



The National **Scholar**

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INSIGHT

THE Academic Staff Union of Universities started the struggle to return Nigeria to Democracy. That history is lost. The struggle against military rule by ASUU has been heroic and at great personal and institutional cost. ASUU's has been a history of bans, dismissal of its members, incarcerations, economic deprivation, threats and harassment. In those days when the strong feared to look Babangida in the face, ASUU dared him and demystified him. What followed later is better left to history. Even the most feared dictator, Sani Abacha was challenged at great personal cost to life and liberties. Under the military, it was easy to understand the paranoia that drove the successive dictators to the brink. It was easy to explain the anti-intellectual culture and virulent assault on university autonomy and academic freedom. It is a contradiction of sorts that the greatest threat to the intellectual and the University System so far in the history of Nigeria, has come under our home grown democracy. Many Nigerians prefer to refer to the current contraption as *democracy*. President Obasanjo has shown so much hatred and disdain for intellectuals that many have wondered about the source of his hatred. The mere mention of ASUU sends him on a frenzy of tantrums. He almost chokes at the mention of certain names in the leadership.

ASUU is all about the protection of the common Nigerian against exploitation and bad governance. Its sin is that for over four decades, it has managed to evolve successive leadership that cannot be compromised with financial inducements. This edition is not about the heroic struggles of ASUU. But the background became necessary because The Scholar has been off the stands for over a year. We have been basically embattled on all fronts, fighting financial strangulation and repression from the government of President Obasanjo. An avowed mission of the president is to dismantle ASUU forever. This is a public declaration by the President and not something made up. The present Labour Law was certainly made with ASUU in mind. The heroic struggle of members and patriotic Nigerians watered down the Bill significantly to remove its most potent ingredients.

INSPITE of all hurdles, ASUU will continue to struggle for the survival and freedom of the Nigerian people. The Union will also continue to strive for better funding of Universities, better working conditions for its members and conducive learning conditions for Nigerian students.

IN this edition, we have lined out a number of articles. As usual, we allow other views. Two of the main contributions are from people who are remotely associated with universities. The issue of explosion of private universities in Africa continues to interest academics all over the world. In this edition, you will get a perspective from an individual who should know.

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'Education not a commodity for sale'

A welcome address by the President of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Dr. Abdullahi Sule-Kano, at the Conference on Reforming Higher Education in Nigeria organised by Academic Staff Union of Universities and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) at the Rockview Hotels, Abuja, Nigeria on 21st and 22nd March, 2005.

PROTOCOL

I wish to, on behalf of the organizers (ASUU/CODESRIA), welcome our special guests, delegates, lead paper presenters and participants to this conference on Reforming Higher Education in Nigeria.

The problem of Higher Education System in Nigeria has over the years been a subject of great concern to academics, the Government and the people. The realization of the magnitude of this problem explains why ASUU has made it the cornerstone of its struggles to force the Nigerian state to address the situation. But unfortunately, various successive governments in Nigeria have not taken the matter seriously. They have misunderstood the problem and, having misunderstood it, they have failed to find anything near a solution to it.

Government, at some points in time, had to set up some commissions to proffer advice, commissions such as the Cookey Commission and the Longe Commission attempted to address the problems and to proffer new directions for Higher Education Development in the country. While the findings of these commissions and some of their recommendations were seen by many as a step in the right direction and as being capable of providing a base for creating a higher education system that is efficient, subsequent governments have refused even to refer to them in their policy positions. One of the highlights of the recommendations of these commissions was their unanimous acceptance of Higher Education as the pivot on which all developmental activities of the nation hinge and that the adequate and sustained funding of education is a social responsibility of government to its citizenry.

The aspirations of the Nigerian people for education demand that we see education not merely in terms of manpower development. Education is a public good directed at uplifting the social, scientific, technological and cultural development of a nation, as well as developing the talents of individual citizens. Although we agree that education is a productive investment, but even this position should be qualified. The humanitarian conception, which we hold to be true is that

education should always not be viewed in economic terms; that is, profit and loss. Education is a social process for "building" the all-round human personality, democratic culture, and for inculcating in citizens those shared values necessary for the common life of the people. This is why the concept of national needs must be understood widely to encompass, not merely manpower needs; it is very important to see that the development of manpower needs is a means to the humanitarian goals of education.

ASUU has argued that the present "market-driven" reform programme in the higher education sector is inimical to our national interest; that they do not stem from a well articulated program of action that is founded on the present economic, social, cultural and political realities of our nation; that they are externally driven by the combined forces of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as exemplified by the Nigerian University System Innovation

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Project (NUSIP). The principles of the NUSIP programme presently implemented by government are drastically reducing access to education for the majority of Nigerian people and hence widen the gap of inequality.

ASUU believes that the essence of reform in any Higher Education System cannot be found at the level of government's divestment from it, especially if such a reform is aimed at promoting national development. This can only shrink the level of access and create further inequality in the society, hence a threat to the emergence of a democratic society. This is particularly a matter of concern in a country like Nigeria, where 90% of the populace live in an income of less than one USD per day.

Education is not a commodity just for sale. It is a social good. It is the social responsibility of any government to its people. It is the engine of growth, development and transformation of any society. Higher Education restores to mankind its humanity.

ASUU is not against reform in the Higher Education System. What ASUU is opposed to is the Marketisation of the Higher Education System in Nigeria in the name of reform. ASUU believes that reform is a necessity in almost every facet of

life and human endeavour in present day Nigeria, the education sector inclusive.

However, ASUU believes that the significance of any reform must be based on its essence to humanity and its consequences for the aspirations of the people for a free and just society. This must be based on scientifically derived policy relevant knowledge, which must be a product of intensive research, debate and consultations by all actors and participants, be they the policy makers, lecturers in the system, their students and the Nigerian public.

The truth is that if Government fails to provide quality tertiary education for its citizens, the private sector cannot. Nigeria needs to provide tertiary education for its citizens, in order to develop. The present thrust of government to force on Nigerian

Tertiary institutions the so-called "Financial Autonomy" will ultimately frustrate the achievement of the national goal of development. This is what ASUU is struggling against.

It is because of our belief in genuine Higher Education Reform that ASUU, in collaboration with CODESRIA, packaged this conference which, in our opinion, should provide a platform for Nigerian Education Policy Makers, all active participants in the Higher Education System and the Nigerian public, to come, share and exchange ideas as well as experiences with other international scholars, particularly those who had, through research or active involvement in policy formulation and execution, played key roles in Higher Education System Reform in their countries.

It is our sincere hope that the outcome of deliberations in the conference shall provide a solid foundation for articulating an effective, efficient and positive reform programme for the Nigerian Higher Education System.

The conference should be able to formulate a basis for the emergence of an improved Higher Education Research Agenda in future.

May I conclude by thanking CODESRIA for this wonderful partnership with ASUU. It is our hope and prayer that it be sustained. May I also use this medium to wish all participants successful deliberations.

Thank you and God bless.

Dr. Abdullahi Sule-Kano
National President, ASUU

News

ASUU Standing Committees

ASUU NEC has approved the formation of a new Standing Committee – The National Freedom Committee. The Committee is to be chaired by Dr. Ibrahim Malunfashi of Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto. NEC has also approved the appointment of Dr. Yomi Akinyeye, the Chairman of the University of Lagos Branch of ASUU, as the New Chairman of the International Relations Committee. Dr. Akinyeye replaces Professor W.O. Alli (Former ASUU Chairman, University of Jos) who is now the Director of Research, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Lagos.

New Chairmen of Branches

Two new Chairmen were recently accredited into the National Executive Council (NEC) of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). The Chairmen are, Dr. Andrew Efemini and Mr. Muazu Maiwada of University of Port Harcourt and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria respectively.

ASUU Library

ASUU has secured a space on the 4th Floor of the Faculty of Arts Complex as the ASUU National Library. The library is still being arranged to accommodate research materials. Efforts have been made to secure books from various sources. Members are hereby urged to continue to donate copies of books they have published. All donations should be made through the Branch Chairmen. ASUU branches are also to purchase all published books by their University Presses as resolved and directed by NEC. Arrangements have reached advanced stage to commission the library and open it to the public.

ASUU Website

ASUU has opened its website since 2003. The website address is asuunigeria.org. ASUU members and the general public can have easy access to information on ASUU activities. Members can chat with other intellectuals within and outside Nigeria and can also open e-mail addresses.

Members News

1. The former Branch Chairman of ASUU, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Dr. Otas Ukponmwan has recently been promoted to the rank of Professor. The editorial board of *The Scholar* felicitates with Professor Otas and wish him more successes in the years ahead.
2. The former Branch Secretary of ASUU, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Mal. M.K. Aliyu has successfully defended his Ph.D Thesis in Archeology at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka on April 14, 2005. Dr. Aliyu is currently the head of the ASUU – NEC Secretariat, a member of the Resolutions Committee of NEC and ASUU National Research and Publications Committee. Dr. Aliyu obtained his B.A. (Hons) and M.Sc Degrees from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and University of Ibadan respectively. The editorial Board of *The Scholar* wishes Dr. Aliyu more successes in his future endeavours.

ASUU's Position on the Federal Government's Anti-Corruption Crusade

IN Nigeria, corruption is not a series of accidental occurrences resulting from defective individual character; it is not the characteristic of any ethnic, cultural or religious group. Since 1960, corruption has been an essential tool in the hand of the ruling class in Nigeria for the accumulation of wealth and for the seizure and sustenance of political power. Unable to organize a productive economy, generally unconcerned about productive generation of wealth, lacking a sense of historical mission, our rulers have used State Power essentially as a base for leading a style and standard of living that cannot be sustained without helping themselves to the treasury. The history of our country, both during military dictatorships (1966-79; 83-99), and the civilian regimes (1963-66, 1979-83, 1999-date) is, in a major way a history of progressive development of the culture of corruption in Nigeria.

The 2003 Elections and Current Reforms

The problem of corruption at this time should be understood also from the current political and economic circumstances in our country. The fact is that now, as before, politics is the fastest path to wealth. It is the quickest means of acquiring riches, through direct self-enrichment and State patronage. The well-organized fraud that was called "elections" in 2003 set the climate that produced the motivation and compulsive felt need for corruption among Nigerian rulers. Furthermore, it is a matter of ordinary human psychology that those who have benefited immensely and who derive political power from fraud are morally, politically and otherwise too weakened and too compromised to deal ruthlessly

with corruption. Unfortunately in Nigeria, morally and politically compromised leaders determine who is accused and punished and who is not, and this has created severe credibility problems and handicaps in the struggle to defeat the cancer of corruption.

The 2003 election fraud is one major reason why no government in Nigeria today has the strength, courage, and

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The accumulative drive induced by economic policies now in force is a true origin of recent revelations of corruption in the NNPC, the Presidency, the ministries, the National Assembly, the Police, the Navy and the Army, the political parties, the educational institutions and the civil service.

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credibility needed to deal decisively with corruption.

The gigantic fraud of 2003 could only have been financed with heavy "investment", the return of which has to be recovered by the "investors" before 2007. A former Senate President admitted this much. Such investors are to be found directly in government, among lawmakers, party big whigs and their families, political contractors, businessmen and women,

corporate officers, godfathers and godmothers, and agents of big business and multinational corporations. They have made corruption in Nigeria an inevitable feature of the political culture. They have turned corruption into an art and a political industry.

The economic policies which the Federal Government has imposed on Nigerians as a cure to our national suffering make corruption a tool for personal survival. It has become economic "wisdom" coming from the IMF and the World Bank that Nigeria will develop only if the bulk of people's (public) property is sold to private individuals and the prior welfare orientation of the Nigerian State is destroyed, leaving individuals to struggle for their survival under the rule of "market forces", economy of debt payment, and competition for power among "interest groups". The government of Nigeria is pursuing this doctrine and its privatization programme with religious fervour. Nigerians now know that individuals who hold State Power, their partners, allies and families are the chief buyers of public property, the major beneficiaries of the 'reign of market forces', while those on behalf of whom government took power (the people) have become more impoverished, less healthy, less educated and more deprived of human dignity.

The accumulative drive induced by economic policies now in force is a true origin of recent revelations of corruption in the NNPC, the Presidency, the ministries, the National Assembly, the Police, the Navy and the Army, the political parties, the educational institutions and the civil service. The recent corruption scandals in high places are traceable to the election fraud in 2003 and the economic policy of privatization of public wealth and the abandonment of

social welfare by a government that was sworn in to protect the people.

Consequence for the Masses

The major consequence of the pervasive scandals/revelations of ruling class corruption is that the masses in Nigeria, who live on less than one dollar a day, now have very strong evidence for the strong conviction that corruption pays. When poor people look around them and find that the best survivors are the rich, powerful and corrupt, it is difficult for them to accept the morality of hard work, productivity and honesty. Ruling class corruption is destroying the fabric of the Nigerian society. *Corruption is so systematic that superficial, occasional arrests and dismissals will not make a dent in fighting it.*

Beyond The Surface

ASUU cannot, therefore, accept the position that the government's responses to recent scandals in the Federal Ministry of Education, the National Assembly, the Ministry of Housing and the Police, constitute a serious and effective onslaught on corruption. The political history of the regime in power at the center and the States are built on corruption. Corruption is an essential part of ruling class culture in Nigeria. Doctrines and policies that the Government has imposed on Nigerians are major causes and sustenance of corruption. The truth lies beyond the surface. We do not see how a government can change its own history or avoid the essential consequences of its own economic direction.

Corruption And The University System

In the last four years, ASUU has drawn Government's attention to cases where public funds have been misused by individuals. Some of these cases are:

(1) **The Education Tax Fund:** In 2001-2002, allegations of fraud and mismanagement were made against the Board of Trustees of the Education Tax Fund. A House of Representatives Committee

inquired into the allegations. Part of the recommendations of that panel was that a high official of the Board be referred to the ICPC. Up till today, the report has never been made public. The Federal Government has pretended that the report does not exist, despite ASUU's continued reminder.

(2) **The Stabilization Fund:** In 2001 when ASUU found that N600 million has been taken from the Stabilization Fund but not disbursed to the Universities as

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ASUU cannot, therefore, accept the position that the government's responses to recent scandals in the Federal Ministry of Education, the National Assembly, the Ministry of Housing and the Police, constitute a serious and effective onslaught on corruption. The political history of the regime in power at the center and the States are built on corruption.

intended by the FGN-ASUU Agreement, ASUU sought an explanation. NUC and the Federal Ministry of Education claimed that NUC had loaned the Federal Ministry of Education N600 million to buy a house for the Open University. But the claim was denied in writing by the Vice-Chancellor of the National Open University. ASUU's investigations revealed that no house was purchased for the

Open University and no house purchased by the Ministry of Education belongs to the Open University. ASUU complained to Mr. President, to the Minister of Education, to the National Assembly, and to the public. The Federal Government has remained silent on the issue. The officers involved remain public officers, one as the NUC Executive Secretary, the other as Minister of State in the Federal Ministry of Mines and Power.

(3) ASUU alleged, and it was proven to be true, that a Government Minister had lied about his academic qualification. The individual is a Federal Minister till today.

(4) Transparency in Nigeria has made public a statement by Sidi Ali, a former member of the Governing Council of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, at Rock View Hotel on December 9, 2004, that he resigned from the Council when the former Minister of Education, Dr. Babalola Borishade, "demanded and received N50 million from the Council" in exchange for helping the Nnamdi Azikiwe University secure a special grant of about N500 million.

(5) *Four years after ASUU's complaints about the mismanagement of the Stabilization Fund by the NUC, at the time when universities are complaining of lack of funds, the NUC Executive Secretary has loaned another N20 million belonging to Universities to the Education Minister for executing a decision to bribe. The Minister of Education testified before the Senate Committee on Ethics; Code of Conduct and Public Petitions that the NUC Executive Secretary arrived during the course of the Management Meeting which made the decision to source for the money to meet the demand*

of N50 million (“for the” two Committees on Education”), was briefed on the matter and agreed to contribute N20 million. Does punishment for corruption a function of proximity to power?

- (6) The Auditor-General Report in 2001 revealed massive corruption in government, including in the Ministry of Education (pages 58-76). The Auditor General was removed. No official was prosecuted or punished for corruption.
- (7) ASUU has publicly claimed and written the Visitor to the University of Lagos that the last University of Lagos Governing Council lost money in a failed Bank, and called for an official investigation into the management of the universities finance by the Council of UNILAG. The Chairman of that Council has been reappointed without investigation of ASUU’s publicly made complaint in 2004.
- (8) ASUU complained to the Federal Government through the Attorney General about the award of a new remuneration package to themselves by the Committees of Pro-Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors, contrary to the law. The Attorney General ignored ASUU’s complaint. A Federal High Court has since declared the package illegal in one University. In the mean time, the Federal Government looks on as the illegal package continues to be implemented in many Universities.
- (9) In the last Visitation to Universities (1999), some Vice Chancellors and Pro-Chancellors were indicted for misappropriation, mismanagement of funds, etc. The White Papers gave directives to Councils, ranging from mandatory return of illegally acquired money, reprimand, to establishment of further probes. These orders were ignored. And

the Federal Government turned its eyes the other way. An example is the University of Ilorin.

- (10) Universities have expressed dissatisfaction with NUC’s handling of their funds, and have called into question NUC’s accountability and probity. ASUU has several times called for a probe into NUC finances and financial management of funds. But the Federal Government has refused to take NUC through this

- (11) While Government publicly advocates honesty and accountability on the part of the youth, government agents, annually and routinely bribe contestants in Students’ Union elections at the national (and local levels), and continually use money to corrupt student leaders, usually to get them to support the policies of the ruling regime.
- (12) Some Vice Chancellors have engineered the sack of Union leaders who have shown a strong interest in promoting accountability in their Universities. Government has, in many cases, supported such unjust and illegal sackings for political reasons.
- (13) Some Vice Chancellors have complained of demands of money from them by Ministry of Finance officials in order to release allocated funds. Some have cooperated and paid. The practice is old. Does government care?

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Most effective weapon against corruption, however, is the establishment of a true welfare state based on a popular democratic government and an egalitarian economic arrangement that will relinquish the disastrous doctrine and practice of the economic religion of “market forces” and the debt (death) trap set for future generations by the IMF.

same check of accountability that Universities undergo. The Federal Government does not know that workers in the NUC may have silently lost faith in Government’s pronouncements on accountability, simply because they cannot see how Government remains indifferent to allegations about the financial mismanagement at the National Universities Commission (NUC).

Accountability issues awaiting answers

The public is still awaiting the Federal Government to come out and deal with the following:

- (1) The unanswered questions about the corrupt practices of Heads of Military Governments since 1996.
- (2) How the funds allocated for the repair of the refineries were used, given that the refineries have not functioned significantly.
- (3) The Federal Government’s position on the ID Card Project Scandal, in light of the established fraud involved (2001).
- (4) The Halliburton scandal involving \$2.4m improper payment to the principal officers of the Inland Revenue Service (2003).
- (5) The allegation of fraud in the finances of COJA and CHOGOM.
- (6) The Julius Mankanjuola case.
- (7) The origin of the Ghana-Must-Go distributed in the National Assembly.

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ASUU has never and will never be against dialogue – *Dr. Sule-Kano*

Dr. Abdullahi Sule-Kano, National President of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, (ASUU) in this interview with The Scholar speaks on pressing issues within and outside the university system. These include, the ASUU/FG Agreement, the tax and labour laws, monetisation policy of the Federal Government and many others. Excerpts

THE SCHOLAR: *What is your vision for ASUU?*

The Union has its strategic planning that capture its vision and mission which can be summarized as follows:

To contribute to the creation of a society where human resources replaces oil as the engine of development for Nigeria; To restore education to its primary position in the nation as a mechanism for mobility, gender and class equality; To create an enabling environment underpinned by a high value on education as a basis for decision making, development and social justice; To defend the principles of collective bargaining and the FGN/ASUU Agreements on genuine university autonomy, funding and conditions of services that encourage the highest level of academic performance; To inculcate a culture of scholarship and discipline amongst ASUU members and to generate greater interest, commitment and participation of members in Union activities and an understanding of the principles and ideologies of the union.

What are you going to do differently from the last Executives?

Unless there is a review of the existing plan, the current mission and vision has to be followed religiously by the current national executives.

How do you intend to handle ASUU's often contentious relations with the Federal Government?

Part of the expectations of our members is that we keep to the principles and tradition of our union for better working condition, social justice and struggle for the survival of our youth through proper education. The Union will continue on these bases and will find ways to make Government responsive to all these matters, even if it means mak-

Interview by:
DR. M.K. ALIYU

ing some sacrifices to the society through our struggles.

ASUU has often been accused of not imbibing dialogue in its struggles, what do you have against dialogue?

In the first place, it is not correct that ASUU do not imbibe dialogue. Infact, the primacy of dialogue in the resolution of industrial disputes was popularised by ASUU.

ASUU was described as a bunch of old time Marxists by a World Bank official. How true is this?

Whoever made this assertion is ignorant of the University System, which is made up of different people with different background, ideologies and convictions. Our Union is characterized by this mixture which is the prime dynamo that move the union, not the specific inclination or belief of any person or group. This principle is enshrined in the Constitution of the Union.

Part of the expectations of our members is that we keep to the principles and tradition of our union for better working condition, social justice and struggle for the survival of our youth through proper education.

A number of your officials, we understand, have some crisis with their families as a result of the demands of the struggle. In fact, some have said that the whole set up is not family friendly. How true is this? Is there any particular study on this? Do you have a policy to ensure that the total needs of your officials, both National and Local, are addressed to enhance their commitment and accountability?

This issue has never been before our union. Issues have to be formally presented and discussed before investigations are made and then necessary policies be made on them. Example, there are situations where members suffer as a result of accidents or lost of property during union assignments. Such matters are normally discussed, policies made and members compensated accordingly.

What is the next big issue in ASUU struggle?

We are now pursuing the re-negotiation of the June 30, 2001 ASUU/FGN Agreement and the correct implementation of all the existing agreements.

There is a Labour Law now in place that many believed was custom made for ASUU. What is your position on that?

If the law is designed for ASUU then it has failed. Because good laws are not designed to deal with individual or group. It is unfortunate if a society can make laws only for a particular group.

ASUU member's allowances have now become target for vicious taxation policies of State Governments, like Oyo and Kaduna States for instance. What is your position on this?

The tax laws are still being reviewed. I am not sure really if the existing tax

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Globalization: Colonizing the Space Flows?

By **TUNDE ADEGBOLA**
African Languages Technology
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Introduction

First of all, let me express my excitement at the opportunity to speak at a conference of linguists. To my mind, it is a salient pointer to the phenomenon of convergence, convergence in the study of the form and content of human language. As an engineer my preoccupation with language, at best had been with the form, in other words the media through which language is transmitted and stored. As an information theorist, my traditional interests had been in answering questions like how much channel space do we need to store and transmit linguistic content in say Yoruba language in contrast to English or any other languages. Of course, the traditional frameworks and premises applied in answering such questions were found in the foundational theories espoused by Claude Shannon. Today, however, I have been constrained to take on frameworks and premises based on the foundational theories espoused by Noam Chomsky. Convergence has therefore manifested in my work much beyond the popular stereotypes of convergence as the coming together of telecommunications, computing and broadcasting.

Convergence and Globalization

Convergence in its different guises is a product of the digitalization of our representation of various levels of natural realities. This new way of representing reality is bringing about a major paradigmatic review of our understanding of the natural environment we live in. It is this same digitalization of our representation of natural realities that has enabled the new patterns of temporal and spatial experiences that are manifesting as globalization at many fronts, including the cultural, economic, political, technological and even ecological.

Let us start by attempting a deconstruction of the rather cryptic title to this paper, Globalization: Colonizing the space flows? Which basically poses the question, 'is globalization a mere colonization of the space of flows? There are three main concepts in this problem

statement and these are globalization, colonization and the space of flows. Let us first take a look at globalization.

Globalization

Many commentators have defined globalization in diverse ways since the

Globalization can therefore be likened to the elephant in the Buddhist parable of the blind scholars and their encounter with an elephant. Given such a nebulous concept therefore, it is important to attempt a delimitation of the context in which this presentation intends to deal with it.

earliest appearances of the terminology in the 1960s. It has been used at various times and in diverse contexts, both in popular media and in the academic literature to describe a process, a condition, a system, a force and an age. Economists tend to see it primarily as an economic phenomenon that involves the increasing interaction, or integration, of national economic systems through the growth in international trade, investment and capital flows. For example, MIT Professor Paul Grugman, in his book "Peddling Prosperity" suggests that there is no more

to the global economy than trade in goods, capital, labour and information. As far as he is concerned, "there is no more mystical sense in which we have a global economy. We are living in a world that is about as integrated, give or take a few measures, as the world of the 19th century". This may be a plausible conclusion if the new patterns of technological development that are changing the ways humans interact are not taken into consideration.

Globalization can therefore be likened to the elephant in the Buddhist parable of the blind scholars and their encounter with an elephant. Given such a nebulous concept therefore, it is important to attempt a delimitation of the context in which this presentation intends to deal with it.

One major theme that runs through most definitions and descriptions is that globalization is a multidimensional set of social processes that resist being confined to a single thematic framework. However, Steger (2003) recognizes the following four characteristics at the core of globalization:

- (i) Globalization involves the creation of new and the multiplication of existing social networks and activities that increasingly overcome traditional political, economic, cultural and geographical boundaries
- (ii) Globalization is reflected in the expansion and the stretching of social relations, activities and interdependencies.
- (iii) Globalization involves the intensification and acceleration of social exchanges and activities.
- (iv) Globalization processes also involve the subjective plane of human consciousness.

From its character and the various levels of rhetoric that accompany it, we can deduce that globalization is a set of processes that manifests in cultural, economic, political, technological, ecological and many other dimensions. What is usually overlooked however is its underlying ideological dimension. According to Steger (2003), globalism, the underlying ideology of

globalization as we know it today is based on neo-liberal capitalism and therefore carries with it the classical 'system of beliefs' upon which neo-liberal capitalism is built. Hence, some of the prominent 'beliefs' that constantly permeate the rhetoric of globalization are that:

- Globalization is about liberalization and global integration of markets;
- Globalization is inevitable and irreversible;
- Nobody is in charge of globalization;
- Globalization benefits everyone;
- Globalization furthers the spread of democracy in the world.

Since these are just beliefs, let us take a look at history. History teaches us that powerful individuals, powerful communities and powerful nations will always express a quest to control less powerful individuals, communities and nations. It seems to be natural. As far back as the twelfth century the Mongolian conqueror Genghis Khan had exhibited globalizing tendencies when in 1206, he created out of almost all of western and eastern Asia, one of the largest land empires in history. Genghis Khan's imperial exploits were facilitated mainly by superb horsemanship and expert archery, the discipline and control of its aristocratic leaders, as well as his own brilliant military strategy and tactics.

What Genghis Khan lacked was the capacity to effectively communicate with his generals at the extremities of his vast empire. Today, however, we have that capacity and we have employed it to turn our world and even much of space, beyond our atmosphere into the proverbial global village. Hence, the present manifestation of globalization, we may say is the result of the capacity that digital technology has provided to the powerful of our times to attempt what the powerful would normally do.

This background gives us a context within which we can examine globalization from the point of view of the question posed in the title of this paper. Is globalization merely colonization of the space of flows? Now that we have addressed globalization let us take some time to examine colonization.

Colonization

As for defining colonization, we may not have as great a challenge because we have direct historical instructions of its practice and its effect as well as its after shocks. Most of us in this gathering are

either offsprings of colonized peoples or offsprings of colonizers. We all have some experience at least of the aftermaths.

We may define colonization as a process in which a state claims sovereignty over territory and people outside its own boundaries, often to facilitate economic domination over their resources, labour, and markets.

Needless to say that the domination goes far beyond the economic sphere. In the process of gaining economic dominance, political dominance becomes necessary. Political dominance calls for cultural dominance and before we know it

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the colonized become mere caricatures of themselves.

The Space of Flows

The idea of the space of flow derives from a concept of the dichotomy of spaces. As articulated by Manuel Castels, space can manifest either as places or flows. Our traditional conception of space is characterized by physical geography. We normally think of space in terms of some geographical location and this is the type of space that Castels refers to as the

space of places. His concept of the space of flows however, is characterized not by a geographical entity but by a capacity for communication and interaction. This space of flows, Castels argues is now becoming more important than the space of places.

For example, the office is no longer a place but a global system, because the same technologies that are facilitating globalization are taking the 'space' out of the workplace (Tapscott, 1995). Hence, home may still be where the heart is, but the office is fast becoming where (wherever) the head is connected (and that can still be at home). We are clearly presented here, with two types of where. A *where* of place and a *where* of flows.

The space of flows therefore is the space within which information flows and various other types of flows such as capital and labour take place.

Now that we have contextualized globalization, colonization and the space of flows, let us return to re-examine our problem statement; is globalization a mere colonization of the space of flows?

As a high school student of introductory economics, I was taught that the means of production are land, labour, capital and human resource, etc. However, in his keynote address to the Annual World Bank Conference on Development Thinking in 2000, Joseph Stiglitz noted that information has assumed such an important place in human experience that modern development thinking now includes an information and knowledge dimension in the aggregate production function,

$$Q = F(A, K, L, H)$$

in which K represents capital, L represents labour, H represents human capital, while A represents a vector of dimensions which includes, information, knowledge as well as social and organizational capital (Stiglitz, 2000). He therefore, suggested that to mitigate imperfections in information flows that may lead to an economic equilibrium in developing countries in which resources are allocated with gross inefficiency, governments in the developing world should:

- take action to improve information flows;
- take action to reduce agency problems and their consequences of information asymmetry;
- take action to help create institutions that find more efficient ways around information asymmetries;

- recognize that in general, information is imperfect hence markets can not be assumed to work under the standard “demand and supply” framework;
- play an active role in the generation, acquisition and use of knowledge.

What, one may ask, is the relevance of all this in a linguistics conference? The relevance stems from the fact that language is the fundamental space of flows. It is the medium within which the totality of human knowledge is coded. It is particularly relevant in a conference of West African Linguists because there is an urgent need for African linguists to enter into interdisciplinary dialogues with scholars of various other specializations in order to develop the linguistic tools that will promote Africa’s relevance in the information age in which we now find ourselves. The efforts of African linguists will to a large extent determine the global relevance of Africa in the information age.

Poor infrastructure has been recognized as a major problem of Africa in dealing with the on-going information revolution. However, if all the problems of Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure of Africa were solved today, only an insignificant population of the African elite would be capable of taking full advantage of modern ICTs. This is because these ICTs have been designed primarily for use in the English language. Even other European languages of colonization such as Spanish and French had to play catch-up. Today, many years after they are still yet to catch up. 80% of the content of the global information infrastructure is in English. Less than three percent is from Africa and most of this three percent is in English.

Many African languages still remain unwritten and many of those that are written are not available to modern information technologies. For this reason, therefore, the asymmetry in the information flows between African and the rest of the world will remain even if the infrastructural defects are effectively addressed. The need to appropriate ICTs for the language needs of Africa is rather pressing.

Colonization was about the space of places while globalization is about the space of flows, but is globalization a mere colonization in the space of flows? For now, may be all we can say is, it depends. It depends on various factors, many of which may be beyond the scope of this presentation. Within the scope of this presentation and for West Africa, however,

we may say it depends on what West African linguists do from now on.

The ascendancy of the space of flows is a loss (at least a drastic reduction in value) of the accolades of independence struggles. Having reclaimed our space of places by virtue of the struggles of the likes of Amilca Cabral, Herbert McCauley, Kwame Nkrumah and most recently Nelson Mandela, attention is now moving in the direction of the space of flows. If we are to make good the sacrifices of the generation that earned us independence, then we must ensure that globalization does not end up a mere colonization of the space of flows.

When a society gets collectively acculturated into foreign values, it becomes easy for the purveyors of these values to sell goods and services that are not to the disposal of the recipient

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society. This way the economic base of the foreign culture is strengthened at the expense of the local culture.

As a little boy growing up in Ibadan, I used to wonder how the Kingsway Stores in downtown Ibadan managed to stock the style of clothing worn by James Bond in the latest 007 films then showing in Scalar Cinema. Now that I am little older and having worked for many years in the broadcasting/

advertising industry, I now realize that both James Bond and the UAC (the then owners of Kingsway Stores) were both on Her Majesty’s secret service.

How then do we address the information asymmetry that makes our society vulnerable to foreign values that threaten our economic livelihoods and what roles are linguists called on to play? To answer these questions we may need to consider the paradoxical nature of modern ICT.

The Information Communication Technology Paradox

Today, modern Information Communication Technology (ICT)s have become the means of generating, processing, transporting and presenting information. The age-old oral technology of speech, the traditional textual technology of print, and relatively more recent electrical technologies of radio and TV are all validly ICTs that have in their various ways promoted the portability of human thought. In recent times, however, modern ICTs have brought about unprecedented increase in the pace and intensity of human communication and by so doing facilitated globalization.

ICTs can either spell doom for our languages and the cultures they bear, knocking the death knell or they can provide new avenues and media to invigorate them by opening up new windows of orality on one hand and redefining literacy on the other.

We can open new windows of orality by appropriating modern ICTs of radio, TV and film to mediate oral communication. Text may be efficient as a means of transferring thought, but speech still remains the preferred means of human communication. We should therefore take full advantage of the capacity of modern ICTs to mediate oral communication. The emerging practice of community radio is one that can be used to reinvigorate endangered languages by capacitating speakers of such languages to broadcast within their local communities in their local languages.

I talk of redefining literacy because currently, literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. Reading and writing we must realize is achieved with the information technology of the “ink stained paper”. It is an information technology with a very steep learning curve. Modern ICTs however present the possibilities of speech synthesis and speech recognition as new information technologies of

reading and writing. You do not need to learn to read in order to use a speech synthesizer neither do you need to be able to write to use a speech recognizer. We can therefore work towards redefining literacy as the capacity to interact with written literature rather than the ability to read and write.

Rethinking Linguistics in West Africa

What is the West African linguist's responsibility in all these? There is a need for rethinking linguistics in our part of the world. My experience of linguistics in Nigerian universities is one that tends to starve linguistics of its essence as a science. Linguistics departments in Nigerian Universities are located in faculties of arts. This, I think could serve an advantage in the sense that an endeavour in science is surrounded and hopefully enriched by the humanities. Unfortunately, however, what this location does, rather than enrich the science of linguistics with the wealth of the humanities, strip linguistic of its scientific essence. I once heard the story of a Nigerian university where the highest decision making body queried why a department of linguistics should demand for a laboratory. I am not sure if this kind of thinking is prevalent in other West African Universities. If this is the case, then we need to rethink linguistics in West Africa.

The great responsibilities that globalization places on the shoulders of West African Linguists can not be met if the type of understanding of linguistics mentioned above is allowed to thrive. In order to meet these responsibilities, we need to embark on curricula review of the linguistics programme in our universities. We also need to review admission criteria in order to nurture the scientific approach. Above all, there is a need to adopt a multidisciplinary approach to the study of linguistics and encourage interdisciplinary study groups around linguistic problems.

With the advent of the information age, there is new impetus to approach the study of African languages based on instrumental and quantitative frameworks. On one hand, the instruments for such study are now largely available in the computer. On the other hand, it is only by so doing that African linguists can provide background theories for the engagement of African languages on ICTs. Hence, we have come to an age in which we need to stretch our intellectual capacities beyond traditional departments of knowledge.

According to John Hennessy, "large scale complex problems cannot be addressed with knowledge and expertise from only one single discipline. The sheer scale and complexity of these problems require a multidisciplinary approach. It is the only truly effective way to make substantial progress towards their solutions", (Hennessy, 2002).

The problems that globalization confronts us with are large-scale and complex. The only truly effective way to make substantial progress towards their solution is to adopt the multidisciplinary approach.

In conclusion, let us return to our problem statement. Is globalization a mere colonization of the space of flows? I dare say that for West Africa, it depends on what West African linguists do. However, let me quickly relieve the burden I seem to be placing on the shoulders of the linguists by reiterating John Hennessy's position. Large-scale complex problems require a multidisciplinary approach. Since West African linguists have a great responsibility in this respect, a multidisciplinary approach spreads the responsibility to many other academic disciplines.

ASUU has never and will never be against dialogue – *Dr. Sule Kano*

(Continued from Page 9)

law is designed to generate the kind of reactions it is generating presently. It is also on record that many state Governments are not using the laws to harm workers in their states. We need to really understand the relationship between the states and the Universities where there are cases of over taxation or allowances being taxed. In the case of Kaduna State for example, previous administration in ABU have not been remitting fully deduction from staff salaries to the Kaduna State Board of Internal Revenue.

What is ASUU's position on Monetization?

ASUU is trying to come up with a position on the issue. All ASUU know about the policy is that it is an IMF/World Bank Programme and will not be good, in the long run, for the Nigerian people.

Are you married? If you are, what are the personal challenges you face as a Unionist and family man? What advise do you have for your colleagues.

I am married with children. The challenges I have are not different from the challenges any Union man faces. One has to manage his time for his family and the Union he is serving.

It is generally believed that ASUU Presidents, Branch Chairmen and some other key officials both at National and branch levels don't teach their courses. How true is this and especially on your case as ASUU National president?

It has never been true. Let me tell you a story to debunk that. The former NUC Secretary was of that opinion or misconception, until one day, one of the former students of ASUU's immediate past president visited his office and discovered the person was the former student of then ASUU President. The Executive Secretary began to ask the former student about his teaching and other academic activities. The fellow immediately reacted to inform the Secretary that one of the most respected lecturer he had passed through was the Immediate Past President, who has never missed his lectures. His lectures were the most satisfying and no student want to miss his lectures. As for me, I still teach all my courses and my primary assignment like any other teacher. This session (2004/2005), I am teaching 8 courses.

In a few sentences, how would you characterize the policy of the present government with respect to education?

The present government is anti-education. Its policies are vehemently against tertiary education and pay a lot of lip service to both primary and secondary education in Nigeria.

Are your members better off today than they were a decade ago? Are Universities better funded?

University funding is at its lowest level in the history of University education in Nigeria. As for members, although there is increase in pay, job satisfaction is at its most unsatisfactory level due to lack of facilities and deteriorating conditions of service.

New Governing Councils for Federal Universities

NEW Governing Councils have been inaugurated for the Federal Universities on April 28, 2005 at the Conference Hall of the National Universities Commission. The Governing Councils are as follows:

UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA

Chief Nnanna A. Iduma, Chairman; with the following as members: Alhaji Bello Dange, Mr. Williams Kefas, Dr. Muyiwa Oladimeji, and Hon. Fred Ekiyegha.

FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, AKURE

Dr. Dejo Raimi, Chairman, with the following as members: Alhaji Saidu Ababa, Engr. Umar K. Ibrahim, Chief Lambert M. Udoh and Dr. Fred Nnamdi Oduah.

NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA

Prof. Gred Iwuta, Chairman, with the following as members: Alhaji Salisu Kanya, Mr. Matthew Akare M. Doma, Matthew Abioye Oke, and Prince IfeaY_LE Ogbu.

ABUBAKAR TAFAWA BALEWA UNIVERSITY, BAUCHI

Prof. Emma Osamor, Chairman with the following as members: Kawu Gurjiya, Emmanuel Toro, Mr. Wahab Sadiq and Barr. Pascal Madu.

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN

Dr. Alex Kadiri, Chairman with the following as members: Chief Festus OchonoQor, Sani Almu Isah, Yuguda Kaigama and Elder Patrie O. Ojo.

UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, CALABAR

Alhaji Isiaka A. Adeleke, Chairman; with members as follows: Nadaniya Abubakar, Madu Mustapha Boka, Dr. M.A. O. Duroshola and Sylvanus Odong.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN

G. Onosode, Chairman, with the following as members: Dr. Funso Adetiba, Dr. James Odoh, Amb. Ladan. Shuni and Prof. Bawa Salka

OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE

Prof. S.J.S. Cookey, Chairman with the following as members: Prince Pat Abii, Barr. Saidu Usman Bukuyum, Abba Kyari Sadiq and Mrs. V.K. Olugbemi.

UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN

Prof. Ayo Banjo, Chairman; with the following as members: Mr. Okolo N. Michael, Chief Alex Mbakwe, Barr. Yahaya Mahmud and Alhaji Ayinla Folorunsho.

UNIVERSITY OF JOS, JOS

Prof. Musa Abdullah, Chairman with the following as members: Mr. O. Ita Toyo, Benjamin Kama, Dr. Abubakar Rasheed and Alhaji Farouk Bamusa.

BAYERO UNIVERSITY, KANO

Ambassador Mohammed A. Junba, Chairman; with the following as members: Dr. Lawrence Ezeogo, Abdullahi Kamba Kamba, Barr. Mike Bosua and Hon. Jide Awe.

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, LAGOS

Chief Afe Babalola, Chairman with the following as members: Dr. Paul Ukpo, Innocent Oparadike, Hon. Douglas Aji and Andrew E. Aileku, OFR.

UNIVERSITY OF MAIDUGURI, MAIDUGURI

Alhaji Yakubu Adamu, Chairman with the following as members: Prince Richard Ozobu, Alhaji Muazu Abubakar, Hajia Amina Ndalolo and Alhaji Rasheed Durodoye.

FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, MINNA

B.M. Wifa, Chairman; with the following as members: Chief Nnana Ezebuiro, Hon. Saba N. Mohammed, Hon. Adamu Usman Degri and Prince Supo Bello.

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

Prof. Bolanle Awe, Chairperson; with the following as members: Dr. Roland Ehigiamusoe, Dr. Stanley Mamman, Engr. Danjuma Dadu and Alhaji Mohammed Bornoma.

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, OWERRI

Umoru Farouk Abdullahi, Chairman with the following as members: Engr. Gabriel Warde, Chief Christian Nwagbara, Chief John C. Agwu, Mr. O.C. Gutip and Col. Roland Omowa.

UNIVERSITY OF PORTHARCOURT, P/HARCOURT

Alhaji L.A.K. Jimoh, Chairman with the following as members: M.I.V Ehiksmo, Hon. Sam Anyakorah, Musa Nuhu Gafiya and Mr. Victor Ilesanmi

UNIVERSITY OF UYO

Barr. Anselm U. Agbo, Chairman; with the following as members: Chief Isaiah H.Y. Oede, Abubakar Ruwa Ahmed, Mai Mala Buni and Mr. Johnson K. Adekunle.

USMANU DAN FODIO UNIVERSITY, SOKOTO

Alhaji Ahmed SonQ – Chairman; with the following as members: Barr. Ifeatu Obi-Okoye, Alhaji Isiaka Adeboye, Usman Zanna and Alhaji Mohammed Lawal.

FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, YOLA

Sen. Abdallah Wali, Chairman with the following as members: Mr. Victor Jonah Akpanowo, Chief Nancy Awuese Torhee, Isa Madaki and Hon. Mike Omoleye.

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

Alhaji Yakubu Mohammed – Chairman with the following as members: Mr. Edward Ukpata, Regina Okeke, Dr. Abubakar Rasheed and S.A. Olowokanga.

Report of the Two-Day ASUU-CODESRIA Initiative on Reforming Higher Education System

THE Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) organized a two-day conference on the above theme between 21st and 22nd March 2005 at Rockview Hotel in Abuja. In addition to the welcome addresses by the Executive Secretary of CODESRIA Professor Adebayo Olukoshi and the National President of ASUU, Dr. Abdullahi Sule-Kano, there was a goodwill message by the Honourable Minister of Education Professor Fabian Osuji. There was also a keynote address by Professor A. Sambo of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi on the Brief History of the Nigerian Higher Education System. The conference then went into four successive sections (two on each day) on different themes in which papers were presented. These themes were History and context in Nigerian Higher Education, Reform Experiences, Issues and trends, Reforming the Nigerian Higher Education system: Failures and Challenges, and The Idea of Reform in Nigerian Higher Education.

In his welcome address, the Executive Secretary of CODESRIA identified five trends that have affected the higher education sector globally which have necessitated reforms. Among these are the phenomenal expansion in enrolment without a corresponding expansion in infrastructure, the development of trade in education providing services, the impact of the global information technology, private initiative in the provision of higher education and globalization. All of these have affected higher education in Nigeria. He expressed the hope that participants would explore the impact of these factors on higher education in Nigeria and find an acceptable solution to the

problem of higher education in Nigeria. He further urged both parties i.e. ASUU and government not to take the attitude of opponents on the issue of higher education in Nigeria but that of both concerned parties attempting to understand each other's perception of the same problem with a view to reconciling and harmonizing views for mutual benefit.

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There is also the related problem of how much fund is available for higher education and how much public and private sectors participation is available. To what extent then is it desirable to expect everybody to benefit from higher education? Also what purpose is served by university education? The Minister then expressed his support for the conference and looks forward to getting the report from the conference.
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The Honourable Minister of Education welcomed delegates to the conference which coincides with the holding of the National Conference on Political Reform and expressed the feeling of challenge to higher education managers by the conference. He expressed the hope that the focus on higher education does not mean a relegation of the other tiers of education to the background but just an expression of the awareness of greater problem in the higher education sub-sector.

The conference, the Minister continued, offers a great opportunity to look at all the ramifications of improving higher education. There is also the related problem of how much fund is available for higher education and how much public and private sectors participation is available. To what extent then is it desirable to expect everybody to benefit from higher education? Also what purpose is served by university education? The Minister then expressed his support for the conference and looks forward to getting the report from the conference.

The ASUU President reiterated the purpose of the conference which is to look into the problems of higher education in Nigeria which had been a subject of great debate by nearly all and all struggles by ASUU. However, successive governments have set up commissions which have produced well thought out reports that have been ignored by governments in their policies. All of these commissions have recognized the centrality of education to Nigeria's development and recommended appropriate funding. Education has been conceived not in market terms but as a tool for the total development of the human persons. This conception has however, changed and been replaced with a market-driven perception of education as a result of the current market driven reform, which is contrary to Nigeria's national interest. These reforms are motivated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The reforms are going to widen inequality among Nigerians. This is not however to say that ASUU is opposed to reforms. ASUU only opposes commoditization of education. If government fails to provide quality education for its citizens, the private sector cannot. Government's current reforms programmes believe in autonomy but frustrate the attainment of autonomy because the autonomy act

that was signed by government does not agree with its idea of autonomy. The difference of opinion between ASUU and government about desired reforms, has informed ASUU's partnership with CODESRIA to host this conference. He then expressed the hope that the conference will provide a meeting point on reforms in the higher education sector between government and ASUU and wished the conference delegates a successful deliberation.

In his presentation, Professor Abdusalam Sambo gave a brief history of the genesis of higher education in Nigeria and its attendant problems. Higher education in Nigeria can be traced to the Elliot Commission of 1943 set up by the British government. As a result of the Commission's report, the University College of Ibadan affiliated to the University of London was established in 1948. This was followed in 1949 with the setting up of the E.J. Hariow Committee which recommended the establishment of a Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology with branches in Ibadan, Enugu and Zaria. These branches were opened in 1952. Ten years later, the Ashby Commission was set up in 1959 to look into Nigeria's needs in the field of post-secondary school certificate and Higher Education in the next twenty years (1960-1980). This committee recommended the establishment of Universities in Lagos, Ibadan, Nsukka and Zaria whose total admission was expected to be 7,500 by 1970. The Western Regional government decided to open a fifth university at Ile-Ife. The universities started in 1962 and integrated the Colleges of Arts, Science and Technology in their regions. The then Bendel State established a University in Benin in 1970 and by then, contrary to total enrolment of 7,500 students in Nigerian Universities, enrolment in all universities was 16,000. The country later had an economic boom due to revenue from oil. In 1975, the Federal Government took over all the Universities in the country and established six new ones. Seven new universities of Technology were established under the restored civilian government. States were also empowered to establish universities and

eight southern states established their own. In 1983, a judgment by the Supreme Court opened the floodgate for private universities. In all these developments, technical education was relegated to the background and when technical education began with the establishment of the Yaba Higher College in 1932, it was to produce middle level manpower. This has affected both the attitude of Nigerians to and the fate of technical education in Nigeria. A National Policy on Education in 1977, reviewed in 1981 and 1998 did not do much to redress this problem. The paper also contained the policy of education in Nigeria. This includes inadequate funding, which came with government's take over of the universities and subsequent abolition of

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all fees, the establishment of agencies such as JAMB, NUC, NBTE and NCCE which eroded the autonomy of these institutions and the staff unions. The paper then recommends adequate funding by government, proper priority and accountability on the part of the universities.

Reform Experiences, Issues and Trends in the Global Higher Education System

There were a good number of papers presented under the sub-theme, "Global Trends". Jimi Adesina's paper, entitled "Global Trends in Higher Education Reform: What Lessons for Nigeria?" condemns the "commodity" approach to education and the declaration by the World Bank that Africa did not need higher education. He observes that the advent of private university will do little good as it does not promote research. This is not unexpected because they are profit-oriented universities that are not research-based and are only glorified secondary schools. Jimi Adesina is also bothered by the new but unfortunate trend of unethical practices by teachers who treat students as customers in their sacred duty of conducting examinations. Finally he condemns the recent ranking of universities by the N.U.C. on the basis of research output when, ironically, the same body does not fund research adequately.

Professor Adesina suggested that the body should recognize and promote local journal and scholarship. He admonished teachers also to be more conscientious in the performance of their sacred duties.

Ebirima Sall's paper is on the shape of Globalization. He lamented the 'commodification' of education which is an unfortunate shift. He lamented the fact that more than three hundred (300) bodies are applying for university licence which points to the attempt by the private business people to dominate and bastardize university education. He added that there is obvious rise in the numerical strength of institutions and enrolment without commensurate provisions in the areas of staffing and funding. He alluded to the situation in Senegal where there are only two public universities and forty-two private ones; in contrast to the French experience which has very few private universities. That the idea of the private university is not entirely inimical is supported by the U.S. story of private universities carrying out copious research with the backing of the industrial sector.

Ebirima Sall recommended that the state should wake up to its responsibility

of adequately funding education and putting in place an effective regulatory body to monitor higher education. He discouraged the state from embarking further on negotiations with foreign bodies on its education.

Professor Hugo Aboites shared with us the Latin American experience of globalization. He alerted us to be wary of any reform proposed by the state because in most cases, there is usually a socio-political agreement between some unseen beneficiaries at the expense of the students and the workers. He asserted that education is a right of the citizenry and not a patrimony of a few. He recalls the Latin American story of workers and students forcing government to bear the responsibility of making education accessible to all. He recommended that there should be complete academic freedom in the university, reformation of the erring young ones and the establishment of an effective regulatory body.

Carlos Cardoso spoke on the Lusophone Africa and its experience of globalization. He revealed that unlike the experience in Francophone and Anglophone countries of Africa, the colonial government refused to establish higher institutions. There was the desperate desire to correct this after independence. The political will of these countries also reflected in their reformation of the content of the education curriculum. There is at present, a National Institute for training teachers. He observed that though Marxism encouraged social science studies, education is still predominantly elitist and foreign oriented. He averred that there are just two universities in Guinea Bissau, one public, the other private. There seems to be a new paradigm of education which has informed the creation of a recent Ministry of Science and Technology, Cardoso pointed out that funding is a great problem as parents have to pay the sum of 150 dollars in an economy that affords only 60 dollars per capita income.

The Kenya experience of globalization contained in **James Otiende paper "Institutional Transformations and Implications for Access and Quality in Public and Private Universities in Kenya: A Comparative Study"**.

According to him, university education has already been privatized in Kenya consequent upon globalization and neoliberalism. There are other factors such as the indebtedness of Kenya to the World Bank and the structural adjustment policy. However, the Kenyan government has devoted 30% of its annual budget to education and this has a positive impact on the enrolment as government gives loans to needy students in private and public universities alike. This is to say that the quality of education is not low in private universities most of which have religious backgrounds. Over crowding

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is interestingly not tolerated in private universities unlike the public ones. However, there is still much to be done in order to diversify courses, derive good research policies, make management more effective and address squarely the new trend of globalization.

In his presentation, the IMSU Vice-Chancellor traced the genesis of the decline in higher education to military intervention. The military neglected higher education which was seen as a property of all with none caring for it. Then there is the problem of remote

control of Vice-Chancellors, the composition of councils and the judiciary with extraneous handling of university case. There is also the problem of strikes by Unions and poor support for ASUU members during strikes which makes members' morale and solidarity to sag. Then there is also the problem of cultism which is regionally lopsided. He then made some recommendations to solve these problems.

These includes the encouragement of ASUU members to form NGOs which will attract funds from outside bodies for the benefit of the University. There is also the need for the annual block release of approved budget to universities instead of the current monthly release. An establishment of a Ministry for Higher Education was also advised. Such government agencies as JAMB, NUC, NBTE, etc. can be departments in this Ministry. It will also be useful to establish a higher education bank which will control the funds of universities instead of the NUC. The Federal Government should also be made to provide 30% of the established budgets of State Universities, while a special tribunal to try cultists and persons accused of examination malpractices should be established. There is also the need for full autonomy to universities. He also advised the re-introduction of the Higher school certificate scheme as the only route for admission into the universities. Lastly, a property tax that will be used to fund education should be introduced.

The Vice-Chancellor of Usman Dan Fodio University lamented the situation whereby no African University made the list of the best 200 universities in the world and that only a few made the list of the top 500. This could not have happened in the 80s.

The problems in the higher education sector are: incessant closure of the universities as a result of strikes, overcrowding in spite of the admission of a negligible fraction of eligible candidates, the non-release of capital grants, brain-drain, irrelevant curriculum, privatization and commercialization, cultism and autonomy, domination of basic research by donors, poor staffing condition, western induced reforms. He then

recommended that accreditation of programmes should be a joint venture between the NUC and professional bodies and should be emphasized in the face of falling standard, indigenous efforts and needs should inform reforms and there is need to look for external financial support study conditions should be improved, while equipment and infrastructure should be enhanced. Curricula should be reviewed to reflect present needs, old equipment should be rehabilitated while new ones should be purchased. ASUU should take more interest in fighting cultism, sexual harassment and extortion. There is also the need for academic staff to do self-re-examination. Efforts should be made to stem the exodus of academic staff and to attract private grants.

Speaking on contemporary challenges to Technical Education in the 21st century Nigeria, Engineer Umar Sanni Ango looked at the historical background of technical education in the country, as well as contemporary trends before making some recommendations.

In the first period of technical education there was little attention to education generally in the country and this attention concentrated on literary education at the expense of technical education. This legacy was inherited by the immediate post-independent years when emphasis was laid on university education at the expense of technical education and the polytechnics. It took fifteen years to realize the importance of middle level manpower that were to be produced by the polytechnics. In 1976, attempts were made to remedy the country's deficiency in middle level manpower through the introduction of the crash programme to send some people hurriedly to the developed world for training. This scheme did not meet the technical manpower need of the country.

As a result of neglect by government, the polytechnics are seen as second best option by students and suffer from low esteem and prestige. Not only this, there is a limit to the career progression of polytechnic graduates and lecturers. While polytechnic graduates unlike their university counterparts cannot go beyond level 14 in the government services, Polytechnic lecturers are less

paid and respected than their university counterparts.

As a result of this low esteem, the engineering workforce is lopsided in favour of engineers contrary to the National Policy on Education (NPE) which requires that there should be at least four technologists, 10 technicians and 20 craftsmen to an engineer. The NPE requires an enrolment ratio of 70:30 between engineering and management courses in the polytechnics. However, most polytechnics have more management than engineering students.

The polytechnics have the problem of low funding more than the universities. To solve the problems in the polytechnics, the paper suggested the removal of the barrier to career

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The issues of sexual harassment and gender inequity in the higher education sector were also seen as serious problems that require urgent attention and resolution. The basis of NUC's ranking of universities was also questioned in the face of inadequate funding. A call was made for the reformation of the NUC itself with a view to restricting it to a purely coordinating institution.

progression of both polytechnic graduates and lecturers and called for greater support for applied research. It also recommends the permission to polytechnics to award technical degrees that will emphasize practical skills more than theoretical knowledge.

The papers were extensively discussed at the plenary session. Professor Eskor Toyo in opening the discussion traced the genesis of the crisis in higher education to the collapse of socialism which started with Gorbachev in 1988 and had led to capitalist counter-revolution. Professor Okonjo counselled about the need to make the Universities to serve the interest of the majority of the people. Contributors identified the causes of the fall in the standard of education in Nigeria as poor funding, expansion of the education sector, poor staff motivation, low quality of input, government agencies, NUC accreditation, role of professional bodies and dearth of lecturers. There is also the marketization and commoditization of education and the negative mind set of rulers. It was also pointed out that ASUU should be involved in the politics of the country for the situation to change and that the NUC should not see itself as a super university.

The issues of sexual harassment and gender inequity in the higher education sector were also seen as serious problems that require urgent attention and resolution. The basis of NUC's ranking of universities was also questioned in the face of inadequate funding. A call was made for the reformation of the NUC itself with a view to restricting it to a purely coordinating institution.

The role of Vice-Chancellors also came under scrutiny in relations to the management of the university and their relationship with government.

In response, the NUC argued that it confines itself to coordinating roles and authorise the establishment of new universities only when the laid down criteria are met. NUC also de-accredited programmes that fall short of its laid down standards. Accreditation of programmes have a lifespan of five years. The NUC also allocates funds to the Universities on the basis of requests and identified deficiencies in the process of accreditation. The parameters of accreditation are jointly worked out with academics and there are eleven of these. The NUC has also directed that at least 1% of recurrent budget should go for staff development and 23% should go to the purchase of research equipment.

ASUU's Position on the Obasanjo's National Dialogue and the National Conference

A SUU's views is here published in order to explain to the critical forces in our country why the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) did not participate in either the National Dialogue or the National Conference. The union's perspective is put forward without prejudice to the integrity, patriotism and commitment of those who do not share our perspective.

Since the end of the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) which resulted from the crisis foisted on the Nigerian people by a class of Nigerians who ruled with the common aim of accumulating wealth and protecting their wealth, our country has transited from one crisis to another. In the process, the armed wing of this class has controlled the destiny of our people most of the time, with the exception of two spells of what we may call "democratic" experiments (1979-1983, 1999-to date). Nigerians now know that the accumulation of wealth and using political power to protect their wealth were common to *both military and civilian* wings of this class. The reckless pursuit of accumulation of wealth, and a common fear of revolt by the deprived people all over the country, arising from bad and oppressive, unproductive economic policies, and the accompanying culture of corruption, have provided some level of unity among this class of rulers. Its members have become extremely wealthy in the main by helping themselves directly to State resources and using government power and connections. This class of rulers has consistently played the disastrous role of placing Nigeria's financial, economic and political institutions under the domination by the financial institutions owned and controlled by the American-

European Powers that use them to control and dominate the direction and pace of our development.

The consequence of the foregoing is that the promise of 1960 Independence has not materialized. In spite of Nigeria's massive wealth, the tremendous human power and intellect of our people, public institutions (schools, utilities, hospitals, forest resources, etc) have been allowed to break down completely through forty-

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Between 1978 and 1999, the dominant powers in America and Europe, riding on the back of Nigeria's feeble and willing class of rulers, tried to bring our country and people to their knees through programmes such as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and Vision 2010.

four (44) years of misrule and missed historical opportunities. Our people have become poorer, and more deprived; they have become more and more divided along ethnic, religious and geopolitical affiliations. These divisions are created, reinforced and manipulated by the same class that has

become richer and richer in pursuit of class interests. The conflicts among them are not about giving power to the people, they are about how to line up the people behind the ethnic leaders that have become richer and richer in pursuit of their class interests.

Between 1978 and 1999, the dominant powers in America and Europe, riding on the back of Nigeria's feeble and willing class of rulers, tried to bring our country and people to their knees through programmes such as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and Vision 2010. In the last five years (1999-2005), kindred programmes which destroyed our country through the destruction of public welfare, selling off the people's property to the few rich, destruction of our environment, increased poverty level and more corruption. They now come under the names "NEEDS", "SEEDS", "NEPAD", etc. These programmes are much inferior to the African initiatives of the 1980s including the Lagos Action Plan. *The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank more openly supervise our future and second their employees and agents to the ruling circles as Ministers, Advisers and Heads of Parastatals. This era can be best described as an era of re-colonization.*

Escalating Social Crisis, and Crisis Inside the Ruling Class: The Ruling Class and the "Constitution" Trick

As a result of the anti-people policies of Nigeria's rulers in the successive coalitions they have formed as government, the crises of security, poverty, corruption, decay of social services and national disgrace in international circles have escalated. At the same time, and more important for our rulers, the crises of greed, looting and pillage of public resources have continued to engender insecurity and

instability, occasioning *coups d'etat*, threats of *coups d'etat*, disintegration of political parties and constellations, and a manipulation of nationality problems.

What has happened almost invariably since independence during periods of serious *social crisis* created by ruling class policies and crises within the class, is that the rulers holding government at the specific time play *the Constitutional Conference (Confab)* trick. This happened towards 1979 (resulting in the 1979 Constitution), in 1995 under Abacha, and, renewed under Abdulsalami Abubakar's crisis management regime, became the 1999 Constitution. Earlier, in 1986, the Babangida regime took our people through a political debate (under the so-called Political Bureau) and the IMF Debate; the latter enabled Nigerians do a comprehensive appraisal of the economic direction for our country. The Babangida government dismissed the popular positions in this exercise with contempt and cynicism.

The ruling circles invariably squandered all these efforts because of their commitment to private wealth accumulation, and their pre-occupation with using the nationality problems in Nigeria to their own political advantage. The Constitutions have not been allowed to do more than "share power" within the ruling circles. Popular constitutional rhetorics such as "We the people of Nigeria..." have been used to hoodwink the oppressed, as if the masses and popular democratic organizations participated in and approved the process and outcome of the Constitution's making. Consequently, once these power-sharing arrangements were achieved in these "Constitutional Conferences", the critical constitutional provisions that address the welfare of our people, the sovereignty of our people and the political and civil rights of our people are studiously, fanatically, and treacherously subverted by the same rulers in the interest of their class and that of the *dominant* global powers from America and Europe.

The National Conference option was used by Babangida's regime as a device to legitimize the military ruler's aspiration to transform himself into a civilian President, (French-style). But the military regime aborted the Conference when it discovered that the Human Rights movement would not allow the General to realize his goal.

Fundamental Objectives of State Policy

Let us consider the following excerpts from Chapter II of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Fundamental Objectives and Directives of State Policy...).

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Fundamental Objectives of State Policy

Let us consider the following excerpts from Chapter II of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Fundamental Objectives and Directives of State Policy...).

On the Government and the People (Section 14)

1. The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a State based on the

principles of democracy and social justice.

2. It is hereby, accordingly, declared that:
- (a) Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government, through this Constitution, derives all its powers and authority;
 - (b) The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government; and
 - (c) The participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provision of this Constitution.

On Political Objectives (Section 15)

1. The motto of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress.
2. Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged, whilst discrimination on the grounds of place, origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited.
3. For the purpose of promoting national integration, it shall be the duty of the State to:
 - (a) provide adequate facilities for and encourage free mobility of people, goods and services throughout the Federation;
 - (b) Secure full residence rights for every citizen in all parts of the Federation;
 - (c) Encourage inter-marriage among persons from different places of origin, or of different religions, ethnic or linguistic association or ties; and
 - (d) Promote or encourage the formation of associations that cut across ethnic, linguistic, religious or other sectional barriers.
4. The state shall foster a feeling of belonging and of involvement among the various peoples of the

Federation; to end that loyalty to the nation shall override sectional loyalties.

5. The State shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power.

On Economic Objectives (Section 16)

- (1) The State shall, within the context of the ideals and objectives for which provisions are made in this Constitution:

- (a) harness the resources of the nation and promote national prosperity and an efficient, dynamic and self-reliant economy;
- (b) control the national economy in such a manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity;
- (c) without prejudice to its right to operate or participate in areas of the economy, other than the major sectors of the economy, manage and operate the major sectors of the economy;
- (d) without prejudice to the right of any person to participate in areas of the economy within the major sectors of the economy, protect the right of every citizen to engage in any economic activities outside the major sectors of the economy,.

- (2) The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring:

- (a) the promotion of a planned and balanced economic development;
- (b) that the material resources of the nation are harnessed and distributed as best as possible to serve common good;
- (c) that the economic system is not operated in such a manner as to permit the

concentration of wealth or the means of production and exchange in the hands of a few individuals or a group; and

- (d) that suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age and pensions, and unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens.

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The ruling class, in and out of government, has collectively collaborated to subvert these objectives through all sorts of acts of commission or omission, to its class advantage and against the interest of the generality of Nigerian people across ethnic, geo-political and confessional boundaries.

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On Social Objectives (Section 17)

- (1) The State Social Order is founded on ideals of Freedom, Equity and Justice.
- (2) In furtherance of the social order:
 - (a) every citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law;
 - (b) the sanctity of the human person shall be recognized and human dignity shall be maintained and enhanced.

(c) Governmental actions shall be humane;

(d) Exploitation of human and natural resources in any form whatsoever for reasons other than good of the community, shall be prevented; and

(e) The independence, impartiality and integrity of courts of law, and easy accessibility thereto shall be secured and maintained.

- (3) The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that:

(a) all citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity to secure suitable employment;

(b) conditions of work are just and humane, and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and for social, religious and cultural life;

(c) the wealth, safety and welfare of all persons in employment are safeguarded and not endangered or abused;

(d) there are adequate medical and health facilities for all persons;

(e) there is equal pay for equal work without discrimination on account of sex or any other ground whatsoever.

(f) Children, young persons and the aged are protected against any exploitation whatsoever, and against moral and material neglect;

(g) Provision is made for public assistance in deserving cases or other conditions of need; and

(h) The evolution and promotion of family life is encouraged.

Educational Objectives (Section 18)

- (1) Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.

- (2) Government shall promote Science and Technology.
- (3) Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy; and to this the government shall *as and when practicable provide* (Our emphasis):
- (a) Free, Compulsory and Universal Primary Education;
 - (b) Free Secondary education; and
 - (c) Free adult literary programme.

What is the Situation Today?

The ruling class, in and out of government, has collectively collaborated to subvert these objectives through all sorts of acts of commission or omission, to its class advantage and against the interest of the generality of Nigerian people across ethnic, geopolitical and confessional boundaries. The addition “as and when practicable” in Section 18, Sub-Section 3 i.e. 18(3), above, was a complete subversion of the 1975 National Policy on Education (NPE) by Nigeria’s subsequent IMF-World Bank-controlled governments.

On the Question of National Conference in the Current Political Dispensation in Nigeria

The issue of National Conference/ Dialogue has arisen in many quarters in Nigeria for numerous reasons, among which is to resolve amicably the myriad of problems of governance of Nigeria such as mass poverty, insecurity of life, violent conflicts, armed robbery, poor quality of infrastructure (roads, electricity, communication, etc), low productivity in most sectors of the economy and corruption in different levels and sectors of life in Nigeria, nationality issues, etc.

It is ASUU’s considered view that the major obstacle to resolving these problem is the control of the productive assets and the wealth of our country by a few, to the detriment of the majority, and a historically induced subordination of our people to the interests of the dominant powers in

Europe and America. The problem of skewed control of the wealth of a society by a few to the detriment of the majority cannot be resolved by a peaceful agreement between the dominant and exploiting class and the exploited and dominated class. It is futile and naïve to attempt to resolve fundamental problems of property relations through dialogue or conference.

Nigeria needs transformation. The transformation is needed to provide for everyone a decent life, education, health-care, housing, cultural

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Since the problem of governance is fundamentally about political power, which is a function of economic power, all Nigerians and groups interested in good governance in the face of bad governance should organize to attain the power to govern and subsequently move governance in their preferred direction.

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expression, and freedom from oppression.

No social class has ever negotiated and will ever negotiate away its domination of other classes, unless on the verge of class defeat. The working and dominated people and class in Nigeria will not be a dominant force in any ‘dialogue’ or ‘conference’ being proposed. The required transformation will be borne through persistent struggles of workers

and groups resisting class differences, gender inequality, nationality, oppression, etc.

ASUU’s suggestion is that the chief task of those who are genuinely interested in resolving the fundamental problems of poverty, freedom and development skewed against the majority of the population, is to organize to control the politics of the country in favour of the majority. What any actor gains in a bargaining situation or conference is dependent on the comparative strength of those participating in a conference and/ or bargaining situation. This means that only those at a comparative level of strength engage in bargains that result in a fundamental change.

Since the problem of governance is fundamentally about *political power*, which is a function of economic power, all Nigerians and groups interested in good governance in the face of bad governance should organize to attain the power to govern and subsequently move governance in their preferred direction. In the current dispensation of elective and civilian politics, those who are interested in good governance must organize to displace and replace the prevailing bad *governance*.

Between Obasanjo’s (Government’s) National Dialogue and Non-Government National Dialogue

The foregoing background is necessary to enable all those who want to rescue our country to understand the bases and prospects of the “National Dialogue” organized by the Executive Arm of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and by the non-governmental coalitions.

We need to call the attention of the Nigerian people to the general identities between the social and ideological base of both proposals. First, the dominant interest on the government’s side is the interest of the rulers in direct control of State power today and how to sustain their rule within policies prescribed by the global powers. The *domineering* interest in the non-governmental group (e.g. PRONACO)

is *also* that of the ruling class except that unlike the government's side, its links with the State power (today) is tenuous. The presence of some patriotic groups and some patriotic individuals who fought on the side of the people during military rule does not invalidate this point. Second, the social base of the majority in both formations consists of ethno-nationalist, statist, geo-political and/or confessional (religious affiliations) etc. In this regard and in spite of pretensions to the contrary, mass organizations (such as Labour, Students, Women, Professionals) who are allowed to participate will only serve to legitimize the programme of the ruling class, and the programme of ethnic leaders put forward as the programme of the people. In the third place, neither of the two coalitions (government and non-government) has shown evidence of deep interest in defending or serious capacity to defend the welfare of the Nigerian masses or the struggle to free Nigeria and its people from forces of global domination and their agencies (IMF, World Bank, WTO, etc.) Neither of the two groups, (*as groups*) has a record of participating in the current struggles to defend the rights of Nigerian children to education, of opposing government's programme of selling Nigeria, of opposing the attempt to kill the labour movement through the amended Labour Bill, or opposing the new Pensions Act which will subvert the humanity of those who have laboured for their country. Fourth, media reports indicate that both government and some non-governmental groups may yet find mutual accommodation with one another. Even if they do not, we do not believe that Nigeria's problems will be resolved through *separately* conceived ethnic visions.

The Specific Disabilities and Defects of Government's National Dialogue

Beyond the identities highlighted above, the Executive Arm's National Dialogue programme is afflicted by incurable disabilities.

First, there is already a huge controversy concerning the "legality" of the FGN-Sponsored National Dialogue. Some members of the National Assembly have been reported in the media to have taken the Presidency to

Court challenging the legality of the FGN-sponsored Confab. Second, Nigerians, including those who have been selected as delegates, do not know the definite agenda of the conference. And even if they knew, it was set by the sponsors, not the people of Nigeria, who do not know the goals, the process and what will be done with the outcome of the 'Dialogue'. Third, there is already massive agitation concerning the criteria employed in the nomination of members to the FGN National Dialogue at Federal and State Government levels. Nigerians continue to be divided by the sponsors

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ASUU is making these views known for our members and for the general public enlightenment and as a means of enabling other groups, organizations and individuals that share our Vision for a Better Nigeria know our views during this, yet another cross-road in the history of our nation. It is our hope that all groups, individuals and organizations that share our vision, will defend the people and the sovereignty of Nigeria.
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using "tribe", local government, religious, ethnic and geo-political antipathies. In the fourth place, the majority of Federal and State Government's nominees and others (like those allegedly leading the academic community) are those directly responsible for the socio-economic, political and moral crisis of Nigeria. These forces can only compound the crises in the process of ethnic bargaining. Fifth, there is the burgeoning crisis of credibility within

the ruling party, within other parties, among the parties and within and among the ethnic-nationalist formations. This crisis constitutes a solid ground to believe that President Obasanjo's belated concession to sponsoring a National Dialogue is in all probability of a larger and comprehensive political plot to cause diversion and confusion towards the realization of an unstated political goal.

Those who think they can frustrate such a goal should ask if, amidst such a gathering of ethnic State representatives, there can be a sufficiently cohesive force within the Dialogue to frustrate a hidden agenda by its sponsors, as the Human Rights Movement did in Babangida's time. There is no such cohesive ethnic coalition.

ASUU's General Position and Guidelines for Political Engagement Towards the Welfare and Unity of Our People and Defending Nigeria's Sovereignty

ASUU's general position and guidelines for political engagement towards the protection of the welfare and unity of our people in freedom are anchored on the resolute position of the Union at the State of the Nation Conference in October 2002, the Benin Declaration of 2003 and all NEC Declarations on the State of the Nation. Some of these include:

- (i) deepening the struggle against the exploitation, oppression and pauperization of the people of Nigeria by the imperial forces in Europe and America in collaboration with Nigerian rulers;
- (ii) encouraging, building and promoting working class between the down trodden (who are the victims of dominant class alliance rule) against the recolonization of the country by the IMF, World Bank, WTO and other international debt management clubs;
- (iii) participating actively in all struggles waged by patriotic civil society organizations against the subjugation of our educational system to the needs of the powers that control the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF); and against policies that

deprived nationalities, women and other groups, of their rights.

- (iv) Ensuring/facilitating the emergence of a strong and patriotic political party with a clear commitment at all levels of a distinct path of development and liberation for the Nigerian people, and with its social base in the working people and the oppressed of all nationalities.

We are persuaded that negotiations between those profiting from a system of governance and the victims of the system cannot lead to any agreement. A negotiation among those who gain from the system of oppression is a non-starter. The victims of the current exploitative system and their allies can change the system only through attainment of State Power.

Towards achieving the objectives of the foregoing programme of Political Engagement, ASUU will encourage its members and members of other Mass Organizations to urgently forge a political

platform or political party that will mobilize Nigerians towards contesting and attaining State Power for the purpose of building a modern society pivoted on solidarity among Nigerians, public welfare and sovereignty of Nigeria. Towards achieving this goal, all organizations looking for an alternative should work towards:

- * repudiation of economic and social policies based on debt slavery and destruction of social welfare programmes;
- * reversal of the tragic SAP and related policies that destroyed the Naira, our local industries, agriculture and our rural and urban environments;
- * revitalization and public funding of various national infrastructures and utilities; reversal of the unbridled privatization of communication, electricity supply, roads, railways, water supply and health-care delivery, etc.
- * reversal of the privatization of public education, privatization of hostels in

our educational institutions, and imposition of fees in public schools;

- * repeal of the obnoxious Pensions Act which is already being used to defraud workers;
- * ensuring that no laws that incapacitate workers organizations (such as the proposed Labour Act (Amendment)) are allowed to stand.

Conclusion

ASUU is making these views known for our members and for the general public enlightenment and as a means of enabling other groups, organizations and individuals that share our Vision for a Better Nigeria know our views during this, yet another cross-road in the history of our nation. It is our hope that all groups, individuals and organizations that share our vision, will defend the people and the sovereignty of Nigeria.

**Long live Nigeria! Long live
Nigeria's Working People!!
Solidarity for Ever!!!**

ASUU's Position on the Federal Government's Anti-Corruption Crusade

(Continued from Page 8)

- (8) How N300 million alleged to have been spent on road repairs in 2003 but there were few roads to show for that amount.
- (9) The public declaration of the assets of all public officers including Mr. President, the Vice-President, all Ministers and Governors before and after 1999.
- (10) Public release of all the exact figures of Federal Government revenues since 1999.

A major problem is that the processes/mechanisms and organs established to address corruption are, themselves, suspect. Loud protests alleging corruption in the DUE PROCESS establishment have been ignored. No public investigation has been established even though many Nigerians, including Vice Chancellors, can give evidence backing up allegations of corruption in the Due Process establishment. Public support for any anti-corruption campaign depends on the public perception of the institutions involved and the credibility

of such institutions. The ICPC is generally perceived as a weapon in the hands of the Nigerian citizen who constituted it and chose its Chairman. The EFCC lacks the power to prosecute, however great the evidence of corruption. Apart from the current economic reforms, some other policies simply encourage more corruption. The PENSIONS Act will, for example, encourage public employees to amass as much money as possible by all means possible in order to survive on retirement. The new Trade Unions Act will encourage corrupting Trade Union leaders in order to frustrate labour organizations. Pervasive poverty, unemployment, social insecurity, and the use of political power as a means of guaranteed wealth all serve systemic corruption.

CONCLUSION

A principled and all-out struggle against corruption is beyond the present political dispensation because the 2003 elections which brought it in and the direction of its economic and social

policies have compromised it. Organized labour, civil society organizations of proven integrity, professional bodies, the private sector, workers and youth organizations, religious bodies etc, should come together to work out a new national agenda for a sustained anti-corruption campaign; to establish anti-corruption agencies not open to manipulation and control by any government, not compromised by their own history and by private interests. This is feasible, however difficult, with positive patriotic creativity and will. ASUU is willing to participate in the evolution of a new national ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENDA.

However, most effective weapon against corruption, however, is the establishment of a true welfare state based on a popular democratic government and an egalitarian economic arrangement that will relinquish the disastrous doctrine and practice of the economic religion of "market forces" and the debt (death) trap set for future generations by the IMF.