

The Mona Monkeys of Akoka: In Search of Animals in African Urban Studies (Posted on Facebook on 09/02/20219)

If Nigerian universities are ranked by the diversity of the creatures they serve, the University of Lagos would come first! Arguably, it is the only urban university in Nigeria where monkeys share academic space with humans. The presence of dozens of mona monkeys on campus reveals an indisputable fact--the space the university has occupied since the early 1960s originally belonged to some nonhuman creatures. If the monkeys of 2019 Unilag would never know what it means to live in the wild, their ancestors couldn't have imagined sharing their space, so intimately, with humans in a concrete environment.

The city in Africa is more than humans. Some of the biggest debates about modern urban planning and aesthetics of everyday life in the city have historically been shaped by humans' contradictory impression of the material and symbolic roles of a wide variety of animal species. The opposing notions of "good" and "bad"; "loyal" and "rebellious"; "ugly" and "beautiful"; "clean" and "dirty" animals was framed by how humans would like to see and enjoy urban modernities.

From public health and pollution consideration, which informed slum clearance schemes, extermination of rats, and rearing of goats, to how dog fancying defined social class and racial hierarchies in colonial Lagos, the story of city animals should be of interest to everyone. Europeans who fought fellow European residents of Ikoyi over the shooting of beautiful and harmless birds relied on modernist framing of birds as one of the beauties of urban skylines. They rarely spoke for the cat in such manner because of its ambivalent status as an animal that straddled the thin line between the "wild" and the "tamed" worlds. Dogs were the most beloved urban animal, until the outbreak of rabies when a single legislation (the dogs ordinance) placed their survival in the hands of instant death. Humans are notorious for quickly making an enemy out of a loyal friend!

The story of resilience and adaptation of the mona monkeys of Akoka should inspire all of us not to give up what truly belongs to us.

Crocodile Strays Into House At Apapa

A crocodile about five feet long believed to have come from a creek near Ijora village strayed into a house at Apapa yesterday.

The reptile was reported to have dashed into the yard of the house and hid under the grass.

A child came out and saw the crocodile and later raised an alarm.

Neighbours who rushed to the yard chased the crocodile and killed it later.

Wild Bird Shooting At Ikoyi: An Appeal

Sir—May I appeal, through your columns, to those members of the public, African and European, who have adopted the practice of shooting wild birds at the park facing the lagoon on Ikoyi Island where the Town Council's reclamation scheme has been carried out, to refrain from doing so.

To very many residents of Lagos, the large variety of beautiful birds which frequent that place are a source of delight and pleasure to watch.

If people really must shoot small, and in many cases beautiful, wild birds not even suitable for edible purposes, they should at least confine such action to the bush and not do so in public parks and gardens where the birds themselves have become comparatively tame.

R. H. BUGLER,
President, Nigeria Branch,
Royal Society for the
Prevention of Cruelty to
Animals.

Keeping of Sheep in Lagos

IN view of the widespread agitation which took place over the new measure prohibiting the keeping of animals (sheep and goats) on the Lagos Island, it is only natural that public feelings should be highly susceptible to excitement over anything tending to show that further restrictions are in one way or another intended.

It is generally known that when the prohibition was first introduced, exception was made in the case of members of the Moslem community who, according to the prescription of their religions, have to keep rams or sheep for slaughter in celebration of the festival of the Greater Beiram, for a few days prior to the day of the festival.

So far as we are aware, there has been no attempt from any quarter whatsoever to interfere with the facilities granted to Moslems in this respect. What is required is that where there is a desire to keep sheep in a compound, the permission of the Medical Officer of Health must be sought, and this will be granted subject to certain restriction as regards the number to be so kept.

We are pleased to observe that due notice to this effect has already been published in the local Press, in view of the forthcoming festival, because it has come to our knowledge that there has been an attempt in certain quarters to create unnecessary excitement and resentment by means of a misrepresentation of the true purport of the permit from the Medical Officer of Health. Everybody knows, or should know, that no fees are payable for this permit, but it would appear that some people have been endeavouring to make their illiterate co-religionists believe that fees are being demanded.

The Town Council Authorities have already discharged their own duty by the publication of the notice which sets out in clear and unmistakable terms the conditions under which sheep may be kept in Lagos Island for the purpose of the festival, but it will still be necessary for literate members of the community to make the true purpose of the notice clear to all concerned.

We have always stressed the duty that the more fortunate elements of the community, in the matter of education, owe to their less favoured neighbours to enlighten them concerning matters of general importance to the public of which they (the educated elements) possess fuller grasp by reason of their more up to date knowledge of affairs and ability to understand the true meaning and full implications of public announcements.

While there may be certain cases where there is a deliberate attempt to mislead and cause mischief, we think in most cases the misdirection has been unwittingly caused by people who, although able to read and write themselves, are not sufficiently "au fait" with the use of English words and phrases to be able to give the correct interpretation of press notices.

We would suggest to such people not to attempt to go beyond their personal limitations, which they should themselves recognise, if they are honest and sensible, but seek the aid of those better qualified than they to undertake the task of interpretation. There is nothing disgraceful in this. In fact, they should realise that to take the contrary course of action and thereby create unnecessary tears, doubts or suspicions, is not only disgraceful in the end, but definitely mischievous and therefore dishonourable.

RABIES LAW

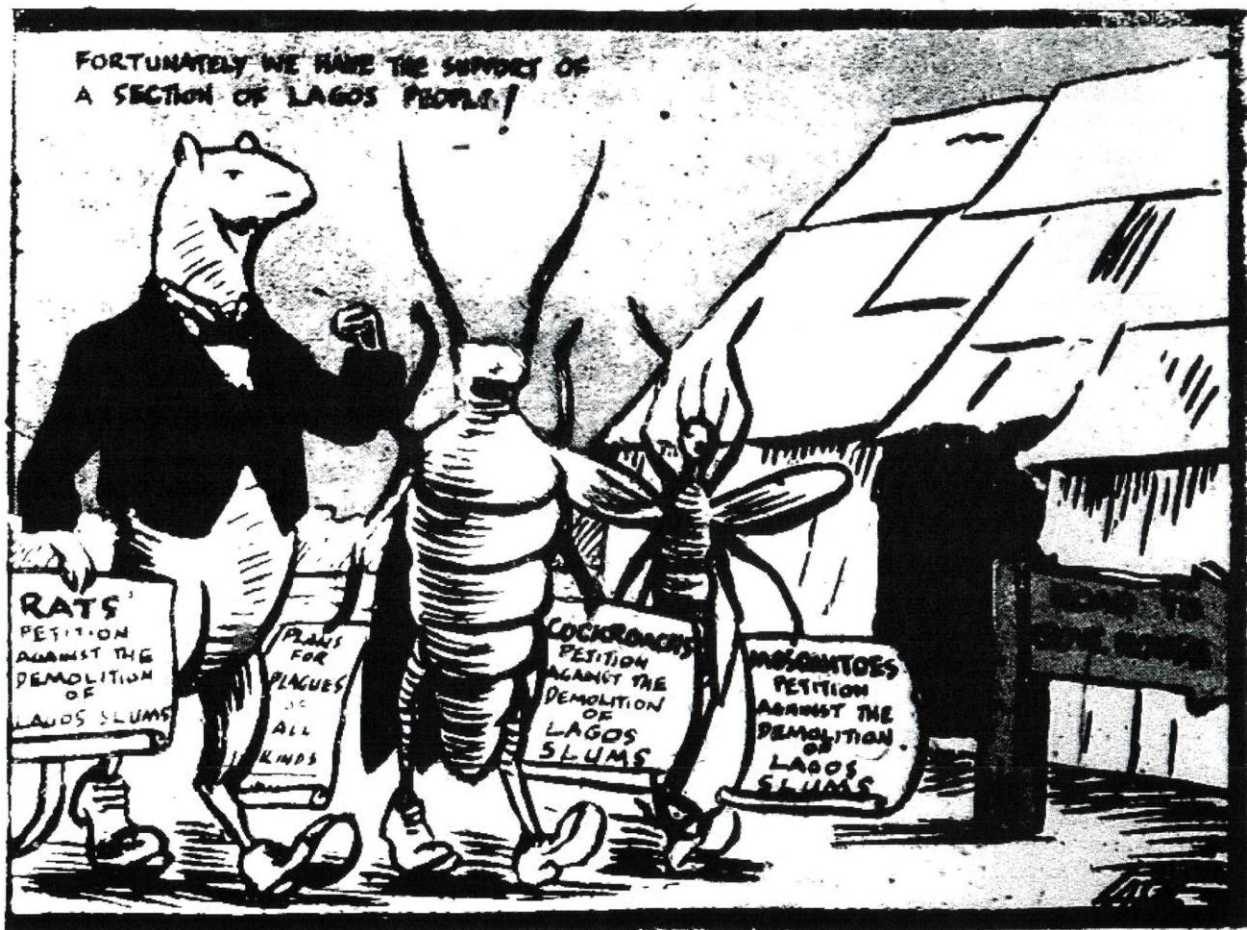
284 DOGS DESTROYED

One fatal bite

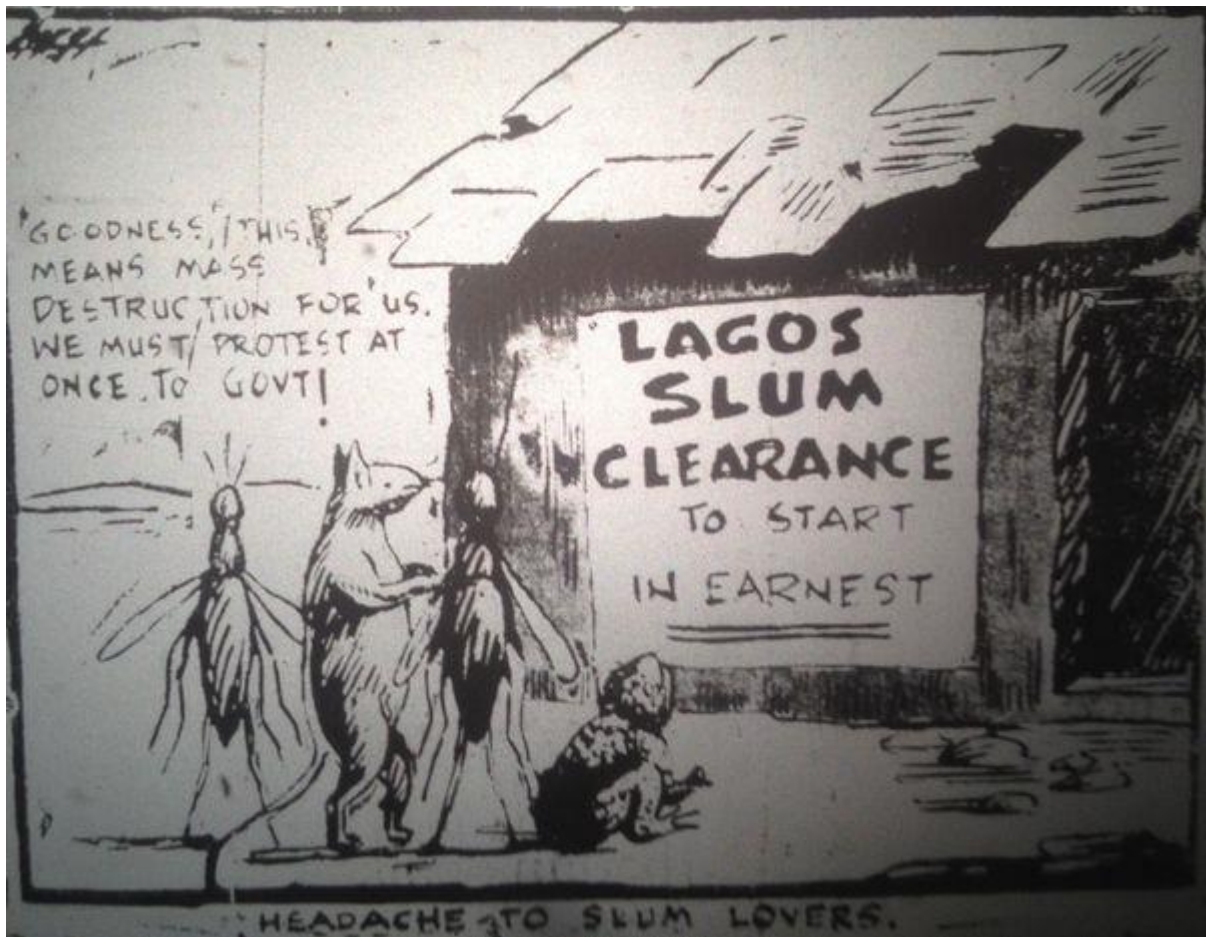
THE Health Authorities have destroyed 284 dogs in Lagos Island and Ikoyi since the anti-rabies by-law was brought in force in the last week of June.

One man has died following a dog-bite. Post-mortem examination revealed that cause of death was rabies.

The Public Health Authorities have warned over the week-end that Lagos is still a diseased area and that the public should observe the prohibition order against dogs straying within the Lagos township.



SOME 'PETITIONS'



GOODNESS, THIS
MEANS MASS
DESTRUCTION FOR US.
WE MUST PROTEST AT
ONCE TO GOVT!

LAGOS
SLUM
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TO START
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HEADACHE TO SLUM LOVERS.

