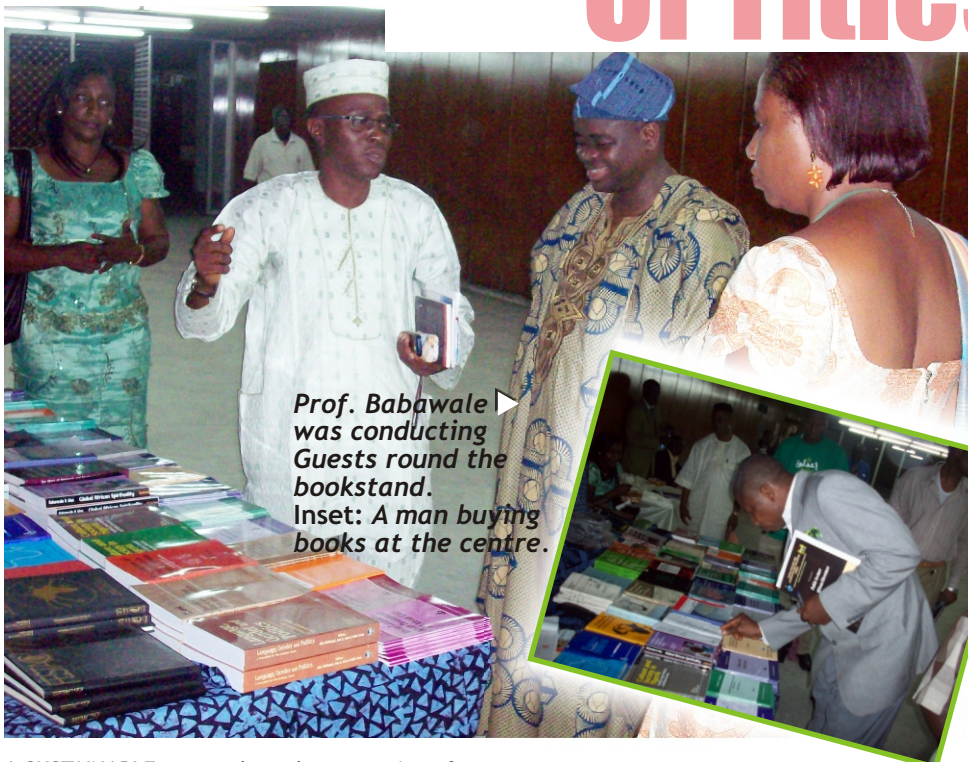




# Harvest Of Titles



Prof. Babawale was conducting Guests round the bookstand. Inset: A man buying books at the centre.

A SUSTAINABLE approach to the promotion of African culture and civilization has just begun at the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation (CBAAC). This is the publishing of books that analytically and critically document Black and African civilization for posterity and

the world at large.

The radical thinking of the present leadership is that any cultural activity that is devoid of documentation will have its impact limited to the immediate beneficiaries alone. And as social workers would postulate, such an

effort amounts to sheer waste of time and scarce resources. Again, today's effort in form of documentation can also serve as a foundation for future development. This is besides the fact that the publications will serve as documentary evidence to the activities of the incumbent team at the Centre.

Under the leadership of Prof Tunde Babawale, the Director of CBAAC, book publishing is a most treasured method of reaching generations yet unborn. In less than three years, the Centre has published no fewer than 24 books and monographs on different subjects and titles. The details show that the Centre has published eight books, 15 monographs and one journal. In the first six months of 2009 alone, the organization published 6 voluminous books. An average of one publication per month! In 2008, it published five while in 2007 it published 13, which averages one in a month.

The Director of the Centre, himself a seasoned academic and prolific writer, either single handedly or co-authored a number of the books and monographs. Prof. Babawale in **Culture, Politics and Sustainable Development: Lessons for Nigeria**, makes a case for sustainable development in Nigeria through a combination of culture and politics. He notes that one reason for the chaotic political life style in Nigeria is the total neglect of culture in the national life. He advocates for the use of cultural institutions to facilitate reorientation of the youths and political actors to imbibe the spirit of brotherhood and service. Also agencies like CBAAC, he argues, can be engaged to organize refresher courses for key political actors who are presumed to be agents of change.

Kwesi Kwaa Prah, in a 36 page monograph on **African Languages, African Development and African Unity**, notes with regret that for so long Africans have unsuccessfully sought answers to the challenges of underdevelopment. To move forward, Prah suggests that we must roll back the unhelpful consequences of the colonial interlude, reclaim our cultural belongings and histories and then confidently move forward.

Akin Odeunmi, Arua E. Ama, Sailal Arimi in the 2009 edition of **Language, Gender and Politics: A Festschrift for Yisa Kehinde Yusuf**, provide very useful theoretical and empirical insights into the role of language in gender relations, political manoeuvring and socio-political mobilisation. They also provides useful contributions on the role of proverbs in political, literary, historical and social settings. The book has insightful contributions from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

**Culture and Society in Nigeria Popular Culture, Language and Intergroup Relations** is another interesting book the Centre published in 2008. Tunde Babawale & Olukoya Ogen in the two-volume book examines the intersection of society and culture in Nigeria to provide a basis for a better understanding of the peculiarities and similarities of cultural traditions of the various Nigerian groups. In addition they explore aspects of Nigerian history and culture to make a strong case for the relevance of cultural studies in laying a solid foundation for state and nation-building in 'post imperial' Nigeria.

In a monograph on **Reconciling the Faiths: Strategies for Enhancing Religion Harmony for**

## Algiers Agog for Heritage

THE CUSTODIAN of symbols of civilization in Africa and indeed for the entire Black race, Nigeria based Centre for Black and Africa Arts and Civilization, CBAAC, joined relevant national organizations around the world recently to celebrate this year's edition of Pan African Festival in Algiers, the capital city of Algeria.

Led by Professor Tunde Babawale, the CBAAC team for days in Algiers flew the banners of the different dimensions of Black civilization around the world to the admiration of all races.

The city stood still, the

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● L-R: Prof Tunde Babawale (DG/CEO CBAAC), Mr Nath Mayo (Director National Commission for Museum and Monuments), Dr Goke Adegoroye ( Immediate past Perm Sec Fed Min of Tourism, Culture and Nat. Orientation), Mr Mohammed Djaiche ( Curator Museum of Ancient Arts, 2nd PANAFEST Algiers) and Mr Ibraheem Muheeb (P.A. to DG CBAAC) outside the Musee l'ancienne Arts Exhibition Hall 2nd PANAFEST Algiers. The picture was taken after the Perm Sec visited CBAAC exhibition stand.

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## Algiers Agog...

peoples overwhelmed. The roads and the streets were all clumsy, yet it was spectacular scene to be sought. For two-weeks the city of Algier was a beehive of cultural activities under the banner of Pan-African Festival (PANAF).

The cultural festival assembled the best of African cultural tradition and regalia, literature, poetry music and artistic heritage from different Africa countries. The cultural anniversary flaunted Africa's lofty sides as opposed to the images of slavery, colonialism, bloody civil wars, catastrophes and rapacious pandemic.

A leading anchor of PANAF, Zouaoui Benhamadi, looking straight into the radiant faces of his huge audience, declared enthusiastically: "We do exist. But we want to be back." And Africa, he said, was back from the three-centuries of slavery hell, and many more centuries of bloody and brutal colonization. It is "back from all sorts of adversities and petty acts, whether small or big, some of which live on until today"

Benhamadi added: "Our come-back will be carried out in a manner likely to please the old and great civilisations that have marked (or set apart) our continent. We are going to come with the smile and epic of happy people, with the amazing vigour of youth, with immaculate



busub of wise men, and with the stylus pens of immemorial scholars. We are meeting in Algiers to make an offering, and we are going to offer ourselves and other the best we have our culture."

The 2009 Pan-African Festival of Algier was indeed not a mere catalogue of fossilized traditional or passive culture, it was indeed a blend of merry making and a big announcement to the world that African has its own unique and unparallel heritage and masterpiece It showed case rich literature of Africa telling the victorious and the sad tales of Africans, highlighting African contributions to civilization and challenging the young to probe their environment and leap forward in their

quest for Africa renaissance.

There was also display of language and musical instruments spearhead by African Academy of Languages to reinforce the crucial role of language in development and social integration.

The festival was also indeed a moment for serious talk and brainstorming session; answering the questions: "Is it true that modernity fell so hard upon us that it stunned and crushed us? If so, how did we manage to stretch our bows and the strength of our people to liberate ourselves? Where did we find the resilience to hold our heads up? History? Religion?... After all, where are we heading? What have we done with our recovered freedom? What do we want?"

Declaring the Festival opened, the Algerian President, Abdelaziz Boutifika emphasized the importance of culture in continental renaissance. He said, "Culture in all its breadth and depth, has a key role to play in fostering change in our society." According to him, culture fosters unity "by striving to enhance our cultural heritage, which is the natural extension of our roots. It will also do so by preserving our unique identity which is smudged by globalization and the universal development of new information technologies. It will finally do so by encouraging openness to the world that is no denial of our self and by helping exert our influence in the world."

The president pledged his government's support for artistic and intellectual productions promising to grant expanded liberty and freedom to creators and artist to freely express themselves in public spaces. ■

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## Harvest Of Titles

National Development, Jacob K. Olupona, Harvard Professor of Religions, discusses a number of issues to argue his point. He makes a modest presentation of the role of religion in promoting interfaith dialogue. Just as the NIIA does in terms of economic, political and social development, Olupona advocates for an Institute of Religion and Public Life where people can theorize, discuss and formulate such policy matters relating to the practice of faith in Nigeria.

As a complement to peace building effort during Kenya's post-election crises, Babafemi A. Badejo in **Politicization of Ethnicity, Inequities and Electoral Violence in Kenya** takes a look at how ethnicity and more importantly inequalities have become endemic and combined to tear societies apart especially the people of underdeveloped countries like Africa. Inequalities come in various shapes and shades, he opines. And according to him, they include, income, place of residence, colour, tribe, etc. Taking Kenya as a case study, the evil of

ethnicity and consequent effect on electioneering is laid bare. Nigeria as supposed 'giant of Africa' is enjoined to take her rightful place and lead by example.

The **Journal of the Black and African Arts and Civilization Vol. 3** is another valuable contribution that CBAAC made to the body of knowledge. The journal treats such topics as African Culture and the Politics of Globalisation, Towards an Authentic African Cultural Heritage in a Globalised World: EuroChristianism and Arabism as mere Distractions, Cultural Globalisation and the Francophone African Novel: Violence Course and Violence Discourse, Endangered Language and Identity: the case of Igbo People in Ibadan, among Others. As usual these topics are treated in depth and capture in the process the African and its response to as well as responsibility in the world at large.

The issue of corruption is another important topic CBAAC discussed from cultural perspective. In a 40 page monograph authored by Gen. Ishola Williams, CBAAC makes a case for the use of culture in overcoming corrupt practices. It advocates that since religion, philosophy, norms and cultural values are key to overcoming corrupt practices, sustained efforts to empower and enforce adherence by the people must be encouraged. ■

## About CBAAC

The Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) was established by Decree 69 of 1979, following the successful and epoch-making hosting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC'77). The Centre houses all the materials, which constitute the core collections and those artifacts and rare cultural items that were used during FESTAC'77.

To achieve its set goals, CBAAC holds lectures, seminars, symposia, workshops and mounts exhibitions. CBAAC also has a library, an art gallery, a studio, and varied collections of cultural and historical significance to Black and African people all over the world. The Centre also engages in other activities, which project the overall image of Black and African Peoples and enable their cultures to be appreciated globally. Statutorily, the Centre is charged with the responsibility of promoting and propagating Black and African Cultural Heritage in its totality. Through its numerous programmes, the Centre has continued to contribute to the pool of universal knowledge on Black and African Peoples.

### VISION

To be the foremost Agency to encourage, initiate, facilitate and coordinate the retrieval and restoration of the natural and cultural heritage of the Black and African peoples for the purposes of protecting, preserving and projecting them for enhanced understanding and appreciation.

### MISSION STATEMENT

To promote public interest in, understanding and appreciation of Black and African Arts and Culture with a view to emphasizing the contributions of Black and African Peoples to world civilization.

# Manna For Artists

## Funding Opportunity from Threshold Foundation

THRESHOLD FOUNDATION has announced its 2009-2010 grant guidelines and they show possibilities for funding community arts programs. This year's themes are Sustainable Planet and Justice & Democracy. The Sustainable Planet Committee supports "efforts to transform both human culture and technology so that we may live within the physical limits of the local and global ecosystems." Foci include Climate Change, Community-based Solutions and Ecological Hotspots. The Justice & Democracy

Committee "seeks to ensure human rights for youth impacted by the criminal justice and drug policy systems, and political rights for those in historically disenfranchised communities."

Foci include Criminal Justice Reform, Drug Policy Reform and Civic Participation. **Deadline for Letters of Interest is September 25, 2009.** The grant-program language is especially friendly to grassroots, community-based projects. ■

Kulture Courier is published by the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation (CBAAC)

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