaries did exist, Lord Lugard stated that the Tiv population was spread across north central Nigeria from Lokoja, under the confluence head of Rivers Benue and Niger, up to the Cameroonian mountains on the Adamawa Hills. The Tiv people occupied this vast stretch of territory, but were unable to establish a solid centralized political structure with political authority distributed for effective control and administration.

This has been the Tiv challenge since the pre colonial era to the present; to learn from history that centralized leadership command structure is a vital political strategy to negotiate conflicts and resolutions with external neighbours, mostly when in the face of threats and aggression. The basic fundamental weakness of the Tiv nation has always been that despite the great numerical strength as well as diversity in economic production, in addition to intellectual acumen and enterprise, the nation from the pre colonial era to the present remains isolated and segmented in political structure and command as well as even on how to control and share economic resources. The acephalous and segmented nature of the Tiv sedentary philosophical outlook scattered and isolated in time and space has been a major setback for the Tiv nation to have consolidated on the gains of empire building in a modern political set up.

Theoretical Framework

From the background of our introductory discussion, we have been able to highlight some theoretical foundations that have come to inhibit the Tiv nation from being able to contain external threats and aggression. It

is important to note that conflicts and hostility is a normal process of inter group relation in world history. However, how specific societies and nations, or ethnic groups employ the instruments of diplomacy and cooperation to overcome such external aggression is pivotal to groups' survival in the sustenance of a people in modern history.

Several scholars like Albert Oluwale have pointed out that conflict management and resolution is part and parcel of the integral system in inter group relations of ethnic groups within the nation state. He has often argued that giving the scarcity of economic resources as well as political resources, there is bound to be excessive competition as to who control resources within a society or what group distributes and allocates values and resources within the state. Economic realities and the scramble over resources is often the root cause of several inter group conflicts in modern nations. In addition, the struggle over economic resources can be reinforced or is sometimes reinforced by negative perceptions and cultural attitudes arising from our ethnic and religious colourations as to how we interpret change and inter group relation in a modern state.

Oluwale and several other scholars have provided an outline on how groups within a state can move beyond conflicts into conflict management and resolutions. In other words, being pro-active in terms of conflict prevention is the most effective strategy in conflict management. The idea that whenever there is a conflict, coercive instruments of a state are used to quell down the conflict; set up crisis management committees; draft a white paper on conflict resolution, is defective and ineffective in managing conflict in a modern nation state. The "fire on the mountain"

approach which is very common in Nigeria, particularly in the crisis between the Tiv/Jukun and Tiv/Fulani have failed from time to time in tackling the fundamental roots of the conflicts.

What is the challenge of the Tiv nation as earlier on mentioned in this discourse? We acknowledged the fact that the acephalous nature and character of the Tiv people both in philosophical terms and settlement patterns is one of the fundamental dynamics that explains the inability of the Tiv nation to effectively engage and manage conflict resolutions by external threats from the neighbours in northern Nigeria. We observed that:

1. Beginning from the pre-colonial period up to the present era, the Tiv nation lacked a unified political structure under a centralized communal system that can mobilize or demobilize all of the Tiv clans and population across Nigeria in the wake of external aggression. As it exists in the contemporary political reality, the Tiv nation is bereft of the poverty of leaders; not as if these leaders do not exist, who can exercise political control and galvanize all Tiv people for a common action against external threats. In practical terms, we have seen the disunity and lack of the sense of purposeful unity manifest itself among the Tiv leaders or political leaders of Tiv extraction in the herdsman invasion of the Tiv nation as well as the conflict between Tiv/Jukun and Tiv/Alago. In all these external threats to the Tiv nation, there has always been discordant political tunes by Tiv political elites as to where they stand in a conflict.
2. The internal clan organisation of the Tiv people is divided and isolated that it often plays out weak in the face of external aggression. Do we have

a Tiv nation when you look at how isolated and segmented the power blocks are? Joseph Iyo decried this a long time ago as well Wanteregh Paul Unongo who in his paper “The Man Tiv is Dead” also decried the unrealistic principle of “Yan na Angbian” or sharing which would have been the ideal of a coordinated Tiv nation. For the purpose of this discussion, the political blocks in Tiv nation include JEMGBAH, JECHIRA, KWANDE, SANKERA and MINDA. These blocks existed since independence in competition for political control and distribution of resources. The nature and character of internal politics or the dynamics of relation between these blocks is often isolated and segmented without recourse to a common Tiv unity, identity and interest. This often plays out whenever there is an external threat against the Tiv nation. For instance, a Jukun aggression against the Ukum people in SANKERA is often viewed and regarded as a challenge peculiar to that axis (SANKERA), which is neglected or often isolated by the other power blocks, to face the challenge of external aggression. This makes it easy for a small band of mercenaries or militia force put together by the aggressors to easily over run particular axis of the Tiv nation and effectively occupy.

3. Since independence, the nature and character of politics in Tiv nation is over shadowed by feudalistic tendencies where the goal of politics is to create laws for the lords of the state with vast material wealth. Richard Joseph described this kind of politics as “prebendal politics” where the lords of the state, using both military and divisive methods capture political power, not for the objective purpose of development but for self material and primitive accumulation of wealth. In the Tiv nation, these

political lords have often a network of political connection with the godfathers in the far north, particularly the Hausa/Fulani political class who are also the wealthy patrons of the Nigerian state. The political lords of Tiv nation through series of treachery and betrayal have often conspired with external aggressors to betray the common interest and identity of the Tiv nation. As we look at the historical dynamics of external threats against the Tiv nation, we shall also give flesh and practical value to some of the theoretical issues raised here.

Scholars such as R.A Sergeant in *Oral Traditions of the Benue Valley* pointed out that the Benue Valley has always been viewed as a slave recruitment centre for the far north. This has coloured the perception of the indigenous populations of the valley as sources of forced labour by the Hausa aristocrat and the Fulani oligarchy. In the colonial era, the Fulani aristocrats under the northern regional framework depended on this framework for the recruitment of labour in the Benue Valley for the construction of public works such as railways, roads, tin mines and public buildings. In the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), it was the Benue valley that provided the pool of forced conscription into the army to fight or prosecute the “One Nigeria” agenda. From the foundations of modern Nigeria, the Fulani ruling class of the north has regarded the people of the north central Nigeria and the entire northern states as free of equal partners in the political and economic development of Nigeria. The project called Nigeria has always being defined as a Fulani aristocratic domination and control of northern Nigeria. Sir Ahmadu Bello pointed out clearly that:

Nigeria is an estate of their great grant father- Uthman Dan Fodio and they will never allow minority groups control and dominate. They will always use them as willing tools in the development of Nigeria.

In the history of modern Nigeria, the Sadauna's statement highlights the challenge for peace and justice by minority ethnic groups of northern Nigeria. This statement revealed the deep seated prejudice of the Fulani ruling class towards minorities in Nigeria. As from the 1920s, up to the 1950s in the colonial era there were unequal policies that were targeted at the minority ethnic groups to deprive them of political and economic justice.

In northern Nigeria under the colonial system, nomadic structures were established that justified the existence of a pastoral economy at the expense of the survival of farmers. There was a deliberate policy in all emirates of northern Nigeria to carve out large hectares of land for Fulani settlements and pastoral edifices which are known as "Zangon Kataf." The idea of cattle colonies, grazing reserves or livestock development for pastoralist began as far back as the colonial era. In this period, the government of northern Nigeria invested as much as 20 million pounds on the pastoral economy to establish nomadic settlements across northern Nigeria.

The implication of these pastoral policies against the indigenous populations of northern Nigeria was obvious and subjective. The minority

groups suffered massive displacement and conscriptions of farmlands to nomadic grazing in emirates like Adamawa, Zaria and Keffi etc where large parcels of land gazette as grazing routes for cattle nomads as well as grazing reservations areas. The policy of the Rural Grazing Reservation Areas (RUGA) existed as far back as the colonial era as structures of the northern regional government under the Sadauna of Sokoto. The implications of these policies were that they created a sense of an unequal development between the pastoralist and the farmers' economy. This has continued up to the present era where there is more focus on how to develop the pastoral economy and less attention on the development of the farming economy. There are state policies that protect and defend pastoralist or justifies nomadism, but there are hardly policies and institutions that protect farmers against the harsh exploitation and injustice of nomadic groups.

The state of peace and justice in the Benue valley is the outcome of deliberate policies of the political class in the north to keep the Benue Valley in a state of servitude and underdevelopment. The valley has being a point of isolation by the political ruling class of the north to keep the region backward using divisive politics that has not helped ethnic groups along the lines of the state beginning from 1967 to 1976 up to the 1990s, state creation in modern Nigeria partitioned ethnic groups to substantive populations in different states. For instance, the Tiv ethnic group of north central Nigeria is virtually found across all the north central states but with little political backing to compete with other ethnic groups in such states.

States creation was exacerbated by the idea of settler-stranger dichotomy; a divisive tool that has always being exploited by the political ruling class to cause ethnic and religious control of the Benue valley.

Other scholars like Justine Aper, factors the existing political and economic crisis in central Nigeria as a direct outcome of underdevelopment of the region. The pastoral and the farming economy remain backward and has continued to depend on crude forces of production. In developed economies that enjoy the large scale resources, there is hardly conflict between pastoralists and farmers that may result in killings and displacement of populations as is the case in Nigeria. The crisis in Nigeria is a direct consequence of underdevelopment and it also indicts the political class for failure to develop these sectors of the economy. As long as Nigeria depends on the use of primitive crude forces of production in the pastoral and farming economy, the killings and displacement of populations as well as the contest for land will continue.

Historical Dynamics of External Threats against the Tiv Nation

Before the Usman Danfodio Jihad of 1803 that witnessed the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate and the spread of Fulani emirates in the far north, the Tiv people according to Joseph Iyo and John Orkaa were already resident in the Benue valley; the area that roughly corresponds with north central Nigeria as far back as the 14th and 15th centuries. The immediate neighbours of the Tiv people during this era were groups who relatively belonged to the Kwararafa Kingdom or confederacy such as the Jukun, Etulo, Egbira. Alago, Idoma etcetera. There were also the presence

of some Hausa speaking groups like Nupe, Gwari and Chamba living together in the Benue Valley. The presence of the Fulani in the Benue valley in terms of a formidable political structure (emirate system) was a development of the 19th and 20th centuries with the advent of the Sokoto jihads. Intergroup relation is characterized by conflicts and cooperation at certain degrees of economic specialization compelled the different groups to depend on one another.

According to R.A Sergeant, the Tiv and the Jukun people explored their economic differences in a world of mutual dependency. In times of conflicts, the two groups had effective resolution mechanisms such as the use of the “*Burukutu*,” locally brewed alcohol from millet that was used in peace meetings to share between the two groups. Overtime, both Tiv and Jukun could cross their ethnic differences to drink from a common *Burukutu* calabash.

During the pre-colonial period, there were hardly incidents of the external aggression of the Alago and Jukun group against the Tiv nation in terms of a full scale war, except minimal clashes. Another instrumental diplomacy was the creation of the drum chiefs in the south eastern part of Tiv land (SANKERA) who received the authority and staff of office from the *Aku-Uka* of Wukari. Tesemchi Makar pointed out that the institution of the drum chiefs (Tor Agbande) was a major political development of the Tiv nation that led to the emergence of *ashagba'aior* (wealthy patrons. The drum chiefs and the wealthy patrons evolved gradually as centres of political articulation of the Tiv, but came short of providing a centralized political command that could galvanize all Tiv clans into a common action

and defence of their national interest against external aggressors. Despite the absence of a centralized political structure, the Tiv nation during this time had a strong identity consciousness that was an important vehicle in nation building or a formidable defence against external conflicts. For instance, in the face of external aggression, the slogan “*Ayatutu ka uno*” (who are the Tiv people?) was evoked with a correspondent chorus-“*ka se*” (we are the ones). This was a clear demonstration of identity, consciousness as well as solidarity and fraternity of the Tiv ability to stand together as one group in readiness to defend external threats. Tiv warriors poured out into several skirmishes with their external neighbours chanting war songs like:

Mnyam ma cie mo uke mire

Oo uke mire

Shima yam ngi awambe awambe

Hoon ngi awambe awambe

Interpretation:

I have a dream that the enemy (uke) is vanquished

The enemy is vanquished

My heart boils with blood

Yes, it is bloody

This was a demonstration of rare heroism, courage and the readiness of the Tiv nation to pay whatever price, including laying down their lives in defence of their father land.

The Fulani Islamic expansion into the Benue Valley during the 19th century witnessed crisis between the Tiv nation and the Fulani external aggressors. According to Elder Utsaha, Fulani Islamic expansionists invaded the Tiv clans of Nongov, Ukum, Shitile and the south eastern border between the Tiv nation with the Lafia and Awe emirates in the present day Nassarawa State. The Fulani Jihadists had consolidated their hold on these emirates after the Islamic revolution of 1803. It is important to note that Lafia, Obi, Awe and Doma were settlements areas with large Tiv population that predates the Islamic jihad of 1803. The same is the case for the town settlements of Wukari, Ibi and Takum which also had Tiv settlements in large numbers, predating 1803.

According to Makar, there were series of battles between the Tiv and the Fulani invaders in what was referred to as the “Dankaro Wars” around the Tiv hill settlements of at Ushongu, Serigi and Mkovur where several of the Shitile and Ugundu groups migrated down into the Benue valley. According to speculations, it was a battle at the Ushongu hills that led to the fatal injuries of one of the sons (the successor) of Uthman Danfodio and his subsequent death back home in Sokoto. The fact is that Fulani outpour into the Benue Valley by the 19th century was an imperialistic design to conquer and establish a Fulani empire over the existing ethnic groups of the valley. The Fulani expansionism was strategically designed to achieve political control as well as the economic control of resources over all ethnic groups of the valley.

External threats to the Tiv nation were also coloured by perception and cultural belief system employed by external groups against the Tiv

people. A case in point is the Jukun referral of the Tiv as “*Mitshi*” meaning stranger. The stranger-settler perception became an important historical construct which the Jukun used against the Tiv and was much later reintroduced by the policies of the colonial British Government. It was from the Jukun that the Fulani conveniently adopted the aberration “*Munchi*” which is the Hausa adulteration of *mitshi*. It should be stated on record that in the Fulfude language, there is no such word as *munchi*, therefore could not be alluded to the Tiv as the “eater of his herd of cows;” the ‘Cow Debt’ theory which has become a common cultural stereotype that has gone a long way in defining relation between the Tiv and the Fulani. The cultural stereotype of *munchi* was designed by the Fulani aggressors to portray the Tiv people as cow rustlers; a frame-up which has become institutionalized in conflicts between the Tiv and Fulani in contemporary times.

In the entire pre-colonial era, the Tiv nation remained an autonomous and independent entity which never came under any form of conquest or occupation by the external neighbours in the Benue valley or from the Sokoto caliphate. There is no record or evidence to show that the Tiv nation came under the occupation of the Fulani jihadists under an emirate system or the Tiv people at any point in time or history paid tribute to the sultanate court in Sokoto or the Aku Uka court in Wukuri. Though extensive network of political and economic relations existed between the Tiv nation and her neighbours, this did not in any way, compromised the national sovereignty of the Tiv. Despite this unique advantage of been fiercely independent, the Tiv nation failed to consolidate on the gains of

nation building or empire building; they could not establish a centralized political structure to cover the vast geographical area from the River Loko up to the Adamawa Hills which the Tiv occupied. The British colonial system was to usher in a new era by the middle of the 19th century that turned the tables against the Tiv nation and favoured the Fulani and Jukun empire builders.

The colonial administration began by the 1860s with explorations on the River Benue by William Blaike. This led to the establishment of a trading outpost on the banks of Rivers Benue and Katsina Ala. The European trading stations such as Makurdi, Abinsi, Katsina Ala, Ibi, Wukari etcetera became centres of British economic articulation and expansion into the hinterlands of Tiv land. By 1886, after the Berlin Conference on Africa, the entire Tiv nation partitioned into northern Nigeria came under the company rule of the Royal Niger Company headed by the colonialist Lord Lugard. At first the headquarters of the northern region was in Lokoja, but was relocated to Kaduna after the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorate in 1914.

By 1906, the Tiv nation came face to face with an external aggression led by the European trading companies. Specifically was the laying of the telegraph line from Lokoja to Kaduna which trespass the territory and sovereignty of the Tiv nation. Understand that the scramble and partition of Africa did not sort the consent of African states and kingdoms. European claims for territory or nations in Africa were arbitrary, often alluding to some fake signatories with local African chiefs. The colonial masters exercise their absolute decision to place the Tiv

nation under the control of the northern protectorate. The Tiv reaction to the telegraph incursion was to align with their Jukun neighbours to attack the company stores of the Royal Niger Company at Abinsi. It took several months for Lugard to prepare for a massive invasion of the Tiv nation. Between 1906 and 1920, British punitive expeditions were carried out against the Tiv leading to the total subjugation of the Tiv to the British Empire.

In the Richards Constitution of 1946 and the McPherson Constitution of 1951, the Tiv nation came under the control of the northern regional government which was led by the Fulani political class. By this, British colonialism under the “Indirect Rule” deployed as a major “Game Changer;” dislocated Tiv nation and brought subjugated it under the Fulani political aristocrats of the Sokoto Caliphate. As a matter of fact, the definition of the northern Nigeria, which the Tiv nation became an integral part was interpreted as the metamorphosis of the Sokoto Caliphate. What the Fulani jihadists were unable to achieve was eventually made possible by the British colonial lords through the institutionalization of the Fulani political control of the Tiv nation under the auspices of the northern region framework. In other words, the political structure of the northern region provided a vintage point for the Fulani aristocrats of the Sokoto Caliphate, together with the colonial masters to become the head, exercising political control over the minority ethnic groups in the Benue valley. This marked the beginning of the conflict between the Tiv nation and her external neighbours led by the Fulani aggressors.

The British colonial policies exacerbated or fueled up conflicts and tensions between the Tiv nation and external forces. The British relied on the Hermetic Hypothesis; the idea that centralized political structures established by the Fairer Skin races was far more superior to those established by the Dark Skin races. In all ramifications both colonial administrators and anthropologists upheld this idea of skin discrimination.

During the initial years of British colonialism, the system established the Munchi Province with headquarters at Abinsi in 1921 but later reversed the policy to Makurdi Province in 1926 with headquarters in Makurdi. Under these provinces, the colonialists relying on the idea of colonial anthropologists like Palmer and Webster decided to impose a “Ring Fence” policy which restricted the migration of Tiv people into Wukari, Ibi, Takum, Awe, Obi and Lafia. This was to curb the Tiv expansion and growth in the Northern Native Authority as it were. This move was held to by the Alago and Jukun people perceptively that the Tiv were after all, stranger-settlers in the above mentioned settlements. By the end of the colonial era (1959), leading to the independence of the country in 1960, the seed of future conflicts and escalation of hostility were deeply sown in two structural foundations:

1. The state institutionalization of the Fulani political control of northern Nigeria became the framework or political structure that all through the 1st Republic, (1960-1965), the Fulani political class exploited the coercive instruments as well as state institutions which geared up the conquest occupation of the Tiv nation.

2. The concept of the 'stranger-settler' phenomenon became more pronounced against the Tiv people as from 1967 with the advent of state creation. This is most especially in the states creation of 1976 and that of 1991 in which the Tiv population in north central states outside Benue are often regarded as STRANGERS AND SETTLERS, thus victims of persecution, ethnic cleansing and pogrom led by external forces like Jukun, Alago and Fulani.

As far back as 1946, with the creation of the Richard constitution, three regional structures emerged in Nigerian politics; the tripartite system. These regions were: the northern, western and eastern regions. In the northern region, the definition framework was refer to as the Fulani/Hausa as the predominant ethnic groups that control political power. This definition of the Hausa/Fulani in terms of who controls political and economic resources had far reaching impact and implication on minority politics in the north. This implies that ethnic minorities like Tiv were subsumed under the political control of the Fulani ruling class. In addition, the state structures and frameworks gave legitimacy to the traditional structure of the Sokoto Caliphate to emerge as New Colonial Masters of minorities under the northern region.

In the 1920s, the northern regional government began the implementation of the idea of nomadic education to encourage and promote the spread and expansion nomads across the region particularly in the Benue Valley where the Fulani had not hitherto occupied any territory. According to statistics, the government of the region at that time voted 20 million pounds to help facilitate the establishment of nomadic settlements,

schools and clinics across the northern region. The regional government also carved out cattle colonies referred to as Zango Kataf as Grazing Reserve Areas for Fulani cattle nomads. These were deliberate state policies that gave legitimate backing to the Fulani expansion occupation of the Benue Valley as well as areas like Kaduna, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa and Niger.

Other state structures that institutionalized the “fulanization” of the north were the creation of the Sharia Courts and the emirate system which exercise both legal and political control over the region. Even the Police Penal Code of the northern region was crafted against the backdrop of Islamic values and did not in any way accommodate the cultural values of minority groups. It is against this premise that we can understand and appreciate minority struggles in northern Nigeria, particularly that of the Tiv nation against the threats of colonization by the Sokoto caliphate.

As of 1946 up to 1956, political parties were formed in the north which represented the ideological values of specific ethnic groups. The Northern Peoples’ Congress (NPC) led by Sir Ahmadu Bello represented the interest of the Arewa group who stood in defence of the ruling status quo in the Fulani aristocratic north. The Northern Element People’s Party (NEPU) led by Sir Aminu Kano stood for the liberation and emancipation of all the “talakawas” of the region who suffered the oppression of the Sokoto aristocrats. The United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) led by JS Tarka stood for the emancipation of all the minority groups of the Middle Belt. From the formation and ideological thrusts of the political parties, it was right that the minority groups craved for emancipation and freedom

from the dominant north orchestrated by the Fulani ruling class. The new colonial masters that had emerged; the Sokoto caliphate just as the British colonial masters were in full control of the coercive instruments of the state and were quite prepared to use state might against minority ethnic groups who were in defence of their identity.

From the foregoing, the Tiv Riots of 1960-65 can best be understood. The Tiv Riots were protest movements interpreted from different angles by different groups to the Tiv nation under the leadership of JS Tarkaa. These were Identity Protest Movements against state institutionalized policies of the northern regional government led by the Fulani to occupy and control both political and economic resources of the Tiv nation. In modern history, this was the first protest movement of the Tiv nation against external forces like the Fulani ruling class. This protest has been a constant theme in the political history of Nigeria that in recent times has manifested in the struggle of the Tiv nation to preserve its land from siege by Fulani herders.

In 1967 under General Yakubu Gowon, the creation of state structures came into existence. In that year, Benue/Plateau was carved out of the northern region Native Authority with a large population of the Tiv under the state. Under General Murtala Mohammed in 1976, the 19 states structure was created with Benue state finally carved from Benue/Plateau. General Ibrahim Babangida created more states with Kogi separated from Benue state in 1991. This was followed up with the states creation of General Sani Abacha giving rise to the 36 states structure at present.

The creation of states in all dimensions was to resolve the problem of minority ethnic groups; quell the fear of domination by the majority ethnic groups; give a sense of identity within the Nigerian federation. True federalism in all ramifications was to allow state structures some level of relative autonomy; for minority groups to have a sense of belonging within the Nigerian nation in terms of the share of political and economic resources as well as enable these minorities chart a sense of freedom to determine the outcome of their decisions under the federal system. As sound as the idea is, true federalism in Nigeria has remain a theoretical issue on paper. In practical reality, the centre at Abuja exercise total control over states and minority groups. There is over concentration of resources at the centre at the detriment of the survival of states. The federal state has always come under the control of Fulani ruling class who has further institutionalized the *fulanization* of the north by using divisive politics that pitches minority groups against each other. For instance, the General Babangida era, the National Nomadic Commission was established just under president Buhari when the idea of Rural Grazing Areas (RUGA) has been conceptualized by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture. These are all attempts at institutionalized Fulani control of the Nigerian state, particularly, the control of land of ethnic minorities to create Fulani settlements across the country. Under the Gen. Babangida regime, the Nigerian military was viciously politicized and ethnicized. This reflected in the creation of states and local governments. The regime used divisive politics that fuelled inter-ethnic crisis and conflicts, mostly in north central Nigeria. The conflicts between Tiv and Jukun, Tiv and Alago

from 1991 to 2003 were fuelled by the increased politicization of the north central region by external forces sponsored by the Fulani ruling class.

In the conflicts between Tiv and Jukun, Tiv and Alago in the states of Taraba and Nassarawa at surface were the struggles for the control of economic resources like land. But fundamentally, the conflicts were a manifestation of the religious and ethnic ideological struggle by groups in northern Nigeria, to assert identity and control over other groups. There is no doubt; the expansion of Tiv population in central Nigeria is of political significance to other minority groups like the Jukun and Alago as to who controls political power. We acknowledged the fact that the fear of domination in whatever sense is at the centre of the struggle and conflict between the Tiv nation and her neighbours. We cannot totally rule out the structural definition of the north which dates back to the colonial era. The ideological war led by the Fulani elite groups has been the major factor for these ethnic conflicts. For instance, despite the reasonable population of Tiv in Taraba and Nassarawa states, no leader from the far north thought it wise to create at least two states for the Tiv people considering their numerical strength. It is rather contradictory that the Tiv do not have a state that is ethnically Tiv. The Idoma, Tiv neighbours in Benue by numerical strength are ripe for a state of their own as well as the Igede people. Compare the number of the Fulani with the states they control in the north due to the regional ideological politics that has been conceived overtime.

Tiv Nation: The Enemy Within

We earlier on pointed that the interplay of political forces between the power blocks in Tiv society; the isolated and segmented political and economic structures of the Tiv people remains one of the “Strongest Weaknesses” of the Tiv nation in combating external aggressions and threats in the post independence era.

As earlier as the 1st Republic, inter-clan politics divided the efforts of JS Tarkaa to sustain a struggle against the Fulani hegemonic control of the Tiv nation. J.S Tarkaa from the JEMGBAH axis of Benue had followers; the young pioneers; the militant arm of the UMBC largely recruited from the JEMGBAH and the JECHIRA power blocks of Tiv. The other power blocks like SANKERA and MINDA pitched their forces and support to the NPC. This explains why the Sadauna’s ministerial appointees from Tiv were people like Takeru Oradi, and Lushakyaa Anja of SANKERA and MINDA respectively. The Tiv nation was divided into two in the Tiv Riots of 1962-1965. The division was along clannish lines that watered down the ideological struggle led by J.S Tarkaa. This also narrowed down the role of Tarkaa as a Tiv hero to a leader of sectional (JEMGBAH) politics.

Under the Gawon regime (1967-1975), several Tiv sons were appointed into the federal and states cabinets: J.S Tarkaa was Minister for Communication, Wanteregh Paul Unongo- Secretary to the Benue/Plateau government and Aper Aku in the Federal Civil Service. Gen. Gawon, himself a minority had good intentions for promoting the minority group identity in the Nigerian politics. It is appalling to reveal that what led to the collapse of J.S Tarkaa from national politics which grossly affected his

chances in the 1979 Presidential primary election was the handiwork of a fellow Tiv. This inter-clan politics of the Tiv inspired Godwin Daboh of the JECHIRA axis who was also the Secretary to J.S Tarkaa to forward a worded petition against his principal to the Gawon led Government. In modern political history, this marked the beginning of treachery and conspiracy by Tiv political elites against aspiring Tiv politicians at the national level. The Daboh saga was first in the series of negative signals from the Tiv to their external enemies, that the Tiv people are bereft of or lack unity; a collective identity and common interest in national politics. It also sent out or advertized the weakness of the Tiv political elites to internally resolve differences, respect a single political authority and bargain with other groups as to how the Tiv nation could achieve greatness in Nigeria.

The Godwin Daboh attack against J.S Tarkaa marked a turning point on how external groups, particularly the Fulani, Jukun Alago and Hausa mirrored the image of the Tiv nation. This has several repercussions among which were the conclusion that: Tiv people have no regard for their leaders; they could easily betray one of their own; the Tiv nation lacks a centralized leadership command structure that could defend the Tiv as well as resolve intra conflicts among the competing clans and the political actors of the Tiv nation. Throughout the investigation of Daboh's petition, both J.S Tarkaa and General Gawon were appalled that it was a Tiv elite that slammed a petition against later.

The Tiv Riots of 1960-1965 opened up the Tiv nation to external ridicule from her neighbours in northern Nigeria. Whatever the

justification of the grievances for the riots, the Tiv nation exposed their weaknesses to these external neighbours. These neighbours found it strange and abnormal that Tiv people could kill their kings and chiefs in cold blood in the open with total disregard to the institution of the Tor Tiv in Gboko. The Fulani, Hausa and Jukun on the contrary hold their traditional institutions to a very high esteem. For the Tiv, the traditional and political institutions are held in contempt and disdain. This attribute gave rise to the conception of the external neighbours that the Tiv nation and easily be “divided and rule” despite its numerical strength and population advantage.

The Tiv Riots also exposed the vulnerability of the Tiv political elites that no single Tiv political leader could exert control over the entire Tiv nation. Tiv political elites like Takeru Oradi and Lushakyya Anja were Cabinet Ministers in the Sadaunna’s administration had no strong support, loyalty and solidarity from their Tiv subjects. J.S Tarkaa despite his legendary commanded no respect from his Tiv people. Unfortunately, each of these political elites emerged as a factional leader controlling particular clans of the Tiv nation. This was the beginning of the Tiv crisis with external neighbours who viewed the people as basically porous; lacking cohesion and political unity. Fulani, Hausa and Jukun held their political elites in high regards and submit total loyalty as it were for the affairs of their nations.

In the 2nd Republic (1979-1983), the Tiv nation witnessed the most divisive politics orchestrated by her political her political elites who were not interested in the well being and development of the Tiv nation. J.S

Tarkaa led the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and switched total loyalty to the Fulani ruling oligarchy which he had resisted in the 1st Republic. The Nigerian People's Party (NPP) was led by Wanteregh Paul Unongu, a radical ideologist who opposed the Fulani political domination of the Tiv nation. To several pundits, J.S Tarkaa had ideologically betrayed the Tiv nation by joining forces with the Fulani Northern agenda; that caused the wars and riots that destroyed the entire Tiv nation in the 1st Republic. J.S Tarkaa who defended the Tiv and the other minority groups in central Nigeria beat a retreat and became part of the Fulani oligarchy. In political terms ideologically, this represented a state of confusion in the Tin nation on how best to align with the northern political agenda. To compound the challenge, J.S Tarkaa lost out in the bid to become the presidential candidate of his NPN as well as the Senate Presidency. Although President Shehu Shagari rewarded the Tiv nation with three ministerial slots, but Tarkaa lost out to provide a dominant political authority in Tiv politics.

Consequently, J.S Tarka passed on in 1981 and left a vacuum for Tiv political elites to battle out in the scramble for who his replacement could be. With this, Tiv politics was reduced into a theatre of war between the group of Governor Aper Aku and that of Wanteregh Paul Unongu. Unongu mobilized everything to vanquish the NPN led government in Benue State, including, sometimes perhaps reasonably, outright disrespect for the Tiv traditional Council. Petitions were high with litigations between Tiv political actors with total disregard as to the impact of such litigations and petitions on the image of the Tiv nation. At the end of the Republic by 1983, it became crystal clear that Tiv political elites had no

single or unified national agenda; a sense of national unity and purpose to guide their political activities and actions.

The protracted military rule that began in 1985 to 1992, 1993 to 1998 were years that witnessed a sharp decline of the Tiv nation in providing leadership at the national level that could lead to the transformation of the Tiv nation. The General Ibrahim Babangida's era witnessed the worse politicization of the Nigerian military along ethnic and religious lines. This scenario was compounded by several coups and counter coups in which Tiv military officers like Major Gideon Orkaa and Mike Orshe led several "military putche" to oust Gen. Babangida. The boomerang and multiplier effect was that the Babangida era began a deliberate movement to decimate the Tiv nation through the use of external neighbours in northern Nigeria. It was this administration that created more local governments for the Idoma speaking people to reduce or weaken the dominance of the Tiv in Benue State. Same, Babangida's administration excised the Igala out of Benue State to then new Kogi State. The aim was to give the Idoma people more room to compete with the Tiv people in the distribution of resources in spite of their weak numerical strength. It was in the same Babangida's era that there was a massive pogrom against Tiv in places like Wukari, Takum, Keana, Awe, Obi, Lafia and Doma areas of Taraba and present day Nasarrawa states by the Jukun and Alago militias. IBB also deposed Iorchia Ayu as President of the Nigerian Senate and replaced him with an Idoma, Senator Ameh Ebute.

Although General Sani Abacha (1993-1998) had a favourable disposition towards the Tiv nation, his attempts at repositioning the Tiv

nation for good were reversed in the era of Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007). Obasanjo exploited the internal divisive politics in Tiv society along clannish lines. He relegated the Tiv nation to the backwaters of national development. For instance, the sacking of Chief Barnabas Gemade as national chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and his replacement by Chief Audu Ogbeh (Idoma) was one such move against the Tiv. Whatever were the lots of the Tiv man became the gains of his external neighbor(s). The removal of General Victor Malu as Chief of Army Staff was another case in reference. The Tiv political elite began a retreat at the national level and Tiv nation began this gradual shrinking in size and image in the national scheme of things.

George Akume who was Benue State Governor between 1999 and 2007 revived the worst vestiges of inter-clan politics in Tiv society that has not only affected the development of Benue State but also the Tiv nation on managing external conflicts. Gov. Akume pioneered efforts at establishing the JEMGBAH National Secretariat with Iorchia Ayu as leader of JEMGBAH National Movement. In doing so, Gov. Akume reduced himself from been the governor of Benue State to the leader of a particular Tiv clan (JEMGBAH). Development of Benue state (if any) was narrowed down to this clan in both the areas of human resource management and political appointments. This also affected the response of Tiv nation to external attacks from neighbours like Fulani and Jukun. In Akume's era, the Tiv segment of SANKERA and Ihyarev from Ichongo Akem suffered attacks from Jukun and Fulani, the response from the Tiv nation was clannish and not wholistic, leaving the victims to address their

challenges. Although in the Zaki Biam and Gbeji massacre of 2003, Gov. Akume responded though late to deal with the Jukun invasion of the Ukum axis of SANKERA. As a matter of fact, it took the legislative efforts of Gabriel Suswam, then a member of the House of Representatives to condemn the Obasanjo military invasion of Tiv nation. The Tiv political elites as always were divided in the strategic response to the conflict.

One important development that took place in the Akume/Suswam eras was the proliferation of small scale and light scale weapons in the hands of clannish and ethnic militias of the Tiv nation. The militias were the principal vehicle through which the political ruling class capture state power and checkmate their opponents. The militia existed mostly for political reasons but out powered the control of their masters or benefactors. These militias of Fulani, Jukun, Alago and even Tiv have constituted adventurous fortune seeking groups, often in search of territories where they can carve out economic empires and control of wealth. These militias are not necessarily out for ethnic cleansing, but just as mercenaries, they have their ulterior motifs to amass wealth and fortune. The inability of their sponsors to control their activities (odd jobs) is responsible for several of the external conflicts between Tiv nation and its neighbours. External conflicts are often fueled by the selfish interest of these militias be they Fulani, Jukun, Alago and Tiv who (as stated earlier) are sometimes not under the control of any political structure or personalities. Sometimes, the militias turn their aggression against their own people like the case of cattle rustling in the far north and communal clashes in the north central Nigeria. Political leadership in Tiv society has

paid little attention on how to manage youth restiveness through by the creation of wealth through jobs. There are two economic sectors in Benue State: agriculture and commercial trade. Statistics shows that the Tiv people are predominantly agrarian farmers while the commercial sector is dominated by national migrants.

The challenge of Tiv nation since 1976 is how to make the youths take up to farming occupation wise and break the monopoly in the commercial sector national migrants like the Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. As a matter of fact, the Tiv people largely depend on salary and political appointees for survival which has induced the culture of “begging and gangsterism” by youths. This remains one big challenge of conflict in the nation which also fuels external crisis. In other words, these massive unemployed youths are easy canon folder; ready to be exploited by both the internal and external forces in the outbreak of hostility. To compound the challenge of youth development and empowerment, there has been a massive rural urban drift of youthful population. This is caused by the progressive years of the deliberate neglect of rural development by successive administrations in Benue State.

Statistically, the Local Government Bureau places the unemployment rate as high as 40% with over 70% of youths living below the poverty line. There is massive turnout of youth graduates from schools without corresponding jobs. The records show that the combination of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education on a yearly basis turn out over a hundred thousand graduates into the labour market. The Benue State challenge and Tiv land in particular is how to put in place programmes that

would enable youths participate in farming and take to commercial enterprise. There are cultural challenges that have compounded the restiveness in youths such as the poor attitudes to work; to embrace work and enterprise as a religion; to take artisanship and shop keeping as step going forward. There is therefore the need for cultural orientation for the youths to embrace hard work through viable enterprises as a means to success.

External Threats and Security Implications on the Tiv Nation

We have already seen in our discussion that there are several external threats against the Tiv nation from herdsmen invasion of Tiv land, the Jukun and Alago militia genocide of Tiv populations in Central Nigeria, together with network of loosed ethnic militias working within the Tiv nation and sponsored by external forces. The fundamental threats to the Tiv nation is to shrink in size both the territory and population that the Tiv nation exercise control and domination in the pre-colonial era. These are systematic attacks organized from the centre of Nigeria to possibly obliterate or decimate Tiv population, dislocate her economy and impoverish the nation within the Nigerian context.

The Fulani herdsmen militia according to the United Nations rating of terrorist groups is the fourth most deadly terrorist group in the world. The herdsmen militia is a combination of several pastoral groups such as the Berbers, Tuaregs, Arabs and Fulani etc. After the collapse of the Mahmud Ghadafi regime in Libya, these nomadic terrorist groups supported by large scale ammunitions began a systematic expansion across West Africa known as the West African Islamic Movement. In West

African countries like Mali, Niger and Chad; these nomadic terrorist groups have succeeded in displacing mass sedentary population. There has also been land grabbing of the farmlands of these sedentary populations across West Africa. They share a network with Boko-Haram movement with a common objective to establish an Islamic State in West Africa under the control of the Fulani Caliphate system.

The Fulani herdsmen militia under the umbrella of Miyetti Allah have been working for over thirty (30) years since the 1980s by putting financial resources together, build up arms and train her militia men using state military apparatus in Nigeria to make effective “fulanization” of the country. In almost every military barracks across the country, these militias who have the backing of Commanders are sympathetic or cohorts to the Fulani expansionism in Nigeria. At several military depots in the country, Fulani insurgents receive military training and are equipped with basic weapons to carry out herdsmen agenda across the country.

In 2015, the Fulani herdsmen terrorists found an outlet in President Muhammadu Buhari, the life patron of Miyetti Allah to begin a forceful occupation of states across central Nigeria, particularly those of the Tiv people. This Fulani herdsmen (better organized in military and financial resources and backed up by the federal state) began a systematic wiping out of Tiv population in Nassarawa, Taraba and Benue states with effective occupation of Tiv homeland.

The security implication for the Tiv nation has been multi-faceted or multi dimensional in nature and character. The greatest threat to security was human security; thousands of Tiv populations are displaced and

thousands of lives lost in the herdsmen invasion. Statistically, from 2015 to 2017 when the Anti Open Grazing Law... was accentuated by the Ortom administration in Benue state, not less than five thousand (5,000) people were killed and over three hundred (300,000) people displaced by this invasion. In practical terms, the Tiv local government speaking areas of Ukum, Logo, Buruku, Gwer West, Guma, Makurdi and Kwande came under attack of the herdsmen militias. In these areas, internally displaced people's camps are established to cater and support the thousands of "refugees" displaced by herdsmen. The humanitarian disaster arising from the conflict has been beyond the financial resources of the Benue State government. According to statistics, the government of Benue State will require not less than 50 billion naira to resettle the "refugees" in their homelands; embark on reconstruction of houses and farmlands as well as settle the victims of the genocide.

Also, one of the most profound security implications of the herdsmen invasion is the near collapse of the farming economy as well as the collapse of rural infrastructure. Statistics indicates that the destruction of farmlands, schools, hospitals and churches amounts to about 20 billion naira. This reality is also well beyond what the Benue state government can provide. The Federal Government led by President Buhari has been able to donate about 10 billion naira for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the "refugees" across central Nigeria. The Federal Government also stepped up security by the dispatch of several military operations across central Nigeria to flush out the herdsmen militias.

Despite these laudable efforts of the Buhari administration, the multiplier security effects of the herdsmen invasion lingers.

The Jukun and Alago militias as far back as the 1990s in network with military officers of these ethnicities put in place a strategic agenda supported by the Fulani ruling class to displace Tiv populations in Nassarawa and Taraba states. The strategic direction of the Jukun and Alago militias is to among many things curtail Tiv domination of the politics of these respective states; reduced Tiv to a severed population depending on a “recycled version of slavery” known as the “tenant slavery and the share crop holder slavery.” Furthermore, the objective of the Jukun and Alago militias is to make the Tiv nation lose out on the gains of empire building in the pre-colonial era. The idea is to shrink the size of the Tiv nation by pushing them back to a small compressed territory call Benue State.

The security implication of the Jukun and Alago militia attacks on the Tiv nation is also multidimensional and multi-facets, just like that of the Fulani herdsmen militia. We can sum up the security implications thus:

1. The displacement of Tiv population as well as the dislocation of their economic base. This is intended to reduce the Tiv people to abject poverty and make them continual slaves (land tenant slavery) to the Jukun and Alago tribes. The practice of land tenant slavery whereby the Tiv populations in Nassarawa and Taraba states live on land tenant slavery is already on. This means that despite the numerical strength of the Tiv people as well as their hard work on the farms, the Tiv should be subjugated to the Jukun, Alago and even the Fulani dictates.

2. Another security implication is that the Tiv people in both Nassarawa and Taraba states have continued to suffer a sense of social identification through the lost of several towns and settlements that were named after Tiv people. There is a gradual obliteration of the Tiv identity across the central states.
3. The Tiv nation is living in a psychological state much closer to that of a holocaust where Tiv people have fast become the endangered species in central Nigeria; Tiv is hunted and has become objects of hate crimes by these tribes (Jukun and Alago). This raises the fundamental question of Tiv homeland- Where is the Tiv homeland in contemporary Nigeria?

We also observed that intra clan conflicts in Tiv society are fuelled by external forces and sometimes in network as accomplishes to these external forces. The breakdown of Tiv into clannish politics defined by primordial sentiments has further ignited and compounded the intra clan politics in Tiv society. In addition, the power play between the rulings houses in Tiv land, often manipulated by the ruling elites have further compounded the challenge of insecurity of the Tiv nation. We earlier on observed that Tiv political elites are clannish leaders who explore the power base of their political climes (JEMGBAH, JECHIRA, SANKERA, MINDA and KWANDE) to hold onto power and retain political relevance at all cost. The power struggle by the Tiv political elites has led to the many communal feuds within the Tiv nation especially in the MINDA and SANKERA areas.

The communal feuds have also far reaching security implications, basically the collapse of law and order in the rural areas. Local militia

groups under this clannish design have carved out certain territories in the rural areas which have become war zones prone to kidnapping, killings, violence, gangsterism etc.

In the urban centres, ganster related violence is fuelled by cult groups sponsored and controlled by politicians. The cult groups are often vulnerable largely arising from the abject poverty among youths. This has giving rise to criminal related activities such as assassinations, kidnapping, rape and robbery. The basic threat is that the urban political and social elites have been reduced to live in state of fear and depression. This has also led to extreme individualism and the breakdown of the general sense of trust and group solidarity.

Conclusion

The basic challenge of the Tiv nation as regards the tackling or combat of external threats mostly that of Fulani (herdsmen), Jukun and Alago militias require some of the following measures:

1. A combination of kinship ties that galvanizes all Tiv clans in a common solidarity with a common national agenda. There is a need for a Pan Tiv movement and solidarity that would transcend the clannish and sectional differences of the Tiv nation. This Pan Tiv movement will mobilize all Tiv resources both at home and in the Diaspora; irrespective of where a Tiv person is found; for common national and global stand.
2. There is need to resuscitate our traditional political institutions; make them credible and relevant to provide a common platform and pull of resources for the development of the Tiv nation; a traditional shadow government

that can resolve the conflict interest of Tiv political elite; irrespective of political divides and religious inclinations.

3. There is need for Tiv nation to provide for a diplomatic platform that would enable it engage external neighbours (Fulani, Jukun and Alago) on how best to foster unity and promote development for the good of all. I suggest that every state in north central Nigeria and the Federal Government should establish a Bureau for Ethnic and Religious Relations, just as in the United States of America where there is a Bureau for Race Relations. There is need for an institution that can help manage ethnic and religious relations in Nigeria. This will go a long way in check-mating issues relating to communal or external aggressions.
4. Governance in Benue State must be focused on how to develop the state in line with global best practices. We must demystify public political offices and make both elective and appointive officers accountable to the people.
5. There must be conscious efforts to diversify our economy; make rural areas more developed through the provision of basic infrastructure. And, the promotion of rural agriculture through agric incentives and loans. This will curb communal feuds and rescue of prevent the rural urban migration drift. In addition, there is need to develop the private sector, particularly the commercial economy; to play a leading role in development and jobs creation. This will reduce the overdependence on white collar jobs which is the bane in Tiv society.

CHAPTER SIX

TIV SURVIVAL IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA: THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CHURCH

Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Chris I. Utov

Introduction

It will not be out of place to highlight or outline the significance of this event to the Tiv as a people and as a nation. It follows that Benue State as it is today called the food basket of the nation derived that recognition from the notable production of food, especially yam. You will all agree with me that day in day out, hundreds of lorry loads of yams are being ferried from Tiv land to other parts of the country. This means that Yam is one of the identities of the Benue people, and particularly the Tiv people.

We can remember the value and importance of the Green Snake (Ik yarern) to the Tiv people, because of this, this creature assumed a sacred status to the Tiv people. Among the significance of this event are the following;

- Yam is an attribute of Tiv culture.
- Yam is connected to Tiv people by value and nature.

For these reasons, it is not a thing of debate to suggest that the celebration of the feast is important to the Tiv people.

Benefits of the Feast of New Yam

The celebration of the feast of new yam has enormous benefits to the Tiv people. The benefits of this *Iniongo I Iyou Mbi Hev* could be highlighted as follows:

- ❖ To teach and preserve our culture as a Tiv people.
- ❖ It will bring the Tiv people together to x-ray our past, Present and plan for the future.
- ❖ Keep our culture alive for our children to see. Encourage the sustenance of our Tiv heritage.
- ❖ Solve and reconcile existing disputes and conflicts among the Tiv people.
- ❖ Create an opportunity to meet loved ones.
- ❖ Letting the world know that the Tiv people have a tradition.
- ❖ Develop strong *spirit* of unity.
- ❖ Enable us create a forum where the *Tiv* people can come together to discuss *issues* that affect the Tiv nation, including economic, social and political problems.

Man and Society

Fundamental to the social teachings of the church *is* her position on the dignity of man and the function of *society*. Man's dignity springs from his nature as a child of God, created "with immortal soul, because man has reason and free *will*, he *is* a subject of both rights and duties. Christian doctrine goes beyond this natural law concept of human dignity.

The Rights of Man

From this dignity flows the basic right of man. First of these *is* the right to life itself. One must respect the life and integrity of another. It is wrong to *kill*, to maim or in any serious way diminish the life of another person in pursuit of power, Position and influence. The sacredness of human life has been acknowledged throughout history. Living is not mere survival. Man's right to live means that he should be able to live as befits a human being. Is this the situation in Tivland today?

The Church and Poverty

There is a paradox in the Christian teaching on poverty. Our lord called the poor blessed, yet he praised highly those who helped the hungry, the homeless, and the unclothed. St Paul said that God has chosen "the things that are not, to bring to naught the things that are; lest any flesh should pride itself before him (1Cor 1.29).

The church has endorsed poverty by demanding it from those who enter the religious life under solemn vows. These give up the right to use and dispose of worldly goods. They do this, not because the world that God made is evil, but in order to cut their ties with all that might turn their gaze from God and lead them to concentrate on the passing and corruptible. You will realize from the above that man's desire for affluence and material things gives rise to the practice of rigging elections to get the positions that will guarantee these perishable desires. We must try to change that ugly reality and allow honest choices of leaders to lead us, and then we judge them from their performances.

The Tiv Application

Through careful study, it is possible to comprehend some of the very complicated links between the changes in the economic bases and changes in the rest of superstructure of the society including the sphere of ideology and social beliefs.

The Tiv nature is almost if not the same with the Chinese people. But from the above, while the Chinese people were progressing both quantitatively and qualitatively, the Tiv people are rather becoming helpless. They have refused to specialize, to transform and sustain. Benue Cement Company which once used to be the pride of Tiv people has been sold out instead of being managed by the Tiv for the Tiv people. Our agricultural products are being shipped out day in day out, processed and resold back to us at neck-breaking prices, yet we remain undeterred to our continuous disadvantage. Can we borrow a leaf from the Chinese people?

Causes of Conflicts in Tiv land

Several theories have been used to explain the causes of conflict. The first involve four factors that appear repeatedly as prominent causes of conflict; insecurity, inequality, private incentives and perceptions (Gardner, 2002). These factors often work in tandem. Economic inequality may exacerbate security concerns, and perceptions fuel incentives to initiate or support conflict.

The second involves two factors that interact with each other across time; structural causes and mobilizing factors more directly precipitate the outbreak of conflicts. Structural factors are the deeply-rooted, underlying causes of conflict that may not always develop into violence. Mobilizing factors are more immediate to the conflict and often involve the actions of

elites or masses. In Tiv land, elites have and continued to play a central role in fuelling conflicts. They are often motivated by opportunities for private accumulation and shared ethnic Clannish ties and discrimination, primarily for their own achievement of power, i.e. the Tiv/Jukun Crises, Ipav /Ukan communal clashes.

In some cases, ethnicity and ideology have been used as instruments by leaders to pursue political goals. Those who choose to follow leaders may have direct incentives for economic or other benefits if they are widely distributed. Leaders become less important in the path to conflict when the potential advantages will be directly conferred on group members; conversely, followers are most likely to support elites when they lack alternative sources of income. Additionally, others who profit from conflict (e.g. business opportunists or criminals) may prefer continued conflicts to resolution, thus creating obstacles to or spoiling settlement. Prevention of resolution of conflict must address private incentives of leaders and followers in order to be effective, as well as remove potential spoilers from the equation.

The causes of conflicts in Tiv land are complex, and therefore require a strategy that recognizes this complexity. The strategies and policies to manage such conflicts must of necessity be multi-pronged. This work therefore proposes the following ways of managing conflicts and sustaining peace in Tivland;

1. Adopt and adapt relevant PD (preventive Diplomacy) instruments and apply them in resolving intra- Tiv conflicts. This also entails a deliberate public policy of building the capacity of law enforcement agents to

perform their constitutional duties and effectively tackling the systematic causes of conflicts such as poverty, under- development, proliferation of arms, and denial of human rights within Tivland.

2. Use of "non coercive" or problem solving approaches that rely on the rule of law and negotiation in Tivland.
3. Improve methods of gathering information about impending crises and develop better early warning indicators of crises within Tivland.
4. Provide positive economic, political and security incentives and inducement to key actors to prevent armed conflict and to encourage cooperation between and among combatants. The government must revisit land reform and land distribution in Tivland.
5. Enhance the capacity of public offices to govern and ensure stability and harmony in Tivland.
6. Involve the faith-based community such as churches and mosques and other social organizations as active participants in conflict resolution. For example, the Roman Catholic Church, and Anglican have established the department of conflict resolution and are working actively to ameliorate internal conflict in Tivland. Revive the traditional means of resolving conflict in Tivland. The Tiv people value tradition; therefore, the role of traditional rulers and community leaders should be encouraged and enhanced to assist in resolving conflicts.

Recommendations

If this *Iniongo I Jyou Mbi Hev*, would be well celebrated, it should take a whole week so that papers can be presented by Tiv scholars

on the Tiv nation and discussions carried out on them, to 1110ve
Tivland forward.

Conclusion

I wish to pay glowing tributes to, all those who may have been quoted in this script, I have not prepared my discussion as debate, but as a worthy contribution to reconstructing and rebuilding the Tiv nation through the opportunity provided by thisIniongo.I pray that all stakeholders of our Tiv nation would realize the need and importance of our culture and seek to promote and preserve it. Thank you all.

REFERENCES

Unongo, Paul. (1969) *Where do we go from Here?* An open letter to the Tiv people of Benue Plateau State on Social conditions and Administrative Reorganization. Lagos; Megida Press. Gardner (2002)

.

CHAPTER SEVEN

POLITICS AND PUBLIC SERVICE: CHALLENGES OF THE TIV NATION IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

Terver Akpar

Introduction

For us to have a meaningful discussion, we need a concise clarification of certain key concepts. These are Politics and Public Service. We also need to understand that our discussion is done within the framework of the theory of Realism. The reason for this choice is quite clear. Realism as a theory underlines and bridges the gap between the theoretical world and social reality. It gives meaning to the character of nations and states, it defines their fundamental interests and the means for their realization, and it brings the motives of political actors into focus particularly given the all important influence of the environment within which they must function and prosper or die.

The discussion's choice of analytical framework is based on one assumption. Realism as a theoretical model is used to study the behaviour of states in the international system. It seeks a proper understanding of state behaviour in international politics. According to Gaylor (1970), in discussing the interests of nations and for us to fully grasp what is really at stake, we assume the same meaning in applying it to the interests of the Tiv nation in today's Nigeria. To do otherwise is perhaps one of the most fool-hardy mistakes that have befallen all descendants of the Tiv nation;

this is why this discussion is necessary at all.

One often discussed issue by people of my generation and that younger is the problem of the typical Tiv man who gets into power. By power in this context we mean a political or bureaucratic office that gives us the leverages of decision making and authority, that office gives its holder enormous potentials to effect change in other people's lives, positively or negatively. The question that our generation always asks is, why do Tiv people behave the way they do when they get into office? We will take up the thread of this discussion later.

Politics is a much maligned subject. Many people, majority of who are our Tiv brothers and sisters are part of this group. They misconstrue what politics is, preferring to paint it in distinctively negative colours. The sad and sombre truth however is that whatever the merits of vegetarianism, the mind of the Wolf cannot be changed. In other words, ignorance is a fatal and costly choice. As they say, it is ignorance that makes the rat to challenge the cat to a duel. Only history can be the judge, jury and judgment in that confrontation. Such a choice I believe is not befitting for a people who so bedazzled the Whiteman at their first and fateful encounter (Akiga, 2003) that even his racist excellence was forced to candidly confess the real quality of this adversary.

One of my favourite definitions of politics is that classic one by Harold Lasswell, which is 'who gets what, when and how?' For the purpose of this discussion, I think I would be even more graphically meaningful if we invert the first part of the definition. Meaning, who does not get what, when and how? This definition opens up certain realities that every man or

woman under the influence of politics must face.

It means someone is doing the deciding of who gets or does not get the what, when and how. There are beneficiaries as well as its victims. It applies in informal as well as formal contexts. I have a daughter whom members of my family, my wife inclusive always accuse me of favouring. The truth of the matter is that girl so thoroughly understands what I want that even my wife would need lessons from her. Above all, she is a carbon copy of me in attitude and values that were she not a girl I would have been proud of the achievement of cloning myself.

The point must be made here that the average Tiv man has this attitude of refusing to understand the logic of this definition that he always runs the risk of needless selfdestruction like that rat. Let me however make one clarification here. It *is* not in itself a negative character trait to be steadfastly true to what you stand for instead of pandering to every demand like a prostitute. The point I want us to grasp here is that everywhere, someone takes decisions that affect others. You must recognize this every time and everywhere. It is simply a war of existence of the species. This is perhaps why Mao Tse Tung defines politics as a war without bloodshed.

Dyke (1960: 134) sees politics as "a struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues." It is the activity (negotiation, argument, discussion" application of force, persuasion, etc) by which an issue *is* agitated or settled (Baker ed. 1962: 166). Webber thinks it means striving to share power or to influence the distribution of power among

individuals and groups within a state.

Politics is to be found wherever individuals and groups exist and interact. It is to be found in families, relationships between individuals and groups, in communities and at all levels. What that means therefore is that no one can hope to escape the pervasive impact of politics. In the game of politics, there can be no spectators, only victors and victims. The choice is that brutal. When the Portuguese conquerors or the Mexican Aztecs, Cortez attacked, the local lore rendered the people defenseless because a prophecy had proclaimed their coming as a return of the gods. Cortez mercilessly massacred these passive and defenseless people who for reasons of their own making became the victims of their own judgment. When our African brothers chose to sell their own brothers into slavery to the Whiteman, for mirrors, wines and the like they were invoking the consequences of a political decision that would affect them, their own communities and generations of the black race.

Public offices refer to a tenured appointment whether political or bureaucratic in the public arena which invests the holder with authority. In Nigeria, a very thin line divides political; and bureaucratic offices, particularly at the executive or managerial cadre levels. Appointments to the top bureaucratic positions are politically determined.

From our discussion so far, it *is* quite *obvious* that politics and public office are not only related but intertwined. This relationship itself has a history that is very significant, for the origin of our modern model of politics and environment can be traced to events in the not so distant past that have also shaped the evolution of the character of the

Tiv nation itself. The point of reference in question is the coming of the Whiteman.

The colonial intruder came with a well-defined but disguised mission. The confrontation between the Whiteman and our forebearers was harsh, deadly and all encompassing. It was a clash of two different worlds, two very different human beings, two different philosophies, two different world views. The battle was swift and brief and for us pragmatically lost. For the *Tiv* nation, this process was much more prolonged. There were no titanic battles, no famous battle-hardened generals, no huge armies.

The arch-republican *Tiv* exhibited neither political offices nor openly visible institutions of governance. The *Tiv* political system, sophisticated as it is, is simplified by the logic of checks and balances. Philosophically, the *Tiv*man did not see the Whiteman as his superior. He rather felt that the *Whiteman's ways* were a desecration of traditions and culture. He therefore not only disdained his civilization but refused to embrace it. Therein lays the origins of the problem of the public service of Nigeria.

As if in keeping with the sobering truth of his own proverb, which says "the cries of the Chicken will not prevent the sacrifice", the *Tiv*man failed to see the reality of the new world the Whiteman was building. To start with, it was now an entity of many other nationalities; the Whiteman had absolute control over the whole land, a new way of things was being evolved, a new world had emerged.

Makar (1981) records that when the Whiteman (explorer spies) had reached the Akoto settlement, he was told by the natives that their

neighbours, the Tiv (the rivarine Iharev) were cannibals. This disinformation would create an image problem for the Tiv. In fact, the nationalistic resilience of the Tiv in fighting the white intruder made him an enemy' of the new world being built. This fact has been passed onto the pliable surrogates of the Whiteman to whom he relinquished power in a new entity called Nigeria.

Let us return to the question we posed earlier, why do Tiv people behave the way they do when they get into public service? The average Tiv man in the public services? Particularly at the managerial cadre levels is supremely native. He believes that he is occupying the office by merit. In many cases, these are actually intelligent and talented people. What they often forget is that political decisions pave way for them to occupy those offices. In most cases too these are positions that need hardworking and talented people with a lot of loyalty. These are attributes normally identified with the average Tivman. Therefore the political logic of appointments into such offices is calculated to a realization of the interests of those who have the power to make such decisions.

Many Tiv people forget where they come from as soon as they get into office. You dare not speak Tiv to them in the office! They make sure there is no fellow Tivman around them; they refuse to relate with their peers preferring to associate with people from the lower rungs of society who will continue to worship them; they paint the average Tiv person in most dishonourable colours; they become a liability to the Tiv nation.

Tiv people have risen to Speaker, House of Representative,

Senate President, Chief of Army Staff, ministers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Justice of Nigeria; Auditor-General of Nigeria, Comptroller-General of Prisons, and Generals in the Nigerian Army *etcetera* what have been the tangible benefits of these appointments to the Tiv nation? Till date, the Tiv have always been Governor of Benue State and yet the Tiv nation ranks a poor second to the Idorna in recruitment into the Federal Services including the Army.

Today, I dare say that the only places open to the majority young Tiv boys is that of thuggery, pimping and the like for their brother Ogain power. Now the most annoying part of this problem is that these same people are in the habit of blaming others for their woes especially other Tiv. In quite a number of cases, this behavioural trait of treachery from your own home is true! The Tiv nation put in the eyes of *Atoatiev* is a real sell schizophrenic mess. What is responsible for this dysfunctional personality of the Tivman? How can a man whose house 'is already on fire or destroyed fight a war and win?

Forget the Past, Forfeit the Future

There is a favorite proverb that says a river which forgets its source will soon dry up. Nothing can be truer of the Tiv nation in Nigeria today than this timeless wisdom of our fathers. There was a time when our neighbours feared and dreaded us. This fear was well founded and arose from our behaviour in the past. That behaviour was the product of the cosmology of the Tiv.

Realism as a body of knowledge believes that every nation or state

has a personality and behaviour that is clearly discernable like that of an individual person. It believes for instance, that every nation has interests that it pursues. Some of these interests are so cardinal that it would rather forfeit everything in pursuing them. It is my belief that the European Philosophers who propounded theories of realism were describing the Tiv.

The world view of the Tiv of old is vintage realism. The world of the Tiv is divided into two; us and them (Tiv and Uke). Those *Ukethe* Tiv called *Atoatiev* or rustics or uncivilized. If you read through various historical records you will see the same world view among other people who have achieved greatness: the Greeks, the Romans, the Jews. It is not an accident that the Americans, the Japanese and lately the Chinese have the same world view: For how can you be worth anything if you don't have any self-belief? How can you aspire to any honour if you have no sense of honour yourself? Today, we have Tiv people living in Tivland whose children cannot speak their own language and they proudly tell you that their own children speak only English and not Tiv. Are such people really Tiv?

In the not too distant past, no one dared to touch a Tivman because it was well-known that his brother will join him in the fight to beat the opponent silly before finding out the cause of the fight. These days, the Tiv are the ones like the Jews are devising means of delivering their own brothers and sisters to enemies who in many cases target to cynically eliminate Tiv as threat. Why have we got it so wrong? It has gotten so ridiculous that for instance, a Tiv girl will tell her Uke boyfriend why

she hates and will not befriend her own Tiv boy!

The sober truth is that like the river that forgets its source, the well spring of wisdom of the Tiv has dried up because we have not forsaken our cultural values but forgotten them, it used to be that every elder in Tiv culture was a father to a younger person just like the Confucian belief in China. Every younger person was your own son or daughter. I grew up to know people who took my father as their own son and he also took several younger others as his own sons too. These days who do our leaders particularly, those occupying public offices choose to mentor? They choose those who have failed in life and are so lacking in esteem and honour that they will serve any master from hell itself without any conscience. Our leaders hate to mentor those. Who are intelligent, hardworking and honourable. They look at them as threats and so gather the riff-raff around them so as to continue as big fish in a small drying pond. The gathering and empowering of school dropouts not as **business** men or people of achievement has reached epidemic proportions.

Realism sees as unalterable, motive of nations pursuing their cardinal interests at all times in all situations. This is why you cannot tell the difference between the foreign policies of Ronald Reagan or Barack Obama in the USA. To the Tiv nation, what are these interests? How can we pursue our interests when we are ashamed to teach our children even our Language? I am talking about the educated elites who occupy the public offices in Nigeria and not our rude unlettered fathers and mothers in the villages. So then is it not pertinent for us to even ask what Tiv nation are we

even talking about?

Realism teaches that a nation should not be concerned with the proclamations (threats, boasts and propaganda) of its enemies. Watch his capability with utmost care. Those of you in public offices, when you delegate power to *Uke* to the detriment 'If deserving Tiv sons and daughters, who are you empowering? Why should you complain when they conspire to boot you out of that office? I know a few of our sons who discovered their Tiv blood only after they lost those offices. Cast your mind to the philosophy of the Yoruba nation who like the *Myongomdo* not care lining up their own brethren in an office serially.

Conclusion

All I have tried to say so far is to cast a beam of searchlight on the soul of the Tiv nation. My discussion believes is full of self-evident suggestions. For the survival of the Tiv in Nigeria is for us to know the truth. The first thing to note is that the practice of politics is always full of moral complications. Man must constantly address the moral ends in the exercise of power. Power cannot be legitimately used only for its own ends. There Fore, any quest for power by the Tiv must also go on side by side with struggle for justice and fairness.

Now the truth that apparently hits us squarely as we probe into the deplorable state of the Tiv in Nigeria is simple but confounding. We know who our enemy is in Nigeria. He is us! Go back into your culture and see what you have cast aside in search of illusions. For the Tiv nation is perhaps the most democratic in practice, republican in nature and perhaps above all Godly.

REFERENCES

- Derek, W. (1989), *A History of South and Central Africa*.
Cambridge: University Press.
- Makar, Tesemchi, *A History of Political Change among the Tiv in the
19th and 20th century* Enugu: Fourth Dimension Pub.
- Dowan, David Craig, *A Political and Social History of the Tiv people
Northern Nigeria: 1900-1939, ----~ 1969*.
- Sai, Akiga, *Akiiga's story: the Tiv as seen through the eyes of its Member*.
London: Oxford University Press. 1936. Gayler (1970),
Bakara (1962) 36

CHAPTER EIGHT

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

CULTURAL IMPERATIVES AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Tyohdzuah Akosu

Introduction

When, in 1969, Paul Iorpuu Unongo wrote his "Open Letter to the Tiv," it was to "defend all eternal and impartial values, like justice and reason" a task to which he believed Julien Benda had challenged him as an intellectual. However, Unongo limited his defence of these values to his community, the Tiv. He was convinced beyond doubt, that the Tiv people had been raped of the development due to them. They had shed blood fighting the socio-economic and political wars of other ethnicities and international communities but had come out with nothing. After these wars they were left to rot in their villages where they had been born on leaves in the mud huts of their mothers.

The neutrality of the Tiv amidst their exploitation by other Nigerian ethnicities and Europe shocked Unongo and thus spurred him to write that open letter which in his own words was (1969: Blurb) "at once a challenge to this abdication of moral responsibility and an elaborate programme sheet which outlines plans for the social resuscitation of Tivland and the ordinary person. The suggestions are practical and realistic. They should be adopted now". That was forty years ago!Revisit to, and analysis. Of

those practical and realistic suggestions shall form the concluding section of this paper? But the question that surges to mind requiring an urgent answer is this: What are the differences between the Tiv of then and now? As pressing as this question may be, we can only respond to it more purposefully and richly if we lay down certain facts and realities about Nigeria, Africa and Europe. After all, the Tiv are Nigerians that have fought wars for Nigeria, Africa and Europe. Thus, what has happened to them and where they are today derive from the Nigeria-Africa-Europe relationship.

Nigeria-Africa-Europe Relationship and the Tiv

Elsewhere I have observed (2008: 11):

For almost half a century of Nigeria's self rule, past governments in Nigeria have consistently put in place political and economic reforms, projects, strategies and policies all in an effort to ensure security, stability and development. However, the state in which Nigeria and Nigerians find themselves today makes a mockery of all these plans for development. Evidence of this reality is everywhere for one to see: Nigeria is corrupt. It is internationally in debt. It is hungry and poor and imports food and technology. Disease ravages it on the one hand and illiteracy permeates it on the other. It has huge deposits of crude and yet power and energy have eluded it for decades. In sum, Nigeria is immeasurably distant from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Something must be wrong.

Projects, strategies and policies may be well intended but things go

wrong at the end of the day because the fundamental values on whose basis they are evolved are either lacking or ignored in preference for values that have no place in traditional Africa. We pay lip service to cultural revival and limit it to literature cases and open festivities and dances. We cling to the value of those whose sole aim is to introduce chaos into our lives for their interests and survival. These are the people who Unongo warns us to beware of (1968:1):

I have ... challenged the wisdom of foreign friends, *foreign meddlers* foreign apostles of doom and racial hate, and foreign corrupt organized churches who/which have from their 'blameless' ivory towers, *questioned and challenged our right, as a people to make our own Unique mistakes* and so evolve our own *unique experience* and answers to the *unique and specific problems* which confront us (my emphasis).

Clearly, a relationship with these "foreign meddlers" who do not take cognizance of our *uniqueness* is not bound to yield positive results in the long run. What is implied in this position is that as we try to develop ourselves and our communities, even as we use modern technology and methods, the ethical and moral values for which our African societies have been known since the beginning of time must guide our every step. No one is suggesting a retreat into the tribal, jungle past, No. But, at the same time, how could the ways of meddlers who regard you as inhuman become your ways? Here is Baikies 1856 description of the Tiv:

(The Tiv are) a lawless set of cannibals ... wild in look and ruder in dress, greatly tattooed and carrying constantly with

them their bows and arrows, these men seemed perfect impersonification of savages ... as far as we could judge are wilder or less intelligent than any of the other African races with whom we have had intercourse.

The Baikies were people who did not understand the Tiv. But certainly, a savage and lawless image of the Tiv fitted the purposes of an imperial force that needed to justify its imperialist action. This is the fact about which Unongo educated the Tiv in that open letter and hoped they would take heed. According to him (1969:10), "the disproportionate sacrifice which the Tiv made for his white master earned him nothing but a stupid and annoying monotonous phrase, ..." "They are a fierce war-like people." The thinking, way of life and values of people for whom we are less than beasts cannot be meant for our emulation. We should have stopped looking up to those values when Unongo told us to.

Like the Tiv, the entire continent of Africa receives a similar portraiture, perhaps worse (George Henty, 1968:21):

Africans are just like children ... they are always either laughing or quarrelling. They are good natured and passionate, indolent. But will work hard for a time; clever up to a certain point, densely stupid beyond. The intelligence of an average Negro is about equal to that of a European child of ten years old. They are absolutely without originality, absolutely without inventive power living among white men; their imitative faculties enable them to attain a considerable amount of civilization. Left alone to their own devices, they retrograde into a state little above their native savagery.

It must be a wonder how the African ever survived before the arrival of the white man on the African soil! Henty's is not just a superior white ego at work; it is a total rejection of Africa by the west. There is a major irony which explains why we are \\here \\,c were 40 years ago. The more the Western world disparages us and literally runs away from us like some leper, the more we hanker after its ways and values; values and ways of those who are prominent members of the international community. Now, we respect the international community. We respect the way Europe, Asia and America run their governrlllts. We appreciate the way they run their economies. We applaud the manner which they are mindful of the health of their citizens. Most importantly, the citizens of these continents are proud of their identities and are genuinely patriotic. These are the reasons why Africa, Nigeria in particular, look up to them as setting standards that the world strives to achieve.

Here is the paradox. The same Western world that we look up to has recognized and honoured worthy sons of Africa in their various fields of human endeavour. These are great individuals from African whom we have refused to listen to, rejected outrightly or chosen to misinterpret and abandon. Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Mwalirnu Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, Obafemi Awolowo, Mallam Aminu Kano are a few examples of the old stock. Their philosophies of life have been applauded worldwide but are yet to be translated into concrete development to the extent that deserves of such ideologies.

Black African writers have also been so honoured internationally for

the noble ideas they generated and for the fight they have intellectually put up to rid their societies of evil and prepare such societies for development along the lines of justice, fair play and equity. Names like Thomas Mofolo, Achebe, Ngugi, Soyinka, Mongo Beti, Bessie Head, Kenneth Kaunda, Mazisi Kunene, Ali Mazrui, Senghor, Sembene Ousmane and three activists among them, Franz Fanon, Walter Rodney and Steve Bantu Biko are the few of the very many that come to mind, Ironically, Africa has refused to listen to their voice consistently and with commitment. Here is the partial reason for the underdevelopment of Africa today.

Our position is that if the thoughts and actions of all these Africans were to be respected, emulated and translated into further action, Africa and Nigeria would not have been where we are today. We in Nigeria have neglected the philosophies and mind set of these heroes and so we have found ourselves tragically in a socio-political and economic quagmire in which poverty and disease alone decimate an inestimable percentage of the population. Perhaps we should exemplify our postulations by examining one case, that of Chinua Achebe, before we have more specifically to Tivland.

The Example of Chinua Achebe

Chinua Achebe is one person that the world virtually worships for his fine and realistic novels about Nigeria and for his literary and political essays. Sometime ago, Achebe tried to explain what society expected of its writers. As far as the matter affected him personally, he said (1989:45):

I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones

I set in the past). Did no more than teach my readers that their past with all its imperfections was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them.

This response is an all-time political advice to Africa: to be able to move forward, Africans must always remember their history; Africans must always know who they are and prize that as a stepping stone to their progress. Achebe's response importantly warns the Africans of people who consciously would continue to distort who they are; who would strive to turn them away from their world of cherished values of high morality, brotherhood, communal living, respect for traditional 'rule of law'." This is the full weight of Achebe's response. We have ignored it.

Today, when, in line with Achebe's wise counsel that we must always remember our past, one attempt to investigate the effects of colonialism and imperialism, the protest is indeed loud. But we must reconsider this our eagerness and thoughtlessness with which we dismiss Colonialism and imperialism as historical realities that are quite distant from today's Africa; that we have been in charge of ourselves for too long to keep blaming others and looking for scapegoats. Achebe (1989:68) reports, for example, of a distinguished public servant who "speaks of our tendency to 'intone the colonial litany' implying that the time has come when we must assume responsibility for our problems and our situation in the world and resist the temptation to blame other people." This kind of thinking is irrational and constitutes a barrier to national development. Let me expatiate.

Colonialism *is* a system. Colonialists are a people who operate that system. Colonialism is a system of enslaving a people while colonialists are *those* who put in place methods by which the enslavement takes place in their own interest. This is why black people can be colonialists. It has less to do with skin colour or geographical abodes of persons. If this were not so, all people of white skin colour would be colonialists. But we know of white-skirted people whose enslavement, consequent poverty and disease are legendary. So colonialism as a system is all about the interest that accrues from perpetuating a master-Servant relationship; a lopsided system of economic living that ensures inequality in society and encourages us to look down on ourselves and values. Thus, formal colonialism and its operators may have gone but as a system, colonialism is still in place and continues to influence the way we think and plan. Therefore, we cannot all too hastily banish colonialism from our historical existence. After all, "much of what goes on in Nigeria today can be understood against the background of the social structures and relations initiated by colonialism (Ahire, 1997: 107).

Hence, we mourn an African past in which we lived in a peace that can never be recovered in the new world governed by technology. We mourn a world in which there was no cut-throat politics. We mourn a world in which life was sacred and leaders in the community were respected because they governed in the best interest of the community. Those chiefs and medicine men did not think of self but the other. That is the African world which Achebe said is ours and must remain our yardstick as we progress.

Yes, progress must be made but it must be an accumulation unto our own old Africa', But today. Which values of that cherished' Africa are kept by anybody including the leaders? None, Achebe saw it-and warned us. Any surprise that our leaders are who they are? 'They are not bad leaders in themselves; it is the values on the basis of which they lead that must be re-examined. Alas, those values are not those of Africa. Achebe saw it and warned us of the people who would distort our own values that make us who we are. Surely, accumulation of material wealth to the detriment of the people cannot be said to be a pillar among African values but strangely it is a value highly prized by African leaders. That is the tragedy! Whatever is of African origin is devalued by us in preference to things and reasons of alien worlds. Thus, our lawyers continue to wear the thick fibrous wig meant for cold countries in the hot, humid Nigerian weather; the Pound Sterling, the Dollar, the Yen are *bard* currencies against our 'soft (not worth much?) Naira; a Nigerian footballer is not worth much until he becomes a Nigerian international i.e. playing in Europe. How can one who rejects self so totally progress and develop his environment?

Nigeria and Tiv, Then and Now

It is not as if we never had great leaders and men from the beginning of times. As mentioned earlier, there have been great leaders in Nigeria who were great because the values that governed their lives were essentially indigenous to their birthplaces and cultures: Selflessness, the good of the community instead of individual interest was primary in their struggles, a sense of equity and fair

sharing dominated their consciences as they planned the development of their countries but above all, they had faith in their countries and communities and therefore were fiercely patriotic.

However, sometime after independence (1960), Nigeria and perhaps many other African communities lost grip of these noble values and individualism (capital?) set in; greed set in. Indeed a reversal of these values became the norm. Since then, it has become impossible to return to these worthy old-time values. The spirit seems to be willing but the body is not.

What we have argued about Africa and Nigeria in the foregoing, applies in a particularly strangulating manner to the Tiv In Tiv land, too, we have persons whose struggles and achievements have been recognized internationally. Such persons have expended their energies in ensuring a liberated Tiv nation of peace, stability and development. These are men and women of great knowledge and foresight whose thoughts and ideas were like the proverbial stitch in time. We chose not to listen to them for no other better reason than because they were prophets in their own land. Senator Joseph Sarwuan Tarka and Wantaregh Paul Iorpuu Unqngo are two of the many such persons in Tiv land. On this occasion, we are more concerned with Paul Unongo.

Forty years ago, Unongo openly wrote and warned us that the Tiv were "pitiably backward". They were backward in basic social amenities and infrastructure; they were backward in thought. Listen to Unongo (1969:2):

When I contemplate the simple social amenities which by and large, are taken for granted here (Lagos), such as pipe borne water, electricity, good roads, durable homes and so on; and when I meet essentially similar such Government

and Private amenities which are totally absent in Tiv Division, in numerous other places in Nigeria, I am disturbed about "back home."

We have begun to witness these amenities today, never mind that it had to take forty years. The amenities are now here and we can only hope that they shall be maintained by subsequent persons given that responsibility. In the backwardness of thought and ideas belies an attitude which is our collective responsibility. This is where we seem to have remained in one spot in spite of the intervening forty years of continuous education in the land. The petty jealousies persist. The syndrome of pulling each other down or blocking the upward climb of the younger ones is ever with us. Lies are still manufactured to discredit our leaders today as of old. More worrisome than all this, is the fact that life is no longer regarded as sacred. It is not easy to put a finger on the culture we borrowed that from.

We cannot ask for a second time, where do we go from here? Unongo provided the answer then accepts that our ears were stuffed with wool. If the Tiv were to realize that, he argues, they have been persecuted, exploited, marginalized, and sent to their deaths as a people, they would realize the absolute futility of cutting each other down. I believe this is the reason why

Unongo took time to explain to the Tiv people their historical experiences of the *ADOGON*, *KUZA*, the Makurdi Bridge Construction and being carted off to BURMA to fight "Europe's 'first world war' and the 'second world war' of Germany's Hitler" (1969:9).

The point being made is that these are experiences which the Tiv came out with nothing but bruises and death. Why on earth would they, instead of nursing their wounds together, start fighting to pull each other down. To change their backwardness' of thought" one must persistently use their historical experiences to conscientize them and look forward to a change of attitude on their part.

It will not be necessary to scrutinize the entirety of Unongo's open letter before we can evaluate the then and a revisit to one or two more of the matters he noted deplorable in and with the Tiv, which matters called for change, should be enough to enable us judge the then and now. *Where Do We From Here?* Shows that the Tiv were generally blind to harsh realities of their existence as a people in Nigeria, hence (1969: blurb) "their strange neutrality and aloofness".

Forty years ago, Unongo was pained that the Tiv constituted a workforce to be exploited at home and there is an important point we must raise here. It has often argued - that wherever 'the colonialists set foot, they share political power, the economy and Education to the ethnicities according to how they rated those 'ethnicities. Nigeria, it seems, they assigned political 'power to the Hausa; economy to the Igbo and education to the Yoruba. What could have been left for the Tiv and other minorities? Providers of labour! This is the kind of reality that Paul Unongo would have the Tiv wake up to.

Another important matter raised in the open letter to the Tiv concerns administrative reforms and organization in Tiv land. Guided

by the proposal laid out by Unongo, coupled with the increased political awareness of the Tiv, it is gladdening to note that a lot has been achieved in this direction. With regards to the position of the TorTiv, Unongo had expressed this hope (1969:22):

I most certainly wish to' see my own tribe have a titular ruler, who will act as traditional father, of Tiv; representing the embodiment of the 'cultural hopes and aspirations of a people with a distinct history which they are seeking to express and preserve ... the position of Tor Tiv must be maintained and safeguarded.

It is worthy of note that not only has the position of the, Tor Tiv been maintained but it has been made more dignifying and powerful. Many more subordinate chiefs and clan heads have been appointed. These assist him with governance through discussions and advice on political, social and economic matters that border on the development in Tivland. Furthermore, the role and position of the Tor Tiv in the National Council of Traditional rulers has been fully entrenched. Again, with the Subordinate chiefs and clan heads being his "eyes", the entire Tiv land is under the Tor Tiv's surveillance and grip at all times, In this matter, Unongo's noble ideas and hopes have not been betrayed by the Tiv people.

Conclusion

On the whole and in conclusion therefore *Where Do We Go from Here* has been of immense assistance to the development of Tiv land in a large measure. Of course there are dark spots here and there but if we continue to

listen to that open letter, much more will be achieved than has been done in these past forty years. The way forward is to abide by the advice contained in the epilogue with which Unongo concludes his letter: He has borrowed the words from Martin Luther King Jr. (1969:26):

One of the great liabilities of history is that all too many people fail to remain awake through great periods of social change. Every society has its protectors of the status quo and its fraternities of the indifferent who are notorious for sleeping through revolutions. But today our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change.

There is thus no gainsaying the fact that the Tiv people must be kept awake. Is it the sure path which the Tiv must tread if they are to develop much more than they have done in these past forty years.

REFERENCES

Achebe, Chinua (1989), *Hopes and impediments selected Essays*.
New York: Doubleday.

Ahire, Philip (1997), *Culture, Democracy and the rule of Law: Theory and Evidence from Nigeria*. In Yakubu Nasidi and Iortange Igoil Eds.), *Culture and Democracy*, Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press Limited.

Akosu, Tyohdzuah (2008). *The Humanities, Democracy and the Rule of Law in Nigeria*. In Ashiko Julius (Ed.), *Faculty of Arts Journal*.

A Publication of the faculty of Arts, Benue State University, Makurdi,.

Vol.5. 2008, Makurdi: Obeta Continental Pree.

Henty, George quoted in G.D. Killam (196s). *Africa in English Fiction 1874 1939*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Uonngo, Paul (1969), *Where Do We Go from here*. Lagos: A Megida Book.

CHAPTER NINE

YOUTHS, CULTURAL VALUES AND THE DEVELOPMENT QUESTION IN TIVLAND

Doki, Ama Gowon

Introduction

The Tiv cultural value system is very fundamental embodiment of Tiv moral behavior. The pre-colonial Tiv society upheld the cultural value that was significant in governing the entire Tivland. That was significant in such as respect for elder who constituted the highest decision making body in the socio-political setting. Tiv cultural value system generally thrives on communalism/ collectivism expressed through political ideologies of” *Ya na Angbian*” & “*Ayatutu*” respectively.

The Tiv people developed and expression their cultural values through their social organization. This formed a significant chain in customs, beliefs, and the general way of life that is showcased in arts, music and literature etc. their beliefs and attitudes on what were wrong and good player important role in shaping the cause of development right from the pre-colonial period the society was regulated in a hierarchical structure where the socio-political organization necessitated adherence to moral values. Leadership loyalty was championed through age variance hence

the opinion of the elders either at the *Ya* (compound) or *ityo* (family) units were held paramount. Through this social organization, age was defined and respect too featured in the relationship between the children, youths and elders in Tiv society

In the post-colonial period, the Tiv youth is left with the challenge of the reconciling the legacies of Tiv cultural value system with the basic tenets of modernity. Dependency has hooked the African society (together with the Tiv) to the western and America culture and has been consolidated by the information technological advancement expressed through globalization. The development of modern technology has introduced television, radio set, and satellite as well as internet services. All these in such as they contribute to human knowledge, have also greatly posed a challenges to the Tiv youths and Tiv land is concerned.

Above all, the monetization of the Tiv society of the Tiv society through capitalization and introduction of western political ideology especially democracy brought a lot of changes in the Tiv youths, and culture value system.

Capitalization brought individualism and politics took a different dimension where the concept of leadership and power has been defined to suite the power taste of the political class. Age or elders have near no role to play in decision making while the youths are used as tools of political emancipation by the political class. Thus in this discourse, the above raised issues would be given much attention. We shall look at the traditional youths and the Tiv cultural values as well as the contemporary youths and challenges of development in Tiv land. Before venturing into detail

analysis, it is germane to look at the conceptual understanding of youths, cultural value and development. It is only by looking at these concepts that we would understand the dynamic of Tiv youth and the challenges of development.

The Concept of Youth

The term youth is used to refer to the period between childhood and adulthood. This is the period of physical and psychological development from the onset of puberty to maturity and early adulthood. Definitions of the specific age range that constitutes youths vary from one society to another. An individual's actual maturity may not correspond to their chronological age, as immature individuals exist at all stages. According to the Webster's Dictionary, "Youths generally refers to a time of life that is neither childhood nor adulthood, but rather somewhere in-between". The youth identifies a particular mindset of attitude, that is, 'He is very young in thinking and action. To Konopka (1973), the term youth is also related to being young.

Thus, there has been controversy among scholars on the age range of what constitute youth. The age in which a person is considered a "youth", and eligible for special treatment under the law and throughout society varies around the world. In Nigeria for instance, the youths is considered between the age range of 18 and 50. Therefore, the Tiv youth as conceived in this paper refers to the period in a man's age when he possesses the state of mind, a temper or the will, a quality of

imagination; a predominance of courage, or the appetite for adventure over the life of ease. It was this kind of Tiv youths that employed the attitude of pride as a cultural value in the development of Tivland. This pride was expressed *through* “*Kwav*”age grade. Whenever a *Kwav* *does* something, he uses it as a source of pride to challenge others to follow suit.

The Concept of Cultural Values

There is no universally single accepted definition of culture. Attempts have been made by different scholars as to what the concept entails. Igitgi (1993) aptly observes that 'certain aspects of a people's life such as language~"religion, political and social systems, economy, aesthetics, mysticism etc can be seen to collectively constitute culture".³ To Taylor (1871:1), "culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". To these views, culture can be described as that totality of a people's way of life which includes their modes of solving problems of physical," socio-economic and political setting. This conception goes a long way in discussing cultural value system of a society. The cultural values of a society could be described as "a widely held belief or sentiment that some activities, relationships, feelings, or goals are important to a community's wellbeing" .⁵

Against that backdrop, we would understand that the Tiv cultural values were synonymous to development. The concepts of collectivism as expressed through the slogan of *Ayatutu ka Uno? Kase*" and the

political ideology of *Uya na Angbian*" contributed to the development of the Tiv society. Religiously, the practice of Tsav ensured loyalty for the elderly class. The youths' practice of *kwav*' necessitated consciousness of a commonly driven society whose development was the responsibility of every member. Within this context, Beal's and Holler emphasize that "culture is not restricted to certain special fields of knowledge; it includes ways of behaving derived from the whole range of human activities". The behavioural patterns of the Tiv and their cultural value system were exhibited through their social and political structure, language and religion. It was this structure that the Tiv world (*Tar Tiv*) was seen as the great heritage of all Tiv people. Tiv cultural values provided order and guidance for social behaviour and stability even amidst the rapid changes that were witnessed in the pre-colonial wars of migration, settlement and expansion.

The Concept of Development

The concept of development suffers lack of a consensus definition authors have given different view based on their varying perspectives. According to Rodney, development is "a many side process. At the level of individual, it implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity. Self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being." This means that development encompasses both physical process and a state of mind, it goes beyond economic indicators. It involves the transformation of institutions such as infrastructure, road, schools, hospitals; food housing, etc this is why Todero defines development as:

A multi-dimensional process involving the organization and re-orientation of the entire economic and social system this also involves in addition, to improvement of income and output, radical change in institution social and administrative structure as well as in popular attitudes, customs and belief.

The crux of the argument is whether development in Tivland has assumed a multi-dimensional process through the involvement of youths. If that is the case then like seers” argues in his questions about development? What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to employment? What has been happening to inequality? therefore, in his views if these withes an improvement that can be Identified in the level poverty, unemployment and inequality,, then that society is said to be developing or has attained development the point is that lack of food security, better shelter, clothing and effective health system is usually as a result of low levels of income, unemployment or generally the presence of acute poverty sometimes accentuated by the act of human beings looking these values of development to our discussion there is every evidence that youth in Tivland development Okpaga “argues that development must involve the transformation of socio-economic and political structures he maintains that development must be human, economic, political and social”

The Pre-Colonial Tiv Cultural Values

The understanding of the cultural values system of the Tiv society in the pre-colonial period would provide us with the background upon

which the Tiv society was regulated and the role played by the youths in the development of the traditional Tiv society before the advent of British colonial administration it is pertinent to note here that so many cultural values were upheld by the Tiv people but our focus under this section would be on those cultural values that provided a platform for youth's involvement in the development of Tiv society.

The Tiv people had cultural values that were used in regulating the socio-political, economic and religious setting of the Tiv society. The pre-colonial socio-political organization invested power in the hands of the elders. The elders formed the highest decision making body therefore, commanding respect from the youths. The Ya (compound) political unit was headed by Orya (Compound Head), and the Council of Elders (Ityo) also headed the family. Gerontocracy was very significant in political recruitment. This by and large, provided an avenue for loyalty attachment which the youths had for elders. The kwav (age grade) were a determined group that enhanced peaceful coexistence in the Tiv society. Like the elders, they were formed along the lineage ties of the Tiv society. Kinship therefore, necessitated collectivism and communalism and de-emphasized the instruments of individualism. The kwav could work together on the farm and sometimes offer some financial assistance to a fellow *kwavthat* could be in financial problem. The economy or wealth in the society was measured not in terms of money but in terms of farmland or entertainment. This could therefore be appreciated in terms of '*A mar a Miring*' when somebody would have to kill a horse to prove his wealth. As a result of

this, respect or loyalty could be anchored on the basis of one's ability to entertain a fellow Tiv man. Basically, the Tiv cultural values had four significant features that were distinctively appreciated and cherished by all and sundry. These were:

1) Respect for elders. This was expressed through this socio-political organization where elders held leadership positions because of their old age.

2) Communalism that de-emphasized individualism. The pride of cultural norms was upheld through the slogan of "*Ayatutu Ka Uno? Ka se*" and the political ideology of "*Ya na Angbian*". The good of the society was the pride of all. People could talk of "*Tar wasedoo*" (our society is good), "*De vibin se Targa*" (Don't spoil our society).

3) Good knowledge of cultural heritage, norms, values and beliefs. This was appreciated through knowledge of the language, lineage ties. Sorkaa (1993:24) observes that this formed the basis for leadership positions especially "his knowledge of jural customs' and of the genealogical and personal history of his agnates and mastery of health and fertility".

4) The value of chastity as expressed through adherence to women's virginity before marriage. The youths could not indulge in fornication or adultery for the sake of pleasure.

All these cultural values provided social security and social control in Tivland. The youths were seen as leaders in transition and as a result

could uphold loyalty, hard work and pride of culture.

Throughout Tiv society communalism was recognized. There was a widespread emphasis on kinship ties. This formed the basis of intimate social organization and cultural value system. This system which was patrilineal provided social security against sudden death, crop failures, natural disasters and group foods and incursions. The issues of land ownership and inheritance, occupational differentiations and communal labour were organized under the fabric of kinship ties. The youths were conscious of this and maintained humility before their elders within the kinship ties.

Tiv Cultural Values in the Colonial Period

The foundation of the alien cultural value practices of the Tiv youths and their challenges of development can be only understood when one looks at the impact of British colonial administration on the cultural value system of Tiv society.

The Tiv society generally came into contact with the Europeans at the beginning of the 20 century. This period covers 1900 ~t9.) 960 and brought a lot of transformations and changes with their attendant consequences on the cultural values of the Tiv society.

Firstly, the Europeans monetized the Tiv society. This brought a lot of transformations in the socio-political set up of the Tiv. Acquisition of wealth led to the total breakup from cultural values. Loyalty became associated with wealth instead of age and leadership position was now contested for instead of collective rationalization

of leadership positions through the philosophy of "*Ya na Angbian*" among elders of different lineages. Of course, monetization brought radical departure from communalism and introduced individualism.

The impact of this development on the youths was that they became assertive in different spheres of life. There was emancipation of the youths in leadership positions and socio-cultural values. Youths could become leaders through the creation of the civil service class. They also become socially viable as evidenced in the abolition of exchange marriage practice. Economically too, they amassed wealth and began to use it as source of power to gain prominence and gain loyalty. On the other hand, the introduction of individualism through monetization of this Tiv society brought loss of social contact between the youths and elders, hence, the beginning of loyalty rivalry between the youths and the elders.

Another area in which contact with, Europe brought transformation on the Tiv cultural values was the area of religion, socialization and education. The establishment of various Christian denominations saw a steady erosion of various Tiv cultural values especially those that governed marriage, ritual, worship membership of secret societies (*Tsav I*) and Festivals. *Tsav* which was used as .an instrument of power to control the entire Tiv was now seen as an act of barbarism and its practice a feature of cannibalism. The impact of this development on the youths was that Tiv youths began to take

their destinies into their hands. But on the other hand, education brought loss of value for Tiv language, belief and norms.

Fundamentally, the introduction of Western culture through religion, education and socialization affected the Tiv society in terms of social contact. Urbanization gradually became part and parcel of the Tiv settlement thereby leaving the youths out of control from the elder or kinship ties.

Tiv Youths and the Challenges of Development in the Contemporary Cultural Era

Youths and development are the two sides of the same coin which reciprocally affect each other. Development in this aspect connotes a movement from a traditional order to certain desired types of advancement and associated forms of social structure, value-orientations, motivations, and norms with special reference to the Tiv youths. This development attracts the Tiv youths at its large-scale that is, influencing substantially the entire well-being of the people in general. The youths in Tiv society are faced with controversies of responsibility under the influence and pressure of western culture in their quest for the development of Tiv land, if one may ask, what are the challenges of the Tiv youths under the western cultural value system? With the paradigm shift, the Tiv youths are geared to adapt old knowledge to new use, produce new knowledge, and apply it on one or more fields of human life in the development of Tivland. .

Nevertheless, the Western culture has established different cultural values in Tiv society through education, religion, political

and economic ideologies and information technology. The challenges of this status quo on the youths in the development of Tiv land are enormous: In education, western education through the institutions concern, educate the youths away from their family ties and acquaint them with new socialization through new values and patterns of life. This has uprooted the Youths from their ties to the past. i.e. their valuesystem and civilization. Youths are particularly interested in the pursuit of Western culture of leisure instead of hard work; their social relations are organized around the peer groups rather than families and thereby imbibing in cult activities and juvenile delinquency. They are particularly interested in style which is manifested in the use of distinctive language form, taste in western music or certain clothes etc.

The impact of this development on transformation and advancement of the Tiv society is that youths are now conceived in the eyes of elders as nuisance of the society. Instead of using their energy, wealth of knowledge, talents, productive ability acquired through western education as engine of change in proffering change and transformation, they are on the contrary retrogressive' in their vision as vanguards orsocial: transformation. With the establishment of the culture of individualism, the Tiv youths now avail themselves to be used as thugs for the power thirsty political class. There is loss of social contact and social security between youths and elders. Snatching of ballot boxes and political assassination are carried out by the youths. Acts of electoral violence are carried out by the

youths who seek for material rewards like cash benefits or flashy cars. However, the politicization of Tiv culture has its own dangers on the development of Tiv society. It leads to assassinations and killings of opposition party members and the destruction of property. It is instructive to emphasize that the youths should use their wealth of knowledge and energy for full and effective participation in decision-making, conflict prevention and the promotion of intergenerational relations by adhering to the Tiv lineage *ties*. They should not be seen as leaders of vulgarization of Tiv political core values of "*Na angbian*" by manipulating electoral offices and promotion of discord, conflict and violence through the acts of brutality.

Another important cultural value cherished by the Tiv people was chastity. It was a means of regulating the moral behaviour of the youths in the Tiv society. As mechanism of social coordination, virginity in girls was upheld as the core value for marriage relationship. Unmarried women were expected to remain as virgins until their day of marriage. As a sine qua non of morality in theyouths, its adherence was very instrumental in the control of sexually transmitted diseases. Of course, the woman found disvirgined at the point of marriage was humiliated together with the parents through the gifts that would be presented to the mother-in-law. It was therefore, the moral obligation of parents to ensure that their female children remained virgins before marriage to avoid embarrassment.

Thus, the European contact with the Tiv society eroded them of this prestigious cultural value. Christianity rationalized adultery and fornication with confession. It became possible for the Tiv youths to commit adultery or fornication and pray for forgiveness or confess to the priest as was the case with Christian denominations and Catholic Church respectively. The culture of virginity among girls began to be looked upon as an act of uncivilized or timid society. Worse of it was the monetization of the marriage institution that accompanied the abolition of exchange marriage. The implication of this European conspiratory act of capitalism on the Tiv cultural value was that the Tiv youths and parents started addressing values of marriage institution from wealth or monetary perspective rather than the value of virginity. In fact, this development marked the introduction of prostitution in the Tiv society along with other attendant consequences such as widespread sexually transmitted diseases because of rampant cases of pre-marital sex or infidelity among married couples. However, the challenge of the Tiv youths in the development of the Tiv society stems from the fact this cultural value have been eroded and bastardized. It is very important to note that the Tiv youths are the most prone to the scourge of HIV/AIDS. This singular scourge has led to the death of so many young people who constitute *greater* percentage of the Tiv labour force. This youth population that could have consciously mobilized themselves and take proactive measures to participate in politics,

civil services, businesses and private sector industries with the aim of exacting change and transformation in Tivland have remained the bulk of commercial sex working class, and other associated immoral acts of homosexuality, lesbianism, pimping, etc.

For the Tiv youths to effectively contribute to the development of Tivland, they must see themselves within the challenge of Tiv cultural modernization along the European culture as productive force with a rational objective of sociocultural, political, religious and economic transformation and change the culture of hard work and enterprise should be developed by the youths rather than laziness and trade in immorality that has characterized the Tiv youths and society.

More so, the global spread of information communication technology has also carried messages, and thereby changes the cultural values and habits of the Tiv youths. This has succeeded in the transformation of youths ideas. Satellite and Television networks have intensified the culture of leisure and laziness in the youths. It has also robbed the Tiv society of the cultural values of music, dance and fashion. The youths instead of recounting the Tiv proverbs which served as moral education, waste much of their time recounting the number of goals that Drogba and Cristiano Ronaldo have scored for Chelsea or Real Madrid football clubs respectively. This condition has subjected the youths to laziness~ thereby indulging- in the acts of sycophancy-and begging which has come to characterize the Tiv youths in the urban centres, Instead of carrying out commercial or

farming activities, the Tiv youths continue to move from one office to another begging for money or telling lies against political opponents. This culture is not in the interest of the youths in charting the cause of productive ability towards change and transformation in Tivland. The youths should therefore, see themselves as liberators of the Tiv society from the strings of backwardness and underdevelopment through political mobilization, social, campaigns, cultural renaissance, and economic advancement.

How can the above mentioned aspects of change and transformation be upheld as the primary objective of the youths towards the development of the Tiv society where traditional cultural values of morality, loyalty, hard work or pride, and communalism are replaced with contemporary cherished cultural values of prostitution, thuggery, arrogance, primitive accumulation through individualism rather than Tiv national service and mass development orientation. The youths can champion the development of Tiv land as vanguards against the principles of modern political-economy of the Tiv political class that is characterized with prebendalism, sectionalism, thuggery, violence, ethnicity, primitive accumulation and individualism that is capitalist oriented. The youths can redefine the development of Tiv society devoid of crime, destitution, prostitution, violence and bigotry. The youths can mobilize themselves against the mediocrity, greed, materialism and primordial factors that have characterized the political Tiv land. The emancipation and attainment of

development in Tiv land can be possible if the youths recognize their past roles as leaders in transition of Tiv society and reject politics of imposition, monetization and commercialization, primitive accumulation, mediocrity and sycophancy as well as the suppression of intellectual class for infrastructural development at every level, economic empowerment through industrialization in Tiv land, and the collective transformation of Tiv land generally.

Conclusion

This speech recognizes the fact that the totality of underdevelopment of the Tiv land acerbated by decadence cultural values of the Tiv society is not entirely the problem of the youths. For instance, the 21st century parades the whole world with western cultural imperialism where the youths are faced with the challenge of negative social vices accentuated with the western media, internet and the press. The Tiv youths have therefore, embraced the cultural modernization instead of scientific and technological modernization. The cultural modernization occasioned by the radical western press, media and internet have aggressively paved off the Tiv youths to the worse cultural phase of western civilization manifested in lesbianism, homosexuality, prostitution, crime, individualism, materialism, violence, terrorism, corruption and greed.

We have argued that imperialism waged the TIV cultural values to the western culture that have been upheld in the 21st century through the

globalization of western cultural values the youths can reproduce and replicate Tiv cultural values of communalism, respect for elders, chastity, political ideologies of “*ya na angbian u & Ayatutu* and harnessed them to the development of Tiv land in the present time. The culture of determination, hard work and vision that characterized the precolonial Tiv youths can be reactivated by the contemporary Tiv youths in the development of the Tiv land.

REFERENCES

1. Webster's New College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, 2004.
2. G. Konopka, "Requirements for Healthy Development of
3. Adolescent Youth", *Adolescence*. VIII (31), p.2. 3 D.
- A. Igirgi, "External Influences on Tiv Culture", in Ahire, P. T., (ed.) *Tiv in Contemporary Nigeria*. Zaria: The Writers Organization, 1993, p.114.
- 4 E. Taylor, *Primitine Cultures*. London: 1871.
- 5 H. N. Nwosu, and O. U. Kalu, "The Study of African Culture" in Kalu, O. U. (ed.) *Readings in African Humanities: African Cultural Development* Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd. 1982, p.5. 6 R. Beats, and I-I. Hoiler, *An Introduction to Anthropology*, New York: Macmillan Press, 1953, p.207.
- 7 W Rodney, *HOJJJ Et/rope Underdeveloped. Africa*.
- 8 M. P. Todaro, *Economics for a Developing, World*, London: Longman Plc, 1985
- 9 D. Seers, "Meaning of Development" Quoted by Enyi, J. E. in *Benue State journal of Humanities*, Vol. 7. 2006. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2006.
- 10 Adagba Okpaga, "The Politics and Development of Sub-Cultural Groups in Benue State" in *Benue State 'in Perspective* Edited by Lyam, A. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2005.

CHAPTER TEN

THE MAN TIV, HAS DIED

Wantaregh Paul Unongo

My dear Tiv compatriots of Nigeria and all of you in the diaspora, greetings from an aging volunteer trooper still hanging and dangling on his war scarred and war wearied horse.

I am pleasantly surprised and delighted that we are together in these United States of America--you in Mississippi, and me, in the Bay Area of California, engaged even if by proxy, in a serious discourse on the fate of Tiv in Nigeria and the world at large. This is very good and extremely challenging. There is a lot that can be said on the theme of this MUTA Meeting: The Tiv In Nigeria: Today and Tomorrow, but I will be understandably, very brief and general, in my comments, as an interested elder.

When I returned to Nigeria in the late 1960s, social responsibility dictated that I become actively engaged in two major activities, in addition to my teaching duties at the University of Lagos, then the only Tiv teaching in any university within (& outside) the country!

As far as I was concerned, I felt very strongly, that the Tiv and Benue community were at the cross-roads. We had been entirely involved in, and in fact, led the struggle and agitation for the creation of more Regions (States) in Nigeria. Now, by military fiat, we had our Benue – Plateau State (Region), created, and as icing on the cake, our Middle–Belt brother, General Yakubu Gowon, now retired, was at helm of affairs, as the Head of State.

To me, and to my mind it appeared crystal clear, that all that the Tiv needed was to appropriately organize themselves advantageously and exploit the existing Nigerian reality of that time, and simply, develop, modernize and get rid of the stench our community, Tiv land, was knee/neck–deep, in. Believing in this orientation, and sincerely overwhelmed by the observable, palpable total abject poverty all over our community, I was moved to express these concerns in a publication: “*Where Do We Go From Here?*” which appeared from my university desk in 1968.

This became published in 1969. Noting further the pulse of the nation of Nigeria then, threatened with secession, and the orientation of the Federal powers that were existent then, bent on stopping secession at all

costs, including a hot war, and realizing the centrality of the Tiv, and the criticality of our necessary contributions to the war efforts of the Federalists, to succeed, I pushed for more decentralization, and the opening up of the political space, in the form of a request for the immediate creation of six more local government councils, from the then existent single Tiv Local Government Council.

The logic was simply that if you could justify the creation of states on development grounds, you could also justify more local government communities, on the development grounds. Some of our Tiv brothers were concerned about my position. Just like in the days of our efforts to float the Community of Tiv Students (CTS), in the fifties, they saw my efforts as an attempt to undermine their political base.

The debate about the contents of this pamphlet and the idea canvassed and portrayed by it, became heated, especially within the same Community of Tiv Students, our baby and forum for public discussion by, and amongst, the Tiv intelligentsia at that time (era). Mercifully, the idea sailed through and we got the Gboko, Katsina-Ala, and Makurdi local government council areas out of the single Tiv Council Area.

My second public engagement which I accepted voluntarily, at that time, was to explain the circumstances of the Nigerian Civil War which broke out during this period, the late 1960s, to the world/international community.

This was more challenging and more daunting because the Federalists had ignored completely, the propaganda aspect of their war efforts. It was crystal clear to my mind, as a Tiv from the then Northern Region of Nigeria, that this war was really our war, because we constituted about 70% of the Nigerian Army, which went to war to stop the breakup of my country, Nigeria.

Biafran propaganda told the world repeatedly that the war was a religious war against Christian Igbos by Northern Muslims. Of course this was a monumental lie, a big Josef Goebbels' type of lie, which the world, particularly, the Western World, uncritically believed or chose to believe! Nigeria almost lost the war by default.

Armed with my training in Experimental Psychology and solid facts and arguments which could easily be marshaled in Nigeria's favour our and our theoretical vision and conceptualization of a federal nation-state, for our plural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, diverse new country, a thing repeated all over the African continent, I had no difficulty acceding to the invitation of the then Head of State, to bring my training to assist the cause of our Federal Nigeria, which I saw, correctly, as the cause of all the mini, multi-tribal principalities, carved out by Europe, in their immoral scramble for Africa, of the Eighteenth Century.

Then back home, and at that time, the Head of State and Commander-In-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces of Nigeria, was our gentle, humble Christian brother, General Yakubu Gowon, who was wrongly and

aggressively portrayed as a “Muslim Butcher” from the North, committing genocide against Christian Igbos, with no response from Federal Nigeria!

Perhaps, it is also instructive and the fact needed to be articulated, that the head of the Nigerian Airforce, during the critical war period, was a Christian, an Idoma man, Brigadier-General Emmanuel Ikwue, the head of the Nigerian Navy then was a Yoruba Christian, Admiral Akinwale Wey. Crowning it all, it was a Tiv officer, Joe Ronnie ItyowuaAkaahan, a Christian Tiv, who led the Nigerian Army to start the Nigerian Civil War as Chief of Staff, Nigerian Army. Well, “ItyoMUTA,” do you subscribe to the notion that, “ityo,” probably killed him as his name suggested, because he was also the first most significant casualty of the Nigerian Civil war! He died in a helicopter crash, after visiting his troops on the Eastern front of the war, on his way back from Gboko to Makurdi!

I am providing this “brief” but essential history, to buttress my participant observer status/experience of our community, and the man Tiv, a very important and strategic man, I dare say, in the Nigerian Project, to help me properly contextualize my observations on the topic of MUTA 2014: *The Tiv People Today and Tomorrow!*

Today in Tiv land, my brothers and sisters of this man Tiv, gathered here for MUTA, (we) have inflicted severe damage on ourselves, and on the man Tiv, in the following crippling, tragic ways, that MUTA should do something creative and constructive about:

1. Primitive inter-party conflicts and hatred – primitive rudimentary political parties which have no ideological orientation or differentiation to warrant the internecine wars, destructions, killings and pains we inflict on the man Tiv, our evolving society, our basal economy and primordial capacities – we do these things mindlessly without a vision of the development goal of the man Tiv, and the Tiv society.
2. Complacency over leadership recruitment and leadership negligence/leadership failure, concerning matters affecting Nigeria, this same Nigeria, which we contributed disproportionately, our blood and our humanness to found, to establish and consolidate! We are now overwhelmed and in a state of stupor, incapable of comprehending Nigeria!
3. Weakness of our traditional institutions, particularly our so called traditional rulers, who could make up for the failure of our political leadership.
4. Low economic capacity leading to horrible and palpable alarming poverty!
5. Total disregard for history and experience and an insidious and insipient crippling lack of respect for Elders, gravitating rapidly to blatant abuse of our institutional memory!

6. Physical destruction and abuse of our valued human resources, human assets and the concomitant ascendancy of mediocrity, pschophancy and buffoonery.

There are many more examples I could give distinguished MUTA compatriots. But I will stop here because these debilitating disabilities enumerated here are enough to destroy a community entirely. My MUTA brothers and sisters, the empirical evidence about this development is palpable, everywhere in our society.

This has made me to submit, humbly, that The Man – Tiv, Has Died! Is Tiv merely comatose?

No, my brothers and sisters! We even lost out to our brothers, the Idoma, who are a mere one fifth of the Benue population, in the pursuit of mundane things like federal job placements on a ratio of 90 to 10. In political influence and networking, we score zero!

Do you know that we are not part of the Nigerian Leadership! In a Federal Government, headed by a “minority man,” whom we helped to bring to power, at the Federal level, after liberating his people and his minority areas, during the Nigerian Civil War, in the so called Niger Delta, we are not considered important.

Where are the young Tiv officers whom we lost in the creeks of the Niger Delta. Where are the ShandeAnyakpa and the over 20 young

lieutenants – the Zachary Agbachas and co, all whom we lost in the creeks of the “powerful” Niger Delta areas?

Today we have had a concluded the handpicked National Conference of friends of our Minority President, gleefully, announcing its conclusions. We, despite our numerical strength of about 10 million people, and standing at about the 4th or 5th most populated ethnic group in Nigeria, despite the request we made for 5 states, not a single state was created for the Tiv nation! Do you know what? Apa State was created for the Idoma with a population of less than the Katsina-Ala State, which General SaniAbacha created for us Tiv, and we, the Tiv, then promptly rejected!

Today, we are weak and powerless! Need I say more?

Ladies and gentlemen, I want you to ponder on the following issues, before we break from Mississippi. These matters have become urgent.

1. How do we reclaim our lost relevance in Nigeria?
2. How do we empower our people taking them away from the debilitating poverty they are trapped in now?
3. How do we recruit good political leaders to protect our interests, develop our people and society and generally govern us well?
4. Do we really have any true friends, and who are these our true friends and allies in the country of Nigeria?
5. In the event of a very serious crisis in our violent, crisis torn country, in a worst-case scenario, where can we go? Can we stand on our own?

6. I believe we are back to the question I posed in 1968, our Tiv compatriots of MUTA—“Where Do We Go From Here?”

Under the second consideration, as we reflect on these issues, I want to plead that we broaden our analysis to consider my earlier concerns and promise, expressed as a young gubernatorial candidate in 1983, at 46. To me, now MUTA is sincerely the most credible of all Tiv cultural and/or politico-social organizations, still standing, not completely polluted, or taken over by party material corruption, so evident, “back home” in Nigeria.

From that sincere observation, I would like to congratulate the leadership of MUTA and the membership, for their development efforts both in Nigeria and in the diaspora. The scholarships, the medical and other projects they have packaged for the benefit of our people over the years, are commendable.

Rather than only appearing to be critical of what I have lived and observed, I feel positively disposed to MUTA and wish to venture to put before all of you distinguished compatriots of MUTA a constructive challenge, that may someday, aid in our efforts, to develop Tiv land and advance the Tiv people.

Could MUTA invest in developing an all-embracing all-time-applicable vision for the Tiv that is not bound by partisan politics?

What is MUTA's blueprint, or vision, of what our people's development would, or could, or should look like in the future? If MUTA has such a vision for the future, could they clarify, what they think of what our homeland and our people should be, in say, 50, 30, 20, or, 10 years time. What do you members of this great MUTA envision?

I had such a dream way back in 1983, and I communicated same, clearly, to my party and people and dared promise to set the pace and be governor for only one term of 4 years. I programmed then, a continuous steady development plan, including even leadership development, stretching out for 20 years.

I envisioned how many universities, with what mix of academic and research specialties and capabilities, we would – or should – have!

Can MUTA do us the favour of dreaming what level of infrastructure development we should attain in 50, 40, 30, 20, 10 years? What will be the mix of industries that productively employ our people? What levels of technological capability will we or should we reach? And even how will we be governed for same periods? How will our institutions function, and how accountable will our political leaders be to the people they are supposed to serve? In my little effort in 1983, I even said in public, as a partisan politician, that my running mate, Dr. Edwin Obe, of blessed memory, would take over and also continue with the programme on our 20 year scale as envisioned. We seriously bought into this kind of orientation.

Can MUTA accept this challenge with superior capacity and better preparation than me?

Along our limited orientation, we believed we would rehabilitate political behavior to become more goal directed and more purposeful.

I wish to appeal to the leadership of MUTA to expand their orientation by adding another dimension of this topic, as a result of their physical location in the USA.

MUTA should evolve a vision of how the diaspora communities will grow, evolve, prosper, and thrive! Will it be up to every man and woman to struggle and find their way on their own, or could anything be done – at least at the level of a vision – to help our people become successful and well anchored within the larger societies and communities that they may settle in, outside of Tiv land, like here in the United States?

I ask these seemingly rhetorical questions both for my own understanding – that you might educate me if MUTA has developed such visions or blueprints – and to encourage you to develop a concrete, and comprehensive, vision for the future of the Tiv if you have not done so yet.

With such a vision in hand, you might want to use it as a compass or guide, for your own assessment of the state of our people overall, or the state of our people in the diaspora. You may also want to use it as a basis for engagement with various leaders, and leadership groups, who may speak to you about their ideas and plans for the Tiv people.

You can use your vision as a somewhat objective basis for holding leaders accountable for their exercise of power and influence, since they love attending MUTA annual conferences. Because, after all, if powerful leaders are not significantly advancing the Tiv people towards goals of development in education, infrastructure, industrial and technological development, and improved governance, democratization, and civil society development, then what good are they really?

Also, having a concrete vision or blueprint of the future may stimulate the MUTA community to think on your own of ways that we individuals and MUTA, might advance the development of the Tiv, even without waiting for government leaders to take positive action. More often than not, we all know that Nigerian political leadership, in general, is often more likely to disappoint than impress. This is the reality confronting us, in this our now, strange Nigeria!

I am done, distinguished ladies and gentlemen at the 2014 MUTA get together. I do not wish to bore you anymore.

However, as a 79-year old unemployed Tiv man, don't be deceived, distinguished leadership and MUTA community assembled here.

This narrative of mine is a serious application for employment, from a committed applicant.

My experience as a university teacher, of the old, a restless or is it troublesome, political activist of the old order, a consultant and advisor to

governments coupled with the leadership of my companies, these experiences exposed me to much knowledge, about life in Nigeria.

I now present myself humbly, as an unemployed resource person for those who wish to hire. Will you be hiring soon, I ask!

I love you all, and God bless and empower Tiv land, Tiv people, MUTA, and Nigeria, my beloved and bleeding country.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

VARYING PATTERNS OF HERDER/FARMER CONFLICTS IN NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA

James Msughter Adzande

Introduction

Nigeria has witnessed different crises overtime bothering on culture, diversity, religion, politics and many other variables. The herder/farmer crisis in Nigeria is one such conflict that has come to impact on peace and mutual coexistence of the Nigerian nation. The expected norm is that our democratic experience ought to have mobilised these groups for development, but the failure to achieve such goal has resulted to the crisis bothering on intra and inter tribe divide. The crisis like others has threatened the unity and survival of the country. Since the beginning of the 21st century, herders/farmers crisis has taken the centre stage in the discourse of conflict and development in Nigeria. This is prevalent across the country though this paper examines the situation in North central region. The region comprises of Benue, Nassarawa, Kogi, Plateau and Niger States. Cumulatively, the crisis has displaced thousands of people and thousands killed. At the moment, internally displaced persons are still living in camps in states like Benue in their thousands for the fear of the marauding herders. The changing patterns of the herder/farmer conflicts in north central Nigeria looks at relationship between these groups in the past

and the present scenario. The concept dwells more on primary sources in order to bring out original information in the herder/farmer configuration.

Conceptual/Theoretical Clarifications

Let it be cleared from the beginning that herders here is not specific to any tribe as ascribed to the Fulani people overtime by some scholars. Herders would mean any person or group of persons in the business of keeping livestock. The keeper can be from any of the religions or tribal affiliations as well an indigene to any part of the country -north, south, west or east. That is to say that even among the Fulani, there exist farmers alongside herders and impasse. Going forward, the term crisis and conflict will be used interchangeably to mean a distortion of peace and mutual coexistence.

There is hardly any society in world history where there is a total absence of crisis. Crisis is a normal part of human existence. The herders/farmers crisis is an aspect of post independence challenges in Nigeria and mostly in the north central region. Since the emergence of the modern nation state in Africa, scholars are interested to find out how African nations can mobilise their ethnic and religious resources to achieve development and transformation. According to Uji, Wilfred “the gap between the developed and the underdeveloped nation lies in the ability of a nation to mobilise her ethnic and religious resources through qualitative education and economic empowerment to achieve national transformation.”

On her visit to Nigeria, Hilary Clinton, then Secretary of State of the United States of America warned of a possible state collapse during the Obasanjo era. The Boko Haram insurgency in the North east of Nigeria and the herdsmen invasion of North central Nigeria are indicators of a near state collapse. The herders/farmers crisis is viewed by some security experts as a disguise and diversionary tactics of the ruling elites in Nigeria; create conflicts in which the masses are often recruited as cannon-fodder. The Vice President of Nigeria- Yemi Osinbajo points out that: “the farmers/herders crisis in Nigeria has been politicised; there is no ethnic or religious colouration to it.”

This is the official version or the narrative of the federal government under President Mohammadu Buhari. While some state governments accuse herdsmen militia under the sponsorship of Miyetti Allah; as the source of the conflicts, the federal government blames it on the activities of the ethnic and religious groups, politicised by the ruling political class. Commenting on the herdsmen invasion on Benue in 2018, then Inspector General of Police Ibrahim Idris said it was not more than a “communal clash” between neighbours who have lived together. Again, Uji said:

The conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria are interpreted by some scholars as an outcome of the poor underdevelopment of the forces of production as well as factors of production. Agricultural production in Nigeria is factored on the use crude primitive forces where the factors of production are grossly unutilised. The pastoral and farming economy are controlled by crude forces of production and hence, the conflict

inherent. In countries such as Brazil and Argentina with a larger cattle population than Nigeria; where the ranching economy has been put in place, there is hardly any conflict between herders and farmers. Rather, the large economies provide supplements between the herders and farmers. Pastoral activities and farming are complementing in nature, depending on the state of development of the respective industries. (77)

The government of Benue state has adopted ranching as an economic policy that can provide for peace and security between herders and farmers for a long term. The **Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches establishment Law 2017** of Benue State is an economic foresight that is aimed to provide peace in Benue. On the 25th of January 2021, the south west Governors and Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN) held a meeting in Akure Ondo State, where it was resolved in a communiqué as follows:

- The security and welfare of the people of Nigeria is the primary purpose of Government as enshrined in the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended.
- The stakeholders are committed to the unity and indivisibility of Nigeria.
- Insecurity is a national challenge and not peculiar to any tribe or region but must be addressed by the cooperation of all.
- The order of the Ondo State Governor was misconstrued and misrepresented by a section of the media. He only ordered those occupying the Forest Reserves in Ondo State illegally to quit.

- Criminals should be apprehended and punished, no matter their origin, class or status.
- Security agencies have been trying to stem the tide of criminality in the country but must step up their efforts in the fight.
- There is the need to build partnership for peace and security with MACBAN and jointly wage war against criminality.
- No one had sent anyone away from any state or region but all hands must be on deck to fight criminality.
- MACBAN is a peace loving, law abiding organization which does not harbour or condone criminals and agreed that:
 - (i) Night grazing should be banned henceforth
 - (ii) Under age herding is inimical to security and hence be banned
 - (iii) Occupation of State Forest Reserves illegally is condemned.
- MACBAN also suffers insecurity and kidnapping and thus desire peaceful coexistence.
- MACBAN is ready for any peaceful move by the states to engender security.
- Fake news is another issue that makes our security worse than solving it.
- There must be an enduring framework with MACBAN in a way that will help address security issues.
- That free range grazing must be stopped to avoid conflicts between the farmers and the herders

- Strengthening an alternative security arrangements and make them complementary to the mainstream security agencies in Nigeria.

- MACBAN should embrace and be committed to modern breeding process by creating grazing reserves and practice ranching to prevent cattle roaming about.

- Standing Committee comprising of farmers, MACBAN and the Government should be set up in each state (where they don't exist) to ensure synergy and result.

- We must create economic opportunities for our people and reduce opportunities for criminalities in our country.

(source:www.proshareng.com>news>Communique

25/01/2021)

The meeting by these groups was necessitated by an earlier call for herders to vacate Ondo state forests by Governor, Rotimi Akeredolu.

Similarly, to control the herders/farmers crisis, the governors of the north central region of Nigeria met with the leadership of Miyetti Allah at the instance of the Inspector of police Ibrahim Mohammed on January 29th 2020. The security summit, which had ‘Strategic Partnership for Effective Community Policing in the North-Central Zone/FCT’ as theme, was held at Ta’al Conference Hotel. According to IGP, “It is worthwhile to note that the foundation of our community policing strategy rests on the cooperation of the traditional rulers, who will be asked to nominate credible citizens to be trained by the police as community policing officers. A successful community policing strategy will increase trust, confidence and

communication between the community and the police and most significantly reduce crime. “In line with the Federal Government’s agenda, deliberate, strategic steps have been taken to deepen community policing in living up to the responsibility for the protection of lives and properties of Nigerians.”

In his own submission, Governor Abdulahi Sule, the host governor said “Criminality has led to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are freely used by unpatriotic elements to achieve heinous and selfish aims. This unpleasant development has become worrisome and a cause for concern, not only to the security agencies but to all and sundry.”

Benue State governor, Samuel Ortom, reiterated that the Anti-Open Grazing Law of his state was not made to target a particular group of persons. Ortom, who commended the efforts of the Inspector-General of Police for initiating the summit, said the plan to have a proper community policing was a step in the right direction. The governor, who described security as an important ingredient of life, said without security, no community would experience development. According to Ortom, “I’m worried because many investors have refused to come to my state to invest despite all efforts because of the ugly security situation that has sent thousands to their early graves and sent thousands away from their ancestral homes and occupations.”

Ortom also said “If we must see the end to insecurity in the country, we must all respect the rule of law. The laws of the land should not be toyed with; everyone should respect the law... Benue State now has a law.

Let everyone respect it. If any person wishes to go into livestock business in our state, ranching is the only option.”

Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State warned any group that goes about attacking communities to stay away from his state, as he would not condone any form of attacks. In his words “We will give it back to any group that dares to attack our people no matter how long it will take.”

The communiqué stated that community leaders and traditional rulers would assist the police in the selection process of those to be recruited, and that the various state governors would re-enforce and provide improved capacity to various security apparatuses in their respective states in support of the Federal Government’s policy of community policing.

(Source: [m.guardian.ng>politics>amp](https://m.guardian.ng/politics))

The Federal government on its part has introduced the Rural Grazing Areas (RUGA) for the herders; a disservice to the various state laws, already put in place like the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law of Benue State which was signed into law in 2017. The states that accepted the RUGA policy included: Gombe, Taraba, Adamawa, Kaduna, Sokoto, Nassarawa, Zamfara, Kebbi, Katsina, Kogi, Niger, Bauchi, Plateau and Kano state. (Source: [www.bbc.com>pidgin>tori](https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori) of July 19th 2019.

Again, the Federal Government of Nigeria through Vice President Yemi Osibanjo on September, 10, 2019, inaugurated what is called the National Livestock Transformation Plan in Mayo Belwa Adamawa State. Prof. Osibanjo said the plan was designed to run from 2019 to 2028 as part of federal government initiatives at ending the herder/farmer crisis in

Nigeria. It was to be piloted in seven states of Adamawa, Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Nassarawa, Taraba and Zamfara.

The federal government said, “government does not and will not take any land from a State or local government. Any participating state will provide the land and its own contribution to the project. The federal government merely supports. It is a plan that hopes to birth tailor-made ranches where cattle are bred and meat and dairy products are produced using modern livestock breeding and dairy methods. This solves the problem of cattle grazing into and destroying farmlands. It ensures a practical response to the pressures on water and pasture by forces of climate change. I wish to emphasise that this is not RUGA. The idea of RUGA settlements launched by the Ministry of Agriculture created a problem when it was perceived as a plan to seize lands to create settlements for herders. RUGA was not the plan designed and approved by the governors and the President rightly suspended the implementation.”
(Source: NAN)

The aforementioned are some efforts by the federal and states governments at addressing the herder/farmer crisis in Nigeria. This is not to include agitations and awareness lectures by way of symposia/workshops/conferences and media education by different experts on conflict management within and outside the country. Academic papers have been harvested by conflict management and security experts to push for peace in the herders/farmers impasse. Where we are now is the greatest undoing of all times.

Historical Glance into the Herder/Farmer Crisis

The herder/farmer relations in north central Nigeria is dated back to the pre-colonial era where the two groups existed on the platform of mutual co-existence and dependency. Scholars like Akiga Sai and Iyo Joseph indicated that the groups had common shared friendly interactions. They opined that as far back as the 14th century, the nomadic herders were expanding across the north that led to the conflict between the Hausa kings and the nomadic. For instance, in 1803 in the Sokoto Jihad led by Uthman Dan Fodio that the Fulani Caliphate was established, scholars like R.A Sergeant says the Tiv people were the most populated and predominant in the Benue Valley, stretching to the Adamawa Mountains down to the Rivers Benue and Niger confluence.

Since the creation of modern Nigeria, the goal and the ambition of the Fulani political class has been centred on the internal colonization of minority groups in the country. Sir Ahmadu Bello in the Parrot Newspaper of 12 October 1960, declared that: “The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our grandfather, Othman Danfodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We must use the minorities in the North and willing tools and South as conquered territories and never allow their future.”

This declaration by Ahmadu Bello has a deep imperial intent as manifested in contemporary herdsmen expansion in Nigeria. To achieve the objective of internal colonisation, certain features were put in place such as the idea of nomadic education, national nomadic commission,

grazing routes and grazing reserves, and the politicisation of the military top command control by the Hausa/Fulani elites.

In North Africa, nomadic herdsman groups like the Berbers and the Tuoregs, armed and mobilised by Islam carved out territories in Mali and Niger. France responded swiftly by dismantling the Islamic States in the West African sub region. However, the dislocation of these Islamic groups found outlets of expansionism into Nigeria, Chad and Cameroun through the creation of terrorists groups like Boko Haram and the herdsman militia group sponsored by Miyetti Allah.

In recent history, the herders/famers crisis in Nigeria is traceable to the emergence of Miyetti Allah, a socio-cultural group. The emergence of herdsman terrorism in Nigeria is tied to the activities of Miyetti Allah and a series of loosed network between them and nomadic herdsman across West Africa. These terrorists groups backed by the state and institutionalised ethnicity are well armed, equipped and trained in the act of modern warfare using light and medium scale weapons in paving the way for herdsman expansionism across Nigeria. The argument has always being that there are grazing routes and grazing reserves which must be secured for the herdsman across the region.

Since 2013, there has been series of herdsman invasion of the central states and some other parts of the country. These attacks have far reaching impacts on social and economic development in the region as affects the agrarian population who are largely commercial and sedentary farmers, with no other means of livelihood. The herders often accuse the locals who are farmers for rustling, killing or refusing their herds the land and water

to graze. Another block of the herders group claims that herders have been part communities where they are no longer wanted. To this group, the issue of grazing on crops and criminal activity is orchestrated by alien herders who maybe fleeing some parts of the continents like Senegal, Mali and Libya as a result of climate change, in search of greener pastures.

Policy analysts are of the opinion that population growth has uttered the structure that provided for cattle routes. With this development, it is difficult for the land to contain both herds and crops, thus the jostle which results to crisis. In a paper presented at the University of Nigeria Nsukka on 17th May, 2019, tagged “the challenges of mitigating herdsmen attacks on people of Nigeria: lessons from Benue state,” then Benue State governor, Samuel Ortom said:

Today we live in the 21st century and open grazing is extinct in most countries of the world. In Europe, America, Asia and in many countries in Africa, pastoralism has long given way to ranching. How can Nigeria then still be battling with a problem of pastoralism that in other countries has been solved over a century ago? According to the United States Department of Agriculture, USDA, India has 303 million cattle, Brazil, 226 million, China, 100 million, USA, 93 million, Argentina, 53 million and Australia 27 million. All these countries ranch their animals. Nigeria has less than 20 million cattle which could also be easily ranched. Unfortunately, the cows are allowed to either roam the streets freely or encroach on people’s farms and other investments.

A ranching policy in Nigeria will provide avenue for both crop farmers and those involved in animal husbandry to increase production using modern technology. The Netherlands in Europe and Swaziland in Africa are both small countries who export a huge amount of beef through the practice of ranching. With arable land of just 2% and population less than 9% that of Nigeria, the Ranches and Animal Husbandry Agriculture subsector of The Netherlands exported meat worth over 21 billion EURO, that is about 9 trillion Naira, between 2016 and 2018 only. Ranching by law and policy therefore, if properly implemented in our country, will also yield similar results and have great positive impact on our economic diversification dreams and our food security.

The idea of ranching has been rejected by some stakeholders in national politics, making it look like an ethnic agenda. For instance, on the 25th of January, 2018, the then Defence Minister briefing Journalists after a quarterly Security Council meeting at the State House Abuja, was reported online in Vanguard of 26th January, 2018 and Punch of 27th January, 2018 to have stated that the law passed by Benue State is the cause of killings in the state. He defended herdsmen's attacks and killings and blamed the victims for blocking cattle routes and reserves. In his exact words:

Look at this issue (killings in Benue and Taraba), what is the remote causes (sic) of this farmers' crisis? Since the nation's independence, we know there used to be a route which the cattle

rearers take because they are all over the nation. You go to Bayelsa, Ogun, you will see them. If those routes are blocked, what do you expect will happen?” “These people are Nigerians. It is just like one going to block shoreline; does that make sense to you? These are the remote causes of the crisis. But the immediate cause is the grazing law.

On June 5, 2018, as reported in Punch of 6th June, 2018 in a statement signed by his Public Relations Officer, Col. Tukur Gusau, called for the suspension of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, 2017 as the only condition for peace in Benue and other states which have enacted similar laws. The statement was emphatic that: “We need to employ other channels with the affected states to reduce tension by suspending the implementation of the anti-open grazing laws while also negotiating safe routes for the herders.”

Causes of Herder/Farmer Crisis

Several factors have been advanced to the cause of the herder/farmer crisis by the affected parties, government, nongovernmental organizations as well as crisis management and security stakeholders. The following claims will be adopted in this study: climate change, cattle rustling, political manipulations/impunity, growth and population and crop destruction.

Climate Change

According to Stephen T. Jackson, Professor Emeritus of Botany, University of Wyoming, climate change is a “periodic modification of earth’s climate brought about as a result of changes in atmosphere as well as interactions between the atmosphere and various other geologic, chemical, biological and geographical factors within the earth system.” That is to say that the climate is no longer what it used to be. This has brought a thorough heat on the planet and this affects the growth and development of the flora and fauna. According to [Britannica.com/science/climate-change](https://www.britannica.com/science/climate-change) updated Jan, 28, 2021, the causes of climate change show where:

- The brightness of the Sun continues to increase as the star ages and it passes on an increasing amount of this energy to Earth's atmosphere over time.
- Fossil-fuel combustion, deforestation, rice cultivation, livestock ranching, industrial production, and other human activities have increased since the development of agriculture and especially since the start of the Industrial Revolution.
- Greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide, methane, and water vapour, absorb infrared radiation emitted from Earth's surface and reradiate it back, thus contributing to the greenhouse effect.
- Ice sheets, sea ice, terrestrial vegetation, ocean temperatures, weathering rates, ocean circulation, and GHG concentrations are influenced either directly or indirectly by the atmosphere; however, they also all feed back into the atmosphere and influence it in important ways.

- Periodic changes in Earth's orbit and axial tilt with respect to the Sun (which occur over tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of years) affect how solar radiation is distributed on Earth's surface.

- Tectonic movements, which change the shape, size, position, and elevation of the continental masses and the bathymetry of the oceans, have had strong effects on the circulation of both the atmosphere and the oceans.

According to the same Britannica, the outcomes of climate change

Include but not limited to the following:

- Human societies have changed adaptively in response to climate variations, although evidence abounds that certain societies and civilisations have collapsed in the face of rapid and severe climatic changes.

- The complex feedbacks between climate components can produce "tipping points" in the climate system, where small, gradual changes in one component of the system can lead to abrupt climate changes.

- The history of life has been strongly influenced by changes in climate, some of which radically altered the course of evolution.

- The most familiar and predictable phenomena are the seasonal cycles, to which people adjust their clothing, outdoor activities, thermostats, and agricultural practices.

The effects of climate change have increased the jostle for greener pastures for herders and more fertile land for farmers. Nomadic herders now travel from different countries in Africa to graze in North Central area of the country where the lands is more accommodating for agricultural activities. To this end, there are points where interests are crashed and this brings in crisis.

It should be noted that this is an emerging trend, way back the situation was not like it is today. Herders could easily graze in any part of Africa without many problems. The industrial revolution world over has resulted to depletion of the ozone layer which makes the land hot and therefore dries out plants meant for animal consumption especially in dry seasons. World powers are already considering measures at curtailing climate charge, but while the outcome is awaited, crisis pertaining plants and animals, guised in herders and farmers have continued to wage on.

With this development, it is becoming extremely difficult for animals to graze. Climate change causes unavailability of grass and water for the animals. So, there has been an unprecedented movement of herders down the states of north central Nigeria where there is greener fields and water to graze. These herds come in and at the detriment of farmers who are denied access to their farms and their yields including yam, rice, cassava, maize, and others destroyed. The concept, “indigenous herders” has come to mean that certain herders have lived alongside farmers in north central for ages, with the ability to settle their misunderstanding amicably. However, the marauding herders that have come to cause harvoc overtime

in north central and other parts of the country is a situation states and the federal government on one side, herders and farmers on the other side are trying to come to terms with. In reality, consequences of climate change as defined in this context cannot be exempted from issues relating to short and long term causes of the crisis.

Population Growth

Population growth is the increase in the number of individuals in a population. Many nations with rapid population growth have low standards of living, whereas many nations with low rates of population growth have high standards of living. Population growth is caused by the operation of fertility, mortality, and migration. Regarding the population growth of countries and other national populations, the effect of migration is normally not as influential as the effects of fertility and mortality, usually considered to be the major factors directly causing national population growth (Hinde 1998). However, regarding the population growth of the subareas (states, provinces, counties) of national populations, migration is the single most important of the three demographic processes. Differences in birthrates and death rates in subareas of the same country are typically small compared to differences between the subareas in migration. Migration is thus the major method for redistributing the population within a country.

In addition rapid population growth tends to impact the interactions between human beings and their environment. An increasing number of people in the population lead to pressures on land resources, which limit the amount of

arable agricultural land and tend to worsen the situation of food supply and human reproduction (Shaw 1976). Furthermore, a high rate of population growth is likely to increase population density in certain geographic areas, particularly urban settings. As a result overcrowding, unemployment, and poverty are likely to lead to social problems in some localities (Sibly and Hone 2002).

In reality, population growth has not been properly addressed by government in relation to human and natural resources. The landmark we know since creation of mankind has never increase. Rather, human population has continued to grow. This has brought untold pressure on the land especially where it is green like the north central area. No official census has been conducted in Nigeria since 2006 but statistics from reliable sources like the National Bureau of Statistics pegged Nigeria's population at over two hundred million (200,000,000 +).

By implication, the number of towns and villages has increased. The number of herders and farmers has also multiplied. This has called for the jostling on the little land available. A landmark, probably useless a decade ago is now useful owing to the growing need of population growth. Thus, the so called "grazing routes" have been occupied by farmlands or villages, making it impossible for herds to migrate or graze. Where the herders and farmers are caught infringing on their rights and trying to sort it out through jungle justice is what has brought the crisis. Even in states where the Anti Open Grazing law is in place, the herders deem it a breach of their fundamental human right. This is a serious point of impasse. This would have been avoidable if planners and policy makers did what is right.

The body language in the polity is that the herders and farmers are left to continue fight to finish.

Different professionals have called for a reexamination of the farmer/herder relationship with a view to ending the crisis. But, these calls have been misinterpreted to suit political sentiments and stereotype. To many, the herder/farmer crisis is an attempt at land grabbing. And yet, it should be noted in honest quarters that the herder/farmers have coexisted in this region overtime. However, population growth with pressure on land is a situation to deal with.

Political Manipulations/impunity

Political manipulation is understood as a special kind of influence when the manipulator induces the person into actions for or against the interest of state. This kind of power is related to impunity in which the person who so manipulates power is not punished or is exempted from facing the consequences of his actions. In politics manipulation is understood as a special kind of influence when the manipulator induces the person to actions which that didn't intend to carry out at present. Manipulation differs from power, imperious influence with absence of the direct instructions, the order what to do, and open compulsion following it or threat of application of sanctions. In a course of manipulating influence, the person doesn't feel external compulsion, it seems him that he makes decision, chooses the form of the behavior himself.

Political manipulation is based on regular introduction of sociopolitical myths-illusory of the ideas confirming certain values and the norms perceived mainly on trust, without rational critical judgement of realities, the validity in mass consciousness. Myths are created to hold down people. When myths manage to be introduced imperceptibly in consciousness of mass, they find huge force for the majority of people don't suspect about occurring manipulation.

Critics of the Buhari Administration have accused the federal government's body language towards the havoc unleashed by herders against the farmers throughout the country. Such critics have traced President Buhari's ties with the herders as the grand patron of Miyetti Allah. Either way, security issues are more critical than they look; therefore it is not completely right to dismiss these critics just as it is not completely wrong to make such assertions. This is where some interpret the crisis as a continuation of the Uthman Jihad aimed at conquering the people, grabbing the land and forcing the inhabitants of north central region to Islamise or force the region under the colony of the sultanate.

For political reasons, some political gladiators also use the herdsmen as a smokescreen to gain political points. Many attacks have been blamed on politicians in the region. Political impunity does not last forever. This is even making it impossible for political gladiators in the region to agree on workable concepts and solution to ending the herder/farmer crisis. Some critics have accused the Fulani oligarchy of carrying on the wishes of Sir Ahmadu Bello who once opined that Nigeria is the inheritance of the

Fulani; an estate of his grandfather, Uthman Dan Fodio. Whatever the thinking, it should be reckoned that these groups - herders and farmers once had a good relationship which has since been thwarted by the political class. Until this is addressed headlong, things can only get worse, going forward.

Cattle Rustling

Cattle rustling or cattle theft is the act of stealing cows or other livestock in the context of this study. In Nigeria, cattle rustling is synonymous with banditry activities where numerous herds have been reported to have been rustled and sold. To members of Miyetti Allah, the reason for their attacks on vulnerable farmer settlements and communities is incited by the killing or rustling of their stocks. So, it is either they move to safer havens or retaliate with the use of weapons to send signals of war and anarchy which has brought the untold stories of herders brutality against the farming communities. This has misplaced hundreds of thousands and the situation has degenerated to every region in the country.

The socio-cultural organisation, Miyetti Allah (Kauta Hore) has defended certain attacks in the north central region of Nigeria. This group blames such attacks on rustling of their herds, killing of their cows and blocking of cattle routes. The stealing of cows is bad, but it is worse scenario to take a human life in retaliation. A life lost cannot be recovered. This was not the case in the past. On their part, some farmers have failed to recognise the attachment of the herder to his herd. This does not go

down well with the inciters. The middle men have decided to use the lingering faceoff to incite insurrection among the farmers. In civilised societies, crisis cannot be a tool for looking for peace. It aggravates and get to a point of no return thereby creating more enemies in the process and causing chaos to victims and the vulnerable. As earlier postulated, both groups had very civil ways of sorting out differences in the past without rancor or acrimony. Why is it practically impossible to end the feud now?

Recommendations

The situation is not out of hand if the right thing is done at the right time and right place. The thing is all stakeholders must be willing to embrace well researched and workable solutions to curb the impasse. The following recommendations can also be helpful:

- One workable solution will be to understand and appreciate the uniqueness and peculiarities as well as territorial integrity of every state. All state laws regarding grazing and farming must be so appreciated by the federal government. In other words, it is the duty of the federal government to give adequate backing to states that have established good laws to curb the crisis.

- The government of Nigeria at all levels must understand where the world is going on animal husbandry. The globally accepted practice now is that animals must be ranched. Ranching has proven to be safer for the economic pursuit of the herders. It is

also a revenue spinner for federal/states/local governments. The animals are healthier for human consumption. This way, the herders, farmers and government authority must provide the ground for ranches.

➤ Authorities of the herders must conscientise their members in view of current realities. Most of the herders are not educated and therefore not in tune with global best practices. Therefore they must be made to understand that ranching is not a denial of their rights but a precaution for crisis and security of their stocks. Most times, the elite class who do not mean well for the country send the message that ranching is strictly against the pastoralists.

➤ Opinion leaders must guard against using inciting statements on crisis related issues. It is a national shame where elites go about inciting their followers through words. Stakeholders must come to a round table and ensure a closure to this crisis. This was achieved in the past even in the face of barbarism. Why is it too difficult now? Everyone must come out of smokescreen and give peace a chance. Because, the persons who are suffering from this fall out are normally the commoners who have little or no way to survive without their herds or farms.

➤ Cow rustlers and killers must be treated as common criminals and terrorists. A situation where certain criminal elements are blamed for a crime of a few is unfair as it is and under representation of facts. There are criminal elements on the side of

the herders and the farmers. Unless and until the affected communities identify and fish them out, the crisis will continue.

➤ The proliferation of small and light scale weapon in the country if not check will cause a serious crisis in this country. What we see now is a litmus test of brutality of armed carriers. People can dictate with the gun and cause mayhem to unsuspecting members of the public. The fall of regimes in some part of Africa like Somalia, and Libya has brought in too many weapons and weaponry unchecked. The AK-47 commonly used by criminal elements is in too many hands. The other resulting consequences of this proliferation can be better imagined through kidnappings, banditry and terrorism.

➤ If properly empowered, the traditional leaders can better tackle this challenge. This group is closer to the grassroots, and relying on their foot soldiers through community policing, bad roots can be uprooted. A situation where certain forces, stronger than the traditional leaders intervene is inciting and counterproductive in tackling the herders/farmers crisis. In the same vein, traditional rulers so empowered should be held accountable for criminality within their reach. This way, intelligence gathering will increase and the national police will do their job better. Communities are soft targets because internal forces must be part of a security breach.

➤ Communities should find a way to accommodate pastoralists by providing some land for ranches. The herders have

been part of the north central region overtime. On their part, the herders must join forces with their host communities to do away with external threats who hide under herdsmen or farmers. A combined security effort like this will help sharpen the herders/farmers relation for good.

➤ Nigerian borders are porous and must be checked to address the influx of weapons. The so called “foreign herders” cannot gain access into Nigeria if the borders are tightened. Nigeria is a big brother to other African countries but it is wrong when her sovereignty is threatened. Porous borders are beneficial to looters and black-marketers. They are not good for the security of any nation no matter how sophisticated in security architecture.

➤ Dialogue according to peace management experts is the only panacea for peaceful coexistence. It is high time Nigeria organised an honest security summit to address security holistically. Moves have being made in the past months following spikes of herder/farmer crisis in south-west Nigeria. Nigeria is ours and as it stands, there is threat to her security.

Conclusion

This piece has hold on to the idea that the herder/farmer crisis is a political creation orchestrated by hidden motives. This crisis has caused

too many deaths and untold hardship to survivals in the north central region of the country both on the side of herders and the farmers. This ought not to be so. Because from a historical perspective. These groups have always sorted differences amicably. Climate change, populations growth, political manipulations, cattle rustling and elites have being incisive and that is why a bad situation has been made worse. It is not late to address the challenges. The past is gone, but the future holds a lot for the living. Both the herders and farmers must come together supported by government to end the crisis. The time for open grazing is past because of growth in population. Thus, the pastoralists must think in the direction of ranching to continue in their business. The farmers must also encourage the herders by providing parcels of land for ranches. This will do more good than harm to the parties in the crisis. Peace is sacrosanct and must be pursued vigorously.

REFERENCES

Akiga, B. Sai. "The Descent of the Tiv from Ibenda Hill." London. International African Institute. 1954.

Iyo, J. "The Origins, Early Migrations and Settlement Patterns of the Tiv in the Lower Benue Valley c. 1475-1900 AD in Idrees, A.A and Ochefu, Y.A (eds) Studies in the History of Central Nigeria area: Vol-1. Lagos. CSS Limited. 2002.

Jackson, S.T, "Climate Change." Encyclopedia Britannica, January 28, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/science/climate-change>

Hinde, Andrew. Demographic Methods. New York: Oxford University Press. 1998.

Shaw, R. Paul. "Government Perceptions of Population Growth." Population Studies 30: 77– 86. 1976.

Sibly, Richard M., and Jim Hone. Population Growth Rate and Its Determinants: An Overview. Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences 357: 1153–1170. 2002.

Uji, Wilfred. "Religious Fundamentalism Movements and Social Conflicts in Nigeria." 99- 111. Kaduna. Kaduna Journal of Historical Studies. 2011.

Uji, Wilfred. "Western Cultural Imperialism: Nigerian Youth and Nation-Building." 60-79. Makurdi. *Journal of Arts and Culture*, vol.9. 2011.

Mazrui, A. A. "Cultural Forces in World Politics." New Hemisphere. Heinemann Educational Books Inc. 1990.

Nwankwo, A. "Can Nigeria Survive?" Enugu. Fourth Dimension Publishing Company Enugu. 1981.

<https://www.proshare.com>new>communique>. Retrieved 25/01/2021

<https://m.gurdian.ng>politics>amp>

<https://www.bbc.com>pidgin>tori> Retrieved 19/7/2019

CHAPTER TWELVE

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

**PERSONAL REFLECTIONS OF PAUL IYORPUU UNONGO ON THE
SITUATION IN TIVLAND EXPRESSED AS AN OPEN LETTER
ADDRESSED TO ALL THE TIV PEOPLE OF BENUE-PLATEAU
STATE, NIGERIA.**

Wanteregh Paul Unongo

PROLOGUE

Julien Benda, once wrote:

The men whose function it is to defend all eternal and impartial values, like justice and reason, and whom I call the intellectuals, have betrayed this function in the interests of expediency.....

Perhaps in a small way, this dialogue attempts to play the role Julien expects. The task has not been an easy one though. I have been called names, branded a

‘traitor’ for advocating changes which will not benefit Tivland but instead will destroy the political unity of the Tiv people. Campaigns have been held and people warned against my “political ambitions” and my “dangerous” ideas because I did not speak “on behalf of the Tiv people” neither did I know Tiv.

Personally however, when I recall all the nonsense that has been spoken “on behalf of Tiv people” in the past fifteen years by those who “know Tiv,” I am not seriously worried about this accusation. Furthermore, I never claimed to speak “on behalf” of anyone. I’ve merely offered opinions – my opinions. If the generality of Tiv people do not agree with my opinions, they can repudiate them. The crust of the matter is that I have always preferred my own ideas to “ready made” or second-hand ones, hence this dialogue.

Contents

1. Serious Discourse On The Deplorable Plight And Position Of The Tiv.
2. The Pitiably Backward Tiv.
3. Selected Grievances Of The Tiv Which Are Sincerely Intolerable.
4. World War I & II: Tiv Tribes Men Fought And Died For Europe.
5. How To Start Face-Lifting And Stop The Downward Trend In Tiv Land.
6. Proposed Administrative Reforms And Organizations In Tiv Land.

7. Divisional Boundaries.
8. My Personal Reservation About The Five Former Intermediate Areas.
9. Why A Separate Gboko Division.
10. Tiv Solidarity.
11. The Position Of Tor-Tiv.
12. Summary Of Administrative Re-organization Proposals.

Fellow Tiv

Serious Discourse on The Deplorable Plight And Position of Tiv.

No doubt many of you do not know me and will be surprised to be receiving an open letter from me. I hope however, that you will nevertheless give my letter the serious and honest attention it deserves because I shall be engaging you in a hard-hitting blunt and frank discussion.

I am a young Nigerian who comes from the Tiv tribe. I have written and said quite a lot on Nigeria and the Nigerian war. I have engaged some of the best minds that our country has in numerous debates and have dared to challenge Nigerian genius to procure for our ailing country the kind of diagnosis and prognosis which will cure our country of its correct illness so completely and so permanently that long after we, present generation are gone, posterity will still benefit.

I have on a private basis, and on the official behalf of the Federal Military Government, challenged the wisdom of foreign friends, foreign meddlers, foreign apostles of doom and racial hate, and foreign corrupt organized churches who/which have from their “blameless” ivory towers, questioned and challenged our right, as a people, to make our own unique mistakes and so evolve our own unique experiences and answers to the unique and specific problems which confront us.

Throughout these numerous activities, in my humble way, the most satisfying attempt, has been the gradual emergence of a definite pattern: - the honest attempt to bring upon the problem at hand, the hard-nosed objective method of inquiry in which a problem is chewed and churned and thrown this side up and that side, and then chewed up some more. The inevitable outcome, has always been the total exposure of the problem in its correct and truest form in all its facets and ramifications. Problems so exposed are much easier to solve, because correct and sincere answers can then be much more readily identified.

It is therefore, on this basis of this conviction that I wish to turn my searchlight, for the moment, away from the total Nigerian problem which has preoccupied my mind for quite sometime, to the specific and particular problem of the Tiv people of Benue-Plateau State, Nigeria.

I have very little time to engage or answer to those who may question the wisdom of my decision to spotlight the Tiv problem, neither am I really disturbed by the possibility of being called a tribalist [a terribly No.

K term in “non-tribal” Nigeria], by those who will choose to misunderstand my actions. To these people, and those who may honestly be wondering, I wish to give the following brief facts:

(1) Nigeria, our beloved country, is a tribal society. The duty of true men of intellect, is not to deny the existence of these tribes with their strong, ethnic and idiosyncratic affinities. Their duty is to study these tribes, understand them and on the basis of such knowledge, recommend the best system which will foster the utilization of the immense tribal energy for [a] the rapid procurement of improved social amenities to the greatest number possible and [b] the evolution of a truer and more embracing national destiny to which all tribal destinies will be subservient. To achieve these goals one does not have to become an Ostrich and deny that one is a tribesman nor pretend that Nigeria is not made up of tribes. I confess most proudly that patrilineally, I am a Tiv tribesman, but I am a most dedicated Nigerian nationalist and all my tribesmen are fiercely sincere in their conviction and commitment to Nigeria, I find nothing unhealthy, strange nor contradictory in this situation at all.

(2) Social mobility and technological advancement in our country are at a primordial level. This fact (coupled with the fact that Nigeria is a tribal society) has pushed most Nigerians to entrench their psychological, as well as their economic and social

roots within the area domiciled by their tribe. Thus, it is a fact that our Nigeria is basically a tribal society even by physical settlement i.e. by habitation. My father and mother, brothers and sisters and so on reside in Tiv division of Benue-Plateau State. Hence my true home (at least psychologically) is back there. It seems therefore reasonable for me to yearn for social improvement in Tiv Division where my home is. When I see all the hospitals in Lagos, the fantastic industrial establishment which as well as providing jobs, has brought the people of this area in direct contact with foreigners who have added to the advancement of Nigerians resident there, and when I contemplate the simple social amenities which by and large, are taken for granted here, such as pipe borne water, electricity, good roads, durable homes and so on; and when I meet essentially similar such Government and Private amenities which are totally absent in Tiv Division, in numerous other places in Nigeria, I am disturbed about “back home.” Sometimes I become so confused that I wonder if the Tiv villages (including our headquarters Gboko), are really places in the same country as towns such as Ibadan, Owo, Benin, Kano, Kaduna, Jos, or even much smaller towns like Ikenne. Thus concern over this deplorable and totally unacceptable social conditions has forced me to descend from my comfortable ivory tower in Lagos and speak frankly with and to, the Tiv people by demanding that they face up to the harsh reality of their miserable backwardness and do something about it. This is not an academic problem to me. It

couldn't because as a Tiv tribesman, I need must return home periodically to visit the old folks back home. Thus even if I did not suffer the psychological pain of the backwardness of the Tiv people, I would have suffered, willy-nilly, the physical tortures emanating from the deplorable state of affairs, "back home." Thus if I appear too serious and too specifically pre-occupied with Tiv, it is because I am tired of the silence about the miserable backwardness and the undeniable neglect and exploitation of the "fatalistic" Tiv in our beloved country, Nigeria, by both the Governments which ruled this country, the civilizing do-gooders of various religious convictions and tragically enough, by most of those Tiv who belonged to that unique and illusive group of false apostles-politicians of the First Republic!

(3) I believe in earnest, that my open letter, is in the direction of the overall interests of our great country, Nigeria. This letter will actually complement and consolidate the efforts which the Federal Military Government is making to keep Nigeria one and to evolve a healthier and fairer Nigeria. True and constructive discussions, in the long run, benefit humanity more than deceptions. It is a fact that a great number of the young Tiv – whether they be in the hot humid trenches of the East Central State, making the ultimate sacrifice: the offering of their lives, in order to consolidate multi-nationalism in the context of one sovereign Nigeria; or

whether they are at universities; or in jobs; or secondary schools; or anywhere else – are beginning to question, seriously, what has happened to their land. Some have lost hope in procuring any improvement in the status quo and are surmising publicly, just like Edward Kennedy, whether indeed the Tiv, as a people, “are cursed” in Nigeria. These questions have arisen from the numerous frustrations to which their land was subjected during the era of European rule and party politics in Nigeria. Some of them are beginning to lose hope that even today, after three years of military regime, their land has not seen and is not likely to see the minimum of those transformations which will make them forget the excesses and injustices of the past era in which social ills were perpetrated against them either by default and neglect, or as a form of political punishment. These doubts and uncertainties tend to produce despondency. This letter to all Tiv is designed to foster a new and more creative feeling than that of despondency. The aim is to suggest new horizons, new attempts and new dreams for the Tiv to digest. Pessimism is a negative philosophy which will not help our backward social position in Nigeria. The Tiv must reject pessimism because this negative effect could well frustrate the commendable efforts which all of us Nigerians are making in order to create a more just and more honorable country for all of us tribesmen and for posterity. What the Tiv must do is to take advantage of the military intervention in government, and reorganize his home in a way which will maximize the rapid social

development of his home through his personal effort, as well as the effort of a government he supports, and helps to maintain in power. This, he should do now before party politicians return to pick up once again their exploitation of the Tiv. Military rulers are not party politicians and they cannot be hampered by political deals in which the interest of the greatest number of ordinary people are sacrificed on the altar of personal aggrandizement and party ideologies. Surely, the Military Government cannot refuse the Tiv, a just request for more rapid social upliftment and direct participation in the benefits of Nigeria's rising standards of living.

In summary then, this letter is designed to channel the collective frustrations of the Tiv people – soldiers alike, towards more creative and, constructive undertakings which of a necessity will forestall any defeatists adventurism that though sterile, and non-productive, would seriously undermine the efforts of the Federal Military Government and those of the rest of us Nigerians in our time of crises. This seems to me, to be a worthy national service to be undertaken urgently.

Having established the rationale for my action, I wish to continue to address all my fellow Tiv now on our basic problems.

The first problem, is to get all of us to accept intellectually, the simple fact that the Tiv are backward within the Nigerian context. Next factors conceived as being responsible for our backwardness will be

presented in a way which shall also portray some of the reasonably just grievances of the Tiv people.

Finally, I shall offer suggestions for arresting the downward trend of the Tiv and then advance definite administrative re-organizations which I feel we should adopt.

These suggestions will aim principally at rectifying the just grievances of Tiv and at procuring, for the greatest number of Tiv greater participation in the governmental decisions which have affected their lives in addition to improving their chances of becoming better informed and receiving more social amenities. Let us debate all these issues sincerely.

The Pitiably Backward Tiv

It is a fact that the Tiv are backward. Perhaps you wish to take issues with me for daring to mention this simple truth. Well, let briefly inform you.

1. Do you know that most living Tiv today (including myself and gosh, look at my youth!) were born on leaves in our mother's mud huts? And immediately after delivery, do you know that for most of us, all kinds of varying improvised implements ranging from barks of dried up raffia, (gagambe) to native "blade razors," a kind of multi-purpose tripod crude metal trapezoid, and small pieces of strings etc., etc., were used to cut our umbilical cords to herald the beginning of our new and novel independent life in this beautiful Nigeria of modern medicine,

“where babies are healthy?” Perhaps you care to contend that this is the general fate of all Nigerians. Of course, you are wrong, because a great many Nigerians had hospitals or clinics or “civilizing” contact of some sort long before I was born, in some cases, even before my father was born. Tragically far from trying to catch up, we are sinking lower and lower, or at least we have essentially remained, or have been forced to remain in basically the same condition. Today, as I write, there isn’t one single governmental hospital or even a good private one, which is catering for the health needs of the vast majority of the poor ordinary Tiv. Thus whereas I can choose my own doctors at will here in Lagos, or Kaduna, or in Jos, and even to some extent in Otuorkpo, I cannot have even one doctor in Gboko – the only town of the Tiv people where their spiritual head, the Tor Tiv resides! How about that? What I am actually saying that today, as I write and now as you read, it is a painful fact that the vast majority of Tiv babies are actually still being delivered on green leaves, as I was; in dark corners under unimaginable conditions! Surely you cannot help but surmise that today, but for the “bush” Christian clinic at Mkar, a suburb of Gboko, Gboko our headquarters is still without a hospital. Hence, even in “modern” Gboko and the surroundings, it is not impossible to imagine that today as you read perhaps a child is being delivered on green leaves. This to me is utter backwardness which we Tiv cannot deny but must not accept today. Surely, there must be something we can do, at least on a private communal effort.

2. Are you aware that today “back home” not only are our health amenities most primitive but our other social amenities will interest you. We have no water system whatsoever. An attempted water supply system in the capital “city” of the Tiv, Gboko, delivers on the very rare occasions it functions, 2/3 red mud and 1/3 rust-water, per every precious drop – but only to very few special people. It is reliably estimated that the vast majority of the almost two million or so home people have worms of some kind consumed in the waters they drink. 99.9% of all Tiv do not know what pipe-borne water is, nor electricity let alone be supplied with them. Gboko town is almost a ghost town – except for the lucrative beer parlors, which mercilessly sap our youth, our womanhood and our valor, as soon as dusk sets in, because the streets are pitch black. Of course with Kainji so far away, and all other generators of the ECN so over tasked in all the other areas, the Tiv cannot sensibly talk about electrical appliances which depend on electricity to function, neither can they conceive of what they are missing. How could they possibly miss such intricate white man’s creations such as fridges, stoves, radiograms and so on? With no more than pieces of loin cloth on the backs of most of us; no telephone system; no roads nor rail roads; no proper mail services; no capital nor business power; and generally with no economic future beyond the primitive hoe type of subsistence level of farming, one must conclude that we the Tiv of Nigeria have remained essentially primitive. If this is not undeniable backwardness, which the Tiv people should reject, and do something about, I don’t know what it is.

3. Try to visit home, if you reside outside Tiv Division as some of us do. Of course, as soon as you enter the “motorable” roads in Tiv you would need no introduction. But if you are a real village boy, as I am, then you have your true taste of our real backwardness when you come to the end of the few cut trenches called motor roads. Here you abandon your battered prized car, [very few, and particularly fortunate young Tiv own this very novel magic commodity called car] and jump on to the real Tiv roads – the “bush” foot paths – which serve as the only true communication links between 99.9% of the vast Tiv lands. On these intricate, snake-like, narrow intertwining, endlessly meandering foot-paths, the real drama of man, the beast of burden is re-enacted. Here Tiv women [including pregnant ones] and men, little Tiv children, old men, husbands and wives, we the “European spoiled” Tivs, doctors, clerks, university men, professionals and all Tiv who must need visit home, or visit friends, or conduct business at our open markets, or socialize and so on and so on, saddle up their belongings on their heads and literally hit the road. The vast majority, do so on their bare feet, some of us – the more fortunate ones, protect our feet with shoes. On these tortuous “bush” paths, real sweat and blood from cuts and bruised toes; smells and the pollen grains from the giant towering spear grass which over-grows most of these paths, and the endless sweet songs of bush birds; the cries of hot and tired babies and children, occasionally punctuated by those wild animals, all mingle together with the cheerful road songs of the seasoned Tiv trekker in one giant, serene but definitely romantic drama which could provide

real entertainment to a white missionary visitor in search of the “real” native. To me, a participating Tiv, it spells misery, injustice, intolerable abuse and backwardness. Why should I, or any Tiv man for that matter, accept this condition in a fast developing Nigeria where highly sophisticated tarred motor roads are being torn down, even today as we wage war, and new American type of super first class highways being reconstructed to take the place of the destroyed tarred roads?

4. Do you know that most Tiv are even backward in their thought as a result of petty and primitive jealousies? Do you know that the Tiv do not look kindly on the “successes” of the other Tiv, no matter how beneficial such successes may have been to their society? Do you know that a Tiv man’s success does not motivate other envious Tiv to aspire to achieve similar heights? Rather than try to climb up to the level of the successful Tiv, other ‘normal’ Tiv spend a great deal of their energies trying desperately to pull the one who is ‘up there’ down. Nobody wants anybody to be ‘better than’ they are. For example, I know of numerous occasions when jealousy made bloody liars of some otherwise innocent Tiv. Some of these strange people, for negative motives did spread wicked gossips, participated in destructive idle talk and maliciously lied against other more successful Tiv, when these successful ones embarked on projects which could, in the long run, raise the social standing of their home land. I have heard impossible stories about highly placed Tiv people, both civilian and military, some of which I have had the opportunity to investigate

personally, and found to be utterly false. These diabolical primitive jealousies, in other cases, even impeded the progress of some very progressive Tiv tribesmen. Why would these less successful Tiv, these people who indulge in malicious tale-bearing, which sometimes destroy useful people and useful social projects for Tiv land, not be merely spurred on to make more determined efforts to achieve similar successes as the more successful ones whom they envy? Obviously, there must be some other abnormal reasons emanating from their warped minds, in addition to other normal ones. However, the more easily available reason is because they are backward and primitive. This primitive, progress-obstructing, often destructive “I-must-pull-him-down-to-my-mediocre-level competition,” characteristic of the behavior of a good many Tiv people, does have its opposite counterpart. Similarly this reverse, which is indulged in by the most senior Tiv officials, has been equally harmful and detrimental to the social progress of Tiv land. The reverse of what is obtained among the less successful and mediocre Tiv is the fact a majority of the Tiv who have made it, spend a tremendous amount of their energies attempting to block the progress or ascendance of any other Tiv, and infact they try to push those down the ladder, further down! For example, I know personally of some cases, and I have heard of other cases from reliable sources, when some very successful Tiv “up there” at the top, have actually intervened to block the advancement of the less senior or less successful ones for no acceptable reasons other than the satisfaction of their bloated egos and the satisfaction of some sadistic tendencies,

perhaps. When a very successful Tiv, or senior official, who has nothing to loose, actually indulges in blatant lying against a junior, but aspiring Tiv official, or any less successful Tiv for that matter, as some have done, in order either to stop a promotion, or a contract award, or a senior appointment, all of which can do nothing but increase the social mobility, the social advancement and the purchasing capacity of the Tiv society, then such a senior Tiv, short of an attack of insanity, must be unprogressive and obviously primitive and backward. How does the getting of more Tiv university lecturers or experimental psychologists or university graduates affect me so much so as to render me so hopelessly worried as to indulge in attempts to hold the clock back by expending tremendous energy to block the educational progress of potentially bright Tiv chaps? What we, the Tiv, fail to realize is that this primitive and unprogressive trait of ours, is self destructive. It has effectively worked to hold back the social progress of our home land. It is incredible, but there are living Tiv today, who at various times actually advised governments not to hire Tiv people in certain categories of employment nor establish certain social amenities in Tiv. Even today with numerous graduates and experienced men, some of these advisers have continued in perpetrating this monstrosity before the powers which continue to seek their advise. They glibly declare that “there is no Tiv sufficiently qualified for position X. Thank you for seeking my advice.....!” Incredible, isn’t it? Doesn’t this confirm that we are very backward and primitive, even in thought? It does to me.

**SELECTED GRIEVANCIES OF THE TIV WHICH ARE
SINCERELY INTOLERABLE AND THE INJUSTICES
PERPETRATED BY THE DIFFERENT GOVERNMENTS OF
OUR COUNTRY**

Apart from the deplorable social and economic conditions, which could have been improved, it will be totally wrong to start diagnosing the social neglect and abuse of us the Tiv people with present day happening. The callous assaults started with the mass conscriptions, the forced labor and physical forceful uprooting of male members of families who were carted away in wagons, to work in mines in unknown faraway places without any financial compensation. Perhaps as Tiv, you may recall these atrocities, which were perpetrated by then British Administrators, beginning in the late twenties and continuing through to the early forties under two familiar names: ADOGON and KUZA. Today in Tiv land when you say that someone has gone to Adogon (yemAdogon), you mean he is dead.

What happened is that when the white man decided to build his railway from the privileged areas of the coast on the South to those of the North, it was decided in the twenties, that a connecting bridge be built across River Benue at Makurdi. The white economic interests decided that we the Tiv, were the obvious natives to conscript because we were supposedly powerful and hard working. And above all, the bridge was to be located in our area. Sure enough, Tiv were conscripted. With whips on

their bare backs, down our people went in hundreds into the very deep holes sunk into the river bed for the huge pillars which support the Makurdi bridge, but up came only a few. The net result was the mass murder of unpaid, forced natives, by a government which was supposed to protect them. The irony of it all is that today, slightly over forty years since ADOGON, the Nigerian railway is yet to extend into Tiv proper in order that ordinary people may benefit from a project which their fathers contributed generously, sweat and blood to help establish!

Then came the notorious KUZA era. This is even more comic though perhaps much more, or at least equally tragic. I also have personal information of this because my own father was a victim. During this period (latter half of the thirties) once again, thousands of male able-bodied “young” Tiv were removed, forcefully, from their homes, and carried almost naked, to the temperate cold of the Jos Plateau, without any financial compensation to themselves nor their families. By sheer accident, in a conversation with a former D.O. recently, I discovered that some of the Tiv administrative officers then were actually paid for the labor of these “beast of burden.” Most died even before they arrived at their shacks in their chains, many more died from the unfamiliar conditions and the severely extreme cold.

Conservatively, three quarters at least, of the ones who survived, such as my father, and were put to work, all suffered from one respiratory ailment or the other. For example, my father came back consumptive, and most of his surviving friends, whom I came to know, have either already

died of tuberculosis, or have been treated or are still consumptive. The net outcome again was the drastic depletion of the male population of Tiv – thousands died to provide wealth for greedy white businessmen who were reaping stupendous profits from the Tin and Columbite of the Jos mines. In a way, some of the crumbs which fell from the master's table, contributed significantly to the gradual but rising economic wealth of Nigeria.

It will soon be thirty years since my father “resurrected” from the tombs of the Jos Plateau. He is yet to realize a minimum of some of the social amenities taken for granted in this country – amenities which money from the nightmarish tin mines of Jos that gave him T.B. in his youth, did help bring to the respected communities of this country. His only gain was the red blanket he brought back as a souvenir – a souvenir I later discovered was meant to be used for wrapping his carcass or corpse for burial. Deaths were expected and casually accepted of all of them Tiv expendables. They represented mere canon fodders and the factory from whence they came was still functioning – thanks to Mother Nature!

I am not trying to overburden the point at all. I am dead serious. I know, I didn't know what death was at three. But somehow, the look I can recall in those sunken eyes of “UnongoGboko, Munshi” frightened me. Mark you, he had even risen to rank of Time Keeper!

Then there is the case of those notorious European wars which have been nicknamed “World Wars.”

WORLD WAR I & II: TIV TRIBESMEN FOUGHT AND DIED FOR

EUROPE

Believe it or not, even the great war of all wars, the war which was going to stop all wars – Europe’s “first world war,” even this war, Tiv tribesmen were carted off to go and fight to save Europe and end all wars. Following closely, was the horrendous 1939-1945 Nazi Germany’s World War II. During this “second world war” of Germany’s white Hitler, thousands of black Tiv fought side by side with their ruling white masters. Hundreds died and still hundreds were maimed. This was a war with a difference. It was a war for freedom and democracy, so the white administrators told us.

At the end of the war however, all the black Nigerians from all the various tribes, who fought for freedom, democracy and self-determination discovered to their dismay that the freedom, the democracy and the self-determination their black comrades died for, was first for the English and then for other white countries and not black countries – least of all Nigeria.

Despite this, the economic benefits which ensued from the great economic boom of Europe immediately after the war years, rubbed off on some of the cities and lands of some sections of the Nigerian society. The sum total of the fruits of that war became improved conditions of living, rapid social advancement and greater participation in government, increased industrial projects and consequently more jobs for a great number of Nigerians of other communities.

In contrast, what has been the lingering reminder of the fruits of the 2nd World War for the Tiv tribesmen, who contributed disproportionately to fight

Europe's war. Well, the most noticeable and pervasively persistent peculiarity is the gold tooth.

In Tiv today you find some elderly gentlemen and middle-aged men who continue to display, prominently their only prized possession accrued from participating in the liberalizing war – their gold/silver etc. teeth. They may still remember “blady facking India,” “Boma” (Burma) and the fact that Japanese soldiers would always run, leaving their wives for them. But none of the social amenities they saw in either India, Burma, or Japan are scarcely anywhere in Tiv land. If you were however to transport these veterans to other communities outside Tiv land, they will see electricity supplying power and light to homes, they will drink or at least see pipe borne water, they will see hospitals, swinging night clubs and good government houses and projects.

The disproportionate sacrifices which the Tiv made for his white master earned him nothing but a stupid and annoying monotonous phrase in all the dull white books written about ethnic groups in Nigeria. After giving detailed descriptions about the culture, the life and the have you, of most cultural entities, these not too bright authors, mimic and re-echo the basic thing frequently written under the Tiv of Nigeria: “They are a fierce war-like people.”

One wonders whether the Tiv of Nigeria have fought more wars than the English, the Germans or any of the other cultural entities of war-mongering Europe such as France and so on. It is unfortunate that even some of Nigeria's so-called writers, true to tradition: lack of imagination and creativity, ape and re-echo this dull monotonous, totally out-dated and stupid paternalistic tone. Is it because

Tiv tribesmen “are a fierce and warlike people” that all the rulers of this country both white and black, tended to ignore and leave Tiv land without social amenities and totally undeveloped? Are we mere mercenaries to be hired to fight white man’s created wars so that we can maintain our true image of ‘fierce warlike people?’ Aren’t even mercenaries compensated?

I feel the time has now come when the Tiv must reject this brainwashing of “fierce warlike people” and project himself as a normal human being, desirous of receiving the benefits of the great social advancements which society has made.

Our various governments dolled out in the past, great social amenities to other communities in this country. The present corrective government of Nigeria must ensure that Tiv land too is developed. We do not wish to merely be always “fierce and warlike people.” We want to be progressive too. Let our homes also taste of such things as television, radiograms, electricity, pipe borne water, hospitals, better roads and schools and so on, so that the Tiv too may find other avenues to explore their hidden talent and tap their creativity and see whether they too could not participate in the social reforms which their other country men have been contributing in order to promote Nigeria’s cultural heritage and generally advance civilization.

We must all make a decided effort to break with the past and provide new labels for our characterization instead of being merely content with “fierce and warlike people” – how dull and monotonous!

Personally, I feel we can take advantage of the experiences of those who have gone before us and avoid their mistakes. A start however, must be made

immediately in areas of self-help, and in re-organizing our administrative set up in such a way that we can maximize what we can legitimately receive from the present government of our state, which is non-political and as such, reasonably impartial and interested in our problems as a neglected and a justifiably aggrieved people.

HOW TO START FACE-LIFTING AND STOP THE DOWNWARD TREND IN TIVLAND

1. ADOPTION OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS WHICH WILL BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

Perhaps all those Tiv who have the financial resources, and quite a few are emerging gradually now, can invest some of their funds in personal development projects of their own. These can be bursaries, construction of modern public facilities, expansion of needed businesses and service stations and so on and so on. Any innovations, combinations etc. etc. could be tried. The Tiv are supposed to be very individualistic. This is a constructive way to avoid turning individualism to destructive mistrust. Let our privileged take the challenge.

1. LAUNCH A TIVLAND OPERATION DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

Here we can utilize our personal energies and consult firms, friends, and other interested financiers to contribute to specific projects we may submit. Perhaps governments can also become actively involved here. For

example, government can go ahead and establish a cement factory in Gboko now. Perhaps you know that we have more limestone deposits near Yandev, than the deposits found anywhere else in this country. In fact, the experts maintain that our limestone is right on the surface and needs no excavation at all. Why can't we establish this cement industry right away? In addition, we should inaugurate a Tivland Development Society (TDS) right away. The TDS will carry out economic and development surveys and expose to all Tiv, what and where we should tackle and in what order of priority. At the moment, we should:

1. Launch a Tivland Development Fund (TDF) perhaps with either a target of at least one million pounds (#1,000,000), or a target will be suggested by the TDS after a careful survey of priorities. I would strongly recommend that those of us Tiv business-men and wage-earners included, who earn above one hundred pounds (#100) a month, should contribute obligatorily (though voluntarily) at least one hundred and twenty pounds (#120) per annum for two years to this Fund. All other workers should contribute not less than the equivalent of their one month's salary every year for two years. All taxable male Tiv should contribute two shillings each. If this idea could be sold and local authority officials convinced, this amount of two shillings could be added on to the general tax and deducted on receipt of tax returns. I realize the stupidity, the inadvisability and the errors inherent in naming tentative suggested amounts as possible contributions. Please reject them and let's fix others, but let's fix them.

2. Appropriate banking, accounting and auditing facilities could be devised to safeguard against mishandling of the funds. With all these funds, what can stop us from hiring the most advanced community and technical officers or construction firms to help us develop our land?
3. Form a Cooperative Bank of Tiv (CBT) in Gboko. The thriving business community and our projected development projects can only benefit from such a venture. Why can't the bright young Tiv lawyers and the few emerging business "tycoons" of Gboko not investigate this possibility right away? If the TDF succeeded, and there is no need to suggest it will not, the huge funds realized could be paid into the CBT.
4. Many other cooperative endeavors should be tried. We have technicians, some engineers and a great many university and secondary school students who just roam the streets of Gboko in the summer. Why can't we use these people in some construction projects in the rural areas? Perhaps the Tiv boys in the army could also help with a contribution which we could use to meet the cost of running such an "Operation Cross Tivland – Rural Area Development" project. The usefulness of the Community of Tiv Students here and elsewhere is unquestionable.

All these are mere heads of proposals which I wish to advance for the consideration of all Tiv. If the basic idea of taking a serious determined self initiative is okay, we can move ahead to try and pull ourselves and our land out of the underdeveloped limbo of blissful ignorance and social

deprivations, into which we Tiv and our land, have been for a long time. I believe the initiative must come from us, though government efforts are desired. Efforts of governments can only be as successful as we are properly oriented to benefit from them.

Though I believe that governments have a responsibility here – perhaps a truly lion's share obligation – it is my considered opinion that government assistance, as presently delivered, demands that we make radical changes in our present administrative set up if we are to benefit substantially from government assistance programs. It is because of my total conviction and complete belief that we should receive these maximum government benefits that I have decided to propose and recommend for consideration and adoption, the following basic administrative reforms in Tiv land.

However, knowing the passions which changes are capable of releasing, because of justified and often, unjustified fears and suspicions, I have taken great pains, to carefully show why and how Tiv land will be a much better place if we adopted these administrative reforms.

All I ask is that you give me your undivided attention till the end of my presentation and above all, please don't misunderstand me for I am dead serious and sincere.

PROPOSED ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND ORGANIZATION IN TIV LAND

Reflecting upon the dilemma which confronts Tivland in the way I had addressed you all Tivs, it became absolutely clear, at least to my mind, that if we were to move forward rapidly as an aggrieved people who are impatient with their social and economic backwardness, then we the Tiv people must require our State Military Government to take certain basic policy decisions, in connection with the existing institutional arrangements in Tivland, in such a way as to produce a system or systems which will maximize our chances of a rapid social advancement, and then to enact necessary laws to implement same, immediately.

It is obvious, that in the present overall organizations of the Military Government, there exists inherent defects in the present local administration set up in Tiv which through institutionalization, militate against the rapid social development of all Tivland in a way which will bring the benefits of modern social advances to the greatest number of ordinary Tiv people.

If the foregoing is correct, and it is my sincere submission that the point made is basically correct, it follows logically that additional institutional arrangements would have to be created in order to formulate a more rational approach to delivering to us Tivs both the social, political, and economic fruits of Nigeria's continuing rising position, commiserate

with our aspirations— aspirations which are justified by past injustices and by the humble contribution of the Tiv people to the consolidation and evolution of a truer and more stable Nigeria.

This then is the general intention of my suggestions – to get for the greatest of Tiv people and their land, the existing minimum standards of the good life, enjoyed by other Nigerians— standards which have been denied them (at least, the vast majority of the ordinary Tiv folks) for a long time, before worrying about the few of us Tiv people who are already enjoying, personally, the superfluous.

Since Governments distribute their available development projects, and also plan total improvements of areas under their jurisdiction on the basis of existing autonomous administrative units, and since at present stage of distributors of social and advancement amenities, it is clearly obvious that if the Tivland is to be rapidly and equitably developed, then the Tiv people must find a way of reorganizing their land, as presently constituted, in such a way as to maximize the receipt of official Government financed development projects and active Government participation in their land.

Since, at the present, the totality of the entire Tivland, with a population nearing a half of the entire Benue-Plateau State, is administratively constituted into a single autonomous administrative unit, within a total of nine such autonomous units in the State and as such, the

Division technically qualifies automatically, and in practice receives (or should receive?) only 1/9 consideration, officially, in all State Government's Development Plans, then in the interest of self improvement and perhaps equity, the Tiv people of Benue-Plateau State, just like the Hausas of Kano and North-Central States, the Urhobos and Benins of the Mid-Western State or the Yoruba of the Western State, must as a matter of urgency, reconstitute their land into many more autonomous administrative divisions in place of present single administrative division.

Even on the basis of the notorious political census of 1963, which even a baby would agree that the true population of the Tiv people was hopelessly mutilated to ensure a downward evaluation hence, a certain underestimation of the true population of the "troublesome" Tivs who were uncooperative and hostile to the then existing political powers, one could comfortably create six autonomous administrative divisions in Tivland, and yet come up with divisions which would compare favorably, both population and land wise, with all the other existing administrative divisions of Benue-Plateau State.

In fact, each one of these six new divisions would still be bigger, in population and area than the Southern Division (AKWANGA) of Benue-Plateau State, (207,364 people at least to 117,858) which however, receives at the moment, quite correctly, the same Governmental treatment and consideration from Jos, as the present Tiv Division because our Nigerian Governments, rightly or wrongly deal with the autonomous

administrative divisions in their planning and in their day to day activity. (In fact, the present giant Tiv Division is nearly equal, perhaps bigger, in population than the whole of Kwara State, and if it were even reconstituted into six autonomous divisions each of these divisions would be bigger in population than any of the present divisions in Kwara State.)

Thus, the basic proposal being advanced here is that if our land and the ordinary Tiv people of Benue-Plateau State are not to continue to linger behind forever in social and economic benefits, and if our country maintains essentially, the prevalent philosophy in Government, then judging on the present method of Governmental handling of problems, the Tiv people have no alternative but to immediately request the Governor of Benue-Plateau State to reconstitute Tivland into more autonomous administrative divisions, each of which will demand of Jos, equal attention and treatment, with all other existing divisions in the State. This will benefit Tivland tremendously, and perhaps balance up the political years of neglect and injustice. Tivland, being constituted into these six autonomous unites, will throw the ball squarely in the laps of the Government which will be honor bound to deliver technically, six times as many amenities, assuming we had six autonomous divisions, as she is obliged to deliver now. This, to me, would be fantastic and a most desirable thing!

Sure, there will be difficulties about such things as the determination of boundaries; political considerations regarding real and imagined fears

about the rendering of Tivland to easier party political maneuverings— "the divide and rule" tactics of all bureaucracies; the fate of political figures, who may feel, rightly, that their well-established party lines in Tivland would be jeopardized by "fractionalization", and along with this, their prominence and the desirable dilatory influence which a real and imagined Tiv cohesiveness (solidarity), has produced at the national level.

There will also be the very important concern regarding the position and fate of the office of the Tor Tiv, who fulfils a most important psychological function that of acting as the spiritual father (Head) and hence custodian of the culture, history, and "civilization", which we brought down with us, from whence we came, SWEM IKARAGBE, we, the excessively individualistic, highly egalitarian, legendary children of the man, Tiv.

Don't let anybody fool you. All the above briefly mentioned considerations are serious and very important problems which should worry us and occupy the minds of all sincere Tivs, as the ponder on the basic proposal of re-organizing Tivland into many more autonomous administrative divisions as advanced by me. Hopefully the problems raised are not insurmountable and given a sincerity of conscience, and dispassionate commitment to serious thought, the Tiv man possesses both the intellectual capacity and courage to advance correct answers to the problems which will be posed by accepting the general proposals advanced here.

Personally, it is my contention that rational answers to the above questions should best be sought from the premise of what is best for Tivland and the majority of Tiv people, instead of what is best for me as an individual.

It is my sincere hope that the young Tiv graduates and other intellectuals, the numerous experienced teachers and administrative officers, and some of our tried and seasoned politicians who know the intricacies of party nuances and so on, will bring, forcefully, their creative intellectual capacities to bear on these problems, so that from the best of our brains, we can provide a pool of useful, possible solutions to the problems raised.

Briefly, my feeling is that the basic problems raised resolve themselves into three categories:

1. The question of divisional boundaries: wouldn't the determination of arbitrary divisional boundaries lead to serious controversy, especially since this clearly a question which will seriously interest politicians of both the past and the future (if they are sincere?)
2. Tiv Solidarity: If we divide Tivland into six or so divisions, which will be autonomous in their dealing with the State Government, would we not be destroying Tiv.
 - a. Cultural Unity
 - b. Political Unity

And consequently rendering the Tiv people weak and easier to manipulate and exploit? After all, "Unity is Strength". Wouldn't the standing of those who emerge, and those who have already emerged as spokesmen or representatives, or leaders of the Tiv people drop?

3. The position of Tor Tiv. How would the organization of Tivland into six or so autonomous divisions cater for a Tor Tiv?
4. Am I not in fact advocating that we should abolish the office of Tor Tiv—and hence deprive Tivland of a First Class Chief and the present holder of the post, His Highness, Mallam Gondo Aluor, of the means of livelihood?
5. What kind of harmonious relationship could I possibly envisage between a Tor Tiv in the system I am advocating and the local "U Tor" (plural) in the new autonomous administrative divisions?

Let me now take these questions one by one and offer briefly, my thoughts.

Divisional Boundaries:

If we had a political regime, the determination of the divisional boundaries in Tivland would have led to certain political controversy as the determination of the then existing Regional boundaries always led to controversy since a political direction was always needed. Party politicians by nature of their necessary pre-occupations, wrangled over the practical pay-offs (benefits) for their own particular parties during any discussions about boundaries – hence difficulties were compounded and magnified.

It is my feeling that today we are particularly blessed with a Military regime and though the immediate practical issues regarding the forms which the divisional boundaries should take will all Tivs, including those who were party politicians, it is clear that the kind of direction needed to resolve whatever controversies which may arise, is not partisan political, because it rests squarely with the Military Government, as represented by the Military Governor of Benue Plateau State, who cannot afford to be partisan since he should owe his allegiance only to be the Commander – In - Chief (C-in C) of the Nigeria Armed Forces and be principally guided in his actions only by what is just and by the inner, honest and sincere evaluations of his human conscience.

If the basic proposal advanced here, the physical determination of the divisional boundaries can be carried out by technical officers, some of which can be obtained even without outside our State, with the State Military Government providing the effective umbrella under which all the administrative arrangements for determining the boundaries will be carried out. The number six, which I have brandishing around, has nothing holy nor magical about it. It may be that for administrative convenience, and the economizing of scarce public funds, the State's Military Government will find it necessary to use the former 5 Intermediate Areas in Tiv division as bases for new interim divisional boundaries thereby ensuring the neglected Tiv people, a more fairer share of Government derived benefits.

For example, the State Government in Jos must establish the administrative headquarters of the new five autonomous divisions. Instead of planning for electricity, Government offices, police barracks, telecommunication links, hospital, priority roads, location of Government industries for just Gboko, the State Government must plan and try to establish all the above in at least all the 5 headquarters of the new autonomous divisions in Tivland. This will spring up in hinterland, right in the midst of ordinary Tiv proper, at the expense of the State Government. The State Government will be further obligated to ensure that they survive, are firmly established and functioning successfully.

MY PERSONAL RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE FIVE FORMER INTERMEDIATE AREAS

One of the reasons why I did not propose five autonomous divisions on the basis of the former intermediate areas was the fear that these areas in the past, tended to create such petty clannish ‘nationalisms’ that one wondered whether the so-called educated exploiters of clannishness for their own particular selfish interests did not succeed in making these Kwande, Jecira, Ukum-Shitire, Jemgbar and Ichongo delimitations anathemas in Tiv land.

These funny arbitrary creations, which were introduced for purely administrative conveniences less than 16 years ago, became gradually interpreted by unprogressive Tiv youth, who were afraid of open competition and who wanted to blackmail more clever Tiv political opponents of theirs, as genealogy demographs, cutting off ‘our real brothers and sisters’ from ‘foreigners’ – all of

who incidentally were the children of the man Tiv, who had, according to the traditional history of our ancestry, only two sons: IPUSU and ICHONGO.

Strangely enough, these clever confusionists never pointed out to the less educated, whom they were exploiting that included in some of the various so-called cleanly segregated blood relationship – kith and kin intermediate areas, were children of both Ichongu and Ipusu.

For example, the Turan Clan, is accepted as a descendant of Ichongo, so are the Injiriv, Yonov and Ugondo clans. Yet Injiriv and Yonov were located in Ichongo Intermediate Area, the Turan in Kwande Intermediate Area and the Ugondo in Ukum-Shitire Intermediate area. Many other examples exist all over Tiv land.

Thus it is a lie to have suggested that the Tiv who became organized into any particular Intermediate Area were more united by blood, kith-kin relationships, as some crooked exploiters did, than those who were not. Those who advanced this incorrect, yet dangerous philosophy, that wreaked so much havoc and destruction on Tiv land, deserve to be reprimanded and condemned in the strongest terms. They deserve condemnation because they succeeded in creating partiality and in introducing clannish considerations in Tiv land. These led to extreme bitterness, incompetent appointments, numerous appalling party political murders, useless unhealthy competition, and finally to a general break down of co-operation, order and good government in Tiv land.

The truth is that all Tiv must be and are the same because they are all the children of one man Tiv.

Tivland which stretches almost 200 miles wide, is the only continuous expanse in this our country where people speak, through and through, one language, have one culture and possess similar anthropological idiosyncrasies. Thus, if the Tiv people and the State Military Government decide to use the former five intermediate areas as bases for re-organizing Tivland into five autonomous divisions, they must be aware of the conniving, politically motivated and ambitious clannish ‘mini-nationalists’, who may hope to benefit by pushing and advocating the erroneous theory of the separateness and single blood individualism of the Tiv within these autonomous divisions, which for purely administrative convenience, would have been allowed to coincide with the former unprogressive intermediate areas.

Perhaps the law setting up these autonomous divisions should spell out the oneness of all the Tiv people by making it clear that government does not expect the Tiv to park up, according to the clans of their great grandfathers and return to their so-called fictitious blood homes. For example, the law establishing the autonomous divisions will be a monstrous one, and a most retrogressive one if it makes, say some of us “foreigners” in Gboko. I was born, raised and bred in Gboko. I have my home in Gboko. I hope to go ahead with my plans to establish my proposed hospital in Gboko and to generally continue with other business in Gboko. I have no intention whatsoever, of packing out of Gboko to go and settle in the new headquarters of whatever division the clan of my grandfathers fall, simply because I want to return ‘home’ and help “my people” develop. All Tiv are “my people” and I shall properly belong, by law and birth, to the Gboko Division which I have advocated or to any division in which Gboko belongs.

Operating from Gboko Division, I shall use all my God-given little advantages over my less fortunate tribesmen, to help all the other divisions in whatever way I can, to complement our State Military Government's effort towards the consolidation of the Divisions and towards a rapid social advancement. This to me, should be the basic posture of all Tiv and the State Military Government.

To de-emphasize the past destructive and unproductive competition noticeable in the former defunct Intermediate Areas, the State Military Government and the Tiv people should perhaps reject outright, the former nomenclature of Kwande, Jecira, Jejuihiev and so on and so on. Instead we should perhaps call these autonomous Tiv divisions, new names. For example there shouldn't be anything terribly wrong with simply designating them:

1. GBOKO DIVISION (TIV-CENTRAL DIVISION)
2. TIV- EASTERN DIVISION
3. TIV – SOUTH EASTERN DIVISION
4. TIV-NORTH EASTERN DIVISION
5. TIV – SOUTH WESTERN DIVISION
6. TIV – WESTERN DIVISION.

Each one of these divisions being autonomous, would have a government established headquarters, and at least a SECOND CLASS CHIEF (except Gboko Division, which will have the TOR TIV as its Chief – hence it will have a FIRST CLASS CHIEF), with all the necessary Administrative, Judicial and Local Legislative (Councilors) officers of Government.

WHY A SEPARATE GBOKO DIVISION?

Before I finish commenting on the Boundary Question, let me briefly comment on why I have advocated autonomous boundaries for a GBOKO DIVISION, but not for Makurdi, the Tiv town which connotes ADOGON, but which during the political era, was never administered by Tiv and was declared one of the so-called special areas that had “sub N.A.’s.”

In the first place, my proposals have the continued maintenance of the cultural unity of the Tiv people as represented by our spiritual head, the TOR TIV (Chief of Tiv) in mind. He would need a place. Gboko is the place. Gboko has been the emotional, the spiritual and the traditional headquarters of all the people of Tiv. It is the seat of our Chief, the home of every Tiv man, soldier, school child, farmer and worker. It is the pride of all Tiv. In a word Gboko is Tiv. All of us have some roots somehow, in Gboko, and inevitably return back to Gboko.

Those of us who are social reformers, have a grave responsibility not to be reactionary in our proposals no matter how revolutionary. To underestimate the nerve, and the affection the Tiv people have for this “home,” Gboko, and the opposition and sensitivity of the Tiv people to acts which they suspect or interpret as aimed at breaking up their unity is irresponsibility of the highest order which would most likely achieve drastic undesirable consequences.

Since my aim is not to divide Tiv cultural solidarity, I feel strongly that a separate Gboko Division must be created. This division will contain all the hundreds of Tiv from all the clans of Tiv who have been living for generations in the present Gboko town, and its suburbs with their surroundings. This will convince all the

Tiv people that they are still basically the same people, and that nobody is trying to divide them for any sinister reasons. Whoever is elected the Tor Tiv anytime, should automatically become the Chief of GBOKO DIVISION.

This may not be acceptable on the grounds that the rights of Gboko inhabitants are violated by the imposition of a Chief who is not exclusively selected by them. Let us entertain other suggestions. It may well be a good suggestion to consider a separate junior Chief for Gboko, and simply make Gboko the seat of the Tor Tiv whose functions will then have to be carefully defined.

The boundaries of Gboko Division, which will take its name from the MbayionGboko hills just like Gboko town, could easily be established by technical officers.

In the present Benue-Plateau State, there is an example of the basic arrangement been advanced for Gboko elsewhere. Our State's Capital, Jos, which is the traditional, emotional and spiritual heart of the Birom people, has been reconstituted into Jos Division. This autonomous division was delimited in such a way as to incorporate Jos township and its environs.

After years of agitation by the Biroms against the appointments of Hausa Chiefs to rule Jos, the Biroms finally won their right to have their spiritual head, the Chief of the Biroms, to also become the Chief of their spiritual town, Jos. Today, Jos, the Headquarters of Benue-Plateau State, seat of our Military Governor, is also the seat of Rwang Pam, Chief of all Biroms, and the headquarters of Jos Division. Thus the creation of Gboko Division will not be unique at all.

Tiv Solidarity

In my simple mind, I do not see how the mere reconstitution of Tivland into six or so autonomous divisions will destroy the cultural solidarity of the Tiv people. Infact, I dare say that rather than destroy the cultural solidarity of the Tiv, this act will strengthen and stress the cultural solidarity of the Tiv people because more and more Tiv will acquire the benefits of modern civilization, since development will be more rapid and more evenly distributed throughout Tiv land. More and more people becoming thus better informed, will be in a much better position to appreciate the immense benefits of all Tiv cooperating to safeguard Tiv culture and make its impact felt on the Nigerian national scene.

If cultural solidarity is that important to us Tiv, and I think it is, what is there to stop six or so Tiv autonomous divisions, having the closest cultural association, more especially since we shall still be the same uni-cultured Tiv, speaking only one language and still maintaining our TOR TIV in our nerve center, Gboko, and still holding our periodic IJIRTAMEN in Gboko? How is our uniqueness and solidarity broken then?

In my opinion, there are three things which will be lost by the creation of six or so autonomous divisions in Tivland.

1. First, Tiv land will loose economic and political exploitation, isolation and tokenism. More Tiv people will attain some of the common social benefits of a fast advancing Nigeria, because there will be at least six

or so autonomous divisions, each vying for governmental attention direct from Jos, to harness and develop their area of jurisdiction. This to me, will be most healthy. The healthy competition with the other divisions of Benue-Plateau State should make more Tiv better informed.

2. A second thing Tivland will loose will be political uncriticality and the kind of contagious mass political hysteria which in the past led to easy violence; mass self murders, including brother against brother and father against son; arson, looting and the general intimidation, terrorizing and destruction of Tiv people and Tiv land by Tiv themselves, whilst the tribes which instigated them, in the name of something called party politics, built more roads, more hospitals, more electric power houses, more water supply systems (pipe borne water), more schools, more modern homes and towns, more indigenous entrepreneurial businesses and numerous other social amenities in their communities and localities! The cream of youth in each of the six autonomous divisions will weigh very carefully all political philosophies being spread in their divisions, in terms of the common objectives of a rapid social ascendancy and the protection of their newly established divisions, before accepting them. This will be a most welcome development, because only sincere philosophies, conceived by the majority of any particular division as being in the interest of the division would be tolerated. Renegade philosophies which seek to destroy Tiv people and Tiv land, in general, will be much more difficult to find common acceptability throughout the six

autonomous divisions. We the Tiv should all encourage this in view of the past history of our collective tragedy.

3. The third thing Tiv land will loose will be the neglect and under-representation. Henceforth, government will have six or so Tiv areas under its constant observation. Governments will have to plan six or so times, in terms of development projects and representation in Tiv land. Tiv people, will not find any need to complain, as they have been doing surreptitiously, about the injustice of having only one Commissioner in Jos, to represent the interest of a people who form over one-third, perhaps half by Tiv estimation, of the State's population.

Thus, honestly, I do not believe Tiv land will loose anything which will not seriously be more than over-compensated by the general improvement in the political and social standards of the ordinary Tiv people, who have suffered for so long and who have been denied those barest social amenities which are taken for granted, and have been taken for granted for a reasonably long time, by some of their fellow country men from other communities.

I also believe that the local government system in Tiv land would be rendered more effective. Taxes would be collected much easier and the local people brought much more into government as they see to what use their taxes are being put in their immediate community. The task of protecting law-abiding citizens in Tiv hinterland will be rendered easier.

Finally, the emergence of an excessive Tiv nationalism, cannot but be an anachronism in Tiv land, the land of fierce ONE NIGERIA exponents. Hence, Nigerianism cannot help but benefit from the creation of six or more autonomous units in present unitary Tiv Division, which possesses all the trappings of excessive ethnic nationalism awaiting exploitation.

The Position of Tor Tiv

Let me state right from the outset that I cannot envisage any suggestions in my thinking about our country, Nigeria, where I underestimate nor ignore the position of the traditional ruler in our society. In fact those of you who read me, you will remember that I devoted a whole chapter, Chapter 18 in one of my books: “The Case For Nigeria,” which I wrote in the far away cold North American country of Canada about our crisis, to offering suggestions on how best we could consolidate and democratize the position of our titular rulers in the changing Nigeria which perhaps they should change with so as to avoid being left behind.

I am a Tiv tribesman and I most certainly wish to see my own tribe have a titular ruler, who will act as traditional father of Tiv, representing the embodiment of the cultural hopes and aspirations of a people with a distinct history which they are seeking to express and preserve.

In proposing that we reconstitute Tivland into six or so autonomous divisions, I do envisage the position of TOR TIV as not being negotiable. The position of TOR TIV must be maintained and safeguarded. I see all Tiv people, through representation at IJIRTAMEN, going through the same traditional way and electing a TOR TIV to fill the vacancy which would be created by any deceased

TOR TIV. This TOR TIV, will continue to be a First Class Chief resident in Gboko. He should also be chief of Gboko Division. In each of the other autonomous divisions this proposal would have Second Class Chiefs. They will function as Chairmen of their various Local Government Authorities, and sit direct in whatever representation (Upper House?) the government may eventually decide to create in the future for the Chiefs of this Nigeria of ours.

I see the Tor Tiv performing the functions of Chairman of all Ijirtamens, and any joint interim agencies which the six or so Divisions may wish to have in Gboko initially. Gboko could serve as the clearing house for Interim Common Services, as Kaduna has served for the six Northern States, which were reconstituted out of the former Northern Region. Any cultural meetings involving all Tiv or any other meetings the autonomous Chiefs of the various Divisions may seek to hold in the interest of Tivland, the Tor Tiv will automatically preside over such meetings as the Father of the Tiv.

The present disgraceful, dilapidating dust and mud filled Tor Tiv's "Palace" in Gboko, is inadequate, an eyesore and an affront to the pride of the Tiv people.

Consequently myb proposals will have the present palace abandoned entirely and a new and more respectable Palace, commensurate with the status of Gboko, and the pride and dignity of the Tiv people, erected for the present and all future Tor Tiv. Hence I see the Tor Tiv still functioning as Father of all Tiv, actively advising and exchanging views with the junior Second Class Chiefs of the various DIVISIONS. This will be principally on traditional matters so as to guarantee the cultural cohesiveness and solidarity of the Tiv people. In addition, he will perform

all the functions of Chairman of all Local Administration Agencies in Gboko Division. This position won't be unique to Tiv land. It is in fact the position which is found to exist for say the Emir of Kano or the Emir of Katsina both of whom are also First Class Chiefs.

Therefore it will be wrong if one concluded that these proposals are going to abolish the post of Tor Tiv. They in fact will consolidate and add respect to his position.

SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE RE-ORGANIZATION PROPOSALS

Summarizing, I have argued strongly that in the interest of ensuring the rapid economic, social and political advancement of Tivland, the present single Tiv Division be reconstituted into many more autonomous Administrative Divisions. This I have maintained, will not only make sure that we receive our own fair share of government amenities but will also

ensure that we are not under-represented at government level. I have further argued and shown how the question of fixing boundaries, or protecting Tiv cultural solidarity or adequately protecting the institution of Tor Tiv can be handled readily under the new proposals.

I recommend these proposals with all my heart to you my Tiv tribesmen. I am convinced that many Tiv and non-Tiv alike, may choose to misunderstand me and my proposals. I am very disturbed but not deterred.

To you my fellow Tiv, I wish to confess my sincerity that I have to speak so forthright and blunt with you and to you is not meant to be an act of arrogance nor disrespect. I feel for you all because of the social and political ills which befell you, but above all, because of the utter backwardness of most of our people who live in blissful ignorance.

Through out my intellectual maturity, I have come to reject that men exist for institutions. I feel and believe firmly that institutions are created to make it easier for men to attain some of their common objectives. The former institutional arrangements in our land, failed us woefully. Through inherent deficiencies within these institutions, our social mobility was stultified and hence we remained poor, uninformed and backward possessing no comparable standards of living with the enlightened communities of modern Nigeria.

Let us reshape our institutions to serve us in our objectives of obtaining higher standards of living for a majority of our people, instead of

trying to continue to prepare Tiv people to exist for an anachronistic, self-defeating institutional arrangement that has not worked for their benefit. We, the Tiv have never been rumored to be cowards. Let us not oppose change simply because we fear change.

To you my fellow Nigerians who though not Tiv, may succeed to read this letter, I pray that you read me well.

I am not a politician, believe me, and I honestly have not been tribalistic in this letter to the Tiv people. The only thing is, I am an empiricist by academic indoctrination. My professional etiquette demands that I report the facts as faithfully as I see them. This is why, if you have been reading me generally, you will discover that I have not honestly deviated from my basic pattern of responsible service to truth. If I have failed anywhere, it is obviously due to intellectual limitation and not to any intended falsification nor intellectual deceit.

Secondly I am emotionally and intellectually committed to my country, Nigeria. I believe firmly that my letter to the Tiv people written with all the sincerity that is, will help strengthen our country better. If I can but help to re-echo the suppressed frustrations of the Tiv people collectively, in a harmless, constructive way which may generate creative energy for improving the living conditions of men, then perhaps I should for the sake of my beloved country. Who can contend seriously in this our country, that the sordid story of Tivland may well be that of other socially underprivileged communities in Nigeria?

I cannot help but be a Tiv tribesman, nevertheless I am still a most loyal and dedicated Nigerian nationalist, contributing in my own little way, to the final evolution of a rational Nigerian nationalism.

So please judge me, if you must, but judge well, for honestly, I am what I am and so will I always be.

Best wishes and may God bless all.

Long Live One Nigeria and true human brotherhood. I must go, bye bye.

HERDSMEN CRISIS AND ITS IMPLICATION ON SOCIAL SECURITY IN BENUE STATE

Wilfred Terlumun Uji

Introduction

Since the beginning of the twenty first Century. Nomadic herdsmen terrorism has taken the centre stage in the discourse of conflict and development in Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, there has been a near collapse of ideological politics in Africa; giving birth to ideological conflict based on ethnicity and religion. Ideological politics in Nigeria often hides under the disguise of religion and ethnicity: thus concealing the selfish intent of the Nigerian political class, the exploitation and mobilization of radical political Islam

threatens civilizations and development in Europe, America, the Middle East and Africa. Nomadic groups such as Berbers, Tuaregs, Beiodum Arabs and the Fulanis have mobilized radical Islamism combined with a network of terrorist groups such as Algadea, AI-Shabab, and Boko Haram to unleash terror on sedentary farming groups across the West African Sub- Region.

In this discussion, we shall explore the conflict between nomadic herdsman and farmers in Nigeria and how that has come to impact on democratic sustenance in Benue State. We shall begin by looking at what is the problem.

Theoretical Issues

There is hardly any society in world history where there is a total absence of conflict and crisis that sometimes degenerate into ethnic and religious wars. The fact is that conflicts and crisis are a normal part of human and societal development. But the social engineering of such conflicts must also be an integral part of a society if must survive and be developed. The Herdsmen terrorist invasion of Nigeria, particularly the Tiv society of Benue State, is an aspect of modern conflict that belongs to the realm of nation building challenges in Africa in the post-independence era. Since the emergence of the modern nation state in Africa, scholars are interested to find out how African nations can mobilize their ethnic and religious resources to achieve development and transformation. The gap between the developed and underdeveloped nations lies in the ability of a

nation to mobilize her ethnic and religious resources through qualitative education and economic empowerment to achieve national transformation.

In Africa, it appears ethnicity and religion are a curse to nation building: a major factor of conflict and underdevelopment of the continent. Africa, with diverse and rich cultural groups has to a large extent failed in mobilizing her cultural resource to achieve national greatness. For instance, the Asian nations like India and China have overcome this challenge of nation building But Africa and most especially sub-Saharan Africa is still infested by ethnic and religious colorations in her developmental drive.

The conflict between nomadic herdsmen and sedentary farming population dates back to antiquity. In the Old Testament of the Bible, there are replicate stories on the conflict between herdsmen and farmers such as the conflict between Can and Abel, Abraham and Lot. Esau and Jacob as well as King David Racist historians were quick to frame out theoretical positions that justified the superiority of nomadic herdsmen over that of sedentary farming groups based on the religious foundations of the Bible. These racist historians went further to invent the Hamatic-hypothesis to justify a superiority of civilization of fairer skin nomadic groups over that of black African sedentary farmers.

Some scholars often view the conflict between nomads and farmers, or the conflict between fairer skin races and black African groups as a clash of civilization. For instance, all the empires of the Western Sudan

were founded by Black African Kings. But the eventual decline and collapse of these empires was linked to the activities of the fairer skin races and nomads. In recent times, Tuoregs and Berbers destroyed much of what was left of Timbuktu, a central learning centre of the Mall Empire.

Racist historians who wanted to justify the export European civilizations in Africa adopted the framework of the Hamatic-hypothesis in explanation of change and development in Africa as well as the brutal exploitation and enslavement of the Black Africa. The Hamatic hypothesis stated that, in the divine ordination of God, Black Africans were destined to be the slaves of the White and fairer races. This idea is adopted from the Old Testament background in which Black Africans were a cursed race destined to be the Hewers of wood and Fetcher of water.

European slave masters exploited this religious foundation in the forced slavery of Africans in the New World. In later Centuries, Arab slave dealers employed the same theoretical stereotypes in the dehumanization of the black African. Islamic expansionism between the 9th Century AD up to the 18th Century in Africa re-enforced these racial stereotypes in the brutal exploitation of the black Africa. The way and manner in which herdsmen often butcher farmers in the recent invasion of Benue State reflect the idea of the inferiority of farmers to herders; the black African to the fairer races. The brutal and cruel killings often leave a message that the sedentary farmers are sub-human creations. These acts of killings are deliberate and deeply rooted in the racial hatred of the fairer skin nomads against black African sedentary populations. The mutilation and cruelty of killing is meant to send one lesson to every black African that they are sub-human. Racial

killings manifested in America during the era of slavery and in South Africa during the apartheid era. In the New World society, white supremacists armed with the same theoretical thought embarked on the genocide and lynching of black Africans across America. White supremacists like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) adopted gory sight in the genocide of the black Africans. In the era of apartheid in South Africa, it was the same theoretical foundation that inspired the Afrikaners to butcher and kill black South Africans. Scholars have argued that in Africa, since the 1990s, there has been near state collapse arising from the crises and contradictions of underdevelopment fuelled by ethnic and religious politics that has led to the emasculation and impoverishment of the African populations. The exploitation of religion and ethnicity is often a smokes screen or disguise that conceals the selfish intentions of the ruling political class which is often based on primitive accumulation. In Africa, primitive accumulation is the goal in politics often negating good governance, development and transformation. The idea is that, the ruling elites become richer at the expense of the poor masses who become divided and factionalized. A good example of failed states in Africa include: Somalia, Sudan, Congo, and Central African Republic. On her visit to Nigeria in recent times, Hillary Clinton, then Secretary of State of the United States of America, warned of a possible state collapse during the Obasanjo era. The Boko Haram War in the North East of Nigeria and the Herdsmen invasion across central Nigeria are all indicators of a near state collapse. Poverty in Nigeria has increased by 70%, real wages at 95%, unemployment by 60%, the breakdown of law and order in which life has been devalued is deplorable. These are all indicators of a near state collapse. The farmer-herders crisis is viewed as a disguise and diversionary tactics of the ruling elites to conceal their poor

performance in terms of their delivery of development and transformation of the Nigerian state. The political elites, since 1999 have nothing to show in terms of real development and thus, the only diversionary measure is to create crisis and conflicts in which the masses are often recruited as cannon fodder. In the same way, since 1999 to date, the Nigerian political elites have come to depend heavily on the mobilization and recruitment of thugs, ethnic militias and religious movements, as a way of gaining relevance on the corridors of political authority and control. These ethnic militias and militant religious movements overtime, have become a source of terror on the Nigerian psyche. In the search for survival and political control, these militias of both Fulani and Tiv extractions in concert with other terrorist groups, have come to unleash mayhem on the civil population of Nigeria in the disguise of farmers-herders crisis Professor Yemi Osinbanjo, the Vice President of Nigeria has always pointed out that: "The farmers-herdsmen crisis in Nigeria has been politicized, there is no ethnic or religious coloration to it."

This is the official version or narrative of the Federal Government of Nigeria under President Mohammadu Buhari. While the State Governments like Benue State accuses Fulani herdsmen militia under the sponsorship of Miyetti Allah as the source of the farmers-herders conflict, the Federal Government of Nigeria blames it on the activities of ethnic and religious militias politicized by the ruling political elites. The conflict between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria is interpreted by some Scholars as an outcome of the poor underdevelopment of the forces of production as well as factors of production. Agricultural production in Nigeria is factored on the use of crude primitive forces where the factors of

production are grossly underutilized. The pastoral and farming economy are controlled by crude forces of production and hence. The conflict inherent. In countries such as Brazil and Argentina, with a larger cattle population than Nigeria; where the ranching economy has been put into place, there is hardly conflict between herders and farmers. Rather, the large economics of scale provide supplements between the herders and farmers. Pastoralism and farming are complementary in nature, depending on the state of development of the respective industries. No country has achieved development on the basis of nomadic pastoralism much in the same way that no country has achieved no development on the basis of subsistence farming. This underscores the recent move by the National Economic Council in Nigeria that States affected by the farmers-herders crisis should adopt the economies of Ranching as a way of regulating peace between farmers and herders and thus achieving development. The government of Benue State, under Governor Samuel Ortom has adopted Ranching as an economic policy that can provide for peace and security between farmers and herders in the short term and the long term. The Anti Open Grazing and foresight that protect Benue farmers; creating the enabling environment for herdsmen and farmers to co-exist and exploit the large economies of scales. There is the angle of the elite conspiracy between the Tiv and the Fulani political elites. The idea is that. In politics and political formations, there is always a string of patron and client ties that exist between majority ruling groups and minority political class. In Nigeria, since independence, a patron client tie has been a major feature and characteristics of Nigerian politics. Actors in the political field do not play the game in isolation but in concert with one another. Minority groups will always seek patronage from majority groups. During the era of George Akume as

Governor of Benue State, Alh. Atiku Abubakar was installed as the zege mule u Tiv by the Tiv Traditional Council, this political relationship between the Fulani political class and the Tiv ruling class has continued to have far reaching implications on the development of the Tiv nation. Also, former Governor Gabriel Suswam allegedly entered into understanding and partnership with the Sokoto Caliphate and Emirs on grazing reserves in Benue State. It is speculated that under President Goodluck Jonathan, states in Nigeria received billions of naira to facilitate grazing reserves in their states. This has been the born of contention between Miyetti Allah and respective states in Nigeria in recent times. The conspiracy of silence by the political elites in Benue State further confirms that perhaps these allegations are true. Democracy as a concept both in theoretical and practical terms means different things to different people, depending on the background, space and time of an existing society. To the ancient Greeks, where the idea of democracy evolved, it implies the government of the commonest people by the commonest people for the common good. It was a system of government envisaged where the Aristocrats and the nobility sit together with commoners in deciding the political development of the Greek State. This idea was a revolutionary one in which the equality of all groups within the Greek State was protected. The idea of equality of all groups in a democracy and the need to protect their material happiness is a central idea that runs all through ancient democracies, up to the French and American revolutions. In the French and American revolutions, as well as the English revolutions, beginning from the sixteenth Century up to the Nineteenth Century. the fundamental ideas of democracy were centred around the equality, liberty and fraternity of all men, irrespective of their race, creed or background. In all the democratic movements

of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century. Both liberal and socialist democracy, as practiced by the West and the East, the prevailing foundations of democracy rooted on the equality of all groups and their right to the pursuit of material freedom as enshrined in the fundamental human rights of all human races. The formations of the United Nations by the Twentieth Century rested on the foundation of human rights in which both majorities and minorities in the World system had equal protection and access to material freedom. The Charter of fundamental human rights is also a critical corner stone of Nigeria's democracy since Independence. The Constitution of Nigeria since 1999 provides for these basic freedoms for all existing groups irrespective of their religion or creed. For example, it is part of the democratic right as enshrined in the Nation's constitution for the Federal Government to protect life and property of all groups irrespective of their religion or ethnic affiliation. It is also the right of all groups in Nigeria to access material development provided by the State irrespective of affiliation or creed.

Democratic sustenance depends on how a nation mobilizes all her democratic institutions and forces to achieve the goal and objective of development and transformation. In other words, all the forces of democracy within the nation: the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary must provide the fundamental basics of a democracy which is factored upon basic human rights and material happiness. Democracies and their institutions exist to develop the material happiness of her people. This is the fundamental goal of democratic sustenance that democracy must provide sustainable development based on the following: good governance, equal development, human security, sustainable infrastructural development, and

income and wealth distribution. Etcetera. Using one theory alone cannot provide adequate framework for our discourse. We shall therefore, combine all these theories in the discus of our focal subject matter.

History of Herders Crisis in Benue State

The Fulani and the Tiv people had relations that date back to pre-colonial era where the two groups existed on the platform of mutual co-existence and dependency. Scholars like Akiga Sai pointed out that the Tiv and the Fulani had common shared friendly interactions that gave birth to stereotypes in which the Fulani referred to the Tiv people as *munchi*. It is important to note that this is a stereotype as the word *munchi* is a Jukun derivative which means *mitshi* meaning stranger. The idea that the Tiv people ate the Fulani cows is ahistorical as it is a fabricated story by the Fulani elites to prejudice the Tiv people John Orkar pointed out that the Tiv people were in the Benue Valley as far back as the fourteenth Century. This was the period the nomadic Fulanis were expanding across the Hausa states in the North that led to the conflict between the Hausa Kings and the nomadics. It was not until 1803 in the Sokoto Jihad led by Usman Dan Fodio that the Fulani caliphate was established in the far North. European scholars like R.A. Sergeant pointed out that the Tiv people were the most predominant population in the Benue valley stretching from the Adamawa Mountains down to as been in a cowed debt. The Niger and River Benue confluence area. The Tiv people had a vast population without an imperial design and structure; a fundamental problem which eventually led to the loss of the Tiv to the Fulani during the colonial era. The British colonial rule of the twentieth Century through the indirect rule system was a major game changer between the

Fulani and the Tiv people. By the twentieth Century, the Fulanis had the Sokoto caliphate, a solid political structure that British colonialism through the indirect rule system depended on. This led to a change in the balance of power in favour of the Fulani ruling group as against the Tiv people. All of the Tiv population came under the northern region together with other minority groups under the control of the Sokoto caliphate. This was great opening door and a window of opportunity for the Sokoto caliphate led by the Sultan of Sokoto to embark on the internal colonization of minorities in the North. This background is very important in understanding the Tiv riots of 1960 to 1965 in which the Tiv people led by Joseph Tarka of the United Middle Belt Congress fought against the Fulani colonization of Tiv society by the Northern People's Congress led by Sir Ahmadu Bello. The Tiv revolts and resistance was a major struggle against the Fulani imperial control of Tiv society compelling the Tiv nation to embrace Islam. The Fulani ruling class through institutions such as the native authority, native courts, police and even the institution of the Tor Tiv created in 1945, as well as District Heads and Chiefs all came under the domination of Islam. In the politics of the 1950s upto the 1960s. The key political actors in Tiv society under the Northern People's Congress were converted to Islam. For instance, Lushakyaa Anja, Takera Oradi, and several others had to play it along with Islam to have political relevance in the northern region. In the military, men of Tiv extraction with a good romance with Islam had a better patronage of the Fulani ruling class. It is therefore, not strange that in contemporary herdsmen crisis in Benue state, the voice of the Tiv military elites is almost non-existent. Scholars in Nigeria have pointed out that since the creation of modern Nigeria, the goal and the ambition of the Fulani political class has been centred on the internal colonization of minority

groups in Nigeria. In 1960 for instance, Sir Ahmadu Bello in the Parrot Newspaper declared that:

Nigeria is the estate of their grandfather Usman Dan Fodio. It was the birthright of the Fulanis to rule, to prevent minorities from having real independence, to use ethnic minorities in central Nigeria as willing tools, to extend the Sokoto caliphate to the Atlantic.

This declaration by Ahmadu Bello has deep imperial intent as manifest in contemporary herdsmen expansion in Nigeria. To achieve the objective of internal colonization, certain structures were put in place such as the idea of nomadic education. National nomadic commission, grazing routes and grazing reserves, and the politicisation of the military top command controlled by the Fulani military elites. The 1980s and 1990s, the regimes of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha witnessed a gradual introduction of the Islamic agenda in Nigeria. Gen. Babangida for instance. Initiated Nigeria in the Organization of Islamic Countries (O.I.C). The protest of Christians in Nigeria did not change the fundamental intention of the Islamic north. The O.L.C controversy was soon followed up by the Abuja declaration of all Islamic Nations which promised one major thing: the islamization of the top military brass of Nigeria, the introduction of Sharia in northern states, the control of political leadership by the Islamic class. These were structures and institutions designed to check the Christian control of the politics of Nigeria. During President Olusegun Obasanjo's era, Sharia movements and Islamic insurgents became widespread across the north and reached a peak during the President Goodluck Jonathan's era with the emergence of the Boko Haram. The rise and expansion of militant Islam and political Islam

in the West African sub-region is traceable back to the era of Barack Obama as President of the United States of America. Since the Obama era, political Islam has been on the rise in the Middle East spreading across North Africa with an outpouring into sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, President Barack Obama, created a military command for Africa that was stationed on the high Mediterranean Sea of North Africa. The Obama administration recruited. Trained and equipped radical Islamic militants to overthrow and bring down regimes in the Middle East and North Africa that were none compliant to the ideological stream of the Western World. Since then. Nations like Iraq and Syria came under Islamic wars, the same for Libya. Tunisia and Egypt that came under the insurrection of the Arab spring. In the aftermath of the Arab spring which left collapsed regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. This led to proliferation of both small scale and medium scale arms in the hands of Islamic insurgents across Africa.

In North Africa, nomadic herdsman groups like the Berbers and the Tuoregs, armed and mobilized by Islam carved out territories in Mali and Niger. France responded quickly by dismantling the Islamic States in the West African sub-region. However, the dislocation of these Islamic groups found outlets of expansionism into Nigeria, Chad and Cameroun through the creation of terrorist groups like the Boko Haram and the Fulani militia group sponsored by Miyetti Allah.

In recent history, the farmers-herdsmen crisis in Nigeria is traceable to the emergence of Miyetti Allah, a socio-cultural group of the Fulani people. The emergence of herdsmen terrorism in Nigeria is tied to the

activities of Miyetti Allah and a series of loosed network between Miyetti Allah and nomadicherdsmen across West Africa. These terrorist groups backed by the state and institutionalized ethnicity, are well armed and equipped, also trained in the act of modern warfare using both light and medium scale weapons in paving the way for Fulani expansionism across Nigeria. Their mouthpiece has been Miyetti Allah and the military class in Nigeria that have refused to call them to order. The argument has always been that there are grazing routes and grazing reserves which must be secured for the herdsmen at the expense of human life. The formation of Miyetti Allah in the 1980s and 1990 is a water shed in the expansion of militant Islam in Nigeria. Miyetti Allah control great economic and financial strength, richer than states in Nigeria, mobilizing the Fulani resource across the whole world, with the sole objective of Fulani occupation of Nigeria through herdsmen expansionism. The patrons of the new Fulani militant movement were no other persons but President Muhamadu Buhari, Alh. Atiku Abubakar, Emir Sanusi, the Sultan of Sokoto, and the Fulani ruling elites both in the military and politics. Miyetti Allah and Boko Haram were basically the creation of the northern Islamic class to achieve a Fulani imperialism over Nigeria. In the election of 2011, Muhamadu Buhari is quoted to have said he was going to use everything possible to make Nigeria ungovernable for President Jonathan. These words were factual and prophetic as Boko Haram razed the entire north-cast Nigeria and even central Nigeria including Abuja. Since 2013, there has been series of herdsmen invasion of Benue State. These attacks have overwhelmed the local governments of Logo, Guma, Makurdi, Gwer

West and Gwer East, Ukum, Agatu, Ogbadigbo and others. The attacks have far reaching impacts on social and economic developments in Benue State.

Implications on Social Security in Benue State

What is the legal foundation and basis of Miyetti Allah's claim of grazing routes and grazing reserves across Nigeria against the backdrop of the Supreme Court Ruling in the 1960s that nullifies the idea of open reserves and grazing routes? It is important to note that in the Gazette of Northern Nigeria under the Northern Province, grazing routes and reserves were not created in the Benue Valley. What then is the legal basis of Miyetti Allah's claim of grazing reserves and routes in the Benue Valley? To what extent has the National Assembly and the Judiciary in Nigeria defended the rights of farmers across Nigeria for a peaceful material pursuit against the invasion by herdsmen? Herdsmen invasion of Benue State since 2012 has virtually destroyed the farming economy, displaced people in hundreds of thousands, thus deepening the crisis of poverty in central Nigeria. The Bureau for Local Governments has released statistics to show that the cost of economic destruction by herdsmen invasion is near N9b. It is expected that common sense would have told President Muhammadu Buhari's Federal led government that the destruction of farming communities compromises the foundation of Nigeria's economy and democratic prosperity. It has been expected. Like the norm in the West that any sane President of the ruling national class will in strongest terms, condemn such an invasion and militarily restrain herders from running

over farmlands. What has been the adequate media coverage of the farmers-herders conflict, in such a way that it reveals the salient motives behind the herdsmen invasion, their sponsors, and their agenda for the Nigerian nation? What actually is hate speech when farming communities' voice out their dissent, when their kinsmen are murdered in cold blood? The media plays a fundamental role in democratic sustenance by bringing out the ideological issues inherent in a conflict. There is no doubt that media reportage of the farmers-herders crisis has been suppressed, and trivialized as communal conflicts been operated by criminal gangs Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore and several Fulani nationalist movements have reportedly declared war on Benue State and carried out such intents with impunity. What has been the expected role of security forces and Agencies in ensuring that Miyetti Allah is not only charged with complicity in the murder of innocent lives across Nigeria but also declared as a terrorist group? These Fulani pan umbrella groups have openly declared terror on Benue State and carried it out without any restraint. These has led to the opinion that there is Federal Government complicity to protect powerful groups against weaker groups in Nigeria. This is a threat to democracy as it completely undermines the right of minority groups to survive in a democracy. It also re-enforces the fear that perhaps the Sir Ahmadu Bello declaration of the 1960 is been carried out by Miyetti Allah and other Fulani militant movements. Since Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State, through the State Assembly, passed the Anti Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, what has been the expected role of the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice or the Supreme

Court in Nigeria to interpret against the backdrop of the Constitution of Nigeria? What has been the role of the National Assembly to discuss these state laws within the context of the Constitution of Nigeria? In all democratic societies in the World, laws made by the States are either interpreted by the Attorney General of the Federation or challenged in the Nation's Supreme Court. This is done so in order to remove every doubt as to the legality of the law and the enforcement of same.

The idea of cattle ranches or cattle colonies, is it a government business or a private business in which the State provides the enabling environment while private Speculators invest in States that support such a business? It is possible to superimpose a cattle economy on an agrarian State against the wish of her people. How fair and justifiable is that under a democracy. In all modern democracies, State within the federation enact laws to protect their local economies, to grow their local economies according to their comparative strength and advantage for an export based economy. Every State exploits and utilizes her natural advantage based on their human and material resources. Is cattle colony the answer to the economic needs of farming populations in Nigeria?

- How rational and legal is it for the federal government to carve out colonies of whatever sort, cattles, pigs and dogs, within the territory of a subunit called the State? The principle of the Federal State gives relative autonomy to the States as against the oppressive and dictatorial wishes of the federal might. The relative autonomy is to guarantee the survival and freedom of minorities against domination by the majority. This is the

fundamental principle of State creation in Nigeria, the preservation of ethnic minorities as against powerful entrenched majorities. The question posers above help us to understand how democratic sustenance in Nigeria works, mobilizing all the basic institutions of democracy and good governance. These basic institutions must interact in a healthy and legal dialogue in order to produce a democratic society that can achieve the basic ideas free society. In Nigeria, since the farmers-herders crisis these institutions of democracy have either been weak or ineffective in the sustenance of the Rule of Law. The implication of this ineptitude of the National Assembly and other basic organs of governance in Nigeria is that Nigeria has been reduced into a jungle as described by Thomas Hobbes in 'Life in the State of Nature". The refusal of the Federal Government led security forces to apprehend the sponsors of Miyetti Allah is a clear indication that Nigeria's democratic sustenance remains that of a feudal state in a prebendal setting. The impact of the herdsman crisis on democratic sustenance in Benue State is the psychological effect on the psych of the average Benue person. The impact in terms of horror can be likened to a holocaust like in Nazi Germany during the Second World War. It is unlikely that the victims of this onslaught may recover even in the next fifty years. The mass burial in January of 2018 is the reminder of a holocaust as well as the recent mass burial of two Catholic priests and 17 persons at Ayati in Gwer-East local government. These burial sites are good reminders of a holocaust memorial like the six million trees planted in the holocaust park in Israel. These sites will remain an unending history in Nigeria's democratic experience especially to the Benue people. The

mass graves as a memorial will remind the people of Benue State that there was a President in Nigeria under a democratic dispensation who was reluctant in exercising his constitutional duties by protecting the lives and people in Benue State. The herdsmen invasion has led to the displacement of school children whose parents are farmers as well as the closure of schools, thereby, thwarting their destiny and future. Statistics indicate that over a hundred thousand students are thrown out of schools. Over ten schools destroyed, several teachers killed and several parents displaced. The attack on education compromises the future of education in Benue State. To some extent, looking at the Boko Haram effect on north East Nigeria. It is evident there is a concerted agenda to destroy the educational foundation of the North. It will take the North over fifty years to recover from this loss. Furthermore, the herdsmen invasion has widened the already existing gap between the gap between the North and the South. The herdsmen crisis impact has created a rift and division between the Benue political class, those who exploit the crises for political gains and those who are patriotic in preserving the Tiv nation from destruction. The crisis has been exploited by the political class either to cover up their deficiencies and failure or to stir disaffection using the masses as cannon fodder.

One major impact is the destruction of communal life in the rural areas. The rural areas were once the object of peaceful communal existence but insecurity, fear and dismay have disrupted the communal co-

existence in rural areas. This has adversely affected the rural areas in terms of development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I shall attempt to look at the way forward by highlighting some suggestions:

1. There is need for Benue State to join the debate on the restructuring of Nigeria as to what is the position and fundamental interest of Benue people within the context of Nigeria. There is need to redefine what is Northern Nigeria, either from the perspective of the majority or minority groups. Until we redefine what is Nigeria and what is Northern Nigeria, either geographically or politically, this will continue to be a major impediment to democratic sustenance in Nigeria. In Nigeria, the major challenge is that of entrenched ethnic majorities over that of minority groups, in terms of the respect for the rights of minority groups to exist and develop.
2. There is need in the restructuring agenda to consider the role of State Police as a panacea for providing grass root security. This is because the national security apparatus and infrastructure in Nigeria is ethnicized and politicized. Particularly in the north where most police Commissioners, Deputy Inspector Generals. Commanders of military garrisons are of Fulani extractions. This compromises the security of local communities that are minority groups.

3. Miyetti Allah and other militant Fulani groups have repeatedly issued out threats and executed same against States and Communities in Nigeria. This is a major impediment to democratic sustenance as it affects the farmers-herders crisis. The threats and executions of such threats qualify Miyetti Allah and other Fulani groups as terrorist organization. The federal government through President Muhamadu Buhari must declare Miyetti Allah a terrorist organization. This organization has repeatedly issued out threats against the government of Benue State and sustained such threats. An organization that has vowed to mobilize all Fulanis across the world to resist the peaceful co-existence of the people of Benue State undoubtedly is a terrorist organization.
4. There is every need to globalize the farmers-herdsmen crisis by either constructing global parallels like the ISIS invasion of Europe and America or by exploiting diplomatic windows with international organizations. This struggle. The farmers-herders conflict is not just a local struggle in Nigeria but also global phenomena with significance in Europe and America. In recent times, Islamic terrorists have invaded civilian populations in the United States, France and Britain all in the name of a jihad. The herdsmen invasion of communities in Nigeria has assumed the same characteristics by attacking civilian targets and Churches. This IS no more a struggle caused by environmental factors but with intent of a religious war. There has been a globalization of Islam that has come to affect Nigeria and the Christian community in Nigeria should also exploit the same global window. This is notable in the presence of Islamic global institutions in Nigeria like the Islamic Bank. In the recent attack at Avar the Catholic

community in Nigeria adopted Papal diplomacy to defend Christians in Nigeria. Such approach and other global tactics can be exploited by groups in Nigeria in the war against militant Islam. After all. Militant Islam has become a global issue and we must globalize it from the local front.

5. We must encourage research into history and the return of history in our schools to curb the challenge of ignorance about our historical existence. The government of Benue State should as a matter of priority invest more into history and historical research as well as the publishing of the history of her people to refute the ignorance of the Sokoto Caliphate about the history of Benue people and also to project the Benue people in right historical perspective. History will help us in the identification of the Benue people and how to assert that identity in both national and international politics. This is an important step towards democratic sustenance that will help project the Benue people and their minority aspirations within the context of the struggle for nationhood in Nigeria. The prevailing ignorance about the identity of the Benue people is a major impediment to the sustenance of democracy in that democracy allows minority interest to stamp her group her identity on world politics. Nations such as Serbia, Croatia, North Korea, South Korea and many others are far more much smaller as compared to Benue State both in population and resources but have been able to stamp their identity on the world map.
6. We must employ international media propaganda with a deliberate ideological information thrust that represents the Benue people in the national and international media. The Benue people must tell their story

from their perspective and should avoid the ruling status quo from telling the Benue story from their perspectives.

7. We must modernize agricultural sector emancipating the sector from the crude forces of production and primitive control. It is good that the Federal Government would want to invest in the creation of ranches across Nigeria as a way of removing the impediment in the conflict between herders and farmers. It will be equally good for the Federal Government to work towards the mechanization of farming communities in Nigeria particularly in Benue State as a way of removing the obstacle between farmers and herders. The pastoral and the farming economies should be developed side by side in order to complement each other. The underdevelopment of these sectors has been a major bottle neck in democratic success that could have enhanced the material happiness of the two groups.

REFERENCES

- Abdulbarkindo, A. and Alupsen, B Nigeria Benue State under the shadow of 'Herdsman Terrorism' (2014 2016)" Africa Conflict and Security Analysis Network ACSAN) Working Paper No. 5, (2017), 8 -43.
- Agena, T. "Resource Conflicts among the Tiv Ethnic Group of Central Nigeria since 1960."

VUNI Journal of History and International Relations, Vol.2, No. 1, (2014), 172-181

Ahokegh, A.F "Democracy and Conflict in Nigeria: A Case Study of Kwande in Benue

State, 2003-2004" Anvigha Journal of Politics, (2012), 1- 12.

Alimba, N.C Probing the Dynamic of Communal Conflict in Northern Nigeria." African

Research Review: An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Vol.8, No 1, (2014), 177-204

Amadi, L. and Igwe, 1 "Democracy and Political Violence in Nigeria since Multi -Party

Polities in 1999 A Critical Appraisal." Open Political Science, Vol 4, (2021), 101-119

Anifowose, R. Violence and Polities in Nigeria. The Tiv and Yoruba Experience (New York: Nok Publisher International, 1982).

Aver, T.T., Nnorom, K.C. and Targba, A. "Political Violence and its Effects on Social Development in Nigeria" International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Vol 3, No 17. (2013), 261-266.

Azaigba, K.T and Banke, S. "Party Politics and the Challenges of Political Stability in

Nigeria" African Journal of economy and Society, Vol 12, No.2, (2014), 48 -61.

Azam, A. and Rehman, S. "Assessing Human Needs Theory: An Approach to Conflict Resolution" *The Nucleus*, Vol. 55, No.3, (2018), 128-132

Berkowiz, L. "Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis: Examination and Reformulation." *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 106, No.1, (1989), 59-73.

Bradshaw, G.J and Lötter, C "Re-Evaluating Burton's Human Needs Approach from Critical Theory Perspectives," *International Journal of Peace Studies*, Vol.24, No.1. (2019), 63- 80.

Denen, G.M. "Political Violence and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.4, No.7. (2013), 41 45

Deng. F. "Anatomy of Conflict in Alrica" in *Between Development and Destruction: An inquiry into the Causes of Conflict in Post-Colonial State*. Edited by Goor, L et al. (The Netherlands: Institute of International Relation, 1996).

Dollard. J., Doob, L., Miller, N., Mowrer, O., & Sears, R. *Frustration and Aggression* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1939),

