

Buhari's PTF

# A Study in Tribalism

A Lagos-based non-governmental organisation has accused Maj-Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, former military head of state and immediate past executive chairman of the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) of pursuing a northern agenda during his days in the PTF, **Okey Ndiribe** reports.

**MAJOR-GENERAL Muhammadu Buhari's** long-standing reputation as one of the most disciplined military leaders Nigeria ever had, may soon be shattered if allegations levelled against him by a Lagos-based non-governmental organisation are substantiated.

Already, the group, Bread of Life Foundation, has accused Buhari of indulging in a tribalist who pursued sectional goals during his tenure as the executive chairman of the defunct Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF).

The foundation's president, Mr. Babatope Babalobi, believed Buhari and the PTF secretary, Chief Tayo Akpata, misused their positions to favour the execution of more PTF projects in zones in which their states of origin are located.

In a recent press statement circulated in Lagos earlier in the week, the group stated: "The major beneficiaries of PTF projects are states in the Edo-Delta-Ondo-Kano-Kaduna-Katsina axis."

The foundation asked "Is it because some of the former top helmsmen of the PTF are indigenes of these axis, that the amounts budgeted for these axis are stupendously high?"

The group is not convinced that the PTF has been adhering to its five criteria of equality, population, landmass, difficulty in terrain and need assessment, in the siting of projects across the states.

Babalobi argued that the PTF ignored the population criteria for the siting of projects. He wondered why Lagos and Kano states, which are the two most populous states



Maj-Gen. Mohammed Buhari

in the country were ranked 10th and 14th respectively in the siting of projects, during Buhari's tenure as PTF chairman.

The foundation further used figures to show that states in the northern zones benefitted more during Buhari's tenure. According to the group, while the three southern zones got projects worth N1.5 billion sited in them, the three northern zones had projects valued N3.6 billion allocated to them.

Babalobi questioned the hurried manner in which some PTF contracts were awarded. He pointed out that curtailing the menace of erosion in the Niger-Delta area is much more urgent than dredging of the River Niger, whose contract was awarded by the Buhari federal organisation.

The foundation further observed that the PTF was very unfair to Lagos in its award of contracts for road projects. He observed that whereas PTF spent only the sum of N544.5 million on Lagos township and access roads, it committed the huge sum of N2.7 billion in the rehabilitation and construction of eight roads in Kaduna State alone.

The foundation also queried the manner in which the PTF handled its National

Farm Power Machinery Rehabilitation Programme (NFPMPR). It pointed out that, under the phase I of the NFPMPR whereas 83 tractors were rehabilitated in Kano, 40 in Adamawa, 29 each in Taraba and Katsina, and 26 in Benue, only one each was repaired in Anambra and Enugu states, while none was rehabilitated in Ekiti, Lagos, Ondo, Ebonyi, Imo, Yobe, Plateau, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Rivers and Cross River states.

Babalobi also queried the rationale for appointing the Afri Projects Consortium (APC), an outfit wholly owned and managed by northerners as PTF's sole management consultants. He pointed out that this has resulted in the PTF becoming an agency for the perpetuation of northern hegemony, dominance and control.

He observed that virtually all the 12 companies that supplied drugs to the South-west zone of the country, under the PTF-assisted Drug Revolving Fund Scheme, were owned by northerners.

He further observed that only four out of the 18 professionals engaged to conduct nation-wide surveys under the PTF health

programme were southerners of Yoruba extraction while the rest were all northerners.

According to him, 85 per cent or those recently appointed by PTF to supply educational materials to the South-west zone were northerners.

The foundation's statement revealed that before the establishment of PTF, the APC was an outfit specialised in engineering-related fields.

Babalobi wondered why the APC was eventually appointed as PTF sole management consultants to coordinate activities in all sectors of the PTF's work. He observed that this resulted in the APC becoming an octopus know-all outfit which managed sectors in which it did not have expertise.

The group wanted to know why a Kaduna-based outfit, Global Livestock and Agro Services Limited was appointed PTF food supply consultants for the Fund's Agricultural and Veterinary Inputs Revolving Fund Scheme and Pastoralist Development Programme Nationwide.

He argued that this outfit has no prior expertise in this field, adding that it was incorporated shortly before it won PTF's consultancy contract.

He further alleged that there were unethical practices prevailing among the top echelon of the APC.

According to him, even though top level officers of the fund and APC were not supposed to have interests in firm's executing PTF programmes at any level, some of them have interest in an outfit called Encon Consult.

## Work Ethics

# How Not to Have Governed

**Ebenezer Ademola**

**SEE** how time flies. In just a couple of months ago, Nigeria was a pariah nation, there was total insecurity, as government agents were planting bombs in public places with the intention to aggravate the sense of insecurity. Human rights activists and perceived oppositions were being harassed and thrown into jails, and there was little or no hope for the future. In short, the country was on the verge of disintegration because the military, a professional institution completely abandoned its ethics and deployed its might to defend wrong values to the detriment of the larger society.

Now a cease-fire has been declared, the military has returned to the barracks, but since democracy will not instantly translate into professionalism and discipline in the military, it would be fruitful to discuss

the contentious issue of 'why' an institution, a creation of the society turned its back on work ethics and engaged in the sort of adventure that unleashed such a terrible terror on the society.

Professional institutions are known to have ethical code of conducts that guide them in the interaction of member with the larger society. It is when an institution becomes

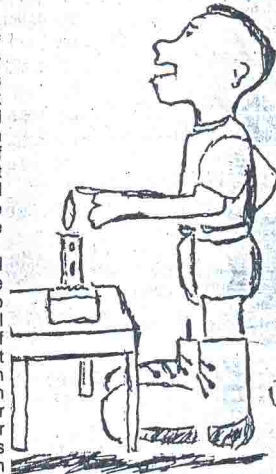
incapable of enforcing its ethical code that we would say, the body has lost its professionalism. In professional institution, either formally or informally constituted, the capacity to enforce its ethics would strongly depend on the education standard of the members, as this is essential to determine their maturity of mind and appreciation of their roles in the society. This is why it would never happen for an illiterate to find his way to the leadership position in institutions like medicine, banking and engineering.

The ethics of the military profession is a function of the fundamental roles of the institution in a civil society. Its roles entail a cohesive force that respects hierarchy and *esprit de corps* for it to be able to protect the nation's territorial integrity and wade off external aggression. But one would expect that with this strategic responsibility, the quality of intakes into the military would be that of

bright mind. Ironically, this has not always been the case in Nigeria as it has been noted that, apart from the fact that majority of the people that join the military are not doing so as a result of any professional yearning, but for selfish reasons, they are mostly primary school leavers and secondary school dropouts. What this implies is that an institution that anchors its recruitment on this quality of people would run into problem in grooming and enforcing discipline, more so when the bright ones are in the minority who need to play along and would only be accommodated by their acceptance to be unprincipled, play eye services or they are frustrated out of the system. Equally, at such stage of human development, one could argue that it would be easy to brainwash and

country ensured that its bright children were trained to be lawyers and other professionals rather than military men. On the other hand, another section of the country with an ulterior motive ensured that its children enrolled en masse into the military.

There is no denying the element of rebellion in the noted indiscipline in the military. This is surprisingly influenced by the assumed superiority of ideas, to right wrong and deliver better services than as constituted by the status quo. And whatever ones political learning, one cannot overlook the forced stability achieved in places like Libya and Cuba, who are governed by dictatorship government. In a more positive note, the military, because of its roles which are futuristic in nature, tend to be the author of not a few of the major break-through in science and technology in



Asipe 99

programme the recruits to imbibe and champion sectional interest.

Another angle to this argument is the believe that a large number of recruits into the military were actually beggars (Almajeri) that strayed from Niger, Chad and other neighbouring countries in the North. This would throw light on why military could terrorise the civilians, engage in unprecedented looting of the treasury, since there is no moral and emotional attachment to the country. A retired military officer had once said the military is an institution of anything goes.

But the military is a creation of the society, and on a second look, one could argue that the society gets the kind of military it bargained for, taking into consideration the section of the country that perceived and eventually relegated the military to an institution for misfits and dropouts. This has turned out as a disadvantage since the section of the

laboratories across the developed nations. For instance, the current global phenomenon, Internet started in the 1960s as United States Defense Department Computer Network project designed to withstand nuclear attack, in which case if part of the network was destroyed, information could be transmitted to its destination by alternative routes. This technology was later shared with universities, companies and at last, the whole world. This is to underline the usefulness of military in a civil society unlike in Nigeria and many African countries where they are wrongly orientated.

To build a disciplined military where excellence would be its watch word, Nigeria government would have to raise the minimum qualification of the entrants into the forces to at least senior school certificate - the military authority may have noticed this defect in view of the advertised qualification for the military schools like the NDA, but to what extent this is enforced is questionable going by the discovery of forged certificate in high place recently. In addition, the institution should be reorientated for people to find relevance and fulfillment in venturing into the military in the first place.

Ademola writes from Lagos.