

Contd. from P. 13

- e) Government serial publications.
- f) Serials published since 1971
- g) Other current titles.

Before the end of January 1978, the centre hopes to publish its National File for dissemination to the Nigerian Community. It will be in ISSN order with a key-title index.

As the national bibliographic agency the National Library has responsibility for the publication of Nigerian Serials in Print which was last issued in 1969. The task of publishing this important bibliographic tool has now been handed over to the Nigerian Serials Data Centre. There is a projection to issue it at the end of this year but the realisation of this will depend on the staffing position of the centre.

Many records in the national file do not contain all the necessary data elements as they could not be traced from the serials or available bibliographic tools at the time of registration. Publishers of such serials will be communicated (where possible) and requested to supply the necessary information.

It is envisaged to undertake more publicity work to educate publishers about the use of ISSN and also the need to supply essential bibliographic data in their publications.

The centre will cooperate more with the Legal Deposit Section through the Serials and Documents Department in achieving an increase in the number of Nigerian publications deposited at the National Library. This will be done by maintaining a list of serials not held in the Serials and Documents Department and submitting such a list to Head, S & D regularly (e.g. quarterly) for necessary action. Presently, the centre is making its computer print-out from Ulrich's Directory available to S & D department for checking against its Kalamazoo records.

Problems

Owing to acute shortage of professional staff to cope with NLN's multifarious duties it has not been possible to have the required staff complement to cope with the work of the centre. In recognition of the various phases of work demanded by ISDS, the IC has recommended that:

"Minimum requirements for a small centre doing manual processing only should be

1 Senior Librarian in charge of administration and bibliographic work.

1 assistant Librarian.

1 Secretary.

These minimum requirements will increase with number of publications to be processed, independent computer processing and participation in national network."

Presently the NNSDC is manned by one senior librarian working with a typist (borrowed from (CTSD). It is obvious that no one person (no matter how efficient) can cope with the functions broadly outlined, handle the projects envisaged earlier in this paper and achieve the urgent attention to requests which ISDS work demands.

There is also the danger of one-man departments i.e. of activities virtually coming to a standstill during periods of staff absence due to indisposition, annual leave etc. as happened in the past. If it is not possible to increase the number of professional staff in the NNSDC, perhaps consideration could be given to the setting up of a task force to deal with the most urgent assignments for about three months. Thereafter one librarian, two intelligent library assistants and a typist can continue with the work.

It should be remembered that the centre is handling an important international assignment on behalf of the country and it will be unfortunate to regard it as an unnecessary appendage to the National Library when posting staff. It will be misleading to judge the magnitude of the work being handled by the NNSDC only on the basis of figures published in the National Bibliography of Nigeria. These figures quoted below do not include serial government publications which constitute the bulk of the national output:

Serial Publications

New Titles	1965	1966	1967
	103	38	93
New Titles	1968	1969	1970
	75	61	35
New Titles	1971	1972	1973
	17	20	27

New Titles	1974	1975	1976
	24	16	23

Nigerian Periodicals and Newspaper 1950 - 1970 lists about titles while over 300 new titles were added in the second edition covering the period 1971 - 74. Serials in Print in Nigeria 1962 which also excluded government publications listed 666 titles. Certainly with an increase in (a) the number of states in Nigeria (b) Universities, other research institutions, polytechnics etc (c) societies launching magazines (d) organisation issuing annual reports and house journals (e) commercial publishers venturing into serials publishing, there will be a multiplicity of new Nigerian serial titles (as defined earlier on) in the very near future.

S. O. Oderinde highlighted one of the problems of periodical publishing in Nigeria thus: "In many of the entities, a considerable degree of instability which characterized periodical publishing in Nigeria during the period is noticeable. Some titles started off with high hopes and sound promises, only to fall away for a long time or cease altogether, unannounced after the appearance of one or two issues.

This type of situation often creates acquisition problems for subscribers, and it indeed proved a formidable undertaking for this library to be able to determine the current status of many of these fugitive publications"

Because of the problem of inadequate bibliographic information of Nigerian serials, it is quite a time-consuming exercise filling the data elements in the ISDS worksheets.

Communication with the publishers poses another problem. On many occasions their addresses are neither ascertainable from the publications nor from available directories. Consequently about 180 publishers are yet to be notified about the ISSN assigned to their publications.

The NNSDC also has accommodation and location problem. Presently it is not attached to any Division of the National Library. Among administrative problems posed by this arrangement is the fact that it is usually not taken into consideration when space is allocated to departments.

The NNSDC in view of its functions should be a part of an enlarged Biblio-

graphic Services Division which should also house the National Bibliography of Nigeria. It should also be as near as possible to the Legal Deposit Section. However, in view of the fact that the bulk of the work being undertaken in the centre is retrospective in nature, there is also a need to be very near the Serials and Documents Department for quick and easy access to Nigerian serials.

The Legal Deposit Section and the S & D Department are far apart and this situation is now causing a location problem for the centre especially in view of the traffic situation in Lagos. Undoubtedly this problem will affect the work of the centre.

When allocating office space to the Serials Data Centre, it should be borne in mind that there is a possibility that in the near future the centre will also accommodate staff on training from new National Centres (of other African countries).

The most serious problem which the centre will experience is registering serial titles in the various Nigerian languages. The Cataloguing Department has been facing some of this problem

as the NLN lacks staff with enough working knowledge of some of the major Nigerian languages. Abbreviating these titles words in accordance with ISO standard will not be easy.

Conclusion

In the area of bibliographical control the National Library has a lot to contribute on the international scene. Moreover, such bibliographic activities are the unique services that distinguishes it from other libraries in Nigeria. The National Library has the following to gain from participation in ISSDS network:

- a) identification and control of national production of serials.
- b) identification of this production on an international level.
- c) systematic exchange of information on an international level.
- d) availability of printed and machine readable files, computer programmes, internationally acceptable standards.
- e) the potential for coordinating national systems and activities.

It is true that presently libraries in Nigeria do not use the ISSN for their operations but it should not be forgotten that many of the big libraries are in the process of computerizing their services and serials control is usually the area first considered. It is therefore not too early for Nigeria to participate in the ISSDS network.

More importantly, the National Library having been designated the bibliographic agency for Nigeria is committed to the international community in this area of control and identification of Nigerian serials.

At worst the setting up of the serials Data Centre could only have been delayed but not avoided. A call is now being made by UNESCO for member states especially the developing countries to set up National or Regional Centres for ISSDS within the next one year.

Nigeria's serials output is not among the lowest in Africa and if some other African countries have joined or are considering participating in the ISSDS, certainly the National Library has not taken a wrong step in setting up the NNSDC. It is hoped that everything possible will be done to make a good job of this international assignment.

RIVERS STATE LAUNCHES A BOAT LIBRARY



The boat library anchored at the jetty among other boats ready to move out any time.

History was made on Tuesday, 21st March 1978 when the Rivers State Library Board launched "MV Knowledge I" a boat library, the first of three such boats to be acquired by the

the Board to serve the riverine areas of the state.

"M. V. Knowledge I", the first of its kind in Africa, together with two others soon to be acquired, will take

library services to the riverine areas of the State which had otherwise been inaccessible to the three mobile libraries already in operation on the mainland since 1976.

Built by "Marinair" in Bristol - England and supplied by Almarine, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, "M. V. Knowledge I" has two Ford Sabre 120 H. P. diesel engines.

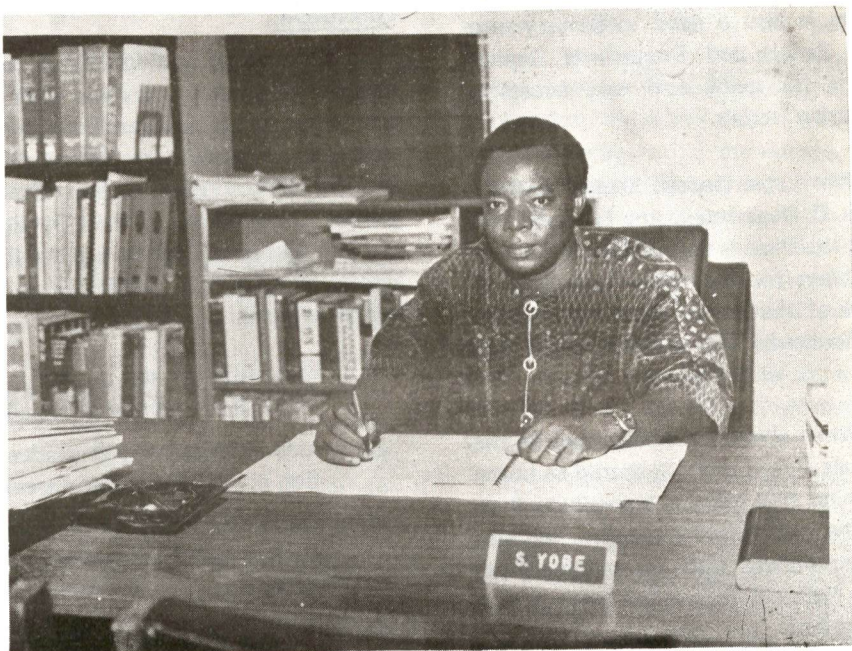
The 14.021 — metre — long boat costing ₦150,000, has a capacity for 2,000 volumes. It will also accommodate two Library Assistants, two able Sea-men, a Quartermaster and an Engineering Assistant.

Although no professional librarian will be physically involved in the operation of the boat library, all its activities will be planned and supervised by a Senior Librarian.

According to the Acting Director of the Rivers State Library Services, Mr. Simeon Yobe, the three boats will, when commissioned, provide library services to the rural areas of the state which will be divided into zones with a boat serving Brass Zone, comprising Brass, Yenagoa and Sagbama; Degema Zone, made up of Degema and Abo-mena and Bonny, Zone, whose service point will be Port Harcourt, but extending to cover Bonny, Opobo, Okrika and other small towns.

When asked about the operations of the boats, after they have been commissioned, Mr. Yobe stated that readers who borrow books from the libraries may have between a fortnight

and one month to keep them before they return or renew them because it is expected that it will take approximately this length of time for a boat to go round all the towns in a zone.



MR. SIMEON YOBE, Acting Director, Rivers State Library Services in his office.

THE PROTEST ELEMENT IN WEST & SOUTH AFRICAN POETRY

It is often the desire of the artist to discover a literary myth on which to base his creative work or which will offer him a source of inspiration. William Van O'Connor writing in his "Modern Literary Criticism", observes that "Eliot made his excursions into anthropology and various religions, Joyce, with a comic glint in his eye, made his into the psychology of human organisms, whereas Yeats and Stevens made theirs into various realms of the aesthetic".

Many African poets in their own search for "the essential image" stumbled upon various contemporary social and psychological conflicts. In this context protest poetry includes all such poetical works which depict in both content and style a measure of dissatisfaction with or opposition to the existence of a certain social status quo.

The South African poet draws his own inspiration from the age-long policy of apartheid, a system by which the black-man is rated lower in status than his white counterpart. The idea of racial stratification is beautifully portrayed by David Gill in a poem he dedicated to Dennis Brutus, that South African poet who was shot down while he was escaping from the South African police. Stanza II of the poem reads:-

They would not say in the diamond cities
Nor ever breathe in the evening bars
That justice must define men equally
As black shapes white, white, black

On the board where chessmen ape
Our larger politics.

The analogy drawn here between apartheid and the chess-board which is ruled strictly into white and black squares is striking, as in racial segregation, the two races - black and white are never allowed to mix

Much of South African poetry is centred on the intimidation and exploitation of the indigenous black by the white. Dennis Brutus, writing on how the black African always lives under fear and uncertainty, notes in his "Sabotage, 1952"

Here thunderheads rear in the night,
dominating the awed sky
on the quiet-breathing plains
fractured metals shriek abandoned wails
my country, an ignorant timid bride
winces, tenses for the shattering releasing wails.

Just as humanity is overpowered by the fear of approaching thunderbolts, so the black in South Africa is ever under the fear of his white taskmaster who hands over him like clouds. The black has, as a result, become a "timid bride" David Gill's lines point, as well, to the same image of intimidation which in the case of Brutus is both mental and physical:

Verwoerd's huge web no longer shakes, A hole
 In the prisoners stomach leaves him usefully prone
 here, sir, is the usual plaster, stick the strips
 Criss-cross on the poet's lips
 And Crucify his voice

Here both the poet's person and his voice are subdued as if the lips are plastered 'criss-cross'. With the law-enforcement agents, the whiteman proves 'all-powerful'. We find that the poet is not free to communicate to his hearers or readers an important fact which makes it difficult to fully appraise the poetic potential of South Africa at present. Gill continues:

And so he (i.e. Brutus) went, the true worlds locked inside

His unpermitted head to fall
 For policemen here policemen there
 They love policemen everywhere.

The blackman has been subdued; he is exploited and defenceless. This is clear from what Dennis Brutus in his "A Troubador" pens:

A Troubador I traverse all my land
 exploring all her wide-flung parts with zest (and then adds)
 and I have laughed, disdaining those who banned
 inquiry and movement, delighting in the test
 of wills when doomed by Saracened arrest
 choosing like unarmed thumb simply to stand

Here it is necessary to note that the land has "wide-flung parts," that is, exploited and that all moves to redress are stifled - 'inquiry and movement' are banned. The people are subjected to forcible conviction "Saracened arrest unarmed thumb". Here, Brutus seems to be prophetic of the manner of his own doom.

In South African poetry, the defenceless African laments as he cannot effect any change. He therefore resigns everything to fate. This mood is revealed in Brutus' "Kneeling before you".

Kneeling before you in gesture
 unposed and quite unpractised
 we froze to an eternal image
 became unpersoned and unageing symbols
 of humbled vulnerable wonder
 enfolded in a bayed and resolute maternalness.

The African has been dehumanized or "unpersoned" and made timeless monuments of vulnerability.

Another poet from South Africa, raises, on the other hand, a touch of hope, however distant, in his "To the Proud". The power of the white will not stand everlasting.

When you behold the fixed bulk of the sun.
 Jubilant in its uncertain festivals
 Know that the symbol on which you stand shall
 vanish

Now that the dawning awaits us with other illusions
 He then ends optimistically:

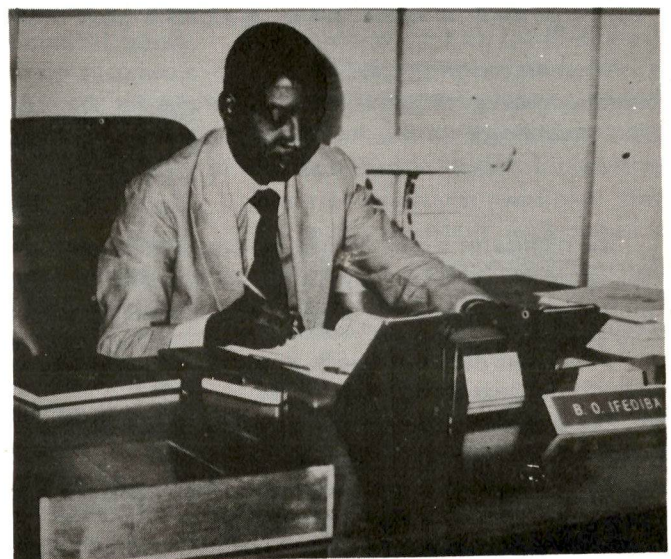
Then shall your nakedness show
 Teasing you before the unashamed sun
 Itching you shall unfurl the night

But we the sons of Time shall be our parents' races.

The poet hopefully waits for the 'dawning' of the day when the 'nakedness' of the white will show. The white will be revealed in the stark ignominy of his wickedness and inhumanity while the indigenous black will be liberated a master of his own destiny.

In West Africa, where protest poetry exists, it is on a different footing. While the South African poet revolts or laments over the obnoxious regime of racial discrimination his West African counterpart is warring, in the main, against cultural-cum-economic exploitation or conflict.

In Gabriel Okara's "Piano and Drums", the protagonist gets lost between two worlds: the white man's culture signified by "Piano" and the traditional culture represented by "Drums":



MR. B. O. IFEDIBA, the author of this review is a Deputy Secretary I in the National Library of Nigeria.

And I lost in the morning mist
 of an age at a river side keep
 wandering in the mystic drum
 of jungle drums and the concerts.

Often, there is a straight-forward protest against the European colonialist for his material exploitation as well.

In this case, Okara's "The Snow Flakes Sail Gently Down" is significant'

I dream of birds, black
 birds flying in my inside, resting
 and hatching on oilpalms bearing suns
 for fruits and with roots denting the
 uprooters' spades. And I dreamed the
 uprooters tired and limp, leaning on my roots.
 their abandoned roots
 and the oilpalms gave them each a sun

The poet here represents Africans as "oilpalms" and the "suns" they bear for fruits as their contributions to the

world. Then the uprooters are obviously the expatriate capitalists.

George Awoonor - Williams shows a more direct confrontation with the white imperialists - declaring a war of rights'. In his "Song of War", the protagonist would prefer death to living in social ignominy'

Let the white man's guns boom
and its smoke cover us
we are fighting them to die.

In his "The Sea Eats the Land at Home", he further laments this capitalistic exploitation of the white who grab so much from our soil simply to enrich themselves: The

last five lines read:

It has taken away their belongings
Adena has lost the trinkets which
were her dowry and her joy
In the sea that eats the land at home.
Eats the whole land at home.

This theme and imagery readily echo in a poem "Weapon" by I.W.W. Citashe, a South African: "Your cattle are gone,/ My countrymen!/Go rescue them! Go rescue them!/.

In style and general poetic effect, we find a measure of difference between the South African and West African poets. The South African, working under oppressive and hopeless conditions, uses a style to reflect his experiences.

In "A Troubadour" the analogy is that of Power versus Powerlessness: ".....wills doomed by Saracened arrest/ choosing like unarmed thumb simply to stand....." There is utter resignation and the style used is geared to that effect. The language is simple, imagery, common place, and often emotive and therefore effective in drawing sympathy from the reader.

The last two lines from Brutus' "Sabotage" seem relevant here....."my country, an ignorant timid bride/winces, tenses for the shattering releasing tide.....". Here the South African is presented as 'ignorant' and 'timid' and then a "bride" who is evidently subjected to the whims and caprices of the white husband.

We find the West African more exulted and sophisticated. This will not be surprising when one remembers that he enjoys physical, mental, as well as academic freedom having therefore the scope to think aesthetically and then polish and repolish his language while the South African is so much concerned with his urgent 'message of pity' to his reader that he does not care so much for style.

George Awoonor-Williams, for instance, speaks of "the sea that eats the land at home" portraying strongly the geomorphological imagery of disintegration and removal, associated with the foreign capitalist in his "The Sea Eats the Land at Home".

Okara is subtle and highly involved when in his "The Snow flakes Sail Gently Down", he writes of birds flying in my inside nesting/and hatching on oilpalms bearing suns uprooters spades",

With his peculiar expression "my inside", by which he refers to the "centre of a person", he goes to metaphysical lengths to compare, as noted earlier, 'oilpalms' with Africans and the 'suns' with their contribution to the world.

Even with West African poets who are not directly concerned with racial or cultural protests, we, as well, observe a high standard of literary skill. J. P. Clarks' "Night Rain" is typical: "What time of night it is/I do not know the run of water/that like ants filing out of wood....." Here the analogy between "the run of water" and "ants filing out of the wood" is very striking.

While the protest poems from South Africa are purposed in content essentially towards racial criticism and in style are urgent and emotive, West African protest poets are involved in the criticism of existing cultural and economic order and are more forceful and uncompromising, achieving a greater maturity in their literary skill.

Boon To All Federal Ministry/ Department Libraries

A few Weber Minigraph Duplicators — a compact, portable printing machine designed for use of libraries for the production of catalogue cards — have been acquired by the National Library of Nigeria for distribution to interested libraries.

The duplicator which reduces the cost and time of producing catalogue cards, is very simple to operate. It produces printed cards from Weber stencils which can be prepared on any standard typewriter.

The stencils incorporate pre-printed registration marks to ensure accurate printing. Catalogue cards, plain or prepunched can be fed into the minigraph which prints, counts and stacks.

Each set now being distributed is complete with catalogue cards, stencils, ink and Instruction Manual. A set which costs N700.00 is made up as follows:-

(i)	Minigraph Duplicator	1
(ii)	Stencils	100
(iii)	Ink	2 bottles
(iv)	Blank Catalogue Cards	3,000

In view of the limited number of these duplicators, no library will be allowed to buy more than one set and it will be sold on first-order-first-service basis. Interested libraries are therefore advised to mark their orders "Minigraph Duplicator" and send them to:

The Director
National Library of Nigeria,
4, Wesley Street,
Lagos.