

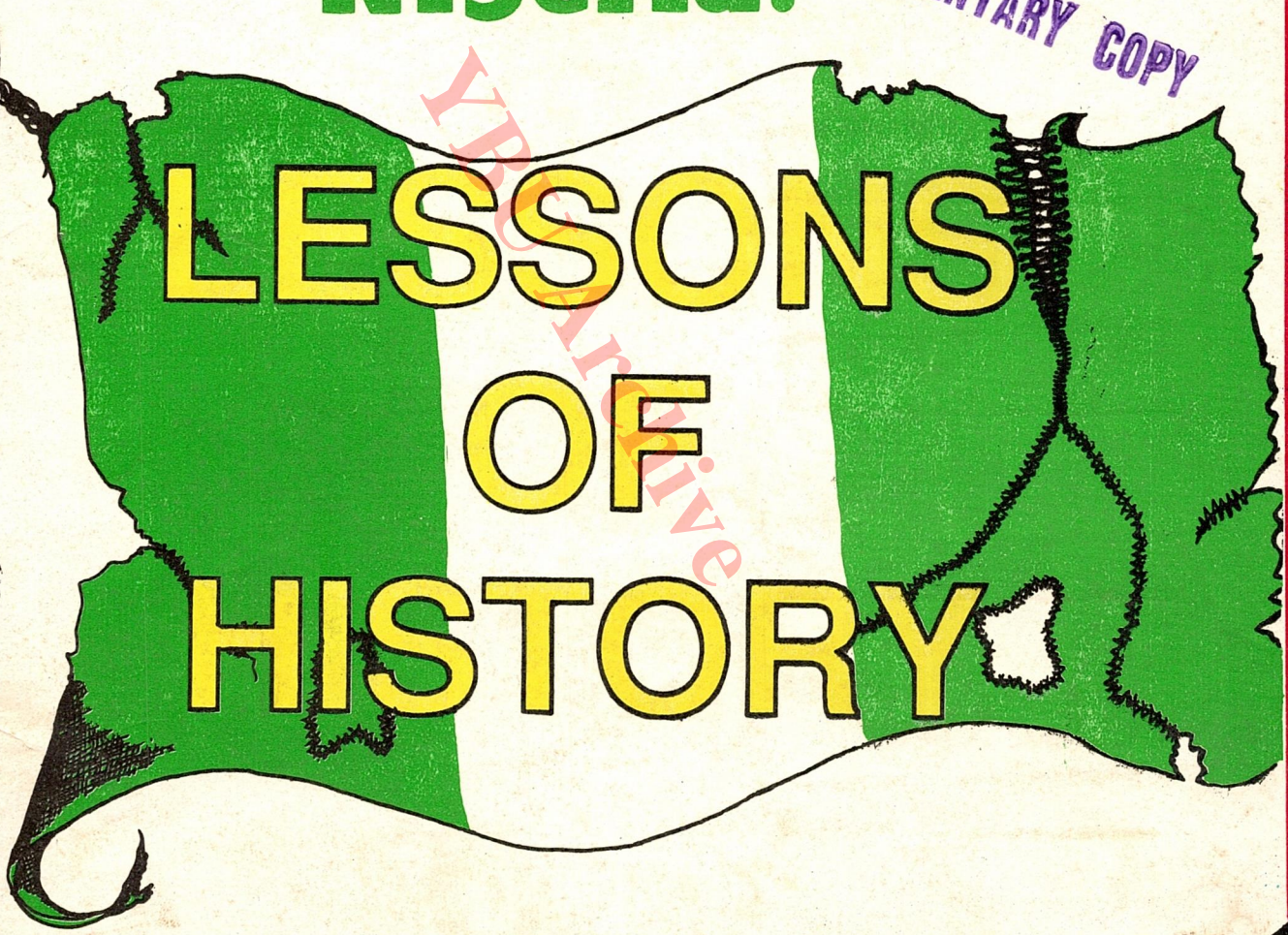
The Analyst

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LESSONS OF HISTORY

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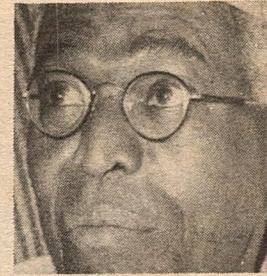
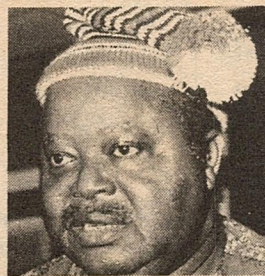
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In this **The Analyst**



The conventional wisdom in many circles is that those who really fought for Nigeria's independence are the Ziks, the Awos, the Balewas, the Gamjis and the Okparas, who are now canonized as our "founding fathers". How true is this?

See page 6

The recent fuel price hike sparked off a fury of protests across the country. What is the real significance of this for the Nigerian people?

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COMMENT

LESSONS OF HISTORY

Every passing day deepens the crisis of Nigerian capitalism. In spite of official proclamations of "recovery" and appeals to the poor working people to make more and more sacrifices, there is no doubt that the country is sinking deeper and deeper.

In the last one and a half years alone, this crisis has expressed itself in various ways: the March "religious" disturbances in Kaduna; the butchers' riots in Minna; the drivers' protests in Bauchi; the youth's riots on Lagos Island following the killing of the Dawodu brothers; and the most recent nationwide popular protests over the fuel crisis, when **Strikes by workers almost** brought economic life to a standstill.

It was loud and clear that Nigerians had had enough. People now want a decisive change, and not cosmetic alterations or meaningless transitions.

To understand this limit of the people's endurance, it is necessary to recapture our country's rough road of history — a history of toil, tears and blood, and persistent betrayal of the people by the leadership.

Not only did the peoples of Nigeria suffer various forms of tyranny before the encounter with Europe; they were brutalised by years of slavery and the slave trade, and then almost a century of British exploitation and repression. It is this harsh reality that made them to put up a determined fight for independence through popular organisations and the labour movement, under the leadership of such true patriots as Michael Imoudu, Abubakar Zukogi, Sa'ad Zungur, Bello Ijumu, Aminu Kano, Funmilayo Kutu, Margaret Ekpo, Adegoke Adelabu, Mokwugo Okoye, etc.

But, sadly, not only did the British hand over to lackeys, the so-called "founding fathers" — the Awos, the Ahmadu Bellos, the Ziks, the Okparas, and the Balewas — who continued the same oppressive and exploitative practices, accumulated fortunes for themselves and for their henchmen, they went on to deny the working people and their leaders the glory of being the true fighters for Nigerian independence.

Securely in the service of imperialism, these lackeys also went on promoting regional, religious and ethnic divisions in order to undermine popular organisations, genuine Nigerian unity, and patriotic development, and by so doing tried to consolidate their parasitic hold on the people.

Instead of independence meaning democratic and popular control of political power, bringing about freedom, creativity, and high productivity in all aspects of life in our society, it came instead to mean repression, manipulation, and systematic accumulation of private wealth by a few at the expense of the true producers of our collective wealth. In fact, by 1964, Nigeria was approaching economic bankruptcy. This is the real

foundation of the current crisis.

Rather than retrace their steps and look for a patriotic way out, our leaders deepened the crisis by greater divisive political wranglings, squabbles, and finally military coups and counter-coups, all leading to a protracted civil war in which millions of Nigerian working people made tremendous sacrifices, while thousands paid the supreme price in order to keep Nigeria one. Thus, once again, it was the Nigerian people who stood firmly for Nigerian unity, and not the so-called "founding fathers".

The end of the civil war and the revenue from oil offered us a fantastic opportunity for building a truly united, progressive and independent country. But as we all know, this golden opportunity was squandered by the same stooges of imperialism. They did not make a decisive break from the policies, programmes, bankrupt ideas and attitudes of the leaders of the First Republic.

It is this mindless continuity that has inevitably nailed Nigeria to imperialism, foreign control, divisive manipulations, and what is clearly a serious crisis that manifests itself in economic decay, political instability, and social upheavals.

Almost three decades after independence, one would expect that the Nigerian ruling class would learn from history. But from the performance of the last three regimes — Shagari, Buhari and Babangida — the ruling classes have obviously learnt nothing, and have forgotten everything. If anything, they have more and more become robots, swallowing hook, line and sinker policy prescriptions and dictation from Washington — policies which no Western governments would dare to implement in their own countries.

Yet, in Nigeria, under the acronym of SAP, Nigerians have been forced into debt slavery, into an unprecedented level of mass suffering and confusion. And to add insult to injury, one sees no corresponding level of sacrifice by the leadership. All we see is an arrogant display of affluence.

It seems that even this could have been endured if the people and their popular organisations were left alone to organise themselves and fight against their oppressors. Instead, while the people are intimidated and harassed, the regime is actively entrenching the people's oppressors — feudal lords and military-bureaucratic satraps, and reactionary forces like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Jama'atul Nasrul Islam (JNI), the Northern Elders Committee, Eastern Solidarity Front, *Egbe Ilosiwaju Yoruba*, etc.

It is a combination of these factors which has moved Nigerians from "the limit of endurance" to the current position where people are saying: "WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH!"

The Nigerian people have begun to act decisively, in

the tradition of heroic struggles against tyranny, oppression and injustice. All that is left is for the people to organise themselves in their working places, and where they live, for the struggles and battles that must be fought

and won for themselves and for future generations. For, it is very clear that they have to take state power into their own hands.

LETTERS

BAUCHI DFERRI: Where are the roads?

A team, with Professor Eluigwu of the University of Jos as leader, inspected all the roads offered for inspection under Phase I of DFERRI rural feeder roads in Bauchi State, in January 1988. The team's verdict is: New construction, 383 km; Reconstruction, 357 km.; Rehabilitation, 392 km.. Total length of feeder roads constructed, 1,132 km.

Since DFERRI was given N8,000 per kilometre, there must be a saving of more than 1.3 million naira out of the N10.4 million given to DFERRI's proxy, the Bauchi State Integrated Rural Development Authority (BASIRDA). As far as we are concerned, all the roads presented to the Team were constructed by the Bauchi State Agric. Development Project. There is not a single kilometre of new road wholly constructed by BASIRDA under Phase I of DFERRI Programme.

Now BASIRDA has been given N4.5 million to start Phase II. Already there are over 300 km of "constructed", "reconstructed", and "rehabilitated" roads under Phase I which were kept out of the Team's inspection. I am appealing to DFERRI not to include these "roads" as part of its achievements in Phase II. DFERRI should remember that people in the rural areas have started pulling down their sign-boards.

*Moses Turaki,
Bauchi*

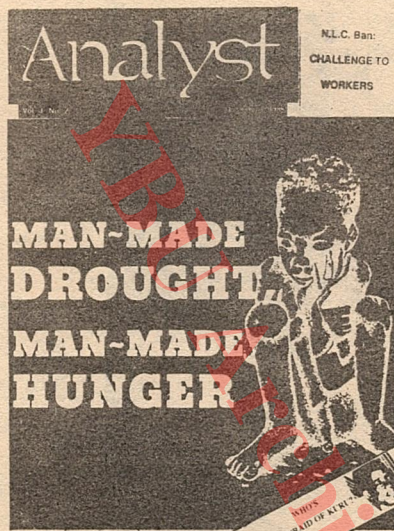
RACIST MAGGIE

The message is clear. Thatcher and her sponsors are undoubtedly aware of the wind of militant resistance and concomitant revolutionary change from the liberation struggle going on in Southern Africa. Whatever warnings she might have dished out at Dodan Barracks during her visit will not delay history, but will rather help to accelerate it. Oppressed peoples all over the world are spontaneously responding to the clarion call of liberation.

One question worth asking is: could Maggie's bargain at the Dodan Barracks

partly be translated into the recent kidnap-deportation of Dr. P. I. Wilmot?

*Mustapha Hassan Bichi,
Zaria*



N.N.P.C. ACCOUNTS

After reading how Thatcher blackmailed Buhari in your Vol. 3, No.1, January-February, 1988, by threatening "to cause commercial banks to publish names of Nigerians having accounts in the United Kingdom", I would like to ask if there is any link between that and what "Insider", Vol.1, No.8, published, that is that the 2.8 billion Naira oil fund was transferred from NNPC account into a private account? It would be interesting to know whose account the money was paid into. Has it been transferred back into NNPC's account? The case of PAN Ocean Company which lifted over N750 million worth of oil without payment under Buhari's regime is yet to be resolved. Who accounts for what in this country?

*Rasheed Olayinka,
Suru-Lere, Lagos*

BAKORI TRIALS

Thank you for bringing to the readers the concluding story on the 'trials' of the Bakori peasants.

The end of that comic tragedy is a victory at another battle-front for the long struggle of the oppressed in this country (of Two Nations) to end their exploitation.

*G. Kasha Malu,
Makurdi*

BUDGET '88

The write-up captioned "Budget '88" in your January-February 1988 issue said all the truth about the present condition of Nigerians and I hope that other magazines will follow the footsteps of *The Analyst* in presenting facts to their numerous readers.

*Balarabe Adamu,
Kano*

CASINO CAPITALISM

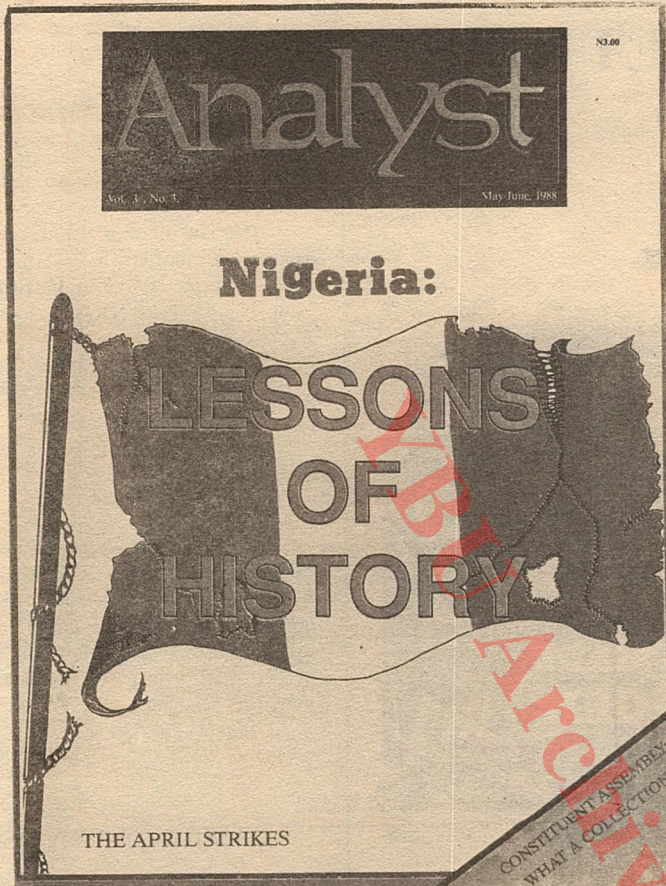
Your piece on "Casino Capitalism" (Vol. 3, No.1) was informative and educative. So the capitalists who have for long hidden under the guise of mass production and free enterprise are now only paying lip service to the former! The casino affair represents another novel formula successfully contrived by the capitalists to exploit and marginalise poor and weak Third World nations and further destabilise their economies.

We in the Third World must not continue to sit by and watch helplessly while the cabal at Wall Street tinkers with the fate of our economies through racketeering and auctioning, at the expense of essential goods and basic services for all.

The lesson for Nigerians from the Wall Street crash is clear: the evils of capitalism are enormous, and only if we adopt credible and progressive methods of socio-economic change can we hope for survival as a nation.

*Abdulazeez Kankia Yusuf,
Katsina*

Nigeria's "Founding Fathers": WHAT FOUNDATIONS?



Since the onset of the current economic crisis the ruling class in Nigeria has deliberately tried to create an image of the period before the oil boom of the 1970s as one in which the Nigerian economy was healthy and sound. A feeling of nostalgia is being generated over this period of cash-crop export, before crude oil became our major foreign exchange earner. This period, before about 1970, we are told, was a period of food self-sufficiency, adequate employment in the rural areas, and generally sound economic development. It was the oil boom, we are told, which came and wrecked this sound economic foundation laid for our country by our "founding fathers", namely Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, in the Northern Region; Chief Obafemi Awolowo, in the Western Region;

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Dr. Michael Okpara, in the Eastern Region; with Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa modestly holding the balance at the centre. This nostalgia for the "golden age" of cash-crop export under the regional premiers (1954-60) and in the First Republic (1960-1966) is used both to justify some of the key features of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and also to generate divisive and diversionary political theatrics around the names and relics of the Sardauna, Okpara, Awolowo, etc. Gamjites and Awoists are now all over the campuses, barracks and media houses fighting to generate a musty nostalgia and calling on the rest of us to join them and dream of a return to the "golden age" of these "heroes", when groundnuts, cotton and cocoa were abundant and things were fine, and

edifices were springing up all over the place.

This political campaign built on nostalgia for Papa Awo and the Gamji in particular, provides essential psychological support for SAP; for, as the World Bank states categorically in its blueprint for Sub-Saharan Africa, the authoritative Berg Report of 1981, our countries have to return to agricultural exports before we can even hope to "start the long term transformation, a prelude to industrialisation".

The issue of what our "founding fathers" did to lay the foundation of our economy is therefore of more than academic interest. It has direct political and psychological relevance today.

AGRICULTURE

Let us start with one of the most widely-touted claims about the achievements of these so-called "founding fathers". This is the claim that they laid the foundation for a sound agricultural base for this country, before the oil boom wrecked it. Tens of millions of Nigerian peasant farmers, herdsmen, fishermen, hunters and artisans, who are the direct rural producers, know that this claim is false. But their voices have been drowned by the loud, full-throated voices of the praise-singers and the peddlers of nostalgia with their powerful radio and television transmitters and newspapers, daily shouting about how much Gamji did for and with cotton, groundnuts and millet; and how much Papa Awo did for and with cocoa; and Okpara with palm oil and rubber; with Balewa delicately balancing everything else.

Without going into any obscure details, there is a report prepared by the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations "at the request of the Government of Nigeria". This authoritative report, titled *Agricultural Development in Nigeria: 1965-1980*, was completed in December 1965 and published by

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the FAO in 1966. The report starts by assessing the state of agriculture in Nigeria as it was then — that was five years after independence and eleven years after our “founding fathers” took over the helm of affairs as premiers and prime ministers on 1st October 1954. As is usual with the reports of the U.N. agencies, the FAO is very careful in what it reports. But the picture of the state of agriculture in Nigeria which comes from the report clearly refutes the claims that Papa Awolowo, Gamji, Zik, Okpara and Balewa, etc. had laid a sound agricultural base for the country. In fact, one gets a clear indication from what the FAO discovered that the roots of the current crises of desertification, erosion, landlessness, low productivity and rural unemployment were actually entrenched by the policies of the governments of these so-called “founding fathers”.

We will just quote what the report says about agricultural conditions in the far North, the Middle Belt, Western Region and the Eastern Region:

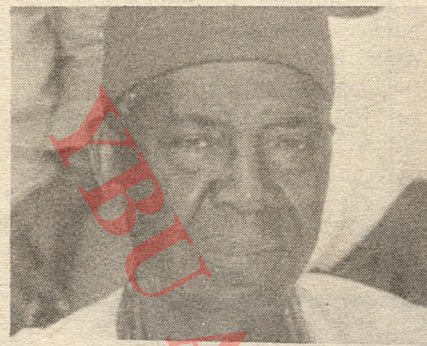
THE FAR NORTH: “the extension of arable farming as population has grown has also shrunk the area available for nomadic herding with consequent erosion and depletion of soil fertility from grazing. . .”

THE MIDDLE BELT: “. . . the whole Middle Belt of Nigeria lying between the much more densely populated areas in the north and south of the country most of which is politically and administratively part of the Northern Region makes little contribution to the economy of the country. . . the whole of the belt has good rainfall. . . there are also very extensive areas of good or potentially good soil.”

THE WESTERN REGION: “The main defects in the original conception and execution of these (farm settlement) schemes particularly in Western Nigeria are the following: (i) they have been conceived on a far too lavish scale. . . (ii) the wrong settlers have been selected. . . The results both in terms of final acceptance of the responsibilities

involved and in terms of crop production have so far been disastrous.”

THE EASTERN REGION: “The original cropping cycle in the Eastern Region, for example, has been reduced from 10-15 years to 5 years as an average. In the densely populated area between Onitsha (north), Bende (east), Aba (west) and Eket (south), the average fallow cycle is down to two years; in many areas to one year — that is, continuous cropping. The overpopulation is of course relative to existing methods of land use.”

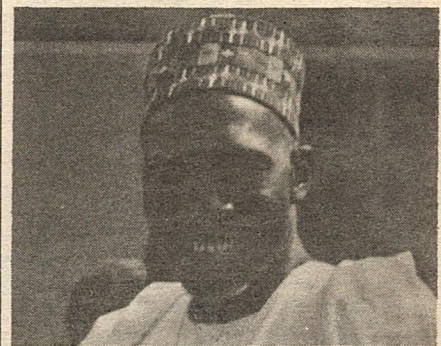


Zik, Balewa: Laid foundation for current crisis.

boom.

Furthermore, what sort of food self-sufficiency was it, when in 1962 food and other edible agricultural imports ranked second only to cotton goods in importance among our imports?

How can these so-called “founding fathers” be said to have laid a sound foundation for our economy when, before their very eyes, the net barter terms of trade of Nigeria declined from 100 in 1954 to 79 in 1962? This, in practice, meant that when Papa, Gamji, Zik, and Balewa took office on 1st October 1954 as regional premiers and prime



Clearly if these “founding fathers” laid some foundation in our agriculture, it was largely the foundation for the current acute crisis in our agriculture and the whole economy; as the above passages from the FAO report bring out graphically.

As for the myth of food self-sufficiency before the oil boom, we only have to go beyond the nostalgic rhetorics to the actual figures to discover that, for example, between 1950 and 1957 real domestic food production was estimated to be increasing at an average annual rate of 2.1%, which was barely the rate at which the Nigerian population was increasing.

In fact, an official survey of Katsina, Sokoto, Bauchi and Bornu Provinces in 1957 recorded that at least 50% of all farming households had exhausted their grain supplies by the time the planting rains began. This was obviously an official understatement of the chronic food shortages. But even this debunks the myth of food self-sufficiency in the “golden age” of Gamji, before the oil

minister, for every 100 units of our cash crop exports we were able to bring in 100 units of imports; but eight years later in 1962, this had fallen by 21 units, and with each one unit of our cash crop exports we could only bring in 79 units of imports! What sort of foundation was this?

Is it surprising therefore that when these “founding fathers” took office in 1954 our total foreign assets were £243.7 million, but these fell to £174.2 million in 1960 and by 31st March 1964 these had declined to £76.8 million, lower than they were in 1948? If not for the inflow of foreign exchange due to the oil industry, the country was — by 1964 — heading straight into the sort of disastrous bankruptcy that the Shagari regime plunged us into by 1982. So, what sort of foundation were these “founding fathers” laying down? A foundation for disaster?

Moreover, this drastic decline in Nigeria’s foreign assets between 1954 and 1964 was not because these foreign assets were being spent for the purchase and installation of

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modern agricultural projects, machinery, hospitals, schools and for other productive purposes. These assets declined largely because of the intensive draining of the capital resources of the country by British and other foreign companies and banks with the active collusion of these "founding fathers".

Within four years of their taking over the regional governments, our "founding fathers" issued a joint statement in July 1958 categorically throwing open the Nigerian economy for such systematic fleecing, stating that "profits and dividends arising from sterling or non-sterling capital investment in approved projects may be freely transferred to the country of origin and such capital may be repatriated at will". This, at a time when from Egypt to Brazil, every country was trying to prevent such capital outflow.

With this type of slavishness to foreign enterprise, the amount of profits taken out legally by foreign

expensive clothing and other useless items for the parasitic luxury of the "founding fathers" and their hangers-on. In addition, the "founding fathers" built and also entrenched the system of siphoning off public funds, in foreign exchange, through dubious transactions with foreign businessmen operating in Nigeria.

RACKETS

For example, in spite of their seeming conflicts, the Action Group government of Papa Awolowo in the Western Region and the NPC government of Gamji in the Northern Region connived to siphon about one million pounds in 1959 through the purchase of over-valued assets of the Arab Brothers Ltd. The Western Regional Finance Corporation paid £1.1 million for the Arab Brothers' old trucks and other assets which were not worth more than £300,000, giving a rake-off to the "founding fathers" of about £800,000. Some of this money was laundered through

governments sunk £1.6 million in 1959 was virtually worthless, and in the five financial years ending on 31st March 1959 the company's average annual profits were only £15,919!

Not only were our "founding fathers" busy conniving to siphon off our foreign exchange reserves through such rackets as the purchase of the useless trucks and old buildings of Arab Brothers, but they were actively supporting the oil companies to underprice Nigerian crude oil, the revenue from which was what was keeping the economy afloat from the early 1960s.

Between 1957/58 and 1965/66, most oil exporting countries were being paid £270-340 sterling for each one thousand barrels of crude oil they exported. During this six year period, Nigeria was receiving an average of only £190 sterling for each one thousand barrels. This has been estimated to amount to an underpricing of Nigerian crude oil



Awo, Sardana, Okpara Entrenched plunder of public resources.

companies rose from £8.5 million in 1959 to £33.3 million in 1965. This meant that this form of draining of Nigeria of precious capital resources increased by about 400% in the seven years 1959-65! The total outflow of these legally-declared profits in these seven years 1959-65 totalled £110.6 million.

Besides this direct form of milking of the Nigerian economy, supported and entrenched by our "founding fathers", there was also the large-scale importation of American and German limousines,

the Midland Bank account of Hassib, one of the Arab brothers.

The northern end of this racket was handled through the Northern Nigeria Development Corporation which paid £500,000 for other useless trucks and old buildings purchased through the other Arab brother, Ali Arab. If the over-valuation in Kaduna was similar to the one in Ibadan, our "founding fathers" in Kaduna would have had a rake-off of over £300,000. This whole Arab Brothers Ltd. transport business over which two regional

exports in this period 1957/58 - 1965/66 of £20 million!

In the Arab Brothers deal and in the collaboration of the Federal Ministry of Mines and Power with the oil companies to underprice Nigerian crude oil, you have the roots of the Scania and Leyland rackets, and of the missing 2.8 billion dollars. These roots had been firmly entrenched in the economic foundations laid down by our "founding fathers".

By Bala Usman

NIGERIA: Independence On A Gold Platter?

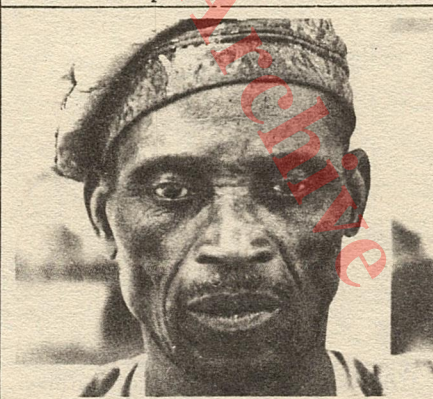
One of the most widespread beliefs about Nigeria's recent past is that the country obtained independence from British colonialism without the people of Nigeria struggling for that independence. In other words, it is said that Nigeria received independence "on a platter of gold". For, according to this belief, the people of Nigeria did not fight for independence, as some other colonised people in Africa and elsewhere had done; rather, independence was granted to the country peacefully, through a series of constitutional conferences between Nigerian leaders, "the founding fathers", and the British. It is said that these constitutional conferences took place in Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna and London, where, over cups of tea, responsible Nigerian and British gentlemen, dressed in dashing *agbada*, turbans, beads, and three-piece suits, agreed to the independence of this country. If there was any struggle or violence during this process, it is said, this was not anti-colonial, but inter-tribal, like the Kano Riots of May 1953.

This belief about how we became an independent sovereign state in 1960 may appear to many Nigerians as a simple recognition of what actually took place. Many Nigerians do not consciously grasp the political implications of this belief about how we became independent. The people with a vested interest in propagating this belief, however, know quite clearly what these political implications are for Nigeria today.

By making pervasive the belief that the people of Nigeria did not play a significant role in the creation of the country as an independent, sovereign, state, these vested interests are inculcating into the sub-consciousness of Nigerians the view that they had no part to play in shaping the destiny of their country and should not attempt to play that part now, or in the future. According to this view, the responsibility for shaping our destiny and determining

the direction of the country's development rested and still rests with our leaders; either the "founding fathers" or their heirs and successors. Thus the role of the people of Nigeria is to be good followers ready to support, obey, pray for and vote for their leaders in whose hands the destiny of the nation rests.

In fact, in the last decade, successive Nigerian regimes, starting from that of Obasanjo, have categorically presented as the central political problem in Nigeria the relationship between what they call LEADERSHIP and FOLLOWERSHIP. The Babangida regime has now reduced this problem into one of ensuring orderly succession among the leadership and infinite patience among the followership. The current constitution-making exercise is being directed to provide for this.



Imoudu: Led the workers' struggle.

The role, or lack of it, of the people of Nigeria in shaping the destiny of their country, from the times of the struggle for independence up to today, is therefore of great relevance to any serious search for the solutions to the economic, social and political crises shaking this country at present.

Was it in fact true that Nigerian independence was received on a platter of gold and the people of Nigeria were no more than spectators in this? Was it our "founding fathers" who negotiated for our independence and

sovereignty, while our people largely watched?

If we want to establish the facts of the matter as they really are, we have to start by sorting out one basic confusion very widespread in this country over the process of attaining independence from colonialism. This process involves two distinct stages. The first stage is that of the *struggle* for independence, when the forces of the independence movement of the colonised are pitched in battle against the forces of the coloniser. The second stage is that of the *transition* to independence, which starts after the end of the first stage when the colonising power has given up the fight to maintain colonialism and has begun to hand over power. The constitutional conferences are part of this second stage of transition to independence and should not be confused with the earlier stage of the struggle for independence.

In the case of Nigeria, this first stage — the stage of the struggle for independence — started in the 1930s and ended in 1947. It was followed by the second stage in the process of attaining independence which was that of transition, which lasted till 1st October 1960, the day Nigeria became a sovereign state independent of colonial domination.

Unless these two stages are seen clearly as distinct stages, then the actual process of attaining independence will be covered up and the role of those who actually conducted and led the *struggle* for independence will become obscured particularly by those who emerged to prominence during the *transition* and in the newly-independent governments.

Once this basic confusion between the struggle for independence and the transition to it is sorted out, it will become obvious that the struggle for independence in Nigeria took off decisively with the formation of numerous popular organisations in the 1930s. Before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, trade unions,

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youth and student organisations, improvement and development unions, clan and tribal associations, market traders, produce buyers, transporters, artisans, drivers, etc., were emerging and engaging in anti-colonial activities in various forms.

The long pre-eminence of the Civil Service Union, formed in 1912, was broken in 1931 when the railway workers went on a short and sharp strike, led by Michael Imoudu, against a newly-introduced system of calculating wages. In the same year the Nigerian Union of Teachers was inaugurated and the following year the Railway Workers Union was formed. These were followed by the formation of the Post and Telegraph Workers Union, the Nigerian Marine African Workers Union, and the Public Works Department Workers Union, and several others, such that

Katsina College and Bauchi TTC organised themselves too. The Nigerian Union of Students itself was formed in 1939. Kinship and tribal unions like the Igbirra Progressive Union, the Urhobo Renascent Convention, the Idoma Hope Rising Union, sprang up alongside older ones like the Ibibio Welfare Union and the Ibibio Farmers Association.

When the Second World War broke out the British mobilised Nigerians for large-scale forced labour on the Jos Plateau tin mines and into the army. In 1942-44 about 92,000 able-bodied men did forced labour on the tin mines. During the war over 100,000 Nigerians were recruited into the West African Frontier Force for military service against the Italian, German and Japanese armies in East Africa, North

then either largely dropped out of anti-colonial activity as in the case of Awolowo, and partially even Azikiwe; or had never even taken part in it, as in the case of Ahmadu Bello and Tafawa Balewa.

Between the day — 29th September, 1941 — when during the COLA agitations Imoudu led a march of thousands of workers down from Ebute Metta to Government House, Marina, to 21st June, 1945, when the fifty-two day General Strike of June-August 1945 began, those who came to be seen later as the great nationalist heroes had largely abandoned the nationalist struggle. Although Zik continued to publish the *West African Pilot*, and the others in the Zik Group of newspapers, he, between October 1941 when he resigned from the Nigerian Youth Movement, to August 1944 when he



Adelabu, Zukogi:
Militant fighters.



by 1940 there were over twelve trade unions actively organising on the railways, at the docks, in the post and telegraph offices, the PWDs, and the other key points in the sinews of the economic and military infrastructure of colonial Nigeria.

In 1937, in Lagos, the Fishermen's Association was formed, followed in 1938 by the Taxi Drivers Union and the Canoe Transport Union, and in 1939 by the Wholesale Builders Association and in 1940 by the Women Sellers Union. Even the Night Soil Removers Union was formed in 1942.

Alongside these, old boys of various secondary schools like Kings College and teachers' colleges like

Africa and in the jungles of Burma. Thus within six years about 200,000 Nigerians, largely from among the peasantry, were brought together in a highly concentrated and direct fashion, face-to-face with the white man.

What is so often obscured about this stage of the struggle for Nigerian independence is that while these popular forces were building up and raising the tempo of their anti-colonial campaign in the period 1941-45, those who came to dominate the stage of the transition to independence like Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello and Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, had by

became the general secretary of the NCNC, largely concentrated on promoting his business enterprise and in between was socialising and playing tennis with Governor Bourdillon. In 1943 he became President of the Ibo Federal Union.

Awolowo also dropped out of the anti-colonial struggle after the 1941 NYM Ikoli-Akinsanya election crisis. And even before he left for further studies in U.K. in August 1944, had regressed like Zik and ended in 1945 as a founder of the *Egbe Omo Oduhuwa*.

As for the Sardauna, he was, up to 1949, fully engaged working as a Councillor of the Sokoto Native Authority, having got a higher court

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to quash his two year conviction by the Sultan's Court over the misappropriation of cattle tax in 1943. As late as 1949 when he went to the Northern House of Assembly, he did so with the active encouragement and support of* the then Resident of Sokoto Province, Bryan Sharwood-Smith, and the Senior District Officer, Charles Michie. So there was no question of his going into the House for any anti-colonial struggle.

So, once it is seen clearly that it was the rising tempo of anti-colonial activity by the popular organisations, in the period 1931-47, that forced the British to decide in 1947 to allow Nigeria to become independent, then it can be seen that this was not an independence won over at constitutional conferences. The conferences came *after* the independence had been won. Constitutional conferences had never won independence for any country. They were for working out the arrangements for the transition to independence, after it had been won.

What decided matters over Nigerian independence was not only the general anti-colonial upsurge throughout the world and the intensification of strikes, boycotts, petitions, riots and agitation in Nigeria in the period 1931-47, but also what the British military intelligence censors read in the letters of the 100,000 or so Nigerian troops returning from North Africa and the jungles of Burma.

For example, in a letter dated 17th September 1945, from Poona,



Aminu Kano: Mobilized the Talakawa.

India, a Nigerian soldier, Private No. 82602 Theo Ayoola, wrote home that:

"We all overseas soldiers are coming back home with new ideas. . . we have been told what we fought for. That is 'freedom' we want nothing but freedom".

Some of Ayoola's mates like Mokwugo Okoye came back and straight away went into nationalist organisation and agitation. All this made matters very clear to the British, with their long experience of colonialism and decolonisation, going back almost two hundred years to the rebellion of their North American colonies.

After the General Strike of 1945, in which even according to official figures 42,951 workers took part for fifty two days, and with many Private Theo Ayoolas among the 100,000 Nigerians who had seen military service in various theatres of the Second World War, the British

did not need to look for any platter of gold on which to give independence to their Nigerian colony. They saw the writing on the wall, and as Sir Hugh Foot, the Chief Secretary to the Nigerian Government (1947-1950) wrote in his memoirs:

"In 1945 many people thought that the most Nigeria could hope for was a continuation of paternal administration, a few decades of marking time, at most a slow and steady development of policy of indirect rule. But fifteen years later a miraculous advance had been achieved. At mid-night on the 1st of October 1960 the green/white flag of the Federation of Nigeria was raised and Nigeria became a self-governing independent state." So much for the myth of Nigeria getting independence on a platter of gold with the people of Nigeria as mere spectators!

As we can see from the facts of history, the independence of this country was won by the anti-colonial struggle of the numerous popular organisations of workers, farmers, ex-servicemen, students, traders, and youth, in the period 1931-47. This independence was not won on a platter of gold. But it was hijacked during the transition period (1947-60) by those whom the British hand-picked and groomed to succeed them, taking advantage of the political weakness of the popular organisations. The lesson of history here is that this must never be allowed to repeat itself in the struggle for the total liberation of Nigeria.

By Bala Usman

".....independence was not won on a platter of gold. But it was hijacked during the transition period by those whom the British had handpicked and groomed to succeed them."

Northernization & Education: THE FACTS, THE FICTION

The manufacture, maintenance and manipulation of narrow sectional interests by powerful cliques in society is as old as society itself. For, in order to disguise their exploitation and domination of other members of the community, these powerful cliques must pose as champions of their communities, as crusaders of the "common cause".

After all, didn't that arch-imposter, Adolf Hitler, justify the extermination of millions of innocent people on the grounds that he was defending the purity of the Aryan race? Have Verwoerd, Voster and Botha not justified the criminal apartheid oppression being imposed on the black people of South Africa and others on the pretext of defending "modern civilization" and "democracy"? And more recently, are we not being told by the present leadership in Nigeria that all the calamities that they are presently dumping on us in the name of S.A.P. is in our "national interest"?

As with all these, so with the much talked-about Northernisation policy of the Sardauna and the defunct Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.) in the Northern Region of Nigeria. This policy was supposed to be one which will give speedy and all-round development to the then Northern Region of Nigeria in a bid to catch up with the Southern Regions. Specifically, it was supposed to be a policy which will involve the expansion of Western education in the Region, the training of staff locally and abroad, the expansion of adult literacy, and the reservation of permanent and pensionable appointments in the public service of the Region only to indigenes of the Northern Region.

As the Premier of the Region, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, KBE, MHA, the Sardauna of Sokoto, himself put it in 1960 at a session of the Northern House of Assembly in Kaduna: "... the general policy of



Sardauna: A legacy of neglect.

Government on Northernisation is as follows: to Northernise the Northern Region Public Service as soon as possible; to ensure for Northerners a reasonable proportion of posts in the Federal Public Service; to secure for Northerners a reasonable proportion of posts in all Statutory Corporations; to increase the number of Northerners in commercial, industrial, banking and trading concerns; to expand as necessary the educational, training and scholarship schemes of the Region in order to provide the qualified personnel required for the Northernisation Policy."

Indeed, going through the speeches, official publications and other public utterances made by the leaders of the N.P.C. in the entire 13 years that they were in government, NORTHERNISATION would appear to be the one obsession that ran like a fibrous thread through the entire period. It is the common song sung by all of them in high and low places, in mosques and churches, in palaces and at rallies, at polo grounds, and fives courts, and in the sleek back seats of their petrol-guzzling Pontiacs, Chevrolets, Cadillacs and Oldsmobiles.

But was this much talked-about Northernisation Policy actually implemented in practice? Were the

human and material resources at the disposal of the N.P.C. government used to develop and promote the Region in the interest of its people? The evidence at our disposal compels us to return a verdict of NO. For, beyond the noises, the soap-box oratory, and the embellishments of latter-day apostles and disciples of Northernisation and Gamjism lies a most despicable record of treacherous neglect and non-performance.

Of course, if the Sardauna's Northernisation slogan was sincerely and genuinely meant to be implemented, then it would have been obvious that the foundation of this lay nowhere else but in the vigorous, bold and accelerated development and promotion of education in Northern Nigeria. But even a casual examination of the records of the performance of the Northern Nigerian government shows the utter neglect of this section by these noisy advocates of Northernisation.

For instance, for the five year period between 1957 and 1962, the number of pupils in *all* schools in Northern Nigeria rose by only 164,019, from 212,838 to 376,857. Similarly, in the same period, the number of primary schools, which is the bedrock of any educational revolution, rose by a mere 559, from 2,009 in 1957 to 2,568 in 1962. For secondary schools the situation is even worse; their number rose to just 50 in 1962 from the 27 existing schools in 1957. Indeed, in the case of Technical and Vocational Schools there was a 50% decline from 8 schools in 1957 to just 4 in 1962; while the number of Teacher Training Colleges increased by only 4 from 48 to 52!

The same neglect of education by these advocates of Northernisation can be glimpsed from the number of teachers they recruited for their schools. Of the total of 12,713 teachers employed in all schools in 1962, over half (6,605)

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were employed by mission schools. Again, of the 359,934 pupils attending schools in the North in 1962, over half (192,196) were in these mission schools. This lukewarm attitude to education was graphically manifested in the proportion of pupils attending schools in Northern Nigeria to the total school age population. In 1961 the proportion was a mere 19.7%. By 1963 it had not gone beyond 21.3% — a mere 2.5% rise! And while in 1963 the estimated 6–13 year population of Northern Nigeria was 3 million, only 13.7% of this number was actually enrolled in primary schools. Similarly, of the 56 secondary schools in Northern Nigeria, 27 belonged to voluntary agencies, which were almost entirely Christian missionary organisations.

To fully appreciate the extent of the criminal neglect of education, one has to consider the fact that in those days it was relatively cheap to build schools. For instance, according to a report by the *Nigerian Citizen* of 1st February 1958, the Sardauna performed the opening ceremony of the Maiduguri Craft School consisting of eight dormitories capable of accommodating 75 students, and houses for five instructors including the Principal, all built at the cost of just £12,000! A keen observer who witnessed the occasion noted that the attire of the luminaries who graced the occasion and the limousines were worth well over £50,000. This could have been used to build four more craft schools in Northern Nigeria.

It is thus not surprising that by 1963 even in the Sardauna's own home province, Sokoto, there were only two secondary schools. Yet in 1962, the recurrent expenditure of the Region's Ministry of Education, with Alhaji Isa Kaita, the Waziri of Katsina, as the Honourable Minister, was £4.5 million. Out of this amount over £200,000 was to be squandered on transport and travelling, while equipment supply was allocated a mere £88,600; school buildings a paltry £29,300; and scholarships a miserable £10,500

It is interesting to note that this coldness towards educational development (while hypocritically

mouthed Northernisation) took place in spite of the huge resources and grants pouring in to the Region for the promotion of education. A few of the grants given were: UNICEF: £864,000 for equipping new primary schools; Federal Government: £3,117,000; World Bank: a loan of £4,500,000 to improve old secondary schools and build new ones; UNESCO: a grant of £365,000 for staff salaries and equipment in Teacher Training Colleges; Ford Foundation: grant of £759,000 for the employment of expatriate teachers; USAID: Processed a loan of £1,907,000 and a grant of £734,000 for building new Teacher Training Colleges and equipping them.

Clear evidence of the neglect of education in the Northern Region was the way the N.P.C. government treated adult education. As everybody knows, adult education provides a sound foundation for the expansion of formal education. For once you educate the parents, they will be in a better position to see to the education of their children. But in spite of the much touted concern for education in Northern Nigeria, the Sardauna found that one year after he took office as Premier in 1954 there were 414,347 adults enrolled in literacy classes. Seven years later, this number had dropped



Isa Kaita: What happened to education grants?



Hassan U. Katsina: Frank Indictment

to 400,015. By 1960 the infrastructure for adult education had crumbled.

It is therefore not much of a surprise to note that even at the sunset of the First Republic in 1965, after the Sardauna had been about 13 years in government, and after shouting from the roof-tops about Northernisation, enrolments in primary schools in the Northern Region stood at a miserable 492,510 pupils, while in the Southern Regions the figure was a staggering 2.4 million!

Lt. Col. Hassan Usman Katsina, then Military Governor of Northern Nigeria, read a befitting epitaph to education and the Northernisation policies of the N.P.C., on Wednesday, June 1, 1966 at Lugard Hall, Kaduna at 10.00 A.M. when in his first address to Emirs and Chiefs of the Region he said: "We have failed to make any real effort to prepare ourselves for competition. This is particularly so in the field of education..."

After such a frank indictment, it beats the imagination how some people still continue fooling themselves over such fairy tales.

By Richard Umaru and Alkasum Abba

JOS: Class & Ethnicity

Jos as a modern town was established by the colonial rulers to serve as the administrative and commercial centre for the tin mining industry. Before the British came in the early years of the 20th century, there had been a Birom settlement at the site, and part of the land presently occupied by the town was communal hunting territory shared by three neighbouring groups — the Birom, the Anaguta, and the Irigwe. With the British 'discovery' of high quality tin, which had been mined and smelted for centuries in the Delimi Valley and carried by long distance traders all over West Africa, a special phase of colonial rule was opened up on the Plateau.

MINING

The Plateau indigenes at first resisted working in the mines, as they had staunchly resisted British incursion into their territory, so the British had to look elsewhere for a work force — especially to the nearby emirates of Zaria and Bauchi. Many young men from poor peasant families were forced to come to the Plateau to work on the mines, either by being captured by their district or village heads and sent to the mines in chains (each emirate had a quota of men it was required to send to the mines each year), or forced to come to look for cash to pay the taxes levied on their families.

The mine workers were Nigeria's early contribution to the proletariat class — they almost all came from poor rural backgrounds, from the Plateau, from Benue Province, from as far away as Sokoto to the north-west and Chad to the north-east. At the peak of mining activity, during the Second World War, the mine labour force numbered as many as 120,000 workers — certainly the largest concentration of industrial workers in any one place in the country.

But instead of constituting a militant force for the advancement of labour and the working class, the mine workers, after a brief initial phase of unity, became divided

along ethnic lines, and wound up as mere pawns of the political parties of the First Republic. The mine workers refused to participate in the 1945 general strike because they were afraid of retrenchment after the boom period of World War II. The National Union of Mineworkers was formed in 1946, and was politically allied with the NCNC. With an entrance fee of two guineas, it was clearly designed to represent the interests of the skilled workers, who earned as much as 7 to 10 times more than the labourers who dug the tin. These privileged workers came largely from the eastern part of Nigeria, as well as from Ghana and Sierra Leone.

In the early 1950s, the Northern Minesworkers Union was formed by Alhaji Audu Danladi, the Barewa-College-educated Welfare Officer (and hence a member of management) for Bisichi Tin Co., and Alhaji Isa Haruna, a big labour contractor. Through the system of contract headmen, workers were recruited to the NMU by Danladi and Haruna, who drove around in long American cars, and who were, in fact, arch henchmen of the Sardana. In fact, the NMU was no more than a wing of the NPC, designed to undercut local support for NEPU, which at that time controlled the Jos Town Council. After 1954, the Sardana directly intervened in minesfield disputes to support the NMU, whose policies were to discourage strikes, cooperate with management, and work up anti-Igbo sentiments among the workers. It is no wonder that in the 1966 killings of Igbos, more were killed on the minesfield than anywhere else in the area.

An attempt to form a NEPU-allied union was thwarted when its organisers were systematically fired from their jobs.

Meanwhile, the Birom and other workers from the Plateau area on the mines were organised into the Middle Belt Minesworkers Union, which was politically allied to the United Middle Belt Congress and the Action Group.

Thus was the working class on the tin mines, potentially one of the most powerful working class forces in Nigeria, disarmed by the game of ethnic politics played by the politicians of the First Republic. Their own real class interests got lost along the wayside.

LAND

Meanwhile, the tin mining was systematically destroying the economy, as well as the society, of the Birom and some other Plateau communities. Their best farmland was dug up and made unusable for farming through mining activities. The peasants were not entitled to any compensation, except a pittance when their crops were destroyed. More and more Birom farmers in seriously affected areas like Gyel found it impossible to support themselves through farming, and they were forced into mining to get food for their families. But at the same time, the mining industry was on the decline, and there were fewer and fewer jobs to be found. The Birom family gradually disintegrated under the pressure, with thousands of unemployed men spending most of their time drowning their troubles in *burkutu*, with no jobs or hope of employment, leaving their wives to feed the families as best they could. Many of the women went to work on construction sites, where they can be seen up till today, carrying headpans of cement up several stories, babies clinging to their backs, and receiving much less for their work than male labourers.

The tin mining not only destroyed the agricultural economy of much of the Plateau, it also destroyed the natural environment. The once heavily forested region around Jos became denuded of its trees, due to the high demand for firewood and charcoal in the mining camps and in the town, leaving even unmined areas open to serious soil erosion in the hilly areas of the Plateau. The mining companies, who were required by law to reclaim previously used mining leases, did

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nothing more than plant a few eucalyptus trees.

JOS TOWN

All the while, Jos Town was growing — filled with traders, clerks, and other workers for the colonial government and the numerous foreign companies that found a lucrative market in supplying the ever-growing population, which included the largest expatriate population in Nigeria outside of Lagos, many of whom worked as managers and supervisors in the mines. These individuals were very highly paid — a white manager made more than 175 times the salary of a mines labourer — and consumed large amounts of imported goods. No wonder the Jos Kingsway store was reputed to be the most well-stocked in all of Nigeria.

The Jos population was like a mini-Nigeria. There were the 'Hausa' settlers — actually a variety of different Muslim peoples from the northern part of the country — who lived in what was called the "Native Town" (where mud buildings and pit latrines were allowed, as against cement buildings and bucket system latrines which prevailed in the Township). These settlers included Nupe, Kanuri, and other groups from Borno, as well as Ilorin Yoruba — all were referred to as 'Hausa'. These individuals came to Jos largely to escape the oppression and restrictions of the colonial/feudal system in their home areas, as well as to take advantage of commercial opportunities. Most of them were traders — but traders of different types. At the top of the ladder were the factors and agents of European companies — those who were the middlemen who made huge profits in imported goods received from the expatriate company managers. These people invested their money in land and houses, and so also became big landlords. It was this class that provided most of the support for the NPC during the First Republic. People like Alhaji Abdu Gobe Zan Tashi, Alhaji Sulen Jebu, and others like Alhaji Ali Kazaure, benefitted from close ties to the Sardauna, who liberally distributed contractors' licences, licences for produce buying,



Tin miners: They made Jos.

and other favours, including large amounts of raw cash, when he came to town on campaign tours. The Sardauna also closely controlled the electoral process in Jos. For instance, when he was Minister for Local Government, there was an election for Chairman of the Jos Town Council, which had strong NEPU membership. After nullifying a number of elections at which his candidate — Ali Kazaure — was consistently defeated, he minuted in his bold handwriting: "Ali Kazaure will be the Chairman of the Jos Town Council or there will be no Jos Town Council."

But the bulk of the Hausa population were not at all members of this privileged group. They were the petty hawkers and small traders, the 'yan koli, the *karnukan mota*, the water carriers, *amalanke* pushers, porters, blacksmiths, tailors, barbers, tinkers, and casual labourers, who had no share in the spoils of NPC rule, and who, in fact, under the leadership of men like Tanko Waziri, were firm supporters of NEPU. This is one of the few periods of Jos politics when class interests actually corresponded to political action, albeit on a somewhat limited scale since NEPU was less successful in garnering support among other oppressed groups outside the town.

Yoruba traders, especially from Ilorin and Ogbomoshu, also came in large numbers. Some Muslim, some Christian, they built churches and mosques side by side, and traded in provisions, cloth, etc. in the market. While the majority just managed to make a living, a few privileged ones like Prince Oyewunmi, a business tycoon and owner of the Terminus Hotel, were extremely wealthy. The Prince went on to become the Shoun of Ogbomoshu, where he still is today.

The large Igbo population began to arrive following the completion of the railway from Port Harcourt to Jos. A few of them became rich businessmen and hotel owners, some were successful lawyers and private miners. This group too invested in real estate, and became big landlords in the town. Their property was kept intact for them during the civil war by the state Abandoned Properties Committee. Out of a total of 1,500 abandoned properties, all but a tiny handful were claimed back by their original owners after the end of the war. It seems that hardly any among these Igbo property owners had lost their lives during the conflict. But the Igbo minesworkers, hotel boys, and other such less privileged individuals were, it seems, much less fortunate.

Aside from members of the large ethnic groups, people from smaller groups also came to Jos, especially from Gongola and Borno, as well as from Benue. Surprisingly, however, the peoples of the Plateau area did not inhabit the town in any numbers. In fact, in 1952, out of a total urban population of about 27,000 in Jos, only 333 were Birom. It was only in the 1960s and especially after the creation of Benue-Plateau State in 1967, that the Birom and other Plateau peoples began to play an important role in the life of Jos town — some being employed in the then Native Authority, while others scraped out a living as casual labourers. Settling largely in Jenta and other outlying wards, these indigenes were truly the wretched of the earth, despite their claims to being the 'owners' of the town.

It was the politically marginalised position of the Birom and other Plateau minorities, the contempt for their culture exhibited by the NPC together with the conversion to Islam and bribery of many chiefs, the utter neglect of their material development, that had earlier led Patrick Dokotri and others to join up with J.S. Tarka to form the United Middle Belt Congress, and demand for the splitting up of the old North. They found a ready following in the poverty-stricken population of the rural areas and towns.

What can we learn from this brief look at the politics of Jos and its environs? First, we can see that the colonial divide-and-rule strategy was continued in the First Republic, where the privileged elites of various ethnic groups purporting to be "leaders of their people", manipulated ethnic sentiments to gain following for their respective political parties. And the Second Republic was no different, with the rich and powerful of all the nationalities joining hands to loot the nation, and keeping their followers in misery. Even the recent local government election was only different in that religion, rather than ethnic affinity, was the basis of political mobilisation.

By: A. Ahmed

A LEGACY OF REPRESSION

"One North, One People", was the slogan of the Northern Peoples Congress (N.P.C.) — the party that ruled Northern Nigeria for more than 12 years, from 1954 — 1966. Indeed, so obsessed were the leaders of the N.P.C. with this slogan that Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, the man who led the party and the government during this period once pledged thus:

"I personally dedicate myself to work untringly for the progress and happiness of the New North. I swear in the Name of Allah that if I die today, I would leave nothing but a legacy of a struggle for the liberation, welfare and dignity of the masses of this country".

Fine words, laudable ideals.

But what was the practice? Did the Sardauna's government promote the genuine unity of the people of the North? Were the masses happy and contented during the 12 or so years that his government was at the helm of affairs in the Region? Did he defend the dignity of the masses of the Region? Indeed, how *new* was this New North?

Sardauna's disciples and the new generation of apologists now being groomed under his name will not hesitate in returning an affirmative verdict in answer to these questions. They would say for example, that his was the "golden age" of Northern Nigeria; the era when every Northerner was a Northerner and proud to be one too; when Christians and Muslims all were one; when Hausa, Fulani, Tiv, Kanuri, Verre and Kabba were all united. An era when there was no discrimination on the basis of birth, political belief, tribe or faith.

However, if the Sardauna and the N.P.C. disciples will not return a negative verdict, the cold, hard facts and the living testimonies of what happened in those tumultuous 12 years of N.P.C.'s reign belie their claims. Take the following

incidences for example:

THE CASE OF MATO UBAN 'YA'YA:

Sometimes around 1964 at a village called Dudunni, in the present-day Kankiya Local Government Area of Katsina State, a combined team of Native Authority and Nigerian Police descended on the compound of a peasant farmer called Mato Uban 'Ya'Ya. Without much ado, the team of policemen started kicking and beating everybody within sight. First taken aback by the unexpected violence, Mato and the two adult sons then at home, Dankaka and Magaji, soon recovered and fought back in self defence. The police were subsequently forced to withdraw, leaving behind their helmets and batons. But that was just to be the beginning of Mato's tribulations. In fact, the Mato family was subsequently forced to take temporary refuge in Kano. And as they fled, the District Head of Kankiya ordered the demolishing of the family's homestead, and appropriated the family's entire property which included cattle, sheep, goats, chickens, and stockpiles of grain.

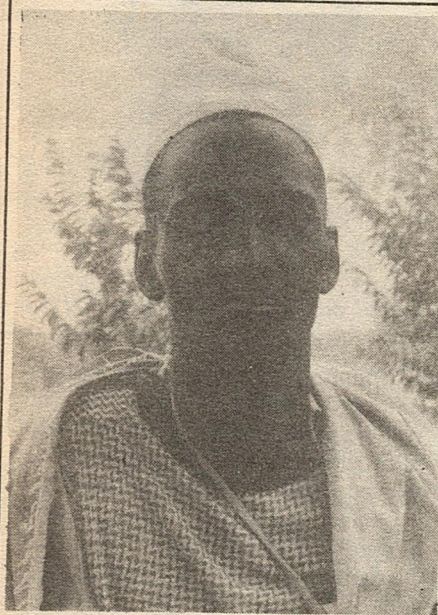
But that was not enough for the District Head and his sponsors. Mato's blood had to be sucked too! He was wooed back from Kano: Under the pretext of reconciliation with the District Head and the Native Authority, he was invited to his Village Head's house, whereupon he was set upon and beaten with sticks and clubs until he lay dead — in the dust. Mato's lifeless body was then handcuffed and chained to the hands of his son, Dankaka, who had meanwhile been tied to a log while his father was being murdered.

Both the living and the dead, handcuffed and chained, were thrown inside the back of a truck, driven first to the District Head's compound at Kankiya, who

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expressed "thanks to Allah" for having removed a thorn from his flesh, and then to the Emir in Katsina, who also expressed delight. The late Mato's son, Dankaka, was subsequently jailed for two years.

Mato's crime, as well as Dankaka's and the other members of the family was that they were militants of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU)!



Dankaka: "I saw them murder my father."

THE RAFIN GORA MASSACRE

At about the same period that the Mato family was being persecuted at Dudunni, something horrendous was being hatched against the people of Rafin Gora, a village just a few kilometres away from Bakori in Funtua Local Government Area of Katsina State. One Friday, as the villagers were preparing for the Friday Mosque, a combined team of well-armed soldiers and policemen suddenly swooped on them. Hell broke loose as the invaders fired indiscriminately on any moving object. One of the villagers, Mallam Dankande, was hit as he came out of his house to see what was amiss. The bullet hit him on the lower jaw and came out just under his ear. Says Dankande: "You could put your fist inside the hole that the bullet made as it came out at the back of my head".

Dankande was rushed, clandestinely,

through bush paths, to the Kano Road, from where he was put on a truck and taken to the Sahara Hospital in Kano. Dankande was later to be dragged by the police out of his hospital bed, and taken to Alkali Wali's court at Katsina, where he was subsequently sentenced to four and a half years prison term, on the instructions of the Emir of Katsina.

Meanwhile, the entire Rafin Gora Village was razed to the ground. Cattle, sheep, goats, chicken and large stocks of assorted grain were either burnt or confiscated. The wives and daughters of the peasants were herded and distributed as concubines amongst the princes and courtiers of the Bakori District. The surviving villagers sought refuge in places as far away as Borno Province, Chad Republic and beyond.

What was the crime of the people of Rafin Gora? They had consistently voted NEPU!

THE CASE OF MALAMI KOKI

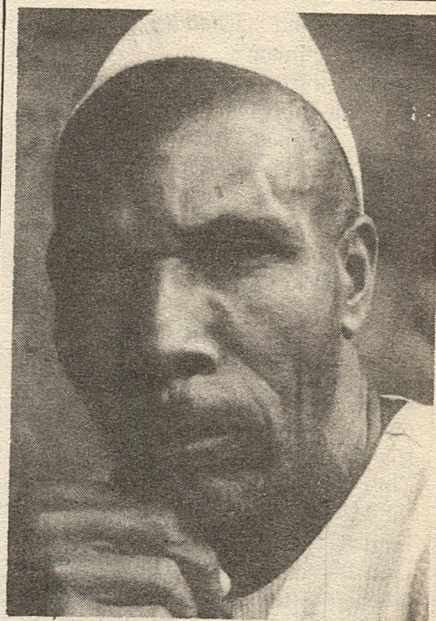
At Dawakin Tofa in Kano Province, one Malami Koki, and his assistant, Tubu, both of whom were NEPU organizers, were waylaid, abducted and severely battered on the instructions of the District Head. Malami Koki was subsequently dragged to the edge of a pond; his hands were tied to his feet, and a heavy stone was strapped around his body. He was then thrown into the pond, where he died. His assistant, Tubu, was then charged to court for "murdering" his colleague, and subsequently jailed for two years.

Their crime? They were NEPU organizers.

THE CASE OF ABUBAKAR ZUKOGI

But these harassments were not only restricted to the peasantry and other oppressed groups. Even the so-called blue-blooded princes who, seeing the injustice of the Native Authorities, chose to raise a voice of protest, were similarly humiliated. For instance, in late 1959, a vicious campaign of intimidation was launched by the Etsu Nupe, Mallam Muhammadu Ndayako (CBE) against his young uncle, Mallam Abubakar

Zukogi, for no other reason but that the latter belonged to the NEPU. This personal campaign of victimization involved the illegal banning of Zukogi from attending Friday prayers at the Bida Central Mosque; his being banned from attending his own family's burial ceremonies; the stopping by the Etsu himself personally of repair work on Zukogi's family compound, and the



Dankande: A victim of NPC repression.

dispersal of workmen from the site; the showering of abuses and curses on Zukogi at public forums, and the occasional, severe beating of Zukogi by the Etsu's *dogarai* (bodyguards). When in early January 1960 the solicitors of Zukogi, Messrs. C.A.J. Nwajei and P.G.E. Umeadi wrote on behalf of their client complaining against this arrant persecution, the Premier's Office, which had been copied the letter, simply refused to even acknowledge receipt.

THE CASE OF IBRAHIM IMAM

Or take the case of Alhaji Ibrahim Imam, as another example. Alhaji Ibrahim was the first Secretary-General of the Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.). But in 1954 Imam parted ways with the N.P.C. This was largely on account of the N.P.C.'s high-handed and patently undemocratic conduct and composition, particularly the

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imposition on the party of Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna, as its President, on the instigation of the colonial administration. Imam was to pay dearly for his "effrontery".

On September 8, 1958, in the thick of the campaign for the 1959 Federal election at Maiduguri, Borno Province, the NPC in Borno loaded armed thugs into three vehicles and invaded the home of Ibrahim Imam. There, they killed three persons instantly, and hacked two more of Ibrahim Imam's Borno Youth Movement (B.Y.M.) supporters elsewhere in the town. Ibrahim himself barely escaped from his burning house through the back door. He fled first to Jos, where the police said they could neither guarantee his security nor his safety; he ended up hiding out in Lagos.

THE CASE OF BENUE PROVINCE

Take yet another evidence of these harassments that were meted out to the people of Northern Nigeria by the N.P.C. government. This time from the mouth of Mr. V. I. Orjime, Member representing Iharev Mamsev Constituency of the then Benue Province at the Northern House of Assembly. Contributing to a debate on 19th April, 1960, on the floor of the House, Mr. Orjime narrated the following story:

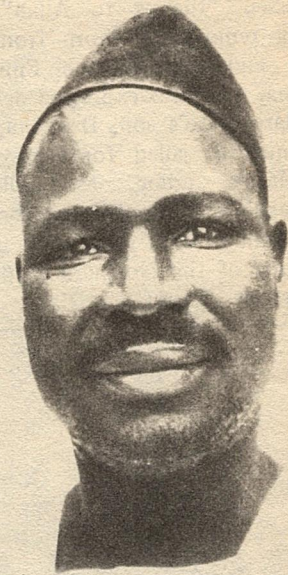
"What happened after (the 1959 Federal election) was this, the Native



Abubakar Zukogi: harassed by the Etsu

Authority went from village to village, arresting some United Middle Belt Congress (U.M.B.C.) and Action Group (A.G.) supporters. . . they held a member, and two police men held his hands, and another two his legs. This man was thrown and let down several times. The first throw was for Mr. J. S. Tarka; the second one was for Chief Awolowo; the third one was for the Sardauna. . . Mr. Speaker, a man was tied on to the side of a lorry with ropes and driven into the prison yard. Mr. Speaker, one day we saw two people who could not see coming to the hospital. What happened to the gentlemen concerned was that they were called upon to look at the sun until they had seen Awolowo's helicopter. They continued looking at the sun until they could not see any longer".

It was the same type of inhuman harassment, intimidation and national oppression which gave rise to the Tiv Riots of 1960 and 1964. These riots — during the course of which hundreds of peasants were killed and injured, and thousands more arrested, detained and jailed — were the Tiv people's reaction to the Sardauna's forceful religious



Ibrahim Imam: Saw through NPC.

to support any party; cattle Fulanis and petty traders who supported the NEPU; parents who tried to refuse to allow their young daughters to be carried away on campaign rallies for immoral purposes; *talakawa* who allegedly mentioned the name of Sardauna without reverence, etc., etc.

.....they were called upon to look at the sun until they had seen Awolowo's helicopter. They continued looking at the sun until they could not see any longer."

conversions, to the Native Authority's intimidations and to N.P.C.'s insistence that even non-Muslims were to be tried by the Alkali Courts. Of course, the overall design was the coercion of the Tiv people into abandoning the U.M.B.C. and A.G. for the N.P.C. bandwagon.

We can of course continue to document a thousand atrocities against Koranic teachers in Borno and Sokoto Provinces who could not force their students to support the N.P.C.; Native Authority employees who supported the NEPU or refused

So, where was the "One North" that the apologists of the Sardauna and NPC have kept on drumming into our ears? Where the dignity, where the freedom, where the progress and happiness, where the liberation promised by the Sardauna? They were all fine words, glibly said, but from the beginning were never meant to be kept. The only legacy is a legacy of repression.

By Sa'idu Adamu, Richard Umaru and Alkasum Abba

LET ME SPEAK

"My Offence Was That I Was NEPU"

Like many NEPU activists, Alhaji Garba Fasali, now a Jos-based businessman and owner of a petrol filling station, had his dose of political oppression during the First Republic. He was forced out of Wase (Plateau State) where he lived as a trader, and was given only 24 hours to leave town. But even more revealing of that period was the kind of "justice" he got when he turned to the courts for help. The interview below says it all.

ANALYST: Alhaji, are you an indigene of Wase?

ALHAJI GARBA: No. My home town is Gwaram, in Kano State. I only went to settle in Wase.

ANALYST: Alhaji, what was your position in the Wase Wing of the NEPU at that time?

ALHAJI GARBA: I was neither the Chairman nor the Secretary of the NEPU in Wase. Rather, I was a kind of a party stalwart or patron, advising on what should be done and helping financially and otherwise, to ensure that the party survived and carried on the fight. The NPC was always trying to do us in, but we always stood our ground.

ANALYST: You said the NPC was always trying to do you in. Can you tell us just a little about the sort of suffering or ordeal you personally went through as a result of NPC's anti-NEPU activities?

ALHAJI GARBA: Well, as you know, the NPC had no better political vanguards or thugs than the traditional institutions — the Emirs especially. These so-called traditional rulers were in reality the political thugs of the NPC. They were deceived and drawn into active politics by the NPC when they ought to have behaved as fathers of all. These traditional rulers were fed with lies to the effect that if the NEPU won the elections and got into power, it would dethrone and disgrace them. This was partly why the emirs and chiefs began to see the NEPU youths especially as mortal enemies and resorted to insulting us,

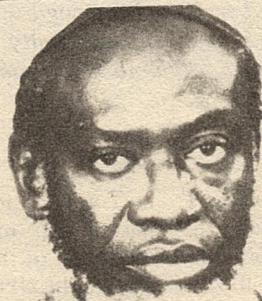


Alhaji Garba Fasali

beating us and locking us up everywhere they saw us. In fact, it was such that even if you sat under a tree, they would cut it down. It was like we were not human beings at all. Take my own case in Wase for example. Once they saw that I was a committed NEPU member and strong backer of the party in Wase, they just decided one day, without warning, that I should be forced out of the town. The Wase traditional council, always jittery whenever they saw a NEPU man, met and decided to give me only 24 hours to leave town.

ANALYST: Did they tell you the offence you committed which warranted such an action?

ALHAJI GARBA: No. There was no offence committed by me. My only offence was my not being in the NPC. If I had committed an offence, they would have taken me before a court, since at that time an emir had powers to whip, or jail, or even kill an offender. You see, during this period, if you were a known NEPU member and for some reason you were sent to prison to serve a three-month sentence, if the emir came into the prison and saw you, he could change your sentence at will to



Gumi — NPC Justice!

two years or so and you had to serve it.

ANALYST: Who came to you and told you that you had to leave Wase in 24 hours? And how did you leave the town?

ALHAJI GARBA: Well, I was called to the Traditional Council, with the Emir and his councillors present, and told that an order has been passed to the effect that I should leave Wase in 24 hours. A policeman later handed the order to me in writing. At the time I had a house I built on a plot given me by one of the Emir's servants, and I had items like salt, potash, and kolanuts in which I was then trading. All these items were thrown out of the house; some got soaked by the rain and some got spoilt completely. It was there outside the house that I got a bell and started singing and auctioning out my property. Even those who were buying my property were being eyed as committing an offence.

ANALYST: What is the position as regards your house right now?

ALHAJI GARBA: When I came here to Jos, I took the matter to court, seeking that the house be returned to me and I myself be allowed to return to Wase to collect my debts and property that I left behind. The case dragged on till it came before the Grand Khadi of Northern Nigeria, (in the person of Alhaji Abubakar Gumi, at the time). The Emir of Wase himself never appeared at the court even once. In the end, the judgement passed by Alhaji Abubakar Gumi was that the house wasn't mine since I didn't have the papers for them. I asked Alhaji Gumi whether anyone had papers for the traditional houses in the cities, and if the Emir of Wase himself could produce the papers of his own house in Wase. But Alhaji Gumi said that was not the issue. He then concluded the matter by ordering that I should not stay in the house, and the Emir himself should not stay or put anyone in it, until the house itself falls to pieces, after which the Emir's servants could use the plot. That's the situation as of today.

“We Fought For Nigerian Unity”

Bello Ijumu, who is now 74, of Aiyetoro Gbede in Oyi Local Government Area of Kwara State, is a founding member of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). Described as “a double secretary” by a British journalist at the 1953 London Constitutional Conference, Bello Ijumu was simultaneously the Secretary-General of NEPU and that of the UMBPP (later UMBPC -- United Middle Belt People's Congress). According to Bello Ijumu, NEPU was formed to struggle against what he calls “local and British imperialisms”. Read on:

THE ANALYST: As a founding member of NEPU, would you tell us what motivated those who founded it?

BELLO IJUMU: We were motivated by two factors. One is the task of keeping Nigeria united. It became necessary to struggle for the unity of the country because the aristocrats of the North had been taught by the British imperialists to demand for 50% of the seats in the then Federal House of Representatives, otherwise the North would break away from the rest of Nigeria. We had to struggle against this. And we did. The second motivation for the formation of NEPU is that while the other parts of Nigeria at that time were advancing socially and economically and therefore improving the conditions of living of their citizens, the North was sleeping in backwardness with the feudal lords backed by the British imperialists oppressing and persecuting the talakawa. The only way to relieve the masses of this feudal yoke was to build a party of the talakawa to serve as a weapon against the oppressors. Therefore, on 8th August 1950, we founded the NEPU.

ANALYST: How did NEPU fight for the unity of Nigeria?

BELLO IJUMU: By going into alliance with the NCNC and AG to



Bello Ijumu.

prevent the North from breaking away from Nigeria. In addition, NEPU and the UMBPC called for the creation of a Middle Belt Region out of the former Northern Region. This frightened the feudal lords and cautioned them. Press statements and articles were issued in various newspapers against the threat of dismembering Nigeria.

ANALYST: What is the nature of oppression suffered by the people of the middle belt in the hands of the NPC?

BELLO IJUMU: We have to remember that the NPC did not exist as a party originally. In its place was a cultural organization called “Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa”. The imperialists later taught them to change it to a political party and then they gave it the name Northern People's Congress (NPC). It was a party of the royalty. And the banned NPN also retained that image.

ANALYST: You have not talked about the nature of oppression suffered by the people of the middle belt in the hands of the NPC government.

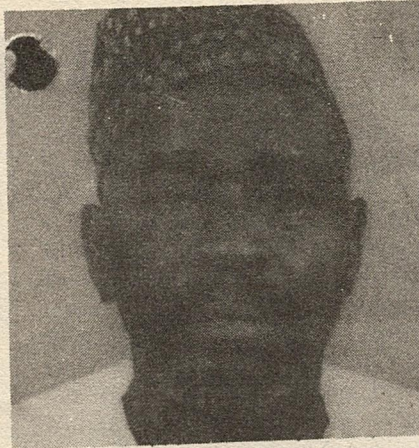
BELLO IJUMU: With regards to that, you know that the weapons of the NPC government include the courts, the alkali courts, the NA Police, etc. In Ilorin Province, where the emirate system exists under the lordship of the Emir of Ilorin, oppression and exploitation were rampant. Members of Ilorin Talaka Parapo (ITP) and the Action Group (AG) suffered unspeakable oppression in the hands of the Emir, the NA Police, and the NPC government. ITP and AG members were provoked by agents instigated by the local feudal lords and members of NPC. If they reacted, they would be taken to the autocratic courts and sentenced without trial to various terms of imprisonment. In the former Kabba Division, now Oyi LGA, the emirate system did not exist, but still the customary courts, the obas and the chiefs served as agents of the feudal lords and the colonial masters. In Igbiraland, the oppressive and exploitative rule of the Attah was resisted by the people and later he was banished to Lokoja.

ANALYST: How did NEPU struggle against this oppressive rule of the feudal oligarchy?

BELLO IJUMU: Ah, in many ways. One is the formation of NEPU which is the greatest blow the feudal lords ever received. The formation of NEPU gave us a platform to fight the autocracy from within the North itself. By this, we challenged the power structure and weakened their hold on the North. Also the formation of the UMBPC gave us the platform to fight for the creation of a Middle Belt Region. This scared Sardauna more than anything else, because he did not want anything that would reduce his power base. We wrote articles in the newspapers exposing the atrocities of feudalism and British imperialism in the North. We went into alliance with the NCNC and AG to fight for self-government in the North.

POLITICAL VICTIMIZATION: The Case Of The B.Y.M.

The Bornu Youth Movement (B.Y.M.) was formed in 1954 by a group of radical young men who had espoused the principles of the NEPU and decided to organise a similar party in Borno for the Kanuris and other indigenous people of the area. A leading member of the B.Y.M. was Mallam Ibrahim Imam, who was the first General Secretary of the N.P.C. The story of his vicious persecution by the Borno Native Authority and Northern People's Congress is one of the most horrifying in the history of the First Republic. He was literally hounded out of Borno and had to go into exile in his own country. In spite of this, the B.Y.M. was able to defeat the top N.P.C. chieftain in Borno, the Waziri, Sir Kashim Ibrahim, in the Maiduguri North



Basharu: Saw hell.

Yoruba, had gone to the Residency to obtain permit for a political meeting they were holding that day. They had waited all day in vain for the permit, and early in the after-

at the time, and a Senior Councillor of the Borno Native Authority, rolled up to the Police Station. They reported the bloody clash in front of the Uje Court II, and proceeded to inform the Desk Officer that Mallam Basharu and the other B.Y.M. stalwarts had organised and executed the clash, and had already fled towards Potiskum — the Police should pursue and arrest them. The S.D.O. and the Councillor did not know that Mallam Basharu and the B.Y.M. stalwarts were within ear-shot. In spite of this, the police slammed further charges against Mallam Basharu and locked them up. The Police then went and scoured the town for all of their relatives — women and children — and packed them into the city's lunatic assylum.

Those of the B.Y.M. members who were injured in the clash were taken to the hospital. At the hospital, one of the B.Y.M. members, Bulama Teburma, was lying next to an N.P.C. chieftain, Mallam Bukar Botulbe, who was also injured in the fracas. Bulama Teburma overheard that the prison authorities too would prove their loyalty to the N.P.C. by doing "something" to

"their wives did not escape jail for jubilating on the day of battle"

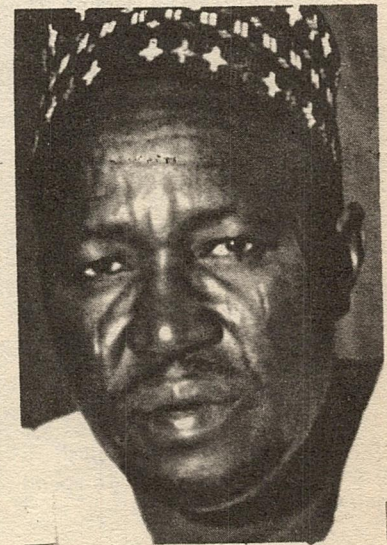
Constituency. The person who defeated Sir Kashim in the 1956 election was Mallam Basharu Yunusa, then a driver in the Borno Native Authority Workshop.

Here we bring to you a glimpse into the true story of the brutal onslaught unleashed by the N.P.C. on the B.Y.M., and Mallam Basharu, in particular, for winning victory in a democratic election. Read on:

The 1958 clash between the B.Y.M. and the N.P.C. was between the two biggest political parties in Borno. On that fateful day, the Alkali Uje Court II was to pass a judgement on more than 40 female members of the B.Y.M. arrested for committing "felony" on the occasion of celebrating Mallam Basharu's own marriage to the granddaughter of Mallam Ibrahim Imam, then the President of the B.Y.M. That day, Mallam Basharu himself was not on the scene of the incident. Himself, Alhaji Sheriff, the Vice-President and Organizing Secretary of the Party, and Bukar

noon, they had decided to return home to eat. Mallam Basharu drove all the party chieftains in his Chevrolet kit-car, first to his house, where they saw the ominous sign that something was amiss. The usually crowded front gate of his house was empty. Then he proceeded to Alhaji Sheriff, whose house was just by the Uje Court II. He almost drove into the fracas, but for a timely warning that a serious clash had occurred in front of the court. On hearing this, Mallam Basharu went and reported to the Police at the Central Police Station. While he was there, female B.Y.M. members arraigned before the Uje II court rushed with reports of a fatal clash between B.Y.M. and N.P.C. in front of that court. Mallam Basharu and those who were with him were promptly arrested.

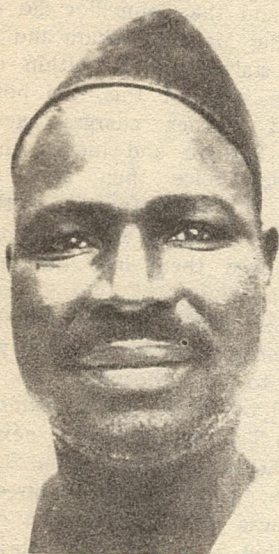
It was then that the unbelievable happened. Just as Mallam Basharu and his colleagues were waiting for further developments, the Senior District Officer of Borno Province



Sir Kashim: A humiliating defeat.

the B.Y.M. detainees. Hearing this, Bulama Teburma went back to the prison to inform his comrades, and this led to a hunger strike among the B.Y.M. detainees. Concession was later made to them so that they could arrange to cook their own food in the prison.

After three months in waiting, the trial commenced in the Alkali Court in Maiduguri. Mallam Basharu was jailed for 3 years. All the other B.Y.M. chieftains were also jailed. Even their wives did not escape jail sentences "for jubilating on the day of the battle"!



Ibrahim Imam: Forced out of Maiduguri.

Mallam Basharu's lawyer appealed against the judgement. The case was transferred to the Court of Appeal in Jos. Seven months later, the case was retried, Basharu was acquitted on all counts, but all the same he was jailed for one and a half years, which, according to him, was on the insistence of the State Counsel from the Ministry of Justice, Kaduna, who reportedly appealed to the judges that as Basharu was a key official of the B.Y.M. in Borno, where "political upheavals had become the order of the day", letting him go scott free would damage the credibility of the government. On this score, Basharu returned to the Jos prison to spend his jail term.

By Kyari Tijjani

Ilorin People Vs The Oligarchy

The rise of the Ilorin Talaka Parapo (ITP) marked a watershed in the development of progressive politics in Ilorin emirate. Its emergence was the response of the *talakawa* to the oppression and exploitation of the then Ilorin Native Authority. Its alliance with the Action Group (AG), its relationship of opposition with the NPC and the NPC-controlled Northern Nigerian Government and its subsequent decline is a case study in the struggle between progressive political organisations, on the one hand, and a feudal oligarchy, on the other.

The Ilorin Native Authority, controlled by the Ilorin feudal oligarchy, had in its control an array of instruments of oppression and exploitation. These included the notorious Native Authority Police, the Alkali Courts, the *Wole-Woles* (Sanitary Inspectors), the *Wogi-Wogis* (the Forestry Inspectors), the *Babakekeres*, the *Baba-Olojas*, the District Heads (D.H.s), etc. Enveloping all these was the octopus of the NPC which controlled the Northern Nigerian Government.

The 1953 Constitutional Reforms created a favourable atmosphere for the emergence of Ilorin Talaka Parapo in 1954. The reforms brought into sharp focus the need for a more representative and more democratic Native Authority Council. The masses of the people, especially the largely frustrated entrepreneurial middle class and educated elites, regarded the changes as superficial because the reforms favoured the oligarchy.

Layers of grievances of the oppressed masses piled up. Therefore, in concrete terms, the programme of ITP centred on the urgent need to campaign for a lower tax and the outright abrogation of some dues like those paid to the

Babakekere, as well as the extortionate practices of the *Wole-Woles* and the *Wogi-Wogis*.

Other agents of oppression and extortion included the *Onise-Oba*, the messenger of the District Head, who charged fees before any messages could be delivered — five shillings for an individual and twenty to thirty shillings for a message to a village or an entire community.

There was also the *isakole*, which was a form of tribute extracted from the peasantry by the District Heads, through agents known as *Babakekeres*.

Aroja, or the payment of market tolls, was another device through which the District Heads exploited the peasants in the Ilorin Metropolitan Districts. Besides paying a market entrance fee, the traders, most of whom were petty traders, were also obliged to give up a percentage of their goods to the *Baba Oloja*, "the market owner".

Other examples of oppression and persecution, the resistance to which formed the background against which ITP was formed, included the molestation suffered by the common man in the hands of the N.A. officials. N. A. Police molested bicycle owners on the most flimsy of excuses; *Wole-Woles* would easily find a house filthy and untidy and the owner of such a house would be fined in the Alkali Court. Also a *Wogi-Wogi* could declare any tree *Igi-Oba*, i.e. the Emir's tree, and anybody who for any reason tampered with such a tree would be arraigned before the Alkali Court and get fined or sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

However, the immediate cause of the formation of I.T.P. was the controversy surrounding the Ilorin Urban Water Supply. The essence of this controversy was the burden of taxation which the people had to

COVER STORY

pay. Earlier on, the then Secretary to the Ilorin N.A., Alhaji Sa'adu Alanamu, had made it known that the upward review of their taxes would go to pay for the expenses of the water scheme as well as those of power supply and the road construction within the town.

About 50 taps were constructed in the entire town, each fenced around to prevent free access to it by the people until each paid a fee of "epinni" (½d) for a tin of approximately 16 litres of water. This was despite the fact that the Ilorin N.A. got a good percentage of the project cost from the regional government. Therefore, the IPT objected to the payment of fees by the people and it decided to mobilize to fight against it.

All these grievances provided fertile ground for the emergence of the ITP. The first Secretary of the movement, Mr. J. S. Omoeko, summarised the aims and objectives of the movement as the raising of the status of Ilorin through the initiation of some wide-ranging development programmes. Part of these objectives included the improvement of the citizenry and fighting the cause of the down-trodden, eradicating corruption within the bureaucracy, and raising to a high degree the political awareness of the masses of Ilorin.

The ITP entered into an alliance with the A.G., maintained some political relationship with the *Egbe Igbomina Parapo* (EIP) and the Ekiti Federal Union (EFU).

The June/July 1956 Ilorin Town Council election and the following April/May 1957 Town and District elections were straightforward fights between the ITP/AG alliance on the one hand and the NPC on the other.

Serious issues were raised by the ITP/AG alliance during the campaign on the problems confronting the people in their daily life. In essence this involved the persecution, oppression, extortion and expropriation suffered by the people in the hands of the feudal oligarchy.

On the other hand, the NPC, now effectively put on the defensive, resorted to crude tactics. ITP/AG candidates were victimised. In several

constituencies, prospective ITP/AG candidates were not allowed to get nominated. The electoral regulations and processes were manipulated by the N.A.

Despite all these abuses, when the primary election was held in June 1956, the ITP won with 53%. This was cancelled and re-scheduled for April/May 1957. Again ITP swept the polls. At the end of the elections, the ITP was virtually in control of almost all elected bodies in the emirate.

In power, the ITP/AG controlled N.A. tried to live up to its promises which were articulated in the



*Sulu Gambari.
Headed the repressive apparatus.*

election manifesto. The local council succeeded in providing the inhabitants of Ilorin with water without charging any fees in contrast to the levies earlier imposed as water rates by the former NPC controlled council.

Successes were recorded in the fields of education, health services, and road rehabilitation. For instance, the ITP/AG council built more classrooms at Alapa and established adult education classes in Ojoku and Ogbondoroko.

In the area of tax collection the council monitored tax collection drives of the Ward Heads (*Baloguns*) and other chiefs like the *Mogajis* to put an end to the evils associated with tax collection and administra-

tion in the emirate. This angered the chiefs.

The payment of *isakole* was stopped by the council.

Other blows on the feudal oligarchy included the suspension order served on the District Heads of Afon and Paiye. Officials of the N.A. like Sanitary/Health Officials who were accused of maladministration and acts of repression against the people did not escape the wrath of the council.

These progressive steps taken by the ITP-controlled council increased the stiff opposition of the NPC-controlled Northern Nigerian Government. At a special meeting convened by the Resident, Mr. C. J. I. Reynolds, in February 1958, the Northern Nigerian Government handed down "a most grave and solemn warning" to the council for deviating from what the government considered as the essential standards of "a sound local government".

The Northern Nigerian Government was strongly opposed to the council's policies generally. Therefore, it had to look for whatever excuses it could get to dissolve the council. The excuse was found in the panel set up by the Northern Nigerian Government on the Ilorin N.A. Council. This panel was chaired by the then Acting Permanent Secretary of Social Welfare and Co-operatives in the Northern Nigerian Government, Mr. R. O. Maut. The other members of this panel were Mallam Musa, Alkalin Bida, and Mallam Yusuf Aminu, a member of the Emir of Kano's court.

All the recommendations of this panel were accepted.

A Caretaker Committee was set up in the place of the dissolved Council. It included the Emir of Ilorin, the four *Baloguns*, *Mogaji Are*, *Mogaji Gari*, *Imam Imale*, the District Heads of Obbo, Igbabja, Ballah, Lanwa, Ajasse, and Illoffa.

Thus feudal dominance was restored in full in the Ilorin Native Authority!

*By Olu Yusuf, with Tayo Fabiyi
and Ayo Benjamin.*

The Jos Killings:

“They Slaughtered Us Like Chicken”

Hit by a bullet that pierced his thigh, Mallam Jafaru Ibrahim Ahmed, a tailor and trader, counts himself a “lucky” victim of the April 13th killings in Jos. He survives to tell a story that offers a rare glimpse into the extent of the brutality displayed by the police in Nigeria today.

“I left my house at about 10.00 a.m. and came out to the street and found that people were gathered. I asked what was happening. I was told that students were demonstrating, that even in the main market the police were there throwing tear gas, and that people in the main market have been told to close their shops. I then asked them about the situation in our own market (New Market along New Market Road), and I was told that most people had opened their shops. Then I headed for the market, I opened my shop, pulled out a bench and sat down. I just sat down when a friend of mine, just arrived from Gumau (Bauchi State) where he works with the Bank of the North, appeared. I took his bag and put it inside the shop. We were sitting down together when the



Jafaru Ibrahim Ahmed

my colleagues and I decided we should close our shops and go home. I closed my shop and headed for home. As we passed through Alhaji Idi Maibarkono Street, a friend and colleague, Alhaji Adamu, said he wanted to ring the hospital so that an ambulance could come and take the person shot who was then

side and came out from the other side. I was rushed to the hospital (Sunna Clinic). At the Clinic, the affected part of the flesh was cut and the place stitched. I was in bed for ten days.

“In actual fact, I did not see when the police reached where we were because I was absorbed in what my friend was saying on the phone. It was when they were passing along the street that they started shooting. That’s how I got hit. I didn’t even know, until later, that it was the members of the Mobile Police force driving in an anti-crime patrol vehicle who did the shooting, and not the ordinary police.

“Besides myself, I also saw with my eyes other people shot and killed or wounded. In fact, at the time I was shot, there was another person, a mango seller who had just brought mangoes from Jengre. After delivering the mangoes to his usual buyers, he went out to look for food to eat. He got hit by a bullet which passed through his shoulder into his chest. I was told that he died later. But

“He went out to look for food to eat. He got hit by a bullet which went through his shoulder into his chest. I was told that he died later. But while he was still alive I heard him kind of dictate his will.”

police came and passed down the street and then came back again. As they passed again, they started shooting in the direction of where the water sellers fetch water. It was later discovered that one of the two water sellers there at the time had died. Then the news reached us. So,

bleeding profusely. He was on the phone and I was standing by him when the police came passing again. As they passed, they fired shots along the street. And I was hit in the thigh by a bullet. I was lucky that the bullet didn’t touch my bone, it only went through the flesh on one



Onoja: Plateau Governor.

STRUGGLES IN THE FRONTLINE

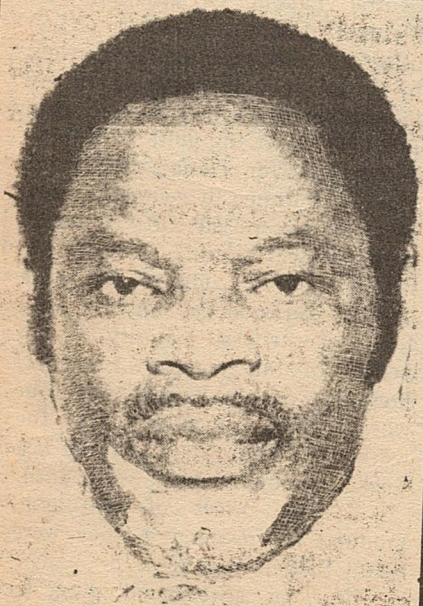
SOUTHERN AFRICA: Towards Total War (2)

while he was still alive, I was with him and I heard him — kind of dictating his will — telling people that he had only a wife, no kids but two dependents (a boy and a girl), and that one of his two farms should be given to his wife and the other to the two wards to share. This apart, when I was being brought back home, right in front of my in-law's house, there was a boy who was shot in the leg and fell down. Then there was an Igbo man that I also saw being shot twice in the leg, his bones completely broken. I watched as people tried in vain to get a vehicle to pick him to a hospital, and he had to be lifted and taken on the head by some people for treatment somewhere. Then there was another boy shot in a back street around the Islamiyya School. I saw the boy but I don't know what became of him because at the time I was also in pain. People were crying and saying that the boy had been shot. He was carried away. These were the ones I saw myself.

“But there was also the case of a brother to a friend of mine, a boy who used to sell metal dishes. He was shot and killed instantly, around the Inland Hotel junction. His elder



Racist Troops on the Run



Professor Onazi: Uni Jos V.C.

brother, who is my friend, told me this when he came to greet me in my house.”

In spite of these and other victories since, the Renamo bandits have been sustained by the South African Defence Force and still ravage large parts of Mozambique. Their atrocities against the people of Mozambique have now reached a level of viciousness that no less a person than the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Roy Stacy, addressing a conference in Maputo on Tuesday, 26th April 1988, described Renamo banditry as “one of the most brutal holocaust against ordinary human beings since World War II”.

This deputy to Dr. Chester Crocker, the U.S. Assistant Secretary

of State for African Affairs, one of the architects of Reagan's bankrupt policy of “constructive engagement” with South Africa, was speaking after public opinion in the United States and elsewhere in the West had reacted with horror and shock to a report on Renamo atrocities compiled by a refugee organisation at the specific request of the U.S. State Department.

This report, published in Washington D.C. in April 1988 documents how, in the last two years, Renamo has killed over 100,000 Mozambicans, directly or through deliberate starvation. They have rendered over one million homeless and destitute by their

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wanton destruction of all homes, farms, offices, hospitals, schools, vehicles, factories, and anything standing in large areas of central and southern Mozambique.

According to the report, 96% of the refugees interviewed in 25 locations outside Mozambique and 60 locations inside Mozambique categorically identified the Renamo bandits as those who attacked them and drove them from their homes.

The United States government, now under pressure from a horrified public, is now denouncing Renamo even though the C.I.A. had, since the founding of the Renamo bandit organisation in June 1976, played a role in sustaining it, directly and through its liaison with the Military Intelligence Directorate (M.I.D.) of the South African armed forces.

In the last two years, in addition to Zimbabwean troops fighting Renamo alongside the Mozambique armed forces, units of the Tanzania People's Defence Forces have been sent in. Although this battle front has not yet seen the large-scale battles with jet fighters, tanks and heavy artillery that are already taking place in the second battle front, it is nonetheless also a crucial one. As in the other fronts, the outcome is going to be decided by the development of the whole war for the liberation of Southern Africa, which has now assumed a new dimension by Botha's clamp-down of February 1988.

The Nigerian Defence Minister, Lt. General Domkat Bali's tour of the frontline states in early March of this year should make the Nigerian government realise much more directly and immediately the great historic significance of this war, for the whole of Africa and the world. It should also make the Nigerian government realise that the war has, over the last seven years, reached such a level and intensity that any deals to sell any dubious arrangement to undermine the forces of African liberation-in-combat, like the one hatched by America and Britain with Kenya and Nigeria in October last year, are going to be a complete and shameful waste of time.

PETROL STRIKES: Who Benefits From the Hikes?

For an administration that prides itself as a great dribbler, the national wave of demonstrations and strikes in April and May came as a rude shock. From Jos to Kano, to Akure, to Lagos, to Calabar and Abuja, indeed all over the country, students, workers, youth, petty traders and artisans, rose up in unison to register their opposition to the April 10th hike in petroleum prices, in particular, and to the whole of the government's Structural Adjustment Programme, in general.

Never before has a military regime, in the eighteen years in which we have been under military dictatorships, out of our twenty eight years of independence, faced such a broadly-based and popular challenge to its policies on the economy. Never before in this country, has the fundamental question of *'in whose class interest should government economic policies be made and implemented?'* been raised so directly and explicitly by working class and popular protest.

The immediate issue is certainly the hike in the price of petrol, kerosene, diesel and other petroleum products. But what this eruption of popular protest brought out vividly, and unambiguously, is that the Nigerian workers, and other toilers, are no longer prepared to continue sitting down meekly and suffering, as their living standards are slashed down every day, in the name of "economic recovery", progress towards which they cannot see, after six harsh years of "austerity" under Shagari, WAI under Buhari, and currently, SAP under Babangida.

THE WORKERS' DEMANDS

All over the country, workers' joint action committees, student leaders, and ordinary Nigerians, expressed profound anger and

disenchantment at the regime's general economic policy and direction, and demanded that an end be put to the Structural Adjustment Programme and the mortgaging of the country to the World Bank, I.M.F., and international loan sharks.

From Kano, the Joint Action Committee of the Trade Unions of Kano State sent an open letter to President Babangida, on Friday 22nd April 1988. This letter, signed by Bappa Gaya of the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives (NANNAM), and Kabiru Mohammed, of the Nigerian Civil Service Union (NCSU), the Chairman and Secretary of the Kano JAC, respectively, told the President bluntly that:

"... sometimes last year the workers of the country through our Central Labour Organisation, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) informed you that they were ready to go on strike at the event of any increase in the prices of petroleum products under the guise of subsidy withdrawal. Our position then, which is now confirmed by general increase in the prices of all sorts of items, particularly foodstuff is that the removal of oil subsidy will have serious consequences on the existence of the vast majority of the people of this country. . . . Mr. President, Sir, in keeping with our words and conviction, we the workers of Kano State resolved last week to go on indefinite strike until:

i) The prices of petroleum products are restored as they were before the recent increase.

ii) That government gives us assurance it will not unilaterally raise the price of petroleum products in the future.

iii) No subsidy, either partial or full is withdrawn on oil.

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iv) No any worker is victimised for his or her involvement in the current popular strike."

The Joint Action Committee of Unions of Bauchi State sent an open letter to the Federal Military Government through the Military Governor of Bauchi State. This letter of Friday 22nd April 1988 was signed by the officials of ten unions, namely: NUBIFE, NUTSAS, CSTWR, NUR, PPWU, NUT, MHWUN, NANNAM, RATTAWU, and NULGE, covering bank, clerical, civil service and technical, railway, printing, road transport, nurses and hospital workers, radio and television, teachers, and local government employees. The letter explained the reasons for the strike in concrete terms. It states that:

"The JAC of Unions/Workers in the State have analysed the effect of the petroleum products price hike being meted by the commercialised NNPC and the Federal Government. And concluded that it is inhuman and anti-people and a SAP programme that could only lead to the death of Nigerian people. The immediate effect of which has now increased the prices of all the staple grains in our market to N2.00 and above. This is over 100% in just five months, higher percentage of which accelerated after the petroleum increase. It is our conviction that more than 85% of family heads in the country cannot afford to feed their families at this rate."

The JAC in Bauchi State made five demands:

1. "The recent price increase on petroleum products be immediately cancelled and future contemplation abandoned.
2. The Federal Military Government terminate with immediate effect all programmes of SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme) especially the FEM, Subsidy, Privatisation, etc.
3. The Nigerian State should immediately guarantee the safety of lives and property of Nigerian citizens against the trigger happy security agents (police) who find happiness in killing innocent and patriotic citizens.

4. The Federal Government should hands off Nigerian Labour Congress.
5. The Federal Military Government should with immediate effect abandon the handing over of the national economy to the multi-nationals, retired generals and top technocrats."

And in Lagos, the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives (NANNM) met on the 22nd of April and made, amongst others, the following demands:

1. "That NANNM supports all actions taken by all industrial unions, individuals, other organizations and well-meaning Nigerians against the Government intervention and dissolution of Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC). National and State executives call on the Federal Government to rescind its decision, lift the order dissolving the NLC National and State Executives, remove the administrator appointed and allow the workers to resolve any issues affecting them in accordance with trade union tradition and

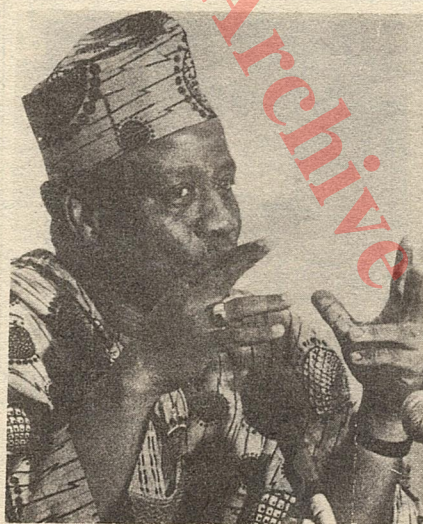
should re-open all Universities and Institutions of higher learning, release all detained student leaders and ensure peace and tranquility in our educational institutions."

THE CARROT AND THE STICK

As Nigerian workers know, this hike in the prices of petrol, kerosene and other essential petroleum products is not just an insignificant element in the government's programme. It is not the result of a fluke decision by badly-informed and badly-advised military officers, as some of the regime's apologists want us to believe.

For, since April 1982, when the Shagari regime embarked on an economic recovery programme, along the lines established for Third World countries by the I.M.F. and the World Bank, an important part of this package has been to impose new, or higher, fees and raise prices for the essential services, utilities and products supplied to the public by the government. The three successive regimes we have had over the last six years have diligently followed along those lines, charging new and higher fees for hospitals, schools, markets, cemeteries, transport, petroleum products, etc. The present regime, which has committed itself to, and articulated, this I.M.F. and World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme, much more explicitly than its predecessors, has continued along those lines in spite of the great suffering inflicted on the people of this country and the damage caused to the productive capacity of the economy by these fees and price hikes.

When, in the first three months of this year, the government started dragging its feet over these price increases, faced as it was with internal disagreements in its ranks, and the widespread and bitter popular opposition to them, the I.M.F. and World Bank took away the carrot and started using the stick! In the first week of April, the I.M.F. and World Bank informed the regime, in no uncertain terms, that the three packages of loans it had been promised — made up of a loan of \$500 million (N2 billion) from the



BABANGIDA:
No NLC but strike everywhere.

practice in the interest of industrial peace, continued unity and stability of the Country.

2. That the Federal Government through the NNPC restore the withdrawal of oil subsidy and the return of all petroleum products to the former prices without delay in the interest of suffering masses and workers.

3. That the Federal Government

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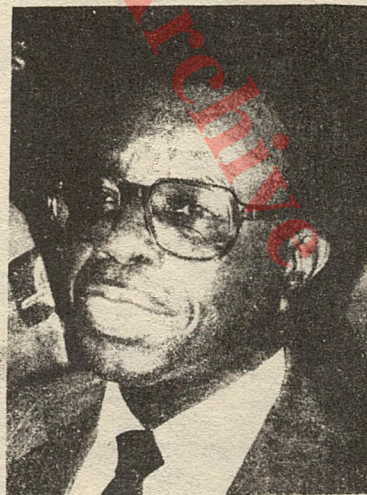
World Bank for the FEM foreign currency auctions; a \$300 million (N1.2 billion) loan from City of London commercial banks; and a \$200 million (N800 million) balance of payments loan from Tokyo — will not be disbursed until these increases were made. Since, without these, and more of such, loans, the whole of the regime's "economic recovery programme", not only its 1988 budget, will just collapse, these second increases in petroleum products prices were implemented immediately. The anger and frustration of the people of Nigeria also immediately burst out in demonstrations and strikes.

When you jack up the price of petrol from 20 kobo per litre in October 1986 to 42 kobo per litre in April 1988, and you impose similar massive price increases on kerosene, diesel, engine oil and fuel oil for industrial plants in the same period, you are making all Nigerian consumers much poorer and the cost of production and transport in the country, of almost everything, much more expensive. Naturally, the production of goods and services would fall. When all this is combined with the devaluation of the Naira by over 400%, within about the same period, you are savagely impoverishing the overwhelming majority of Nigerians.

The foreign investor, and the foreign creditor with debt claims against Nigeria, is not going to send any money into Nigeria to produce goods and services even if his debt claims are settled and Nigerian labour and raw materials are so much cheaper for him. Why should he? Almost all Nigerians are getting poorer and poorer, and the way they are getting rapidly impoverished, not only leads to a shrinking of the Nigerian domestic market, but also generates chronic instability in Nigerian government and society. So why should anybody tie up his money in productive assets in Nigeria? Why? When he can make more fortunes from Nigeria through foreign currency, food, property, and crude oil speculations.

THE CLASS INTEREST

The Nigerian economy is, far from growing under SAP, in fact declining rapidly. For SAP brings to a head, and in a concentrated form, all the key elements of the I.M.F. and World Bank programme which our economy has been dragged into since April 1982. All its major elements, including the fuel price hike, directly serve the class interest of the Western bourgeoisie and their multi-national corporation and banks milking Nigeria, who now falsely claim that we are deeply indebted to them. They also serve the class interests of the Nigerian agents of these corporations and banks, who through their service to these foreign interests have amassed huge fortunes in foreign currency and other foreign assets. This Nigerian dependent bourgeoisie, which constitutes the core of the Nigerian ruling class, has never been interested in, and in actual fact is directly opposed to, any productive investment and



Ogunkoya: Failed to tame the workers.

productive enterprise in this country. They are opposed to anything productive which goes beyond the financial transactions and the construction, packaging and assembling operations necessary for them to enrich themselves, particularly in foreign currency and foreign assets. This dependent bourgeoisie is entrenched among the serving and

retired officers of the armed forces, and the police; and of course at the top levels of the commercial and merchant banks, the companies, parastatals and the civil service; and also among some of the bigger merchants, smugglers, contractors, bunkerers, drug-traffickers, emirs and chiefs. Out of Nigeria's total population of about one hundred million, they do not amount to more than fifty thousand, including their immediate families and essential Nigerian henchmen.

But in spite of their insignificant numerical size, it is their class interest and of course, the higher class and national interests of their masters, which are the forces which have dragged Nigeria over the last six years through "Austerity", WAI, and SAP.

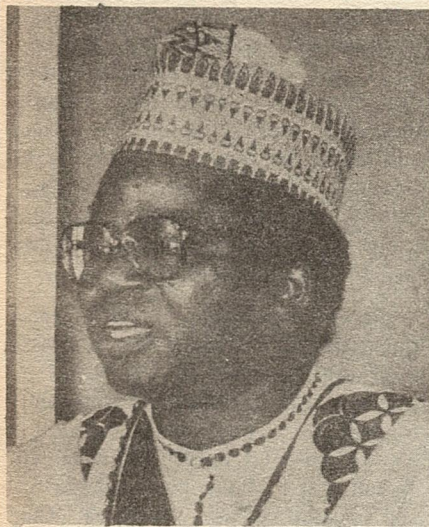
The very few members of the Nigerian bourgeoisie committed to and engaged in productive enterprises, as genuine industrialists, agriculturalists or as professionals of various types, are marginal in this ruling class.

THE BLIND ALLEY

The road which has brought us to these latest fuel price increases has taken us through the cuts in social services and the beginning of the increase in fees for them under Shagari's regime; the imposition of poll tax, cattle tax, levies of all sorts, higher fees on all trades and occupations and on social services under the Buhari regime; and since August 1985, on top of all these, we have had hikes in the price of fuels and higher fees and charges for social services and transport, and the prospects for more, under the Babangida regime. The thrust, force, and underlying class interest under all these three regimes has been essentially the same. The detention, trial, and even execution of some top individuals of the two regimes overthrown, and all the hullabaloo of the military coups of December 1983 and August 1985 should not cover up for us the strong continuity of the concrete class interest behind these policies of directly impoverishing most

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Nigerians in the name of "economic recovery". We cannot escape the bankruptcy and devastations of SAP by returning to the "Austerity" of Shagari or the WAI of Buhari and Idiagbon, as some sterile reactionary interests are trying to convince sections of the students and workers. SAP is only a more advanced stage of the same terrible blind alley of debt-slavery and mass impoverishment like the earlier "Austerity" and WAI.



*Tony Momoh:
Failed to convince anybody.*

PEOPLE'S POWER

The path to genuine economic recovery for this country cannot be found anywhere in this blind alley, or any of its two earlier stages. The paths to genuine economic recovery for Nigeria is through the building of a solid productive base for our home market and by promoting the well-being and social progress of all the working people of the country. We can only follow this path by eliminating the parasitical class interest behind these hikes in fees and prices, and building organs of people's power which are deeply rooted in the productive, and political, activity of Nigerian workers, peasants, artisans, and all the toilers of the country. For it is only this people's power that can provide the sustained force necessary for the gigantic struggle of saving our people and our country from the abysmal decline, impoverishment, degeneration and subjugation which it is rapidly being dragged down into.

Constituent Assembly: WHAT A COLLECTION!

Karl Marx it was who once observed that while history repeats itself, it does so the first time as a tragedy, and the second time as a farce.

In Nigeria, history is repeating itself. And is doing so first as a tragedy, and then as a farce. The 1977/78 gathering in Lagos, dubbed the Constituent Assembly, was indeed a tragic re-enactment of the set of constitutional conferences of the early 1950s. If nothing else, these two sets of conferences shared the dubious honour of giving birth to two separate political regimes which both came to violent ends: the one in January 1966, and the other in December 1983.

Today, in 1988, history is again repeating itself. A Constituent Assembly has been constituted, and is being assembled at Abuja, in preparation for the birth of yet another civilian regime. But this time around, history is repeating itself not as a tragedy, but as a monumental farce.

However, to fully comprehend the farcical nature of this Constituent Assembly of 1988, we must first of all dwell a little on the historical importance and social relevance of constitutions.

BEYOND CONSTITUTIONS

A constitution is merely the legal, legitimating reflection of underlying economic, social and political relations and realities within a society. It follows therefore that to fully grasp the essence of a constitution, we will have to go beyond the outer shell of that constitution. In fact, we will have to go even beyond the constitution itself and examine the real underlying relations that exist in that society between individuals and between groups. In the specific case of Nigeria, we have got to examine and understand how these relations have combined to push the country

into its present mess.

A very basic feature of these economic and social relations in Nigeria today is that real economic and political power is in the greedy and insatiable hands of a tiny elite. Against this small kleptocratic clique of the rich and powerful, stands a mass of workers, peasants and other small-scale producers, shop owners, artisans and the youth, who are not only abjectly powerless and unorganised, but are in fact victims of the power and influence of this tiny minority.

Another feature of these economic and social relations is that those engaged in the production of our society's goods and services do not control these goods and services.

A third feature of these social and economic relations in Nigeria is that profit, greed, and private accumulation are the central purposes of life and all activity.

It is these three features that successive Nigerian Constitutions have sought to entrench and to safeguard. It is the same features which the present regime seeks to entrench through the current farcical and cynical exercise.

COMEDY OF THE ABSURD

Nowhere is the cynical nature of the current attempt at constitution crafting for Nigeria brought out more graphically than in the very manner that the new Constituent Assembly has itself been constituted.

To begin with, the way and manner in which the members of this Constituent Assembly have been selected or nominated only goes to entrench the powerlessness of the majority of the people of Nigeria. First, the Local Government Councils which constituted the electoral colleges for 'electing' the members of this Assembly, were themselves 'elected' in what is generally acknowledged to have been a completely undemocratic and

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unjust election. For example, workers and all those in public employment were excluded from contesting. The material and financial qualifications and requirements were such that only the rich or those sponsored by the rich could contest. Administrative and bureaucratic blunders, often deliberate, guaranteed rigging and vote stealing on a massive scale. Even now, several months after those elections, many of the 'successful' candidates are being challenged in the courts and are only taking advantage of clumsy and windy court procedures!

But the cynical nature of this constitution making exercise does not rest only on these serious limitations. The indirect method of 'electing' the members of this Assembly did not even enjoy some of the more enlightened features of the colonial indirect elections. For instance, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) gave only a week's notice for the filing of nomination papers — a period so short that it could not have allowed anybody who was not part of the official or semi-official political network, such as the Committee of Patriots, Northern Elders, *Egbe Ilosiwaju Yoruba*, Eastern Solidarity Front, CAN or JNI to know about arrangements for these elections.

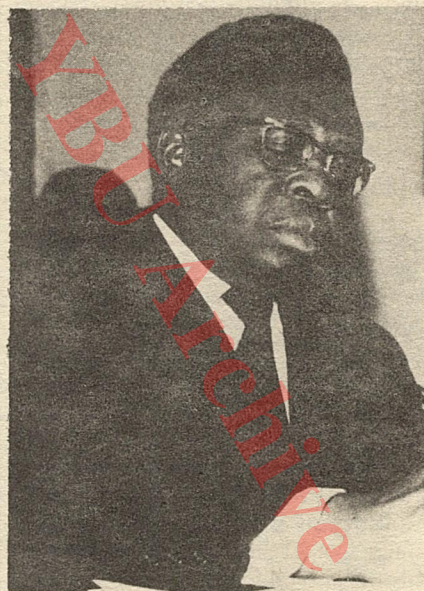
Similarly, the NEC screened out contestants by means of secret criteria under the cover of "security", and arbitrarily slashed down the lists to only two, and in many instances returned known crooks, banned public officers, and in some cases even well-known sectarian bigots, as unopposed candidates.

Indeed, as many as 1/4 of the so-called elected members of the Constituent Assembly were returned as unopposed candidates. The question here is, on what criteria were those who wanted to oppose them disqualified?

Furthermore, the narrow popular base of the Local Government Councils which served as the electoral colleges, combined with the largely undemocratic methods of their make-up to give rise to widespread corruption and horse trading

during the "elections". Indeed, in some states the councillors' votes were sold for over N50,000.

Then, there is the fact that the 'elections' to the Constituent Assembly itself were conducted without any public platform, as the Draft Constitution was still secret. In the absence of any platform, and devoid of any public debates over the direction which the country should take, those elected have ended up largely being representatives, not of the people, but of the pervasive networks and cliques around retired generals, feudal chieftains, religious bigots, and the new rich being produced by the current military regime.



*Justice Anagoiu:
Presiding over a jamboree?*

Indeed, well-known chauvinists, discredited and dismissed public officers and extreme religious fanatics were either cleared for the elections, returned un-opposed by NEC, or even nominated as members by the government. Some of these do not even believe in the unity of Nigeria, and have in fact worked for its dismemberment along regional, religious or tribal lines. Others are arch and unredeemable reactionaries whose commitment to feudalism and the legal restoration of slavery, and even the slave trade, have never been in doubt.

Then, there is the whole coterie of professional bench-warmers and

'yes-men' whose only commitment is to advance themselves and their careers.

With such an assemblage, the stage is surely set for a debate of tragi-comic proportions.

Equally ridiculous is the qualification which was prescribed for the contestants for the 'new' Constituent Assembly: possession of WASC or GCE with fifteen years experience, or a university degree with five years experience. If such pre-qualifications had been applied in the 1950 Constitutional Conference, it would have meant that such leading members of the nationalist movement like Michael Imoudu, Gogo Nzeribe, Mokwugo Okoye, Sa'adu Zungur, Aminu Kano, Anthony Enahoro, etc., would have been disqualified.

It is by way of such pre-qualifications that the most important sections of the Nigerian society have been carefully screened out of the Constituent Assembly. Loudly absent from the Constituent Assembly are the representatives of the peasantry, the workers, the market women, petty traders and artisans, students, and all those who toil to produce the wealth of the country.

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

The vast majority of Nigerians are today facing issues of life and death; issues that have to do with how to get drinking water, how to obtain food, how to secure shelter, how to live healthy lives, how to educate their children, where to get cultivable land, how to beat unemployment and stay sane, etc.

The Constituent Assembly as presently constituted cannot but be removed from the aspirations and hard realities of the lives of the majority of our people. Indeed, one wonders what this rowdy crowd is assembled in Abuja to do, when they cannot change or even debate some of the most salient features of the Draft Constitution put before them. For, as the President has said in his inaugural speech, the Assembly members cannot touch,

among other things, the provisions dealing with the presidential system, the blanket ban on former politicians, and the much-hated two party structure. So, what are they in Abuja for? Wining, dining and politicking?



Gen. Babangida:

What's the Assembly for?

There is thus no other patriotic option for the government but to proceed forthwith with the immediate disbanding of this bankrupt collection. A new Constituent Assembly should thereafter be reconstituted. This new Constituent Assembly should not only be directly elected on the basis of a universal adult suffrage, but should be elected on the basis of occupational, professional and residential organisations. All reactionary pre-qualifications should be removed, and the only requirement should be that the person seeking election should be literate in English or any Nigerian language. Above all, all issues in the draft should be open to debate and subject to change.

Anything short of this in effect amounts to a short-circuiting of the transition programme, and an abortion of the Third Republic.

By Richard Umaru

UPDATE

The Constituent Assembly: WHAT A COLLECTION!

"By their fruits, ye shall know them", runs an old proverb. What manner of men and women are the members of our newly constituted Constituent Assembly and what sort of a constitution may Nigerians reasonably expect them to produce? The fruits of the previous deeds of many of these C.A. members leave a sour taste in the mouth, as the following random sample clearly shows:

V. G. SANDA ("Elected", Langtang)

Mr. Sanda has, among other things, the dubious reputation of having been found guilty, by a 1975/76 judicial probe, of irregularly awarding a contract for the bulk purchase of cement in 1972/73, while Permanent Secretary, Benue-Plateau State Ministry of Finance. For this he was retired from the public service.

ANGO ABDULLAHI (Returned "unopposed", Zaria L.G.A.)

Between 1979-1982, the first three years of Professor Abdullahi's Vice-Chancellorship at the A.B.U., Zaria, audit reports established massive fraudulent mismanagement of finances at the institution, which included even the foreign exchange account. Subsequent audit reports were not better. Furthermore, it has been established that the same Ango Abdullahi mismanaged the over N20 million federal funds for the Arid Zone Afforestation Committee, of which he was Chairman (1978-1984). Again, in 1986, as Vice-Chancellor of the A.B.U., Ango gloated over the cold-blooded murder of students and others, during the May 23rd peaceful students' protest, which he had largely provoked. He said, callously, "I have no regrets". Then, in 1987, a Presidential Visitation Panel to A.B.U. confirmed what everybody already knew: that Ango Abdullahi had fraudulently used his position as V.C. to get himself

promoted to a professorship in Agronomy when he was clearly unqualified.

P.C. ASIODU (Nominated)

This former Super-Permanent Secretary under Yakubu Gowon's administration had his property at Umude, Asaba, confiscated by the Federal Government in 1976 for its having been irregularly acquired when he was in the Public Service.

ALHAJI GARBA JA ABDULKADIR (Nominated)

This former Secretary to the Military Government in the North Central State was indicted in 1976 for using public resources to sink a bore-hole on his private farm near Funtua for his exclusive private use.

DR. ALEXANDER FOM (Nominated)

i. As a director of BEPCO (Benue Plateau Construction Company Limited) he took part in the siphoning off of BEPCO resources by extravagant loans to its directors;

ii. Illegally got BEPCO to renovate his shop at No. 19 Ahmadu Bello Way, Jos, and to purchase a



Ango Abdullahi: Questionable integrity.

UPDATE

vehicle for his private use;

iii. Once presented a fake certificate of shares to one Mr. G. Fillepi;

iv. As a director of BEPCO, siphoned a loan of N53,000 from the company to purchase a house from a departing alien, and siphoned



Alex Fom: A litany of misdeeds.

another loan of N71,056.08 to further extend the house;

v. Got BEPCO to build a house for him along Bukuru Road, adjacent to the Census Office.

Alex Fom now poses as an outspoken champion of Christianity.

Apart from these glaring cases, the Constituent Assembly is full of other such characters. For instance, one of the members of the Assembly from Borno State had his appointment to a very high federal political office withdrawn in 1985 because it was discovered that he had fraudulently collected rice from the Borno State Government on behalf of a business organisation, using forged documents and on false pretences.

Another well-known member of the Assembly, from Sokoto State, who specialises in posing as the spokesman of an Islamic religious organisation, is on record as having connived with the Zionist Raccab Brothers in 1973-74 to defraud an oil mill, a fraud which involved arson. This same imposter connived with another Zionist in 1980-82 to siphon the many millions voted for the construction of a rice mill in the same Sokoto State.

Or take another example: one of the numerous opportunistic academics in the Assembly has, for over a decade, illegally kept two jobs — one in Nigeria, and the other in the United States — from both of which he received full remunerations.

Another member, who is a tycoon owning a powerful media outfit, made most of the money for establishing this publishing empire, which hypocritically pontificates and moralises on Nigerian affairs, from a kickback of over fifty million naira gotten from a water contract which



Asiudu: Indicted in 1976.

he shared with N.P.N. chieftains who awarded the contract to a French company he was fronting for.

These are the type of people who have been "cleared" and "elected" or nominated to make a new constitution for Nigeria! What a collection! What an assembly!

MIDDLE EAST:

The Palestinian Uprising

In the night of Tuesday, 8th December 1987, a huge truck, of the type used for carrying military tanks, suddenly appeared to run out of control and crashed into the traffic near the Jabalia refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. Four commuters travelling back home to the camp from work in a van were crushed to death by this huge tank transporter. The driver of this vehicle was an Israeli. The driver and passengers killed in the van were Palentinians.

News of this ghastly accident rapidly spread throughout Jabalia that night. Many Palestinians heard that the tank transporter was driven by the brother of Shlomo Takal, an Israeli businessman stabbed to death on a busy street in Gaza City on

Sunday, 6th December 1987. Many believed that this was not an ordinary traffic accident but a vengeful slaughter of innocent Palestinians by an Israeli.

On Wednesday, 9th December, the Palestinian youth, the *shabiba*, organised a demonstration to protest this incident and were met with gun fire from Israeli soldiers. A 17-year old boy was killed and 25 others seriously injured. A curfew was immediately imposed on Jabalia.

Meanwhile, several kilometres away in East Jerusalem, the morning of Tuesday, 8th December, 1987, began with a general strike by Palestinian workers. They were striking in solidarity with the Palestinian-owned Jerusalem District

Electricity Company, part of whose generating capacity had that week been seized by the Israeli government, because since it was supplying electricity to some quarters where Jews lived, the Zionist government wanted it under full Israeli control. In fact, the Prime Minister of Israel, Shamir, visited the Jewish quarters affected that week and with racist glee said, "Now the Jewish quarter residents will have good light, Israeli light", as if electric light has a racial coloration.

On Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th December, tension spread throughout the Gaza and the West Bank. Protest demonstrations broke out all over the areas where Palestinians lived.

ISSUE

At the Balatta refugee camp, near Nablus, on the West Bank, Israeli soldiers shot dead a 57 year old woman, a 12 year old boy, and two other teenagers on Thursday, 11th December, for protesting against the incident at Jabalia.

Palestinians of all ages came out. The two million Palestinians in the territories seized and occupied by the Israelis erupted in a popular uprising which took the heavily-armed Israeli troops by surprise. The *shabiba*, the Palestinian youth, took to the streets with stones, against Israeli tanks, machine guns and helicopter gunships.

Within one week of that incident in Jabalia, the foundation of Israeli rule had been shaken. Even though the Israeli army adopted a policy of shoot-to-kill, massacring seven demonstrators in Gaza on Tuesday 1st December, the uprising spread and deepened. Between 8th and 16th December, 16 unarmed Palestinians were shot dead by Israeli troops and hundreds were wounded.

The Israeli army became so hysterical that they started storming hospitals like the Shefa Hospital in Gaza, from where they dragged wounded Palestinians and beat up the nurses and doctors.

On Monday, 21st December 1987, the two million Palestinians went on an unprecedented twenty-four hour general strike, which shook the Israelis and their Western patrons who had believed that years of brutal occupation had cowed the Palestinians and destroyed their solidarity.

Two days before the general strike, there was, for the first time, open urban street warfare in Jerusalem, which the Zionists claim as their capital. For three hours, one of the main streets of Jerusalem, Sala al-Din Street, was under the control of Palestinian youths.

On Tuesday, 22nd December, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution condemning Israel's brutal treatment of the Palestinians, and even the United States government did not veto the resolution, as it automatically does with all resolutions condemning Israeli atrocities.

EXPOSURE

By this time there were 600-700 foreign news reporters of the print and electronic media covering the uprising. American and European public opinion usually manipulated to support the Zionists was shocked by the atrocities committed by the Israeli soldiers on unarmed men, women, and children, some of whom were dragged from their hospital beds. The daily television coverage brought to the living rooms of hundreds of millions throughout America and Europe, how courageous the Palestinians were and how all the illusions about them spread by intensive Zionist propaganda were false.



Yasser Arafat: Leading the fight.

This came to so seriously threaten long-established American public sympathy for the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories that Henry Kissinger, a leading American Jewish pillar of Zionism, is reported to have said at a breakfast meeting of prominent Jews in New York, in February 1988, that "Israel should bar the media from entering into the territories involved in the present demonstrations, accept the short-term criticism of the world press for such conduct and put down the insurrection as quickly as possible; overwhelmingly, brutally and rapidly. . . The first step should be to throw out the television *a la* South Africa."

In March 1988, the Israeli government did precisely what

Kissinger suggested and threw up a cordon around the Palestinian camps and quarters to keep the media out. But before that was done, a delegation from the Rainbow Coalition of the United States Democratic Party had seen, with its own eyes, the Palestinian flag hoisted on the village of Idna, south of Jerusalem. They saw with their own eyes, and even filmed, this village coming under the attack of Israeli helicopter gunships.

Before the ban on news coverage of the uprising, the foreign media had recorded, on Sunday, 31st January 1988, Israeli police brutally beating Palestinian Christians, largely women, who were leaving the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, after a mass prayer for those killed in the uprising. Two American school teachers were among those beaten.

In February 1988, the tear-gassing and beating of Muslim worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem by Israeli police was also recorded by the foreign media.

In fact, a team of four American doctors sent by an organisation called Physicians for Human Rights, based in Boston, Massachusetts, revealed at a press conference in mid-February 1988, how systematic the brutalities of the Israeli army and police were. These doctors confirmed what the Palestinians have all along said, that the Zionists were either shooting to kill, or beating them deliberately and viciously in order to break all their limbs.

According to one of these doctors, Dr. Jennifer Leaning, an expert on trauma, what they saw from the wounded Palestinian youth they examined was "a pattern of midshaft fractures of hands and arms that were likely to occur when limbs were held outstretched by force and broken deliberately".

Such cold-blooded atrocities, like those inflicted by Hitler's Nazis on the Jews, included the burying alive by an Israeli army bulldozer, in February 1988, of four Palestinian youths at the village of Salem on the West Bank.

But all these brutalities did not crush the Palestinian uprising, which

the Palestinians call the *infatih*. Initially, after recovering from their shock and surprise at its breadth and depth, the Israeli authorities had tried to present it as something sectarian, coming from Islamic fundamentalist organisations, and not involving the whole of the Palestinian people. But this propaganda was quickly exposed. The Christian Mayor of Bethlehem, Elias Freiz, who is a Palestinian, for example, cancelled the annual Christmas party; and as churches gave sermons on the justice of the Palestinian cause, the Zionists started attacking churches and their congregations, thus exposing their own divisive propaganda.

ORGANISATION

A United Front of the Uprising, above all divisions, religious and ideological, emerged to direct the uprising. It was linked to the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). The capacity it demonstrated for the mobilisation of unarmed people to confront tanks and machine guns and to organise effective strikes and commercial boycotts frightened even the neighbouring Arab rulers.

King Hussein of Jordan and his government felt threatened by this massive Palestinian uprising, particularly as 1.2 million Palestinians live in Jordan, and a dependent feudal monarchy like that of the Hashemites in Jordan cannot co-exist with a sovereign Palestinian state for any length of time.

It was because of this that King Hussein had fourteen lecturers at Yarmuk University in Jordan dismissed for discussing the uprising in their classes. The hostility of the Jordanian government became so much that the United Front of the Uprising called for a boycott of *Am-Mahai*, a Jerusalem newspaper financed by King Hussein, which was trying to subvert the uprising.

The occupation policy of Israel, which has been basically to absorb the occupied territories, is now in shambles. The militant unity, combativeness and cohesion of the two million Palestinians living under Zionist rule is no longer in doubt. The Palestinian Liberation Organisa-

tion has shown that it has survived the genocidal massacres by Jordanian, Syrian, Lebanese and Israeli armies in 1971, 1976, 1982 and 1985. It has emerged strengthened, at the head of a much more united Palestinian national liberation struggle, which, in the four months since December 1987, has changed the whole diplomatic, political and military equation in the Middle East.

The Israeli government has become so desperate that they sent their commandoes to Tunisia to assassinate Khalil Al-Wazir, also known as Abu Jihad, the Commander of the Palestinian Armed Forces, on Saturday, 16th April, 1988. They were so maniacal



Abu Jihad: Victim of Zionist terrorism.

that, in front of his wife and children, they pumped over one hundred bullets into his body and a television camera filmed the whole bloody assassination.

This assassination of Abu Jihad has not only deepened the determination of the Palestinians to overthrow the Zionist occupation, but has also put Israel in a very bad light in the West and embarrassed Reagan, who has made so much noise against "terrorism". Here he is faced with a brazen act of terrorism by Israel, which was presumably filmed for him and others like him to see, yet he refuses to call it "terrorism".

SIGNIFICANCE

The hysterical desperation of the Israeli leaders in the face of this latest Palestinian uprising is not only

illustrated by the assassination of Abu Jihad but also by the right-wing backlash in Israel, which is throwing its ramshackle political party structure into serious disarray.

This disarray is very serious and is much more significant than the disarray Israeli politics went into after the beating their armed forces took when they invaded Lebanon and the Palestinian camps there in 1982. The shock the Israeli government received when its forces were battered by fierce Palestinian and Lebanese resistance in 1982, was a major factor in causing the then Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, to lose his mental balance and become mentally deranged.

Nobody in the Israeli leadership has yet gone mad as a result of the current Palestinian uprising. But a number of the political and military leaders are reported to be already showing signs of cracking up.

They see clearly that the whole policy, pursued fanatically by the Likud bloc, but also objectively supported by the Labour Party, of getting rid of the Palestinians or totally subjugating them under Israeli rule, has collapsed. They realise that after driving away over 300,000 Palestinians in June 1967 and having been left with only 1.34 million, and now, almost twenty one years after that "victory", they have 2.14 million Palestinians to subjugate. Most of these belong to a generation born since 1967 who reject the occupation, and as the uprising has shown, are prepared to sacrifice their lives to bring it to an end, and are now fighting tanks and machine guns with stones and burning rubber tyres!

Not only has the Palestinian population under Zionist rule risen from 1.3 million to 2.1 million in these twenty years — a rise of over 50% — but it has now practically demonstrated in the uprising that it is organised and cohesive under the leadership of the PLO, which is determined to liberate Palestine, irrespective of what the Arab States may do or not do. It is in this practical demonstration of this determination that the significance of the current Palestinian uprising is to be found.

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DO THEY KNOW IT IS SALLAH? Yes, of course, they do. That is why they have come out in their full strength, armed with their rusty bowls, weathered sticks and juvenile guides.

Perhaps — just perhaps — in this season of merriment some charitable souls might have pity on their sorry plight and wind down the glass of their air — conditioned limousines to throw a lonely coin or two at their outstretched arms.

But in a land, so bounteously endowed as ours, why should some people be condemned to this beggerly existence, living a dreary life permanently at the mercy of the elements and the chanced and occasional charity of others.?

But, then, this is an idle thought, isn't it? After all, is this not Nigeria: One country, two nations!