

UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

**ETHNICITY PROBLEM IN NIGERIA –
IMPEDIMENT TO NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

A Valedictory Lecture

By

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PROGRAMME

- 1. GUESTS ARE SEATED**
- 2. INTRODUCTION**
- 3. THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S OPENING REMARKS**
- 4. CITATION**
- 5. THE VALEDICTORY LECTURE**

The lecturer shall remain standing during the citation. He shall step on the rostrum, and deliver his Valedictory Lecture. After the lecture, he shall step towards the Vice-Chancellor, and deliver a copy of the Valedictory Lecture and return to his seat. The Vice-Chancellor shall present the document to the Registrar.

- 6. CLOSING REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**
- 7. VOTE OF THANKS**
- 8. DEPARTURE**

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Valedictory lecture to all my former students at various levels in the University system.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I say God, thank you for EVERYTHING in my life.

I acknowledge with gratitude the love and support of my late wife, Stella. Even in death her love has sustained me till this day.

I thank my children, Chinedu (late), Chineze, Chukwuemeka, Chijioke and Chinyei for being loving children and for the wonderful happy environment they created around me after the demise of their mother.

My daughters and sons-in-law for being so supportive and indeed wonderful friends.

To my colleagues in the Faculty of Science and Department of Plant Science and Biotechnology, especially the indefatigable HOD, Prof. Eunice Nwachukwu, I cannot thank you enough.

To the numerous friends I cultivated in the University Administration, I cherish the wonderful moments we shared. I salute you all.

ETHNICITY PROBLEM IN NIGERIA – IMPEDIMENT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A valedictory lecture is a farewell address. It should be a reminiscence of one's life in the University as one is ready to bow out. In our "Guidelines for Delivery of Inaugural and Valedictory Lectures", we stated that unlike the inaugural lecture, the valedictory should be less intellectually taxing the environment more relaxing. The lecture should really provide opportunity to thank God and thank the University for the opportunity to serve.

As I look back on my odyssey at UniPort, I would like to share a few memorable occasions of my life of 36 years service to this University.

I arrived this University on **1st January 1980** from the National Root Crops Research Institute, Umudike. I had been interviewed and offered the UniPort job in London two years earlier by the Premier Vice Chancellor, Professor Ekong. Why did I not proceed directly to Choba from London but chose to cool off for 1 year at Umudike? Why did I have to arrive Choba on New Year Day, 1st January 1980? To answer these questions, I need a more relaxed atmosphere – Let us meet at IPS Delta Park Bush Bar for the gist to flow! You have to pay to hear the gist!

At the time of my arrival at Uniport, the military government of the day was at war with the radical Academic staff of universities over the issue of **Academic freedom** and **Autonomy** of Universities. While the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) was fighting to defend the Autonomy of the Universities, the military government was bent on usurping the powers of **Council of Universities** and so was freely dismissing staff and **appointing** Vice Chancellors and sole administrators to run Universities. It was a period of desecration and violation of the sanctity of the University.

The military government was bent on destroying the soul of the University system in Nigeria.

I had no difficulty whatsoever in being recruited in the movement to save the University system. Our mentors – The Kimse Okokos, Iyang Eteng. The Nzimiro were our champions and we followed faithfully. I quickly linked up with Chidi Amuta and both of us started as Editors of **the ASUU Uniport Commentator**, an ASUU magazine which we floated to address and correct the ills of the environment. ASUU Uniport was concerned that the administration of the University should be democratised and that officers of the University should be **accountable** to the people. The commentator did a critique of various organs of the University. We urged our colleagues to wake up and do their work as lecturers. No Faculty or Department seminars? No inaugural lectures? Lecturers were closing work by 4.00p.m.?. No proper library? No proper bookshop? We challenged the Vice-Chancellor to sit up and run the University appropriately or else resign. For daring to challenge the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Chidi Amuta and Dr. Anthony Arinze received our **1st letter of dismissal** from the University.

The letter of dismissal frightened and scared many members of our Union. ASUU Exco intervened and the sack letters were withdrawn. Chidi Amuta and Tony Arinze resigned from the editorship of the Commentator by publishing the text “**Goodbye to Babylon**” when we discovered that a good number of our colleagues were withdrawing from our mission for fear of losing their jobs.

In those days under the leadership of Prof. Mark Anikpo as ASUU Chairman, debates at ASUU meetings were **robust**, highly emotive and explosive. With the tenure of Mark Anikpo over, a delegation lead by Blessing Didia and Patrick Igbigbi pleaded with me to take up ASUU **leadership in 1994**. Reluctantly, I accepted. Little did I know that we were going to be sentenced to four years of different types of terrorism, namely:

- (1) Abacha terrorism
- (2) SSS terrorism

- (3) Institutional terrorism –Vice Chancellors who were then agents of military government.

I assumed ASUU Chairmanship, under the most vicious regime of Sani Abacha who sought to decimate academics and bring them to their knees. It was a most trying period in the life of Academics in this University. Brutality was visited on us. The Union was banned several times but we remained adamant.

During those dark days, the most cases of violation of human rights as academics were visited on University staff. What was more worrisome was that we were even more afraid of our Vice-Chancellors and fellow colleagues than of the government security outfit. We had no reason not to believe that our 1st President of ASUU, Mohammed Tukur was murdered by government security agents. Dr. Attahiru Jega, Dr. Frank Dimowo, Dr. Festus Iyayi, Dr. Asissi Asobie and **many of our colleagues** were not only sacked but were imprisoned.

These acts of violation by government did not go unchallenged by our Union. Following our resistance, we learnt a lesson or two in human betrayal. Many of our Vice Chancellors appointed by government allied themselves with their masters and joined forces with government to destroy, violate and desecrate the very autonomy which they swore to uphold.

And so, we were harassed even more by our Vice Chancellors. ASUU meetings were held deliberately in the dark because we were being hunted. The venues of the meetings were not announced. Our movements were monitored by SSS. We were arrested, detained and questioned by SSS. We travelled **in cognito** to attend ASUU meetings. I remember one night, Professor Eskor Tuoyo, the National Trustee of ASUU was smuggled into my house at night for a meeting, the venue of which neither him nor myself knew. He did not even know who brought him to my house. Indeed we became masters in espionage. In those days when we went for ASUU/FGN negotiations, Dr. Abubakar **Momoh** ensured that Professor Eskor

Tuoyo was starved of breakfast to get him sufficiently angry during our encounter with government officials. We travelled long distances in discomfort. I once arrived Jos for a NEC meeting smelling crayfish because of my mode of transport – a 911 vehicle with market women from 9th mile Enugu to Jos!. These persecutions were borne because we refused to compromise **the soul of the University**.

In the course of these struggles, I received two (2) more letters of termination of my appointment signed by the Registrar of the University. In 1998, I took the University to court for failing to pay our salaries during the six month old strike. The salaries were later paid but I am yet to withdraw the case in court!

My tenure as ASUU Chairman was extended for a further **two years** because ASUU National directed that we do not change ASUU leadership during crises period. And so we carried on!

Permit me at this stage to pay tribute to members of my Executive who bore these pains along with me.

Regina Ogali, Late Clara Akpan, Gab Agabi, Gab Agu, Late Augustus Uzoukwu and other very loyal members of the Union, prominent among them was Philo Ejele!

It is important to remember that in our time, individuals did not have to lobby or campaign to be ASUU **leaders**. The Union then had a way of identifying people who as Festus Iyayi put it “had the nose and stomach for the work that has to be done” We appealed to such people and persuaded them to carry the cross of the Union to the next generation. It was a call to sacrifice. Today, it is a different story. People now campaign; lobby to occupy a position in ASUU Exco. Surely something has gone wrong somewhere!

Our actions were guided by the tenets of ASUU, the Guiding Principles of ASUU as enunciated by Festus Iyayi. These are the Principles:

- Integrity, transparency and accountability
- Professionalism, objectivity and hard work

- Courage, sacrifice and total commitment
- Internal democracy, team work and group solidarity
- Patriotism, anti-imperialism and working class solidarity

We **imbibed these principles**, drank these principles almost to the point of **inebriation!** With these **guiding principles**, it was not difficult for me to transit from chairmanship of ASUU to head the **anti-corruption** outfit of the University – **The Professional Ethics Committees**

These principles of ASUU were applied in whatever I did as Chairman, PEC, as Deputy Vice Chancellor (Admin.), Head of Administration, VC’s Office, Director QA/QC, and Focal Officer, Servicom.

As Director of QA/QC I was charged with the assignment of standardising procedures, processes and practices in every sphere of life of the University. Working closely with the Vice Chancellor Prof. Ajenka, we tried to reposition the University, not only to rank as No.1 in the Country but to move this University to the International Community. By adapting and adopting best practices the world over, this University became a Global player. We achieved this by various means:-

- (1) Through well researched presentations, we challenged every Professor in the University to become a Research Centre with a cluster of Research Assistants able to attract funds from anywhere in the world.
- (2) Established various Research Centres and Institutes to promote research and innovations.
- (3) Established linkages with National and International Bodies.
- (4) Established **partnership** with industries to promote research and attract funds to the University. Some of the numerous structures at various stages of completion were results of these partnerships and collaborations.
- (5) We believed that we should attract the best brains any where we found them in the world and get them associated with the University. These moves gave impetus to our being

recognised as Centres of Excellence in various fields of study in the University.

In **deepening** the Academic Culture of the University we set the pace for other Universities to follow. Indeed we set **guidelines** for doing things.

- Producing Quality Assurance Manuals
- Guidelines for **Matriculations/Convocation**
- Appointment of Writers in Residence
- Guidelines for Inaugural and Valedictory Lectures
- Appointment of University Poet
- Appointment and Celebration of Emeritus Professors with guidelines for appointment.
- Encouraged productivity by enacting Annual **Productivity/Merit Awards**
- **We rebranded the University.**

It gave me great joy to receive requests from 1st Generation Universities and NUC for some of our Guidelines. We believed that UniPort should be pacesetters, and indeed we have been pacesetter in many departments. While we occasionally had to step on toes in order to achieve what we did, we certainly had no room for pettiness, but ensured that we effected changes with utmost civility and goodwill, **love and understanding** I had the responsibility to ensure that Prof. Ajiienka's dreams spelt out in his master plan were translated into reality. QA/QC had the **task of driving** the system. And for the sake of posterity these efforts and results have been documented.

Our ranking as No.1 in Nigeria and 6th in Africa was named by Times Higher Education at the 1st African Universities Summit held in Johannesburg July 30th 2015. This ranking was not based on the **quantity** of Research papers produced by African Universities but on the **Quality** of the papers. Indeed at the 7th International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education Africa held in Abuja Sept. 21-25, the recognition of UniPort for Quality Research was re-echoed.

It is worthy of note **that** we successfully registered UniPort as a member of AfriQAN (African Quality Assurance Network). At the General Assembly of that body, UNIPORT voice is respected. I urge my successor in QA/QC to follow up on the ISO Certification of the University. We have laid the foundation for this exercise and if successful, we would be the first Nigerian University to achieve this feat.

I urge this Administration to see Quality Assurance/Quality Control as the **SOUL OF THE UNIVERSITY** and so give it the support it needs to function effectively. This is what the NUC has been preaching.

Before my appointment as Focal Officer, Servicom, there was a Servicom Unit which had become moribund. We revived the unit and the idea of Quality Service delivery occupied a front burner in the University. The culture of doing things **RIGHT** and doing the **RIGHT** things took centre stage. No more missing Results! Students, staff, contractors etc now knew that there was a window for complaints and all complaints were treated expeditiously. The Servicom office was a very busy office. And the staff were happy to serve.

Let us therefore be proud of our achievement and endeavour to attain **Greater heights**. We cannot afford to lower the standard we have inherited.

Let me now address a National Issue which has bugged my mind all these years, which is the topic of the Day.

- ETHNIC BIGOTRY: THE ALBATROSS TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Shortly after my appointment as Deputy Vice Chancellor (Admin.) in 2010, I was sent by the University Management to Prof. Chukwuka Okonjo, father of Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. We were looking for the quickest way to reach his daughter, Ngozi to invite her to deliver our Convocation Lecture.

I INTRODUCED MYSELF TO PROF. OKONJO AS THE DVC (ADMIN) OF UNIPOINT. HE LOOKED UP AT ME IN AMAZEMENT. “DID THEY KNOW THAT YOU ARE AN IBO MAN FROM IBUSA IN DELTA STATE?”

- I SAID “YES”. HE WAS SPEECHLESS!
“AM I NOT QUALIFIED”, I ENQUIRED. “
“IN NIGERIA? WHO CARES ABOUT QUALIFICATION. OUR SYSTEM DOES NOT REGARD MERIT OR EXCELLENCE” HE RETORTED.

We spent the next **1 hour** moaning over the **problem with Nigeria!** I could see that this man, over 80 years of age was passionately patriotic and was concerned as I was over discrimination against people based on ethnicity.

Your dictionary will tell you that “a bigot is a person who is **prejudiced** in his views, somebody **intolerant** of the opinion of others. **Ethnic bigotry** therefore means to be prejudiced or intolerant of an ethnic group. It means to **discriminate against** an ethnic group. There is nothing wrong with the word **discriminate**. To discriminate is to recognize a distinction between objects or persons. But to discriminate **against** is where bigotry comes in; it means to make **unjust distinction** in the treatment of people. If a people suffer from ethnic bigotry, it means that the people suffer from (1) discrimination (2) prejudices (3) intolerance (4) marginalization (5) are peripheral (not mainstream) (6) are of

secondary or minor importance (7) are inconsequential! We remember Wole Soyinka's "The man died". The man dies in whoever suffers from **ethnic bigotry!**

IS THERE ETHNIC BIGOTRY IN NIGERIA?

Is there discrimination against anybody because of his/her place of birth? If the answer is yes, how does this affect the development of our country. The answer is a resounding YES, there is bigotry in Nigeria; yes there is discrimination. I want to say that one major problem militating against our progress is **REFUSAL** to face the truth. The reason is there are people who benefit from this discrimination. It is people who are hurt by discrimination that want to talk about it. Those benefiting from it do not like discussing it.

OUR BRIEF HISTORY

I will take you back to how this country came to be, in order to understand our problems better.

- We know that this country is a heterogeneous union of nationalities called tribes with distinct territories.
- We know that the evolution of the Nigerian state started around 1867 with the British conquest.
- We know that the present character of Nigeria was assumed in 1914 with the amalgamation of the North and the Southern protectorates.
- We know that in 1914, the three Regions-East, West, North, were created.
- We know that at independence, these 3 regions were self governing and a fourth one created in 1963 by plebiscite i.e. Midwest state.
- We know that today, there are 36 states created by military fiat and we are told that there are about 250 ethnic groups in the country. **Our national culture is thus enriched by this multiplicity of ethnic groups.** Indeed there are manifestations of tribal cultures **which are beautiful e.g. peculiar habits of dress, food, language, music.** Infact these manifestations are **positive, desirable** and really beautiful – think of the boredom in **MONOTONY.** This is indeed a blessing from GOD!

As stated earlier we are a country made up of different nationalities **forced into a union** without their consent. Since 1960 when our country became independent, there has been a tussle for political power among the different nationalities. Indeed since 1960, the desire to control the Nigeria **polity and** hence the country's destiny has been the centre of mistrust and disaffection among these nationalities. The march of the country towards nationhood has been hampered by **real** or **imagined** fear of domination of one nationality by another.

Some people have traced the origin of tribalism to the momentous event that took place in Nigeria politics in 1951 when Chief Obafemi Awolowo stole the leadership of Western Nigeria from Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in broad daylight on the floor of Western House of Assembly. It was called a "carpet – crossing". Zik was sent packing to his native Eastern Nigeria "where he came from!" The term "ti wan ti wa" entered our political dictionary. That event, political analysts say, spelt the death of the dream called Nigeria. As Chinua Achebe in his satiric text "the trouble with Nigeria" put it,

"No matter how anyone attempts to explain away that event in retrospect, it was the death of a dream – Nigeria, in which a citizen could live and work in a place of his choice anywhere and pursue any legitimate goal open to him; a Nigeria in which an Easterner might aspire to be premier in the West and a Northerner become Mayor of Enugu. That dream Nigeria suffered a death-blow from Awolowo's "success" in the Western House of Assembly in 1951".

That divisive song "Tiwa nti wa" re-echoed again in 1970 at the University of Lagos. Mr. Loyd Nwakeke from Umuahia, a then student of psychology almost succeeded in being President of Student Union of the University of Lagos – Carpet crossing again took place. This prevented Loyd from being President of the SU in

Unilag. As a young newly admitted student of the University, I saw this play out. I was deeply disturbed.

Following from these, what do we see today in Nigeria?

- (1) A Nigerian child seeking admission into a federal school faces discrimination.
- (2) A student wishing to enter a college or university faces discrimination.
- (3) A graduate seeking employment in **the public service** faces discrimination.
- (4) A business man tendering for a contract faces discrimination.
- (5) A citizen filling a report with the police or seeking access to any of the avenues controlled by the state faces discrimination.
 - These people will be required to **confess** their **TRIBES** and when your interrogator wants to be less crude or hypocritical he tells you to state your “state of origin: All is meant to tag or label you **in order to discriminate against you. This is Ethnic bigotry.**
 - Recently ex-military President Babangida said he is now born again. He no longer believes in **Quota System. Let us have the best, he said.**
 - Babangida must have been touched by the election of a black man, Barak OBAMA as President of America! It is UNJUST TO DENY SOMEONE HIS entitlement simply because of his place of Birth in NIGERIA.
 - How come federal presence is denied some while others are inundated with that presence. What has given rise to so called youth restiveness in some parts of the country, specifically in Niger Delta Today! and recently in the S.E. of Nigeria.
 - What is the real reason for the cry of marginalization in some parts of the country.
 - It is open denial of your entitlement, a feeling that you are being discriminated against; that you are being cheated because you do not belong.

- Is it not a tragedy that in the 21st Century Nigeria, you are marked out by your tribe to ensure where you are displaced in the scheme of things. And the tragedy is: You are so labelled, not based on where you are born but where your father comes from! You have so to say inherited the sins of your father.
- Think of the trauma a bright student suffers when he is denied admission into a University because of where his father was born.

ETHNIC BIGOTRY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The direct consequence of ethnic bigotry on Nigeria is that it gives birth to and promotes **TRIBAL LEADERS**. When people are asked to cast their vote, they simply vote their tribal brother or sister. This promotes mediocres in every department of our lives. It means that Nigeria cannot play with the **1st elevens**. Excellence is sacrificed and mediocrity extolled. What do you expect when people occupy positions not because of what they can offer the system but because of where they come from. We are hypocrites; we see what the problem is and choose to ignore it and focus on something else and hope that the real problem will be wished away. By so doing, we lack **integrity**. Integrity means **consistency** of actions, values, principles; expectation and outcome.

If you lack integrity, you are a hypocrite. You can therefore see how our country has been built on **deceit**, built on a big lie. Lack of integrity has been responsible for, corruption. It breeds disgraceful, dishonest and dishonourable people. We know we are not playing with **our best**, but we don't care, it does not matter to us.

We are deceitful as a people and what is more, we are deceiving ourselves. At a time, we said we were – Rebranding Nigeria! Rebranding simply means giving a new Name in order to sell a product! It means white-washing-presenting ourselves as good when we know that something is wrong somewhere. That is hypocrisy.

We **envy people** who are playing with their best but we lack the courage to do what they are doing.

Look at Ghana, look at South Africa, see USA where our Black Brother is judged as their **best** and they had to elect him! Who are out LEADERS? Are they out BEST at **National? Local Government?** In our Universities? In Student Unions? Even class Rep? Do you elect the best candidate? Or are our elections not coloured by ethnic consideration?

As Professor Nzimiro would put it –

*intellectual light weights, indeed
intellectual Lilliputians are catapulted
to exhalted positions on the ladder of
ethnicity.*

How do we expect to compete with the outside world. While others celebrate **EXCELLENCE**, we celebrate **MEDIOCRITY**. This is the **DIRECT CONSEQUENCE OF ETHNIC BIGOTRY!**

ORIGIN OF OUR PROBLEM

Somewhere during our match to nationhood we missed our opportunity. Having wrestled power from the British Colonialists, our then leaders were supposed to chart a course of history to **define our National Philosophy** so that as generations come, they would fit into a certain pattern of **behaviour** or **conduct in line with our national goal**. What did our leaders do? While Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was called **Zik of Africa**, Chief Obafemi Awolowo was called **leader of the Yorubas** and Alhaji Ahmadu Bello the **leader of the Northern Nigeria**. These were charismatic leaders with **great Vision** but their suspicion of one another did not allow them to have a **common** philosophy for **NIGERIA**. This was happening at a time when we had the Mao Tse Tung of China, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya (adopted the name for love of country) Kwameh Nkrumah of Ghana, Houphouët Boigny of Ivory Coast, Nyerere of Tanzania, Mandela of South Africa, Ghaddafi of Libya, Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. There was **NOBODY OF NIGERIA!** These leaders of other countries **defined a course**, a national philosophy, national **ethos**, while our own leaders were regional champions. Our **problems** manifested and multiplied as

soon as these **three** political giants Zik, Awolowo and Ahmadu Bello left the **scene**. Having chased away the Whiteman and we became independent, there was excitement. Our **subsequent** leaders became *ethnic warlords*. What pre-occupied them was how to share the nations resources, how to obtain advantage over the others. There was suspicion, unhealthy rivalry and unhealthy competition. There was no National leader, no **ethics, no morality**. While other countries were producing national heroes we were manufacturing self seeking anarchists, political demagogues, charlatans who paraded themselves as miniature ethnic messiahs. Nigeria produced leaders both military and civilians who mistake showmanship for dynamism and big spending for leadership. As one of my academic mentors Professor 'Nolue Emenanjo at his Inaugural lecture years ago during the **ABACHA** era, satirically put it

“this giant of Africa, called Nigeria is a nation in search of her nationals, an evergreen wasteland peopled by hollowmen, a land where there is continuous change and yet no continuity, a land with all sorts of directorates and yet no direction; Nigeria is a land where the blind and the deaf lead the lame and the dumb, where umpires end up as vampires; it is a country where rulers always believe they are leaders; a country where people are perennially engaged in a hopeful mirage of building castles of people with blocks of buffoonery and wishful thinking.”

Indeed as popularly said – nobody has underdeveloped Africa more than Nigerian leaders have done! **and this is traceable to the No.1 enemy of Nigeria – ethnic bigotry** – the giant albatross hanging on our necks.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is our country. One silent killer of our country which has prevented us from attaining the nationhood is **Ethnic Bigotry**, injustice arising from discrimination. Embezzlement of funds, misappropriation, lawlessness, lack of

accountability, corruption are all manifestations of **FAILURE OF LEADERSHIP**. Failure of leadership is a direct product of **USING OUR SECOND BEST, NOT OUR BEST**. I REMEMBER VIVIDLY THE CLAIM BY THE THEN Publicity Secretary of UPN that

“if you put a UPN label on a goat” – that goat will win election anywhere in the Western States of Nigeria!

This is the situation all over the country. Yes they won't mind voting for a goat so long as the goat comes from **their ethnic region!** *Is it possible that we do have “goats” leading us in some parts of Nigeria today?

WHAT TO DO?

- (1) Having accepted that Nigeria is an artificial conglomeration (Union) of nationalities forced into a union without their consent, by British Colonialists, it does seem sensible that having now won our independence and seeing the problems created by this union, we should **re-examine this union**, discuss the union and decide on whether it is working or not. **THIS IS THE CALL FOR A SOVEREIGN NATIONAL CONFERENCE**. Some have called it agitation for disintegration, some divorce of forced marriage, others demerger. Whatever is the name, let these nationalities sit down and decide on how they desire to eliminate **DISCRIMINATION** from our body politics.
- (2) I posit that it is still possible, following the dialogue of these mininations called tribes for Nigeria **to still remain a viable united entity**. But this can only be done through **EDUCATION**. It is possible through **EDUCATION** for these mini-nations to **coalesce**, lose their identity and subject themselves to Nigerian Nationhood. Education will produce a **LEADER** around whom we shall all rally.

I posit that if the Educational System of any country is faulty, or where the leaders do not pay sufficient attention to education, that

country is doomed. If all we think about is PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION and how to take advantage of one another, we have not left the level of **lower animals**. The grave danger in mis-education or under-educating a populace is that the error has multiplying effect. The reason is that it is what you teach a child that he takes to adult life – and that is what this adult teaches on coming generation. So, once you've got it wrong, the consequences will take a long time to wear off. This is exactly why Nigeria is in a big mess today. We are the products of the Education we received yesterday. Are we surprised at the **low morality**, the lack of integrity, **the corruption**, the **ineptitude** of our leadership and followership. Are we surprised that Nigeria would produce democratically elected politicians who would canvas for and engineer the collapse of the very democratic process which produced them and which they swore to uphold and protect? Are we surprised at the emergence of the culture of settlements in our body polity. Are we surprised at the squandamania and the perpetual transitional governments that visit and assault us. Are we surprised that we are a country with so much resources and yet we are rated among the poorest people in the world. That we are an OPEC nation exporting fuel but have no fuel to run our cars? We should not be surprised!

Our aberrant behaviour is the result of what we learnt yesterday. Corruption begets corruption, secret societies beget secret cults on campuses, dishonesty in public life begets exam malpractices, insincerity and non accountability of ruling class begets 419. **All these give rise to a nation in search of her nationals.**

These are the dangers of **faulty education and lack of a defined philosophy** for our country.

This is the challenge of the YOUTH OF TODAY! It is our hope that the youth will succeed where the elders failed. That the youth will re-engineer the course of history of this country and bring back the culture of EXCELLENCE. That in the course of the re-engineering, Nigeria will get to a point where a student seeking for admission into a University, a graduate seeking

employment, a business man tendering for contract, and a citizen applying for passport will not be required to indicate his tribe, state of origin or religious belief or place of birth but will only be required to state if he is a Nigerian or not.

This would be the beginning of the end to Ethnic Bigotry! This great burden, this monstrous albatross would have been lifted off our country.

I thank and salute you for listening as I say “GOODBYE!”

Tony ARINZE

PROFILE OF PROFESSOR TONY ARINZE



Professor Tony Arinze is a Nigerian.

After his Primary and Post-Primary education he proceeded to the University of Lagos where he obtained his first degree B.Sc. (Special Honours) in Botany in 1972 and Masters degree M.Sc. in Plant Pathology in 1974.

He proceeded to Imperial College, London on Commonwealth Scholarship where he took a Ph.D and Diploma of Imperial College (DIC) in 1978 specialising in Post Harvest Pathology of Sweet Patoto (*Ipomoea batatas*).

On returning to Nigeria in 1979, he proceeded to National Roots Crops Research Institute, Umudike where he was briefly the head of Crop Protection Department and in 1980, took up appointment in Uniport, Choba.

Tony Arinze rose to the rank of Professor of Physiological Plant Pathology in 2001.

From 1980 to 2015, Arinze held at various times several positions in the University of Port Harcourt.

Head of Department Botany
Member of Senate
Member, Governing Council of the University
Chairman, ASUU, Uniport Chapter
Chairman, Professional Ethics Committees of the University
Director of Administration, Vice-Chancellor's Office
Director Quality Assurances – Quality Control of the University
Focal Officer Servicom, Uniport
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration) of the University

Professor Arinze was President Nigerian society for Plant Protection (2005-2009) and was made a Fellow of the Society, 2011 (FNSPP).

Arinze's research interest is in the field of Post Harvest Pathology, especially enzyme facilitated reduction in the quality and shelf life of root and tuber crops. He has worked extensively on yams, cocoyams sweet potato and edible fruits and vegetables.

Professor Arinze has been for the past **9 years**, the President-General of IBUSA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UNION (ICDU), **Worldwide**.

Prof. B. O. Nwanze
Orator