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EDITORIAL

One of the most controversial debates in African scholarship now involves the impact of foreign influences on the development of African structures and systems. In other words, it is asked: in the absence of external interference, would African systems be more or less developed than they are now? Some scholars argue that foreign influences have done a lot in helping to develop African systems, while others argue that foreign influences have had a negative effect on otherwise flourishing African systems. Scholars who subscribe to the latter school of thought point to the Nubian civilization of the Nile Valley and Mwenemutapa of Zimbabwe, among others, as examples of highly advanced African civilizations that were already in existence long before the arrival of the Arab slaver and the European slaver/colonizer. According to this school, it is difficult to tell with certainty the level of advancement that the African systems would have attained by now had they not been interfered with.

Most of the systems and structures in place in African countries today, however, are largely a legacy of the European colonial heritage. Police forces, school, judicial, penal and parliamentary systems are some of the structures that were inherited almost intact from colonial governments. Their inadequacy and inefficiency today are, in fact, always attributed to the fact that they are alien systems imposed on African societies without due regard to the values and needs of the African people.

In this issue of our journal, we have included an interesting article that looks at one of the ways by which a Nigerian community maintained law and order, and ensured the administration of justice. In "Indigenous Nigerian Oral Drama as an Instrument of Social Regulation: a Study of Ogblo Secret Society of Idoma," Idris Amali looks at the role of the Ogblo Secret Society among the Idoma of Lower Benue in upholding social morality and punishing social deviants. A self-sufficient system, the Society used both invisible powers of the ancestors and visible powers of the living to keep social misconduct such as theft, adultery, and selfishness in check.

Amali's article is appropriately supplemented by Lawan Yalwa's "Socio-Cultural and Linguistic Implications of Abusive Expressions in Hausa." In this piece, Yalwa also discusses the various ways in which insults are used among the Hausa of Nigeria to maintain good social conduct among members of the community.

In "African Response to German Colonialism in East Africa: The Case of Usukuma, 1890-1918," Buluda Itandala argues that what happened during the colonial period in East Africa cannot be attributed

to the colonizing powers alone. The trend of events during that period should also be seen in the light of the changing African responses to colonial rule, as this was instrumental in influencing the decisions and actions of the colonial administration.

Politically, Nigeria has perhaps been the most eventful country in Africa. The role of the military as protagonists on the Nigerian political stage is discussed by Emmanuel Amadike in "The Challenge of Redemocratization in Nigeria: Involvement or Alienation of the Military?" Tracing the factors responsible for military hold onto political power in Nigeria, Amadike argues that even after the anticipated transition to civilian government, military influence on Nigerian politics will continue to be felt and their return to power cannot be ruled out altogether. And Okwute Abah discusses the evil that is perpetrated by those who are driven by lust for power in "Creative Apostasy or Aesthetic Amnesia?: *Osofisan's Birthdays are not for Dying and Other Plays.*"

Angaluki Muaka