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THE NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY AT THE CROSS ROAD

Aaron T. Gana

The choice of the theme for this conference, "University Governance in Nigeria", - was made at a time when only a handful of social scientists anticipated the current abnormal circumstances under which the nation groans. The choice was informed by the narrow but legitimate concern with the crisis of relevance foisted on the Nigerian university system by a bankrupt and unpatriotic leadership, both within and outside the system. Governance, in this context, should be understood as "the mechanisms whereby an institution (be it the family, the university or the state) incorporates the participation of relevant interest groups in defining the scope and content of its work - including the capacity to mediate among these interests when they enter into conflict — and the means whereby it demonstrates accountability to those who support it through its mission mandate and the application of its resources in pursuit of these goals' (my emphasis). The key words here are participation and accountability, for these represent the missing links in the process of governance at all levels of the Nigerian society. It is the brutal denial of participation that has produced the current culture of irrational submission to fatalism and the consequent militarization of governance at all levels of society, including, unfortunately, the university.

When the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) engaged, in 1992, in the most protracted but patriotic struggle it had ever embarked upon, it was with the conviction that it has, in the classic Fanonian sense, a historic responsibility to protect this critical mass of the nation from extermination and consequently facilitate its march towards a rational social order. No sooner did sanity prevail and a comprehensive deal struck to save the nation from self-annihilation than crass opportunism, parading this time as legal scholarship, descended with a ferocity that only the combined deployment of the intellectual and moral fortitude of the nation could have withstood. It is a matter for concern that the greatest threats to the survival of the Nigerian university as a national monument have come from academics turned-politicians. Was it not crass opportunism coupled with regal arrogance that informed Aminu's destructive war on the very institution he was appointed to

nurture? I submit that it was crass opportunism that informed Nwabueze's primitive rationalization of the Babangida regime's vacillation on the ASUU-Federal Government's agreement, which prolonged the crisis at a cost to the nation that is difficult to quantify.

Similarly, it is crass opportunism that informed incumbent Minister, Iyorchia Ayu's decision to subvert the spirit, if not the letter of that agreement in the appointments of the Vice-Chancellors for the Federal University of Technology, Minna, and the University of Jos respectively. What is clear in the theatrics of these appointments is that there is still no institution in the country that is beyond the calculus of political brinkmanship. Once again the scholar-politicians are poised to compromise the integrity of the university on the altar of personal advancement. The message is unequivocal: unless the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is eternally vigilant, opportunists, parading in the corridors of power as scholars, will return us to the primitive conditions from which we are still struggling to be liberated. This phenomenon of academics in temporary positions of power, turning against their constituency, requires scholarly attention, as we see it reproduced on our campuses across the nation with Vice-Chancellors exhibiting the same hostile disposition to their peers' needs and concerns as scholar-politicians have done so shamelessly at the national level.

But the year 1992 will, for a long time to come, remain a historic landmark for the Nigerian university. For it was the year the Nigerian academics went to war with their brain and brawn in defence of their vocation. There is neither the space nor the need to go into the details of that heroic struggle. Suffice it to say that at the end of that protracted face-off between the state and the scholars, a new lease of life was enacted for the Nigerian university system and consequently, for the future of the nation.

Three issues dominated the agenda presented by ASUU: funding, welfare, and governance. Prior to the constitution of its negotiating panel, ASUU had put together a document that confounded the representatives of the state in its data and logic, so much so that at a stage in the negotiation, they sought a breather, to enable them recompose themselves for the protracted duel. Reliable sources hinted that the team, which included three Vice-Chancellors, one former Vice-Chancellor, three pro-Chancellors, and the Executive Secretary of the National University Commission (NUC), could not believe some of the information presented in the document, in particular the claim by ASUU that their Ghanaian counterparts were enjoying pay packets that were more than four times what they (Nigerian academics) were receiving at the time.* More disturbing to them were statistics that revealed Nigeria as lagging behind all sub-saharan countries in funding higher education, as Table 1 below shows.

•The author was • member of ASUU'* negotiation team.

Table 1:
CHANGES IN% OF GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION, 1972-98 10 SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Year</i>		<i>Movement</i>
	1972	1988	
Ethiopia	14.4	10.6	Decrease
Malawi	15.8	10.0	•
Burkina Faso	20.6	14.0	* .
Uganda	153	15.0	•
Nigeria	4J	2J	«
Zambia	19.0	83	*
Kenya	21.9	21.5	•
Ghana	20.1	125.7	Increase
Botswana	10.0	18.1	H
Mauritius	13.5	12.7	Decrease

Source: Adapted from Akin Tade Aina, "Quality and Relevance: African Universities in the 21st Century," (Monograph, CODESRIA, Dakar, nd), p.22.

So unassailable was ASUU's document in logic, statistics and analysis that when the teams reconvened to continue the negotiation, the representatives of the state were forced not only to admit the impeccability of ASUU's document but to verbalize its respect for the Union as a body of *scholars par excellence!* I have no doubt that it was the superiority of ASUU's negotiating position that, in the end, broke the resistance of the state to the reforms sought by the Nigerian academic community. For, soon after this break-through, what amounted to revolutionary concessions were granted by the state: rehabilitation funds that ran into billions of naira, a welfare package which, though fell below that of our Ghanaian counterparts, was nevertheless considered attractive enough for the time being to slow down, if not stop, the brain drain from the universities into the local and international markets; and a restructuring of the apex organ of governance in the university - the Governing Council - to make it more representative of the stake-holders. Even more revolutionary - at least, to the ASUU team - was the concession that in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors, the Councils would henceforth play the determining role. This was to be concretized in the selection process, from advertisement to the selection of a new Chief Executive for the

institution. In contrast to the previous practice of sending three names from which the Visitor selected one, the Council now selects one out of the three names submitted to it by the joint Council-Senate Committee, and forwards same to the Visitor for approval. One major advantage that this has over the old procedure is that it would free the Visitor from the multiple pressures usually mounted by three candidates short-listed and forwarded to him under the old procedure. An additional advantage is that it is expected to force the aspirants to look inward to their constituency - to their peers - rather than to the Visitor and his cohorts for support. Of course, the agreement - now codified into Decree 11 - still left room for the Visitor to manoeuvre, through the provision that he can reject the name sent by the Council. This is the catch which the state has exploited to subvert the popular will of the academic communities in Jos and Minna respectively, in the recent appointments of Vice-Chancellors,

The issue of governance needs further exploration, as it not only constitutes the kernel of the reform package, but on it depends much of the promise of the university as a factory for ideas and scientific progress⁴. In a series of studies on the state and future of African universities, by the World Bank and the Working Group of the Donors to African Education in 1993, the authors were united on one conclusion: that there is no future for Africa so long as the state continues its strangulating control on the university. They conceded that the African state, perhaps more than in European counterpart, is a significant stake-holder in the knowledge industry, of which the university is pivotal. Sherman articulates this point poignantly.

A very important step in the reform process is improving the relationship between governments and the universities. Governments are most important to success of reforms both because they provide a substantial portion of university budgets (more than 85%) and because they create the political climate which is either conducive to university education or stifling. The importance of an enabling environment on the continent for intellectual activities can not be overestimated and government should always be sensitized to its role in this connection.⁵

The sensitization relates to governance structures and processes in the universities. As conceptualized above, this role is not in the strangulating control of the university. In this regard, it is pertinent to draw attention to the two traditions that have evolved over the centuries in state-university relationship especially since the state assumed responsibility for higher education in the older nations of Europe and North America. First is the continental European tradition of rational planning which derived its theoretical inspiration from the regulation versus deregulation debates in the economics discipline. The rational planning strategy conceives the state as providing "a framework of rules within which other decision units can make decisions without the high transaction costs of maintaining a private force for

The purpose of protecting their belongings or of maintaining threats to enforce the carrying out of agreed upon contracts. As a framework, the government simply delineates the boundaries within which other units determine substantive choices, the government making its own forces available to defend the established boundaries."⁶ What this translates to in concrete terms is a state-university relationship in which "much confidence is put in the capabilities of governmental actors and agencies (such as the NUC and the JAMB, (ATG) to acquire comprehensive and true knowledge and to take the best decisions ... It is an approach in which these governmental actors try to steer a planning object by using stringent rules and extensive control mechanism." This logic has produced such bizarre outcomes as the appointment of card-carrying party members as Vice-Chancellors, Deans and Heads of Departments. It has institutionalized corruption in all its forms — looting of university funds, the prostitution of recruitment and promotion procedures and even the bastardization of academic standards.⁹

Yet, this model of strangulating control, which in the continental European context has produced impressive results in terms of knowledge generation, is certainly inappropriate in a developing context as the performance of universities across the African continent has demonstrated since independence, during which time state control has reached a suffocating level. This is because the state control model stifles initiative, innovation and creativity, as it ignores the historical fact that the university has evolved as a social system in which "the handling of knowledge is the most crucial thing", in which knowledge is "discovered, conserved, refined, transmitted and applied. More fundamentally, it is a social system in which the decisions regarding the detailed knowledge-oriented activities of research and teaching... on what and how to investigate, and on what and how to teach, come to a large extent under the direct supervision of the academic experts. Only they are able to oversee their specialized fields. Only they are able to stimulate the enthusiasm of students for specific objects of study. This is why professional autonomy is so important in higher education Institutions." (my emphasis)

The relative success of this model in continental Europe cannot be attributed to its inherent quality, but is more a function of the countervailing structures that ensures the primacy of the national over individual, group or even institutional interests. It cannot produce the same or even similar outcomes in an underdeveloped context where personalized rule is the order of the day at all levels of society, a context in which the state arrogates to itself the status of "an omniscient and omnipotent actor who thinks himself able to rightfully steer a part of society according to its own objectives."¹² And that posture just destroys. It destroys men, women, and, worst still, it destroys the ideas they carry as has happened to brilliant ideas that are buried in the fertile minds of many a scholar that has crossed over to the greener pastures of local and international markets mostly outside the knowledge industry.

It is for its destructive potential that students of state-university relations advocate the strategy of self-regulation, whose *modus operandi* is the very antithesis of the rational planning model. Van Vaught characterizes this model thus:

Instead of the assumption that knowledge of the object of

regulation can be firm comes the recognition that such knowledge is highly uncertain. Instead of the wish to control the object as completely as possible, comes the conviction that such a control should, to a large extent be avoided. Instead of a holistic self-image of the regulating subject, comes the assertion that the atomistic self-image offers important advantages.¹³

Translated into concrete forms, the strategy of self-regulation finds expression in the state-supervising model of the state-university relations spectrum, and is best exemplified by the British model, which in Africa, operated in what Aina calls 'the colonial university'.¹⁴ As is well known, the traditional British model of higher education "is a combination of the Authority of faculty guilds, and a modest amount of the influence of trustees and administrators at the institutional level (Vice-Chancellors)."¹⁵ British universities, like their American replicas, are chartered corporations, responsible for their own management. Each university as well as college decides on its own admission, curricula and the hiring of its faculty. State control is not formally organized. To an even greater extent, this is the case with state universities in the United States. In this model, the state exercises minimum influence, seeing its task only in supervising the university in terms of assuring academic quality (*a la* the minimum standards exercise of the NUC a few years back), and maintaining a certain level of accountability. Here, "government does not intrude into the higher education system by means of detailed regulation and strict control. It rather respects the autonomy of the higher education institutions and stimulates the self-regulating capacities of these institutions. The state sees itself as a supervisor, steering from a distance and using broad terms of regulation."¹⁶ (my emphasis).

Although the state became more aggressive in its posture towards the universities under Thatcher, the core elements of the state-supervising model remained intact. As noted above, this was the case with Aina's 'colonial universities' up until the eve of independence in Africa. The model is ideal for the contest of higher education because ^acknowledges the fundamental characteristics of the university and facilitates the stimulation of innovativeness and creativity. "By limiting itself to only global forms of steering, and by putting its confidence in the self-regulating capacities of the professionals and the basic units of the institutions, this model has the potential to reach the basic objectives of many developing nations with respect to their higher education systems." More importantly, it "offers the advantages of a better fit to the characteristics of higher education in instructions. By enlarging the autonomy (of the university) and by limiting itself to monitoring some critical system variables, and to (not too often and not too drastically) adapting some general rules of the game"¹⁷ the university *Is* better able to fulfil its mission, including the developmental mission which state actors claim to be the motive force of their regulatory regimes. Very few; in the university will dispute this conclusion, which was the premise from which ASUU launched its war of national survival in 1992.

What has happened since the concession by the Nigerian state that the university needs a reprieve from the paralysing grip of the state? Slow progress on all fronts, very much depending on the character and vision of the state agent (minister) overseeing the implementation of the ASUU-Government Agreement. Nwabueze deployed his legal scholarship to mystify rather than illuminate the document. The tenure of Professor Abraham Imogie under the contraption called Interim National Government promised forward movement, probably because as a victim of the unconscionable conditions under which the Nigerian academic functions he was able to empathize with his peers' plight and would probably have moved faster in translating the provisions of the agreement into concrete actions, but his tenure, like that of other interimists, was too short to record any achievement. When Iyorchia Ayu took over, the academic community was elated, seeing in him a fellow struggler, whose writings had portrayed him as a radical scholar, and whose politics, not unexpectedly, pitched him on the side of the progressives in the context of Nigerian politics. It hardly occurred to them that radicalism has two shades: one for personal advancement, the other for principle. It is principled radicalism that stands for truth, at whatever cost to the individual. The latter produces the politics of issues, the former the politics of expedience. The contrasting positions taken by the Minister and the Union over the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor for the University of Jos tells the difference! The message from the encounter should be clear to the academic community: the state will not let go its control over the university so long as academics continue to vie for the position as if their lives depended entirely on it. The day academics are cajoled into accepting to be Vice-Chancellors, rather than falling over each other for it, that day will see the end of state agents who delight in taunting and humiliating scholars over bureaucratic positions. For Ayu, as for many of his predecessors, notably Jibril Aminu, the university is just another parastatal to which political allies are posted to make returns!

The challenge before the academic communities across Africa, therefore, remains "the taming of the state" in its relationship with the university. In the continuing struggle, the point should be sharply and consistently made to the public that the Nigerian academic is the most patriotic of the fractions of the ruling elite, if only because most of them have exit visas to more lucrative vocations, nationally and internationally, but have chosen to remain in their fatherland. What this encounter between the state, as represented by Ayu, and* the Academic Staff Union of Universities underline is the centrality of governance to the attainment of the mission of the university, just as it is to progress at the national level. And it should not surprise anyone that progress in the latter will determine progress in the former. More importantly, it should be clear to those of us who have elected to live and die as scholars that the deserters amongst us, that is, those who, as Gaidzanwa would say "vote with their feet by moving to western universities, international organizations, and to business and commercial organizations in their economies,"¹⁸ or, more commonly in our own context, those who decamp to service the state, are likely to be least sympathetic with the plight of those they left behind. Empirical evidence suggests that such deserters, i.e.

those who left to service the state, have been the most hostile to their peers whenever the universities encounter the state. They are foremost in championing tighter control of the university by the state.

Yet, as Mamdani reminds us, those who, in the past called for state intervention to protect their individual and group interest lived to regret their actions. For when they called on the state in the heat of their struggle with expatriate academics, little did they know that in the not too distant a future they would be engaged in warding off a more destructive virus that has destroyed the enviable legacies of Professors Emovon and, in particular of Onazi, in Jos. It is the logic of indigenization that has produced the most unconscionable campaign of vilification against key figures in the university, even Professor Onazi, who, to all intents and purposes, is indigenous to Plateau state but was literally harassed out of office; thanks to a Minister, who has no respect for scholarship, judging from what he inflicted on the aradf-mif community generally during his tenure. From all indications, he appears to be Ayu's mentor in this regard! I have no doubt that those of our young colleagues who have pitched their camps at this early stage of their career on the side of localizing the leadership of their institutions will, some day, if they stay long enough, join Mamdani in his reminiscences over the struggle to indigenize Makerere University, when he admitted:

We were right to see the banner of rights as no more than a fig leaf defending racial privilege, at best an expression of crass professionalism. But we were short-sighted in not seeing beyond that immediate context, in confusing university interest with the interest of its immediate occupants, in not recognizing that the language of rights does not have to be a minority language, it can also be a vehicle for defending majority interest.

Whether or not the advocates of indigenization stay long enough to witness the folly of their myopia, those who have chosen scholarship as a vocation, and not as an enterprise, must keep the dream afloat that some day, in the not too distant a future, the Nigerian university will approximate the letter and the spirit of Decree 11. This is because, having been privileged to see what science and technology has wrought in other societies, the patriotism that fires that dream, and the concentration of intellect, skills and vision that the university represents, posterity will not forgive us for betraying our mission by watching charlatans in and outside *academe* destroy this national patrimony. We must therefore engage the Aminus, the Nwabuezes and the Ayus, both within the campuses and in the corridors of power, in continuous battle of the intellect until total victory is won, not for our generation - for we seem to have lost that, given the character of those at the helms of our affairs nationally — but for generations to come. For until the university community in Nigeria, indeed across the continent, is free to set its own agenda, subject only to the dictates of the national interest, and with the barest minimum interference from the state, there is no hope for Africa, which already limps

along the periphery of the global knowledge industry. To move it to the centre of this industry requires not only a revolutionary assault on the existing governance practices, but a return to the philosophy of town and gown. As Aina points out in his incisive analysis of quality and relevance in the African context, "the emerging world is such that requires visionary political and intellectual leadership if the continent is to survive the multiple pressures from the various changes that are already evident in the environment. In a continent still unfamiliar with the spectra of independent research institutions tied to industrial production, the university remains the strategic institution for the generation of knowledge and the fabrication of industrial artefacts, with which to confront the challenges of the 21st century.

In this regard, quality and relevance are the key values. 'Quality' in terms of the content of what is taught, and its measurement in students' responses to the challenges of social existence. 'Relevance' in terms of "educational choices within the university that are germane to the national economy and in tune with the prevailing labour market, some capacity for critical and innovative thinking on issues of national importance, the transmission of essential professional and cultural values, institutional processes and behaviour that equip graduates for leadership in society, and regional, gender, and ethnic representation of staff and students in the content of curricula".²¹ While one may question this conception of relevance on grounds of "WHO" defines it, one cannot but insist that since society funds the university, relevance can only be defined in relation to the needs of all members of the society in question, regardless of who defines such priority, since someone, some group must set the agenda. The critical issue here is not "who" but "for whom" or "in whose interest".

Yet we cannot, in the pursuit of these values, neglect the issue of contextualization if only to avoid the lack of accountability to the society which nourishes the academic community. Thus, the quest for quality and relevance must be complemented by a new sensitivity to the needs of the masses of our country men and women, which needs must be incorporated into, if they do not determine, our research agenda. Only by so doing can we void a repeat performance of past neglect of our primary constituency, our "underbelly" (to borrow Pelczynski's expression), which invited Mamdani's harsh indictment:

In our single-minded pursuit to create centres of learning and research of international standing, we had nurtured researchers and educators who had little capacity to work in surrounding communities but who could move to any institution in any industrialized country and serve any privileged community around the globe with comparative ease. In our failure to contextualize standards and excellence, to the needs of our own people, to ground the very process and agenda of learning and research in our condition, we ended up creating an intelligentsia with little stamina for the very process of development whose vanguard we claim to be. Like birds who cross oceans

when the weather turns adverse, we had little depth and grounding but maximum reach and mobility. So that when the going got rough, we got going - across borders.²⁴

Those who did not cross borders because they were trapped within the confines of their disciplinary specialisms that are irrelevant to the needs of Euro-American markets, turned either to the local market or to politics; and, once in power, they release their frustrations on their peers who remain behind with inexplicable ferocity, as if to say, 'since I could not make it why should you!'

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

As we move towards the 21st century, we, as producers and custodians of knowledge that holds the key to the future of our beleaguered continent, must rise up to the challenges of the emerging world order, in which the current monopolarity gives way to tripolarity of Europe (East & West) the Americas (North and South- *la* NAFTA) and China (and the ASEAN South). Africa has the potential to force a restructuring of this emerging tripolarity into a multipolarity of which it is an integral part. To do this, however, we must engage the current visionless leadership on the continent in a battle royal. In our own context we must create the condition for the revolutionary transformation of our universities. These we can do by forcing the jettisoning of archaic structures and practices that stand between us and the creative application of intellect. We must insist on playing the determinant role in the choice of those who govern us. We must insist on the deparastatalization of the university. We must insist on delinking the university from the state house to ensure it ceases to be a conduit pipe for siphoning public funds that it has been since its attachment to the state house, as our counterparts in Uganda have succeeded in doing. This is because although what originally informed the linkage was the presumed advantage of privileged attention of the Visitor in matters of funding, the danger has come to outweigh by far the anticipated gains, as the coupling has exposed the universities to the "arbitrary power of the presidency".²⁵

Part of the strategy for decoupling should be to make the office of the Vice-Chancellor a measure of the occupant's moral and intellectual prowess, while simultaneously demystifying the office by stripping it of the unregulated perks that have, over the years, encrusted on it. Remove the mystique around the office and the criminal opulence that it confers on incumbents, and we will not but witness the exit of the apostles of indigenization. *Pari pasu* with this process of demystification should be the remystification of scholarship, by which we mean the restoration of the status of the professor as the kingpin of *academe*, a peak to which all on the ladder aspire. This calk for the investiture in the rank of the professor of all the perks associated with the office of the Vice-Chancellor, especially when the professor is at the same time Dean or Director. Once this happens, we will find more candidates to

remain in the classroom than aspiring to the office of the Vice-Chancellor, and more importantly, psychopaths in and outside the university will be put out of business. We must insist on putting heads of service department in their proper rank order *vis-a-vis* senior academics. We must strip the offices of the Registrar and the Bursar of the present ridiculous priority granted them over Deans and Directors of academic units. Because the Librarian is a scholar in his/her own right, we must concede equality with senior academics in terms of protocol and the perks of office, but never above his/her counterparts in the academic departments.

It was the inclination to corruption by Vice-Chancellors that produced the investiture of these offices with indefensible perks so that the rip-offs are covered! And this "alliance for progress in corruption" explains, in part, the hostile disposition of Vice-Chancellors to the material requirements of academic departments, for the more resources that filter into academic departments, the less becomes available for sharing among the key principal officers (the Librarian is, in most cases, excluded from this cabal). Above all, we must insist on a separate salary structure for academics, if for now, we cannot personalize them as is done in some advanced settings. Ultimately, however, this is the solution to the current idiocy in homogenizing salaries of people with incomparable skills. It should not be long from now when the position of university registrars and bursars are filled with scholars in the respective disciplines, instead of the laughable practice now, in which OND/HND holders sit on academic policy-making organs of the university as "principal officers", doing nothing but frustrating academic initiatives for advancement in the knowledge industry. Such a development will end the current denigration of scholarship in not only the demand for parity, but much more reprehensibly, in the diversion of the scarce resources into the criminal investiture of these sinecure officers with undeserved comfort.

CONCLUSION

We have argued in this paper that the gains of the past two years in our struggle for the restoration of a dignified existence for the scholar and his work environment are considerable. But, we have also been at pains to point out that the task ahead to complete the journey is no less daunting. In the heat of the ensuing struggle, we must not fail to distinguish between substantive and procedural autonomy, both of which are essential ingredients for the realization of the mission mandate of the university. If autonomy is understood to mean the right to govern without external control, substantive autonomy is the right "to determine ...the goals and programmes (the 'what' of *academe*), while procedural autonomy is the right 'to determine the means' by which the set-goals and programmes will be pursued, (the 'how' of *academe*). It should be obvious that once the battle for substantive autonomy is won, procedural autonomy, being an internal matter, can be assumed to be a matter of commitment to scholarship by the leadership of the universities, which can be effectuated through the various internal organs of democratic governance. Our focus, therefore, must be on the former – the

political kingdom - (a *la* Nkrumah) from which will flow all the other kingdoms within the academy. Daunting as the task appears to be, given the reverses suffered under Ayu, it is a task that must be performed with singular determination, for the alternative is death - death of men and women of ideas, of decades of accumulated knowledge, and above all, death of ideas. When these die, Nigeria dies, Africa dies, nay, the black race dies! It is for this reason that we must conclude this call to 'arms' with a committed scholar's plea to African politicians:

The time has come in the negotiation of the future of the African university to insist on a political context in terms of state intervention and governance that will allow the universities to grow effectively to meet the challenges the 21st century has to offer.. African governments and politicians must free African universities from the burden of dependence on government and politicians defining these basic elements of the university life such as admissions, promotions, curricula and research (let us add, appointment of Vice-Chancellors (ATG)). Governments can set up regulatory and inspecting bodies, but they must allow the African university in the 21st century to be herself. University people, donor agencies and other users of the university must insist on this, (my emphasis)

The case for institutional autonomy can hardly be made better. But the concluding sentence must be emphasized not only on paper but in our minds. For, on it depends the prospects for a truly liberated university. Unless we insist and back up our insistence with determined struggles for its realization, politicians, whether in gown, garb or' khaki, will destroy this, our only hope for survival in the 21st century. In exchange, of course, we owe the masses of our people, whose labour provides the resources that nourish us, a duty to be relevant: relevant to their own daily struggles, relevant to their needs, their hopes, their dreams and their aspirations. We owe them quality knowledge, not the *kwashiokor* meals dished out from lecture notes of the forties, fifties, or even the eighties. We owe them life-sustaining jackets in the form of knowledge re-armament for the challenges of the 21st century and beyond. Only then can governance as participation and accountability produce consensus on the critical role of the university in our society. Only then can the university in Nigeria become the university *par excellence*.

NOTES

1. Presidential Address delivered at the 1993 General Assembly of the Social Science Council of Nigeria, held at the University of Jos, Jos, Nigeria.
2. William S. Saint, *Universities in Africa: Strategies for Stabilization and Revitalization*, (Washington, D.C., The World Bank, 1992), p. 71.
3. Both Aminu and Nwabueze served Nigeria's former Head of State, General I.B. Babangida, as Ministers of Education - the former at the very beginning and the latter at the tail end of his dictatorship.
4. The position of the Vice-Chancellor became vacant both in Jos and Sokoto, following the failure of the incumbent in Jos to secure renewal, and the decision of his counterpart in Sokoto not to seek a second term. In the case of Minna, the incumbent faced widespread opposition from his constituency in his bid for a second term, but had the backing of the Chairman of Council, who, sources claimed, surreptitiously smuggled the issue of re-appointment of the incumbent into the agenda at one of the meetings of Council. This infuriated Senate and Congregation representatives who insisted that renewal is not automatic under Decree 11, and thus began the theatrics over the appointment/reappointment of Vice-Chancellors under Iyorchia Ayu. In the end the academic community lost out, not because it is wrong in insisting on the spirit and the letter of the decree, but because the sceptre of June 23 resonates through society at all levels. It should not be forgotten that both the Councils and the Minister who worked together to subvert the decree are products of June 23!
5. Tade Akin Aina, "Quality and Relevance: African Universities in the 21st Century," (Monograph, CODESRIA, Dakar, 1993); Thomas Owen Eisemon, "Higher Education and the State in Uganda"; (Monograph, Education & Employment Division, The World Bank, 1993); Rudo Barbra Gaidzanwa, "Governance Issues in African Universities: Improving Management and Governance to make African Universities Viable in the Nineties and Beyond"; (Monograph commissioned by Donors to African Education Working Group on Higher Education, 1993); Geremie Sawadogo, "The Future Missions and Roles of the African Universities"; (Monograph commissioned by DAE, 1993); Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman, "Building Consensus for Higher Education Reforms in Africa: Some Reflections"; (Monograph for the Africa Technical Department, The World Bank, May 1993); and Frans A. van Hught, "Autonomy and Accountability in Government-University Relationships", (Monograph, The World Bank, 1992).

14. *Annals of the Social Science Council of Nigeria, No.5, 1993*
6. Sherman, *ibid*, p. 26.
7. T. Sowell, *Knowledge and Decisions*, (New York, Basic Books, 1980), p.145.
8. van Hught, *op.cit*, pp. 12-13.
9. Gaidzanwa, *op.cit*, p. 15.
10. The author was at the centre of the crisis generated by his Faculty's refusal to register candidates included in the Vice-Chancellor's discretionary list who did not meet the Faculty's requirements for admission as the then Vice-Chancellor mobilized local sentiments against the Faculty, leading to the rampage on the campus on April 22, 1993 during which a former Dean of Arts was beaten, the author's wife assaulted, and his office (as Dean) and that of Sam Egwu, then Secretary to the local branch of ASUU, were vandalized by candidates suspected to have had the backing of the university administration. For instance, the Chairman of ASUU, Dr SA. Alubo, and his Vice, Dr Femi Adelokun, and the then Head of Sociology, Dr E.E. Alemika were all taken hostage earlier, for taking what the candidates were told was an uncompromising stand on the issue of admission requirements. Many of these applicants were victims of the admission and accommodation rackets which the university authorities knew about but were unable or unwilling to deal with, leading to speculations that they were party to the rackets. The gang held the campus to ransom for several weeks, vowing to disrupt matriculation ceremony for duly admitted students. In the end, the matriculation exercise had to be conducted at the Faculty level.
11. B.R. Clark, *The Higher Education System*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983), p. 12.
12. van Hught, *op.cit.*, p. 26. 13.
14. *Ibid*.
15. Aina, *op.cit*, pp. 8-9.
16. van Hught, *op.cit*, p. 16.
17. *Ibid*, p. 17.
18. *Ibid*, p. 44.

19. Gaidzanwa, *op.cit*, p. 24.
20. Mahmood Mamdani, "University Crisis and University Reform: A Reflection on the African Experience", in *CODESRIA Bulletin*, NoJ, 1993, p. 12.
21. Aina, *op.cit*, pp. 24-28.
22. Saint, *op.cit*, p. xii.
23. Aina, *Op.cst*, p. 5.
24. ZA. Pekzynski, "Solidarity and the Rebirth of Civil Society", in J. Keane, *Civil Society and the State*, (London, Verso, 1988).
25. Mamdani, *op.cit*, p. 15.
26. T. Coombe, *A Consultation on Higher Education in Africa: A Report to the Ford Foundation*, (London, Institute of Education, University of London, 1991), p. 16.
27. R. Berdahl, "Academic Freedom Autonomy and Accountability in British Universities," in *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol.15, No. 2.
28. Aina, *op.cit*, p. 30.