

Where Do We Go From Here?

By:

Wantaregh Paul Iyorpuu Unongo, 1969

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PROLUGUE

Julien Benda, once wrote:

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

Perhaps in a small way, this dialogue attempts to play the role Julien expects. The task has not been an easy one though. I have been called names, branded a ‘traitor’ for advocating changes, which will not benefit Tivland but instead will destroy the political unity of the Tiv people. Campaigns have been held and people warned against my “political ambitions” and my “dangerous” ideas, because I did not speak “on behalf of the Tiv people”, neither did I know Tiv.

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

CONTENTS

1. Serious Discourse On The Deplorable Plight And Position Of The Tiv.
2. The Pitiably Backward Tiv.
3. Selected Grievances Of The Tiv, Which Are Sincerely Intolerable.
4. World War I & II: Tiv Tribes Men Fought And Died For Europe.
5. How To Start Face-Lifting And Stop The Downward Trend In Tiv Land.
6. Proposed Administrative Reforms And Organizations In Tiv Land.
7. Divisional Boundaries.
8. My Personal Reservation About The Five Former Intermediate Areas.
9. Why A Separate Gboko Division.
10. Tiv Solidarity.
11. The Position Of Tor-Tiv.
12. Summary Of Administrative Re-organization Proposals.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

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

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AUGUST 1969

FELLOW TIV:

Serious Discourse On The Deplorable Plight And Position of Tiv.

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

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

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

Throughout these numerous activities, in my humble way, the most satisfying attempt, has been the gradual emergence of a definite pattern: - the honest attempt to bring upon the problem at hand, the hard-nosed objective method of inquiry in which a problem is chewed and churned and thrown this

side up and that side, and then chewed up some more. The inevitable outcome has always been the total exposure of the problem in its correct and truest form in all its facets and ramifications. Problems so exposed are much easier to solve, because correct and sincere answers can then be much more readily identified.

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

I have very little time to engage or answer to those who may question the wisdom of my decision to spotlight the Tiv problem, neither am I really disturbed by the possibility of being called a tribalist [a terribly No. K term in “non-tribal” Nigeria], by those who will choose to misunderstand my actions. To these people, and those who may honestly be wondering, I wish to give the following brief facts:

- (1) Nigeria, our beloved country, is a tribal society. The duty of true men of intellect is not to deny the existence of these tribes with their strong, ethnic and idiosyncratic affinities. Their duty is to study these tribes, understand them and on the basis of such knowledge, recommend the best system which will foster the utilization of the immense tribal energy for [a] the rapid procurement of improved social amenities to the greatest number possible and [b] the evolution of a truer and more embracing national destiny to which all tribal destinies will be subservient. To achieve these goals one does not have to become an Ostrich and deny that one is a tribesman nor pretend that Nigeria is not made up of tribes. I confess most proudly that patrilineally, I am a Tiv tribesman, but I am a most dedicated Nigerian nationalist and all my tribesmen are fiercely sincere in their conviction and commitment to Nigeria, I find nothing unhealthy, strange nor contradictory in this situation at all.
- (2) Social mobility and technological advancement in our country are at a primordial level. This fact (coupled with the fact that Nigeria is a tribal society) has pushed most Nigerians to entrench their psychological, as well as their economic and social roots within the area domiciled by their tribe. Thus, it is a fact that our Nigeria is basically a tribal society even by physical settlement i.e. by habitation. My father and mother, brothers and sisters and so on reside in Tiv division of Benue-Plateau State. Hence my true home (at least psychologically) is back there. It seems therefore reasonable for me to yearn for social improvement in Tiv Division where my home is. When I see all the hospitals in Lagos, the fantastic industrial establishment which as well as providing jobs, has brought the people of this area in direct contact with foreigners who have added to the advancement of Nigerians resident there, and when I contemplate the simple social amenities which by and large, are taken for granted here, such as pipe borne water, electricity, good roads, durable homes and so on; and when I meet essentially similar such Government and Private amenities which are totally absent in Tiv Division, in numerous other places in Nigeria, I am disturbed about “back home.” Sometimes I become so confused that I wonder if the Tiv villages (including our headquarters Gboko), are really places in the same country as towns such as Ibadan, Owo, Benin, Kano, Kaduna, Jos, or even much smaller towns like Ikenne. Thus concern over this deplorable and totally unacceptable social conditions has forced me to descend from my comfortable ivory tower in Lagos and speak frankly with and to, the Tiv people by demanding that they face up to the harsh reality of their miserable backwardness and do something about it. This is not an academic problem to me. It couldn't, because as a Tiv tribesman, I need must return home periodically to visit the old folks back home. Thus even if I did not suffer the psychological pain of the backwardness of the Tiv people, I would have suffered, willy-nilly, the physical

tortures emanating from the deplorable state of affairs, “back home.” Thus if I appear too serious and too specifically pre-occupied with Tiv, it is because I am tired of the silence about the miserable backwardness and the undeniable neglect and exploitation of the “fatalistic” Tiv in our beloved country, Nigeria, by both the Governments which ruled this country, the civilizing do-gooders of various religious convictions and tragically enough, by most of those Tiv who belonged to that unique and illusive group of false apostles-politicians of the First Republic!

- (3) I believe in earnest, that my open letter is in the direction of the overall interests of our great country, Nigeria. This letter will actually complement and consolidate the efforts, which the Federal Military Government is making to keep Nigeria one and to evolve a healthier and fairer Nigeria. True and constructive discussions, in the long run, benefit humanity more than deceptions. It is a fact that a great number of the young Tiv – whether they be in the hot humid trenches of the East Central State, making the ultimate sacrifice: the offering of their lives, in order to consolidate multi-nationalism in the context of one sovereign Nigeria; or whether they are at universities; or in jobs; or secondary schools; or anywhere else – are beginning to question, seriously, what has happened to their land. Some have lost hope in procuring any improvement in the status quo and are surmising publicly, just like Edward Kennedy, whether indeed the Tiv, as a people, “are cursed” in Nigeria. These questions have arisen from the numerous frustrations to which their land was subjected during the era of European rule and party politics in Nigeria. Some of them are beginning to lose hope that even today, after three years of military regime, their land has not seen and is not likely to see the minimum of those transformations which will make them forget the excesses and injustices of the past era in which social ills were perpetrated against them either by default and neglect, or as a form of political punishment. These doubts and uncertainties tend to produce despondency. This letter to all Tiv is designed to foster a new and more creative feeling than that of despondency. The aim is to suggest new horizons, new attempts and new dreams for the Tiv to digest. Pessimism is a negative philosophy, which will not help our backward social position in Nigeria. The Tiv must reject pessimism because this negative effect could well frustrate the commendable efforts which all of us Nigerians are making in order to create a more just and more honorable country for all of us tribesmen and for posterity. What the Tiv must do is to take advantage of the military intervention in government, and reorganize his home in a way, which will maximize the rapid social development of his home through his personal effort, as well as the effort of a government he supports, and helps to maintain in power. This, he should do now before party politicians return to pick up once again their exploitation of the Tiv. Military rulers are not party politicians and they cannot be hampered by political deals in which the interest of the greatest number of ordinary people are sacrificed on the altar of personal aggrandizement and party ideologies. Surely, the Military Government cannot refuse the Tiv, a just request for more rapid social upliftment and direct participation in the benefits of Nigeria’s rising standards of living.

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

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

The first problem is to get all of us to accept intellectually, the simple fact that the Tiv are backward within the Nigerian context. Next factors conceived as being responsible for our backwardness will be presented in a way, which shall also portray some of the reasonably just grievances of the Tiv people.

Finally, I shall offer suggestions for arresting the downward trend of the Tiv and then advance definite administrative re-organizations, which I feel we should adopt. These suggestions will aim principally at rectifying the just grievances of Tiv and at procuring, for the greatest number of Tiv greater participation in the governmental decisions which have affected their lives in addition to improving their chances of becoming better informed and receiving more social amenities. Let us debate all these issues sincerely.

THE PITIABLY BACKWARD TIV.

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

1. Do you know that most living Tiv today (including myself and gosh, look at my youth!) were born on leaves in our mother's mud huts? And immediately after delivery, do you know that for most of us, all kinds of varying improvised implements ranging from barks of dried up raffia, (gagambe) to native "blade razors," a kind of multi-purpose tripod crude metal trapezoid, and small pieces of strings etc., etc., were used to cut our umbilical cords to herald the beginning of our new and novel independent life in this beautiful Nigeria of modern medicine, "where babies are healthy?" Perhaps you care to contend that this is the general fate of all Nigerians. Of course, you are wrong, because a great many Nigerians had hospitals or clinics or "civilizing" contact of some sort long before I was born, in some cases, even before my father was born. Tragically far from trying to catch up, we are sinking lower and lower, or at least we have essentially remained, or have been forced to remain in basically the same condition. Today, as I write, there isn't one single governmental hospital or even a good private one, which is catering for the health needs of the vast majority of the poor ordinary Tiv. Thus whereas I can choose my own doctors at will here in Lagos, or Kaduna, or in Jos, and even to some extent in Oturkpo, I cannot have even one doctor in Gboko – the only town of the Tiv people where their spiritual head, the Tor Tiv resides! How about that? What I am actually saying that today, as I write and now as you read, it is a painful fact that the vast majority of Tiv babies are actually still being delivered on green leaves, as I was; in dark corners under unimaginable conditions! Surely you cannot help but surmise that today, but for the "bush" Christian clinic at Mkar, a suburb of Gboko, Gboko our headquarters is still without a hospital. Hence, ever in "modern" Gboko and the surrounds, it is not impossible to imagine that today as you read perhaps a child is being delivered on green leaves. This to me is utter backwardness, which we Tiv cannot deny but must not accept today. Surely, there must be something we can do, at least on a private communal effort.
2. Are you aware that today "back home" not only are our health amenities most primitive but our other social amenities will interest you. We have no water system whatsoever. An attempted water supply system in the capital "city" of the Tiv, Gboko, delivers on the very rare occasions it functions, 2/3 red mud and 1/3 rust-water, per every precious drop – but only to very few special people. It is reliably estimated that the vast majority of the almost two million or so home people have worms of some kind consumed in the waters they drink. 99.9% of all Tiv do not know what pipe-borne water is, nor electricity let alone be

supplied with them. Gboko town is almost a ghost town – except for the lucrative beer parlors, which mercilessly sap our youth, our womanhood and our valor, as soon as dusk sets in, because the streets are pitch black. Of course with Kainji so far away, and all other generators of the ECN so over tasked in all the other areas, the Tiv cannot sensibly talk about electrical appliances, which depend on electricity to function, neither can they conceive of what they are missing. How could they possibly miss such intricate white man's creations such as fridges, stoves, radiograms and so on? With no more than pieces of loin cloth on the backs of most of us; no telephone system; no roads nor rail roads; no proper mail services; no capital nor business power; and generally with no economic future beyond the primitive hoe type of subsistence level of farming, one must conclude that we the Tiv of Nigeria have remained essentially primitive. If this is not undeniable backwardness, which the Tiv people should reject, and do something about, I don't know what it is.

3. Try to visit home, if you reside outside Tiv Division as some of us do. Of course, as soon as you enter the “motorable” roads in Tiv you would need no introduction. But if you are a real village boy, as I am, then you have your true taste of our real backwardness when you come to the end of the few cut trenches called motor roads. Here you abandon your battered prized car, [very few, and particularly fortunate young Tiv own this very novel magic commodity called car] and jump on to the real Tiv roads – the “bush” foot paths – which serve as the only true communication links between 99.9% of the vast Tiv lands. On these intricate, snake-like, narrow intertwining, endlessly meandering footpaths, the real drama of man; the beast of burden is re-enacted. Here Tiv women [including pregnant ones] and men, little Tiv children, old men, husbands and wives, we the “European spoiled” Tivs, doctors, clerks, university men, professionals and all Tiv who must need visit home, or visit friends, or conduct business at our open markets, or socialize and so on and so on, saddle up their belongings on their heads and literally hit the road. The vast majority, do so on their bare feet, some of us – the more fortunate ones, protect our feet with shoes. On these tortuous “bush” paths, real sweat and blood from cuts and bruised toes; smells and the pollen grains from the giant towering spear grass which over-grows most of these paths, and the endless sweet songs of bush birds; the cries of hot and tired babies and children, occasionally punctuated by those wild animals, all mingle together with the cheerful road songs of the seasoned Tiv trekker in one giant, serene but definitely romantic drama which could provide real entertainment to a white missionary visitor in search of the “real’ native. To me, a participating Tiv, it spells misery, injustice, intolerable abuse and backwardness. Why should I, or any Tiv man for that matter, accept this condition in a fast developing Nigeria where highly sophisticated tarred motor roads are being torn down, even today as we wage war, and new American type of super first class highways being reconstructed to take the place of the destroyed tarred roads?
4. Do you know that most Tiv are even backward in their thought as a result of petty and primitive jealousies? Do you know that the Tiv do not look kindly on the “successes” of the other Tiv, no matter how beneficial such successes may have been to their society? Do you know that a Tiv man's success does not motivate other envious Tiv to aspire to achieve similar heights? Rather than try to climb up to the level of the successful Tiv, other ‘normal’ Tiv spend a great deal of their energies trying desperately to pull the one who is ‘up there’ down. Nobody wants anybody to be ‘better than’ they are. For example, I know of numerous occasions when jealousy made bloody liars of some otherwise innocent Tiv. Some of these strange people, for negative motives did spread wicked gossips, participated

in destructive idle talk and maliciously lied against other more successful Tiv, when these successful ones embarked on projects which could, in the long run, raise the social standing of their home land. I have heard impossible stories about highly placed Tiv people, both civilian and military, some of which I have had the opportunity to investigate personally, and found to be utterly false. These diabolical primitive jealousies, in other cases, even impeded the progress of some very progressive Tiv tribesmen. Why would these less successful Tiv, these people who indulge in malicious tale-bearing, which sometimes destroy useful people and useful social projects for Tiv land, not be merely spurred on to make more determined efforts to achieve similar successes as the more successful ones whom they envy? Obviously, there must be some other abnormal reasons emanating from their warped minds, in addition to other normal ones. However, the more easily available reason is because they are backward and primitive. This primitive, progress-obstructing, often destructive “I-must-pull-him-down-to-my-mediocre-level competition,” characteristic of the behavior of a good many Tiv people, does have its opposite counterpart. Similarly this reverse, which is indulged in by the most senior Tiv officials, has been equally harmful and detrimental to the social progress of Tiv land. The reverse of what is obtained among the less successful and mediocre Tiv is the fact a majority of the Tiv who have made it, spend a tremendous amount of their energies attempting to block the progress or ascendance of any other Tiv, and in fact they try to push those down the ladder, further down! For example, I know personally of some cases, and I have heard of other cases from reliable sources, when some very successful Tiv “up there” at the top, have actually intervened to block the advancement of the less senior or less successful ones for no acceptable reasons other than the satisfaction of their bloated egos and the satisfaction of some sadistic tendencies, perhaps. When a very successful Tiv, or senior official, who has nothing to loose, actually indulges in blatant lying against a junior, but aspiring Tiv official, or any less successful Tiv for that matter, as some have done, in order either to stop a promotion, or a contract award, or a senior appointment, all of which can do nothing but increase the social mobility, the social advancement and the purchasing capacity of the Tiv society, then such a senior Tiv, short of an attack of insanity, must be unprogressive and obviously primitive and backward. How does the getting of more Tiv university lecturers or experimental psychologists or university graduates affect me so much so as to render me so hopelessly worried as to indulge in attempts to hold the clock back by expending tremendous energy to block the educational progress of potentially bright Tiv chaps? What we, the Tiv, fail to realize is that this primitive and unprogressive trait of ours, is self-destructive. It has effectively worked to hold back the social progress of our homeland. It is incredible, but there are living Tiv today, who at various times actually advised governments not to hire Tiv people in certain categories of employment nor establish certain social amenities in Tiv. Even today with numerous graduates and experienced men, some of these advisers have continued in perpetrating this monstrosity before the powers which continue to seek their advise. They glibly declare that “there is no Tiv sufficiently qualified for position X. Thank you for seeking my advice ...!” Incredible, isn’t it? Doesn’t this confirm that we are very backward and primitive, even in thought? It does to me.

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

Apart from the deplorable social and economic conditions, which could have been improved, it will be totally wrong to start diagnosing the social neglect and abuse of us the Tiv people with present day

happening. The callous assaults started with the mass conscriptions, the forced labor and physical forceful uprooting of male members of families who were carted away in wagons, to work in mines in unknown faraway places without any financial compensation. Perhaps as Tiv, you may recall these atrocities, which were perpetrated by then British Administrators, beginning in the late twenties and continuing through to the early forties under two familiar names: ADOGON and KUZA. Today in Tiv land when you say that someone has gone to Adogon (yem Adogon), you mean he is dead.

What happened is that when the white man decided to build his railway from the privileged areas of the coast on the South to those of the North, it was decided in the twenties, that a connecting bridge be built across River Benue at Makurdi. The white economic interests decided that we the Tiv, were the obvious natives to conscript because we were supposedly powerful and hard working. And above all, the bridge was to be located in our area. Sure enough, Tiv were conscripted. With whips on their bare backs, down our people went in hundreds into the very deep holes sunk into the river bed for the huge pillars which support the Makurdi bridge, but up came only a few. The net result was the mass murder of unpaid, forced natives, by a government, which was supposed to protect them. The irony of it all is that today, slightly over forty years since ADOGON, the Nigerian railway is yet to extend into Tiv proper in order that ordinary people may benefit from a project which their fathers contributed generously, sweat and blood to help establish!

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

Conservatively, three quarters at least, of the ones who survived, such as my father, and were put to work, all suffered from one respiratory ailment or the other. For example, my father came back consumptive, and most of his surviving friends, whom I came to know, have either already died of tuberculosis, or have been treated or are still consumptive. The net outcome again was the drastic depletion of the male population of Tiv – thousands died to provide wealth for greedy white businessmen who were reaping stupendous profits from the Tin and Columbite of the Jos mines. In a way, some of the crumbs, which fell from the master’s table, contributed significantly to the gradual but rising economic wealth of Nigeria.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Well, the most noticeable and pervasively persistent peculiarity is the gold tooth.

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

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

One wonders whether the Tiv of Nigeria have fought more wars than the English, the Germans or any of the other cultural entities of war-mongering Europe such as France and so on. It is unfortunate that even some of Nigeria’s so-called writers, true to tradition: lack of imagination and creativity, ape and re-echo this dull monotonous, totally out-dated and stupid paternalistic tone. Is it because Tiv tribesmen “are a fierce and warlike people” that all the rulers of this country both white and black, tended to ignore and leave Tiv land without social amenities and totally undeveloped? Are we mere mercenaries to be hired to fight white man’s created wars so that we can maintain our true image of ‘fierce warlike people?’ Aren’t even mercenaries compensated?

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

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

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

Personally, I feel we can take advantage of the experiences of those who have gone before us and avoid their mistakes. A start however, must be made immediately in areas of self-help, and in re-organizing our administrative set up in such a way that we can maximize what we can legitimately receive from the present government of our state, which is non-political and as such, reasonably impartial and interested in our problems as a neglected and a justifiably aggrieved people.

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

1. ADOPTION OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS WHICH WILL BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

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

2. LAUNCH A TIVLAND OPERATION DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

Here we can utilize our personal energies and consult firms, friends, and other interested financiers to contribute to specific projects we may submit. Perhaps governments can also become actively involved here. For example, government can go ahead and establish a cement factory in Gboko now. Perhaps you know that we have more limestone deposits near Yandev, than the deposits found anywhere else in this country. In fact, the experts maintain that our limestone is right on the surface and needs no excavation at all. Why can’t we establish this cement industry right away? In addition, we should inaugurate a Tivland Development Society (TDS) right away. The TDS will carry out economic and development surveys and expose to all Tiv, what and where we should tackle and in what order of priority. At the moment, we should:

- i. Launch a Tivland Development Fund (TDF) perhaps with either a target of at least one million pounds (£1,000,000), or a target will be suggested by the TDS after a careful survey of priorities. I would strongly recommend that those of us Tiv business-men and wage-earners included, who earn above one hundred pounds (£100) a month, should contribute obligatorily (though voluntarily) at least one hundred and twenty pounds (£120) per annum for two years to this Fund. All other workers should contribute not less than the equivalent of their one-month's salary every year for two years. All taxable male Tiv should contribute two shillings each. If this idea could be sold and local authority officials convinced, this amount of two shillings could be added on to the general tax and deducted on receipt of tax returns. I realize the stupidity, the inadvisability and the errors inherent in naming tentative suggested amounts as possible contributions. Please reject them and let's fix others, but let's fix them.
- ii. Appropriate banking, accounting and auditing facilities could be devised to safeguard against mishandling of the funds. With all these funds, what can stop us from hiring the most advanced community and technical officers or construction firms to help us develop our land?
- iii. Form a Cooperative Bank of Tiv (CBT) in Gboko. The thriving business community and our projected development projects can only benefit from such a venture. Why can't the bright young Tiv lawyers and the few emerging business "tycoons" of Gboko not investigate this possibility right away? If the TDF succeeded, and there is no need to suggest it will not, the huge funds realized could be paid into the CBT.
- iv. Many other cooperative endeavors should be tried. We have technicians, some engineers and a great many university and secondary school students who just roam the streets of Gboko in the summer. Why can't we use these people in some construction projects in the rural areas? Perhaps the Tiv boys in the army could also help with a contribution, which we could use to meet the cost of running such an "Operation Cross Tivland – Rural Area Development" project. The usefulness of the Community of Tiv Students here and elsewhere is unquestionable.

All these are mere heads of proposals, which I wish to advance for the consideration of all Tiv. If the basic idea of taking a serious determined self-initiative is okay, we can move ahead to try and pull ourselves and our land out of the underdeveloped limbo of blissful ignorance and social deprivations, into which we Tiv and our land, have been for a long time. I believe the initiative must come from us, though government efforts are desired. Efforts of governments can only be as successful as we are properly oriented to benefit from them.

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

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

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

PROPOSED ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND ORGANIZATION IN TIV LAND

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

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

If the foregoing is correct, and it is my sincere submission that the point made is basically correct, it follows logically that additional institutional arrangements would have to be created in order to formulate a more rational approach to delivering to us Tivs both the social, political, and economic fruits of Nigeria's continuing rising position, commiserate with our aspirations— aspirations which are justified by past injustices and by the humble contribution of the Tiv people to the consolidation and evolution of a truer and more stable Nigeria.

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

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

Since, at the present, the totality of the entire Tivland, with a population nearing a half of the entire Benue-Plateau State, is administratively constituted into a single autonomous administrative unit, within a total of nine such autonomous units in the State and as such, the Division technically qualifies automatically, and in practice receives (or should receive?) only 1/9 consideration, officially, in all State Government's Development Plans, then in the interest of self improvement and perhaps equity, the Tiv people of Benue-Plateau State, just like the Hausas of Kano and North-Central States, the Urhobos and Benins of the Mid-Western State or the Yoruba of the Western State, must as a matter of

urgency, reconstitute their land into many more autonomous administrative divisions in place of present single administrative division.

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

In fact, each one of these six new divisions would still be bigger, in population and area than the Southern Division (AKWANGA) of Benue-Plateau State, (207,364 people at least to 117858) which however, receives at the moment, quite correctly, the same Governmental treatment and consideration from Jos, as the present Tiv Division because our Nigerian Governments, rightly or wrongly deal with the autonomous administrative divisions in their planning and in their day to day activity. (In fact, the present giant Tiv Division is nearly equal, perhaps bigger, in population than the whole of Kwara State, and if it were even reconstituted into six autonomous divisions each of these divisions would be bigger in population than any of the present divisions in Kwara State.)

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

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

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

Don't let anybody fool you. All the above briefly mentioned considerations are serious and very important problems which should worry us and occupy the minds of all sincere Tivs, as the ponder on the basic proposal of re-organizing Tivland into many more autonomous administrative divisions as advanced by me. Hopefully the problems raised are not insurmountable and given a sincerity of

conscience, and dispassionate commitment to serious thought, the Tiv man possesses both the intellectual capacity and courage to advance correct answers to the problems which will be posed by accepting the general proposals advanced here.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DIVISIONAL BOUNDARIES:

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

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

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

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

MY PERSONAL RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE FIVE FORMER INTERMEDIATE AREAS

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

These funny arbitrary creations, which were introduced for purely administrative conveniences less than 16 years ago, became gradually interpreted by unprogressive Tiv youth, who were afraid of open competition and who wanted to blackmail more clever Tiv political opponents of theirs, as genealogy demographs, cutting off 'our real brothers and sisters' from 'foreigners' – all of who incidentally were the children of the man Tiv, who had, according to the traditional history of our ancestry, only two sons: IPUSU and ICHONGO.

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

For example, the Turan Clan, is accepted as a descendant of Ichongo, so are the Injiriv, Yonov and Ugondo clans. Yet Injiriv and Yonov were located in Ichongo Intermediate Area, the Turan in Kwande

Intermediate Area and the Ugondo in Ukum-Shitire Intermediate area. Many other examples exist all over Tiv land.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 1. GBOKO DIVISION (TIV-CENTRAL DIVISION)**
- 2. TIV- EASTERN DIVISION**

3. **TIV – SOUTH EASTERN DIVISION**
4. **TIV-NORTH EASTERN DIVISION**
5. **TIV – SOUTH WESTERN DIVISION**
6. **TIV – WESTERN DIVISION**

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

WHY A SEPARATE GBOKO DIVISION?

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

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

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

Since my aim is not to divide Tiv cultural solidarity, I feel strongly that a separate Gboko Division must be created. This division will contain all the hundreds of Tiv from all the clans of Tiv who have been living for generations in the present Gboko town, and its suburbs with their surroundings. This will convince all the Tiv people that they are still basically the same people, and that nobody is trying to divide them for any sinister reasons. Whoever is elected the **Tor Tiv** anytime, should automatically become the Chief of **GBOKO DIVISION**.

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

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

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

After years of agitation by the Biroms against the appointments of Hausa Chiefs to rule Jos, the Biroms finally won their right to have their spiritual head, the Chief of the Biroms, to also become the Chief of their spiritual town, Jos. Today, Jos, the Headquarters of Benue-Plateau State, seat of our Military Governor, is also the seat of Rwang Pam, Chief of all Biroms, and the headquarters of Jos Division.

Thus the creation of Gboko Division will not be unique at all.

TIV SOLIDARITY

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

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

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

1. First, Tiv land will lose economic and political exploitation, isolation and tokenism. More Tiv people will attain some of the common social benefits of a fast advancing Nigeria, because there will be at least six or so autonomous divisions, each vying for governmental attention direct from Jos, to harness and develop their area of jurisdiction. This to me, will be most healthy. The healthy competition with the other divisions of Benue-Plateau State should make more Tiv better informed.
2. A second thing Tivland will lose will be political uncriticality and the kind of contagious mass political hysteria which in the past led to easy violence; mass self murders, including brother against brother and father against son; arson, looting and the general intimidation, terrorizing and destruction of Tiv people and Tiv land by Tiv themselves, whilst the tribes which instigated them, in the name of something called party politics, built more roads, more hospitals, more electric power houses, more water supply systems (pipe borne water), more schools, more modern homes and towns, more indigenous entrepreneurial businesses and numerous other social amenities in their communities and localities! The cream of youth in each of the six autonomous divisions will weigh very carefully all political philosophies being spread in their divisions, in terms of the common objectives of a rapid social ascendancy and the protection of their newly established divisions, before accepting them. This will be a most welcome development, because only sincere philosophies, conceived by the majority of any particular division, as being in the interest of the division would be tolerated. Renegade philosophies which seek to destroy Tiv people and Tiv land,

in general, will be much more difficult to find common acceptability throughout the six autonomous divisions. We the Tiv should all encourage this in view of the past history of our collective tragedy.

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

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

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

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

THE POSITION OF TOR TIV.

Let me state right from the outset that I cannot envisage any suggestions in my thinking about our country, Nigeria, where I underestimate nor ignore the position of the traditional ruler in our society. In fact those of you who read me, you will remember that I devoted a whole chapter, Chapter 18 in one of my books: "The Case For Nigeria," which I wrote in the far away cold North American country of Canada about our crisis, to offering suggestions on how best we could consolidate and democratize the position of our titular rulers in the changing Nigeria which perhaps they should change with so as to avoid being left behind.

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

In proposing that we reconstitute Tivland into six or so autonomous divisions, I do envisage the position of TOR TIV as not being negotiable. The position of TOR TIV must be maintained and safeguarded. I see all Tiv people, through representation at IJIRTAMEN, going through the same traditional way and electing a TOR TIV to fill the vacancy, which would be created by any deceased TOR TIV. This TOR TIV, will continue to be a First Class Chief resident in Gboko. He should also be chief of Gboko Division. In each of the other autonomous divisions this proposal would have Second Class Chiefs. They will function as Chairmen of their various Local Government Authorities, and sit

direct in whatever representation (Upper House?) the government may eventually decide to create in the future for the Chiefs of this Nigeria of ours.

I see the Tor Tiv performing the functions of Chairman of all Ijirtamens, and any joint interim agencies which the six or so Divisions may wish to have in Gboko initially. Gboko could serve as the clearinghouse for Interim Common Services, as Kaduna has served for the six Northern States, which were reconstituted out of the former Northern Region. Any cultural meetings involving all Tiv or any other meetings the autonomous Chiefs of the various Divisions may seek to hold in the interest of Tivland, the Tor Tiv will automatically preside over such meetings as the Father of the Tiv.

The present disgraceful, dilapidating dust and mud filled Tor Tiv's "Palace" in Gboko, is inadequate, an eyesore and an affront to the pride of the Tiv people.

Consequently my proposals will have the present palace abandoned entirely and a new and more respectable Palace, commensurate with the status of Gboko, and the pride and dignity of the Tiv people, erected for the present and all future Tor Tiv.

Hence I see the Tor Tiv still functioning as Father of all Tiv, actively advising and exchanging views with the junior Second Class Chiefs of the various DIVISIONS. This will be principally on traditional matters so as to guarantee the cultural cohesiveness and solidarity of the Tiv people. In addition, he will perform all the functions of Chairman of all Local Administration Agencies in Gboko Division. This position won't be unique to Tiv land. It is in fact the position, which is found to exist for say the Emir of Kano or the Emir of Katsina both of whom are also First Class Chiefs.

Therefore it will be wrong if one concluded that these proposals are going to abolish the post of Tor Tiv. They in fact will consolidate and add respect to his position.

SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE RE-ORGANIZATION PROPOSALS.

Summarizing, I have argued strongly that in the interest of ensuring the rapid economic, social and political advancement of Tivland, the present single Tiv Division be reconstituted into many more autonomous Administrative Divisions. This I have maintained, will not only make sure that we receive our own fair share of government amenities but will also ensure that we are not under-represented at government level. I have further argued and shown how the question of fixing boundaries, or protecting Tiv cultural solidarity or adequately protecting the institution of Tor Tiv can be handled readily under the new proposals.

I recommend these proposals with all my heart to you my Tiv tribesmen. I am convinced that many Tiv and non-Tiv alike may choose to misunderstand me and my proposals. I am very disturbed but not deterred.

To you my fellow Tiv, I wish to confess my sincerity that I have to speak so forthright and blunt with you and to you is not meant to be an act of arrogance nor disrespect. I feel for you all because of the social and political ills, which befell you, but above all, because of the utter backwardness of most of our people who live in blissful ignorance.

Through out my intellectual maturity, I have come to reject that men exist for institutions. I feel and believe firmly that institutions are created to make it easier for men to attain some of their common objectives. The former institutional arrangements in our land, failed us woefully. Through inherent

deficiencies within these institutions, our social mobility was stultified and hence we remained poor, uninformed and backward possessing no comparable standards of living with the enlightened communities of modern Nigeria.

Let us reshape our institutions to serve us in our objectives of obtaining higher standards of living for a majority of our people, instead of trying to continue to prepare Tiv people to exist for an anachronistic, self-defeating institutional arrangement that has not worked for their benefit. We, the Tiv have never been rumored to be cowards. Let us not oppose change simply because we fear change.

To you my fellow Nigerians who though not Tiv, may succeed to read this letter, I pray that you read me well.

I am not a politician, believe me, and I honestly have not been tribalistic in this letter to the Tiv people. The only thing is, I am an empiricist by academic indoctrination. My professional etiquette demands that I report the facts as faithfully as I see them. This is why, if you have been reading me generally, you will discover that I have not honestly deviated from my basic pattern of responsible service to truth. If I have failed anywhere, it is obviously due to intellectual limitation, and not to any intended falsification or intellectual deceit.

Secondly I am emotionally and intellectually committed to my country, Nigeria. I believe firmly that my letter to the Tiv people written with all the sincerity that is, will help strengthen our country better. If I can but help to re-echo the suppressed frustrations of the Tiv people collectively, in a harmless, constructive way, which may generate creative energy for improving the living conditions of men, then perhaps I should for the sake of my beloved country. Who can contend seriously in this our country that the sordid story of Tivland may well be that of other socially underprivileged communities in Nigeria?

I cannot help but be a Tiv tribesman, nevertheless I am still a most loyal and dedicated Nigerian nationalist, contributing in my own little way, to the final evolution of a rational Nigerian nationalism.

So please judge me, if you must, but judge well, for honestly, I am what I am and so will I always be.

Best wishes and may God bless all.

Long Live One Nigeria and true human brotherhood. I must go, bye bye.

Yours Sincerely,

Paul I. Unongo,
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