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says it, as it is

September — October, 1988

IRAN: REVOLUTION BETRAYED
CHRISTIANITY: A THEOLOGY FOR LIBERATION

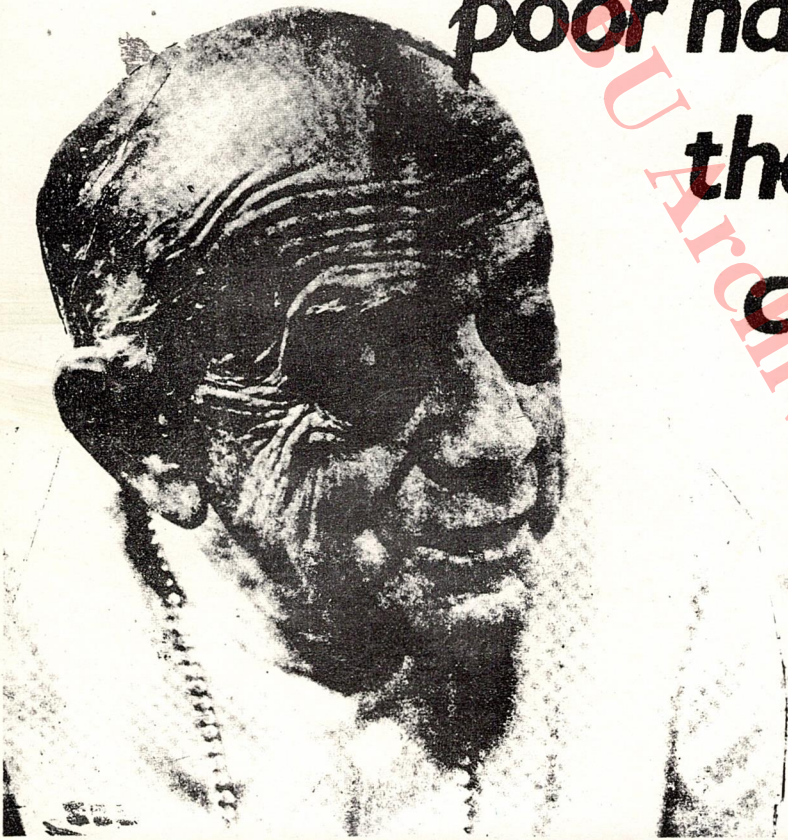


Devils At Work

REVOLUTIONARY HERITAGE

**'When I give food to the poor,
they call me a saint.
When I ask why the
poor have no food,
they call me a
communist.'**

— Dom Helder Camara



NOTE:

Dom Helder Camara, a north Brazilian catholic bishop, played a very prominent role in the Medellin Conference of 1968 and has been the inspiration behind many leaders of the 'Liberation Theology' movement in the Church.

The Analyst

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In this issue

MARK OF THE DEVIL

The hunt is on throughout Nigeria for the Devil. He is being chased out from mosques, churches, schools, offices, homes, and even pubs. But who is the Devil, and what are his marks?

Turn to page 6

IN GOD'S NAME...

In God's name, anything and everything is possible: Save life or destroy life; build faith or destroy faith; speak truth or spin lies; build the community or destroy it; heal wounds or spill blood. How, and for what, has God's name been used in Iran, Sudan, Pakistan, Guatemala and Libya?

See page 10

GIANTS IN THE SUN



There are men, and there are Men. Men, who dwarf other men in their life time. Men who straddle the world, leaving indelible marks in the sands of time. Men who strike fear in the hearts of oppressors. Men like Omar Muktar and Camilo Torres 24

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LETTERS

LESSONS OF HISTORY

Your comment (Vol.3, No. 3) is a very nice piece but contains a little misinformation. You have allowed sentiments to becloud your full vision. That is to say, in arguing that our so-called founding fathers were the very cause of the nation's problems you included amongst them an innocent and true patriot - Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. In fact, I am of the belief that Balewa died a true jihadist and therefore shouldn't be included in your list.

Finally, I agree with you that it was the Nigerian people who stood firmly for Nigerian unity and not these so-called 'founding fathers'. This is because it is they who took up arms against our rebels during the civil war. And it is they who are suffering under the acronym of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP).

*Ibrahim Dan'Azumi,
Gwarzo.*

The letter written by Kabir Yusuf Mawashi is not only absurd, but provocative to all progressive elements. He told us that the state apparatus (police, soldiers and judges) massacred the people of Rafin Gora because they tried to evade tax. But Kabir forgot that during that period, Gamji and his stooges in the NPC were in full control of the state apparatus. And they used this state apparatus in killing, maiming, torturing and exploiting innocent peasants without being challenged. They usually justify their criminal deeds by accusing the victims of being rebels and tax evaders. But the only offence of these progressive peasants was their constant resistance and opposition to the exploitative and oppressive regime of Gamji and his disciples.

The history of a people is the future of the people - this statement will only be correct if we search with powerful microscopes into the lives of our past leaders. And their crimes, committed against the people, must be quickly exposed and condemned, so that our future leaders will take progressive steps towards solving the problems of the vast majority of the people being exploited by this tiny parasitic class.

All progressive elements must be able to stand by the truth, to tell the truth without fear, even if the truth entails some difficulties. Long live THE ANALYST.

*Isiaka M. Danjuma,
Gongola State*

The letters you published by Kabir Yusuf Mawashi Katsina and Muhammad Bukhari Zubairu (THE ANALYST, July-August 1988, Vol. 3, No.4) were just unscientific and atavistic nonsense.

Kabir says that the case of Mato Uban 'Ya'Ya, for example, is correct, but it was only the place that's wrong. The essential thing here is that the exploitation, suppression, degradation, oppression and total subjugation really happened to Mato even if the name of the town where it happened was wrong.

Muhammad on the other hand said he was pained by the way THE ANALYST is bringing the general public to become aware of our oppressors' exploitative nature right from the time Nigeria got its so-called political independence. He even went further to say that most of our exploiters were dead, and it is "contrary to the norm observed here" to say someone has done wrong when he is dead. But Muhammad, you failed to tell us what "here" is to you.

*Bashir Ahmadu Gambo,
Sokoto.*

I'M A GAMJITE, PERIOD.

If at all Sardauna and his likes were corrupt, then what of the publisher of this your damnable magazine? Where did he get the capital to establish such a publishing company? Is it his gratuity or what? Why didn't he establish the company before the Second Republic?

In spite of all your criticisms, we are Gamjites. Period.

*Iiyasu Y. Dahiru Damham,
Darazo, Bauchi State.*

WHY 3RD REPUBLIC IS DOOMED

Your edition on the Third Republic is worthy of praise. In fact, you spoke many of your readers' mind about how the imminent Third Republic of Nigeria will be.

*Walter C. Aneke-Oku,
Kaduna.*

Your piece, 'Why Second Republic Failed' was a masterpiece, and a warning to us in this period of transition. We all know that transition is continuous. Please, you should not forget to focus on how Ministers, PLOs, Junior Ministers, Leaders of Houses (Senate/Representatives) were elected, selected or appointed, and how they steered the course of corruption and self-enrichment and nepotism. This may help to avert a repetition of this during the Third

Republic.

*Rabiu Yusuf,
Kano.*

The present regime wants the masses to be convinced that a democratic government will be formed when the country returns to civil rule in 1992. But this is a farce, and is unconvincing.

Democracy in capitalist Nigeria is a democracy that is curtailed, wretched and false; it is a democracy for the rich and for the minority. While restrictions and exactions continue to be imposed on the poor by the ruling classes. Only in a socialist society will a truly complete democracy become possible, a democracy without restrictions or exceptions whatsoever.

The recent industrial unrest, clearly proves the determination of the Nigerian workers, peasant farmers, students, etc. to raise their position to that of the ruling class and to win a battle for democracy through socialist revolution.

*Danjuma Ishaq A.,
Gongola State.*

N.N.P.C. ACCOUNTS

Mr. Rasheed Olayinka has asked "who accounts for what in this country?", when referring to the 'missing' N2.8 billion and the Pan Ocean oil deal under Buhari in your popular magazine (THE ANALYST, Vol.3, No.3, May-June, 1988). The *Headlines* (No. 184, August, 1988) has explained that only General Obasanjo and General Buhari did not appear before the Irikife tribunal. The *New Nigerian* editorial (23/6/88) has talked about financial chaos and confirmed that Ayida did say the money was moved into a private account. And when he took over power in December '83, Buhari, then just one week in office, recalled Chief Marinho who had earlier on been redeployed by Shagari. Two weeks later, Buhari called for the file on the N2.8 billion oil scandal (*The Guardian*, Friday, January 13, 1988).

To a layman like me, both Buhari and Obasanjo should be asked to say what they know on this matter. This may be the beginning of accounting by our leaders, past and present. The poor people of this country should know whose account this money was paid into "temporarily".

*Yussuf Olatunji,
Agege, Lagos.*

COMMENT

THE BLOOD-BATH WE MUST AVOID

A political controversy under the cover of religion is being used once again to threaten the survival of Nigeria. Powerful forces well entrenched in the government machinery, including the security services, seem bent on creating the conditions for another civil war. This time, a civil war pitching Nigerian christians against Nigerian muslims. This is not being alarmist. It is stating the plain truth. The survival of not only Nigeria, but of each and every Nigerian, is being threatened.

Since the palaver over Nigeria's role in the Organisation of Islamic Conference in 1986, political tension over religion has been heightening. The rioting and arson in Kaduna State in April 1987, aggravated this even further. Today, this tension is being deliberately intensified to a new pitch over Shari'a in the Constituent Assembly.

On Thursday, 8th September 1988, a Committee of the Assembly broke up violently over the Shari'a issue. In a desperate attempt to hide the rowdy, and possibly violent, scenes likely to occur when the Committee submits its report to the full house, metal detectors have even been installed, and the Chairman of the Assembly, Justice Anthony Aniagolu, has directed that for the rest of its life, the Assembly shall sit in camera. That means the public and the press shall be excluded.

For a body set up to produce a democratic constitution for a country of one hundred million people, such a move is very damaging. If the Constituent Assembly has to sit in camera because its members are not responsible enough to hold open and democratic debates, what shall happen in the state and national legislatures the constitution they will produce is going to establish? This disgraceful situation at Abuja shows how serious this political controversy under the cover of religion has become.

Nigerians therefore cannot afford to ignore the tragic experiences of other nations on this kind of politics of deceit using religion. The bloodbath that will occur in Nigeria in the event of a religious civil war will make the Sudanese, Irish and Lebanese tragedies seem like child's play.

Those who think that this blood-letting will give them the political leadership of a christian crusade, or a muslim jihad, should stop fooling themselves. The in-fighting and sectarianism within each of the

two religious groups will lead to such fragmentation that the only victor will be the vultures.

In any case, the working people of Nigeria in the urban and rural areas, and the patriotic elements in the professions and the armed forces, will not allow this to happen. They are increasingly becoming alert to the serious dangers of the ongoing manipulative campaigns over religion. They are aware that this campaign has no other purpose but to enable the same crooks to continue sucking the nation dry.

These crooks are now desperate.

They have used tribalism, and it has failed. They have used regionalism, and it blew up in their face. They have tried statism and it has failed to take off. Now they are going back to religion. But here again, they will fail.

They believe that by masquerading as the Christian Association of Nigeria or the Jama'atul Nasril Islam, or the Fellowship of Christian Graduates, or the Council of the Ulama, etc., they can continue to divide the people of Nigeria, protect what they have stolen from them, and continue looting. But they are mistaken. Both Islam and Christianity emerged and spread because of the commitment in their original messages to social justice and human dignity and equality. The people of Nigeria are increasingly awakening to this fact and are turning away from the hypocrisy of these swindlers and exploiters. It is on the basis of this new awakening that all patriots are now coming together to crush the devils now dancing on the gallery of religion. The commitment of the people of Nigeria to national unity, democracy, genuine national independence and socialism is becoming stronger every day. This was clearly articulated in the IMF and the Political Bureau debates of 1986-87. The dirty and sordid politics of divide and rule, using religion, can only be crushed by organising on the basis of that popular commitment.

Sentimental appeals for the unity of Nigeria, or of the North, the East, or the West, to counter this divisive campaign, are a complete waste of time. The challenge that faces all patriotic Nigerians — muslims, christians, and others, is clear. It is to respect one another's beliefs and unite to save this country from being wrecked by blood-sucking devils parading around as religious champions.

THE MARK OF THE DEVIL

Everybody in Jos, the Plateau State capital, knows the Hill Station Hotel. Delicately balanced, like a Shagari cap, on the scraggy tops of volcanic rocks, the Hill Station is the hallowed haunt of the new rich. And the Hill Station it was that recently provided the venue for an extraordinary gathering: the Prayer Week Against the International Conspiracy of Witches.

The attendance list read like a 'Who's Who'. Judges were there. Retired and serving generals were there. University dons were there. So were the money-bags and their jesters. For days, in an orgy of prayers and songs, they built themselves up to a state of hysteria, blubbing

unintelligible incantations.

But Jos is not the only state capital privileged enough to host such bizarre events. Benin City, home of the Ogboni Cult and of Idahosa's Church of God Mission, had earlier on hosted a similar convention. This time, however, it was a National Convention of Witches and Wizards — the very phantoms that were being exorcised at the Hill Station. From all corners of the country, witches and wizards trooped to the city, bringing along with them their broom sticks, feathers, cauldrons, oracles, fly-whisks, animal skins and exotic roots and herbs.

While all these were happening, 'mullahs' in Katsina, Sokoto and elsewhere in the country were busy

chasing out their own devils: prostitutes, pimps and the unemployed. Reason: these social groups are regarded as the cause of our social and economic misfortunes — too little rain and too much rain; soil erosion and dessication; hunger and disease; crime and poverty.

Yes. In Nigeria today, the devil is being chased everywhere. And to every group, its own devil. For the reactionary mullahs, the devil is the unemployed and the victims of unemployment; and everybody else who does not fit into their narrow conception of the world. For the 'christians' at the Hill Station, the devil is the same, even if seen as a witch or a wizard. As for the witches and wizards themselves, the devil is modernity.

Devils indeed Nigeria has aplenty. But are they the devils being chased by these pretenders and their ilk? To answer these questions satisfactorily, it is necessary to take a short excursion into the historical and social origins of religion.

ORIGINS

Religion is as old as human society. The product of men's efforts to come to terms with a harsh and uncertain world, religion has always been the last resort of all those in distress. Almost all religions known to mankind started in conditions of social and economic dislocation, and were originally movements composed and led largely by the poor and oppressed in society. Unfortunately, however, as soon as they become popular among the masses, they are captured by the very oppressors that they were meant to dislodge, and are turned into instruments of deception and domination. This is as true of the world religions — for example, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam — as it is true of our so-called traditional religions.

Take Buddhism for instance. At the time this religion emerged in the mountainous area to the north of the Ganges Plain, in present-day India, five hundred years before Christ, it was a response to the destruction of the old communal organisation of the society, dominated by elders. The division of Indian society into



Landless peasants: How they would love to crucify the Devils!

BRITISH Archive

emergent castes had just begun. The old tribal confederations, such as the Vajjian Republics, were being subjugated by newly-rising monarchies. In short, the society was in a state of turmoil.

It was in these conditions that a man known as Gautama, who was later to assume the religious title of the *Buddha* (the enlightened one) emerged. The message of Buddha, known as *Dhamma*, may be summed up thus: a return to a final state of holiness when all fires of greed, hate and illusion are eliminated. To Buddha and to early Buddhism, the ideal man (the *Nibbuta* man) is the "unprovocable, him of unclouded mind, freed from all lustfulness, void of all indolence".

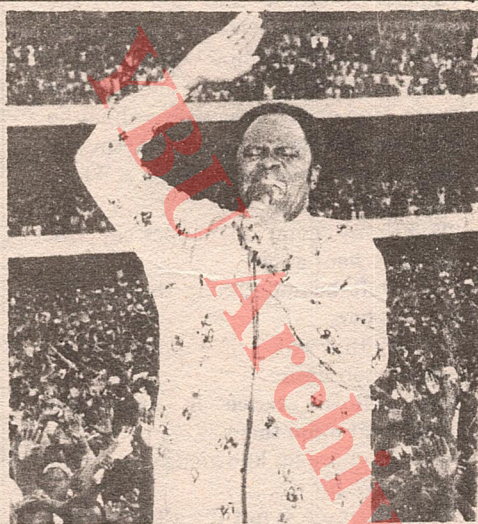
The early Buddhists practicalised these concepts and ideals by banding together into communes called *sanghas*. These *sanghas* disregarded the emerging social and economic distinctions in their recruitment. Buddha's teaching was addressed to all and sundry.

However, soon after the death of Buddha, this popular religious movement was hijacked by the royal courts. The first to do so was Emperor Asoka (270-232 B.C.), who became a Buddhist eight years after his ascension. Hiding behind the cloak of Buddhism, Asoka embarked on a process of incorporating the Buddhist monks into the service of the state. They were given land and other forms of property, and recruitment into the *sanghas* became the preserve of the upper castes in the community, while the poor were left high and dry, flinging coins at the feet of the Buddha.

CHRISTIANITY

The same process of decay occurred in the case of Christianity. In its beginnings, Christianity was the religion of the slaves, the poor, the outcasts and the flotsam and jetsam of society. Jesus of Nazareth himself had very poor earthly parentage. His father, Joseph, was a carpenter. He was born in a manger, amongst sheep and cattle. His entire ministry was devoted to fighting the cause of the poor and the down-trodden. Indeed, that is why the early Christians, particularly the disciples, were drawn from the most harassed and oppressed classes of Judaea: slaves, fishermen, artisans, and shepherds.

And persecuted indeed they were, by the rulers and the wealthy of their time. Jesus himself had to be 'crucified'. Simon Peter had to deny being a Christian to save his skin. Judas even went as far as betraying Christ. And Paul had his eyes plucked out. Yet, Christianity continued to grow in strength because of its message of social justice and its popular social base. The ruling classes of Rome and Judaea were so frightened that they had to adopt the religion in order to tame it, corrupt its leadership, and turn it into an instrument of domination. In fact, at the height of the decay of the church, salvation had become so commercialised that for a specific amount you could buy your way into heaven.



Idahosa: Faith healing is big business.

ISLAM

Like Jesus of Nazareth, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also had humble origins, even though his clan, the Quraish, had high status. He was an orphan. He was poor. To survive the turbulent changes that were rocking the Arabia of his day, that is the breaking up of the old order based on camel wealth and clan loyalties, to the new commercial upsurge centred around the pagan shrines of Mecca and the wheeling and dealing of Medina, he had to work for a wealthy widow. His message was first received by various groups oppressed by the old order.

This is reflected in the values and composition of early Islam: its rejection of hereditary principles of succession to leadership, its concern

for social justice and the protection of the weak and the poor, its insistence on accountability and probity in public life, and its call on all the oppressed to stand up and fight for their rights.

But Islam also could not escape the putrefying hands of the rich and the powerful. No sooner had it conquered Arabia, and began its world-wide expansion, establishing itself as the religion of the state, than it became the victim of the rapacious greed, capricious avarice and lascivious appetite of monarchs, kings, merchants and the official clergy. The discredited hereditary principle of leadership found its way back into the *Umma*. Controversy riddled succession to the caliphate. The third caliph, Usman, was assassinated by hired killers. His successor, the Caliph Ali, was also assassinated, this time in the mosque. Since then, the Caliphate became the sole preserve of dynasties. The level of decay under the Umayyad, for example, reached such a low point that special songs were composed at the courts, celebrating debauchery and the pleasures of the flesh. Little has changed since then.

AROCHUKWU ORACLE

But the use and abuse of religion is not something peculiar to the world religions. For centuries, African traditional religions have also lent themselves to positive, as well as negative, use. Perhaps a typical example is the Arochukwu Cult of the peoples of eastern Nigeria. The Aro Oracle, or Long Juju as it is generally known, was based at Arochukwu, in present-day Arochukwu in Imo State. Arising out of a communal society where the fear of the unknown was particularly strong, because of the low level of human control over the environment, the Arochukwu Oracle served to assuage society's fears and to explain its misfortunes. The barren went to the oracle. The diseased went to the oracle. The distressed also sought solace from the oracle.

However, the emergence of the slave trade changed all that. The Aro Oracle became a snare. The Aro priests transformed themselves into merchants in human merchandise. Unsuspecting supplicants who went to consult the oracle and make offerings were lured into a labyrinth

of caves which opened up into slave ships. As W.B.Baikie graphically described in 1856: "When a man goes to A'ro to consult Tshuku, he is received by some of the priests outside of the town, near a small stream. Here he makes an offering, after which a fowl is killed and, if it appears unpropitious, a quantity of a red dye, probably camwood, is spilled into the water which the priests tell the people is blood, and on this the votary is hurried off by the priests and is seen no more, it being given out that Tshuku has been displeased, and has taken him. The result of this preliminary ceremony is determined in general by the amount of the present given to the priests, and those who are reported to have been carried off by Tshuku are usually sold as slaves."

DAN FODIO

However, one of the best examples of the use and abuse of religion in Nigeria is to be found in the Jihad of Shehu Usman Dan Fodio. The jihadists mobilised people on the basis of concrete social and economic discontent. For instance, in his *Kitab-al-Farq*, Shehu Usman Dan Fodio condemned the imposition by the rulers of Hausaland on the peasantry of such a wide variety of taxes, levies and other extortions as *jangali* (cattle tax), *kurdin ghari* (poll tax), *kurdin salla* (festival tax), *ghaisuwa* (institutionalised bribe to officials), *tawasa* (butchers' tax in kind), *aghama* (meat tax) and *kamuwa* (seizures of humans and livestock). It was this concern with the well-being of the majority of the people, and of their rights and dignity, which enabled Shehu and the other leaders of the Jihad to overthrow the old order.

But Dan Fodio did not stop at that. Soon after the success of the Jihad, he retired from active politics and concentrated his efforts on writing guidelines on the proper conduct of state affairs for his successors. He warned against the dangers of ostentatious living and the insensitivity of rulers to the welfare of their subjects. He frowned at the wearing of silk and other forms of easy and corrupt living. He examined the hereditary principle in determining succession to the throne, preferring instead merit, consent, and knowledge.

Shehu Usman Dan Fodio's warnings fell on deaf ears. Barely a decade



Gumi: Qadi or fox?

after the success of the Jihad, Shehu's younger brother, and one of the leading commanders of the Jihad, Abdullahi Dan Fodio, was forced to write a scathing attack on the new order, *Tazyin-al-Waraqat*, in which he indicted the new rulers for betraying the ideals of the Jihad. Wrote Abdullahi:

"When my companions passed, and my aims went awry
I was left behind among the remainder, the liars
Who say that which they did not do and follow their desires
And follow avarice in everything incumbent upon them,
And who have no knowledge, and who do not ask for it. . .
Whose purpose is not the affairs of the Mosque,
Nor the schools of learning, nor even the affairs of the Quran schools,
But whose purpose is the ruling of the countries and their people,
In order to obtain delights and acquire rank,
According to the custom of the unbelievers and the titles of their sovereignty,
And the appointing of ignorant persons to the highest places,
And the collecting of concubines and fine clothes,
And horses that gallop in the towns, not in the battle fields,
And the devouring of the gifts of sanctity and booty and bribery,
And loots, and flutes and the beating of drums,
Their activities weaken those charged with managing affairs,
And the country people make off from every side;

Their purpose is fleeing from the judge, the breaking of faith,
And the befriending of the unbelievers for fear of the outcome.

They were many, but their righteous men were few;
They showed the dissimulation of wicked people, the people of the squadrons,
And of the sellers of free men in the market;
Some of them are posing as *qadis* in the clothing of foxes."

There could not have been a more eloquent indictment of a Jihad betrayed.

BIBLE AND SWORD

Indeed, even in the colonisation of this country, religion was used. For the missionaries came hand in glove with the European traders. And both were pathfinders, scouts and spies for the colonial soldiers and administrators. Ade Ajayi has, for instance, graphically recorded what took place at Abeokuta. He writes: "By Christmas 1846, within four months of the arrival of missionaries at Abeokuta, Thomas Hutton, Agent-General in Cape Coast of the firm of Thomas Hutton and Co. visited their factory in Badagry, still the only establishment there. He visited mission schools, contributed '120 heads of cowries to the good cause', and, together with his agent, Parsons, proceeded to Abeokuta in January 1847. There, he gave the school children a new year feast, contributed to mission funds, and in particular, looked round the town and investigated for prospects for trade. Very soon, other traders followed?"

But the use of religion did not stop at smoothening the penetration of colonial capitalism. Even after colonialism had been firmly established in the country, the colonial administrators resorted to playing off one religion against the other, manipulating different religious sentiments so as to confuse people and subvert their yearnings for independence and self determination. This was done particularly in the educational institutions. On the one hand, and in some selected schools, they would promote the virtues of Christianity and western civilisation and denigrate traditional religions and Islam; and on the other they would extol the teachings and

examples of the Sokoto Jihad, which they reduced to a Fulani affair.

The chosen successors of the colonial regime were to perfect this political trickery using religion. For example, on Thursday, 10th March, 1955, the Premier of the Northern Region, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, whose party — the Northern People's Congress (NPC) — had as its main rallying cry the motto "One North, One People, irrespective of rank, tribe or religion", rose during the Third Reading of the Native Authority (Amendment) Law of 1955 to state that:

"The right traditions that we have gone away from are the cutting of the hands of thieves and that has caused a lot of thieving in this country. Why should we not be cutting the hands of thieves in order to reduce thieving? That is logical and it is lawful in our own tradition and custom here. As regards slaves it is only because the moslem power is not strong here that we have not got slaves to sell."

But in November 1958, as the 1959 federal election approached, the same Sir Ahmadu Bello visited the Northern Mission Council at Jos and told them that:

"Firstly our government is a government of Northerners both Muslims and Christians. We wish to allow all men to practise their religion as they wish."

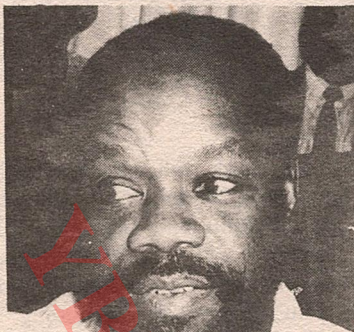
Meanwhile, in the Western Region, another political 'wizard', Chief Obafemi Awolowo, would at one and the same time operate with the priests of the Ogboni Cult and the Rosicrucians and still see nothing wrong and hypocritical in going to church and even donating custom-built organs.

CIVIL WAR

Yet such cynical manipulations could not prevent the emergence of violent contradictions amongst our political 'wizards'. Their insatiable greed, their cut-throat, dog-eat-dog, man-eat-man competition could only lead to one thing: chronic political instability. This led to the bloody, but totally unnecessary, civil war. But not even the blood of tens of thousands of innocent victims was enough to stop them from continuing with the deceptions and manipulation of religious sentiment and differences

in furtherance of their narrow and selfish ends.

From Ojukwu's bunker, Radio Biafra continued to cry wolf about the Biafrans being the victims of a so-called jihad launched by the 'muslim vandals of Northern Nigeria' against the black 'Christian Jews' of Biafra. And from Kaduna the shrill voice of Isa Abdulmumini and Lamido Muhammed Bajoga would retort: the rebels of Eastern Nigeria are but the illegitimate children of the christian colonialists and the black servants of the Vatican.



Ojukwu: Tried to dismember Nigeria.

While the brick-bats continued between Kaduna and Enugu, the international Christian hierarchies did not hesitate to pour petrol onto the conflagration. In an ecumenical service held in Westminster Abbey in May 1968, the Catholic Archbishop of London, Cardinal Heenan, told the congregation, amongst other things, that the civil war in Nigeria is a war of unbelievers against Christians. Similarly, in its September 1967 edition, the *African Monthly Review* wrote: "The Arabs have tried three times to wipe out Israel from the earth, but their efforts were on each occasion abortive. Today a similar situation is taking place in the West Coast of Africa. More than 30,000 inhabitants of what used to be Eastern Nigeria were murdered in cold-blood. Pregnant women, children, unarmed christian worshippers, were among the victims of the pogrom in Northern Nigeria last year. But the almighty God is fighting with the innocent Biafrans".

Powerful propaganda. But damnable lies. But then, in times of

crisis and rising tempers, the bigger the deception the better the effect.

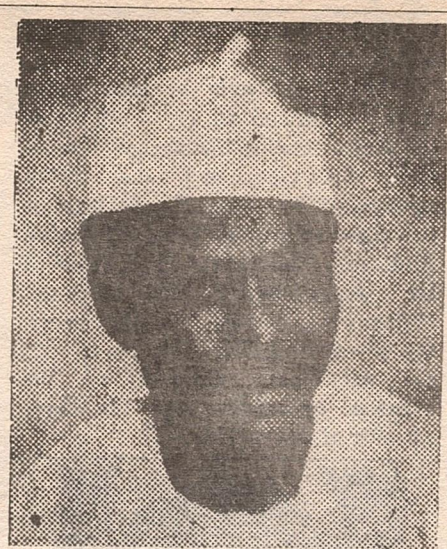
And when in 1976, the imperialist forces which had failed to break up Nigeria masterminded the assassination of that patriot and nationalist, General Murtala Mohammed, the domestic religious pretenders rose in one voice to chorus their old refrain: 'Look, the Nigerian muslims are killing the christians; hey, the christian infidels are killing our muslim brothers in Nigeria.' Murtala's assassination was interpreted variously, in religious terms, in order to foster communal violence and distrust.

Reuter's Collin Fox's despatch, broadcast on the world service of the BBC, falsely reported communal rioting after Murtala's assassination. The World Muslim League, whose Saudi sponsors had all along opposed Murtala's policies, sent a condolence message to its Nigerian cabin-boys commiserating with them "for the loss of a Muslim leader". The noisy Chike Obi rushed to the 1976 convention of the National Union of Nigerian Students at Enugu to charge that the backwardness of Nigeria can be directly traced to the door-steps of Islam and the Fulani.

But even in more recent times, religion has continued to be a convenient camouflage for the thief and the dissimulator. Classical example: the Shari'a debate of 1977-78. In this cheap show of the most theatrical rabble-rousing exercise Nigeria had yet witnessed in its history, corrupt, hypocritical and morally bankrupt ten-percenters, contractors and verandah boys stood the nation on its toes, ranting and raving, chanting and hollering, barking and baying half-digested religious quotations. And at the end of the whole show, after all the charade and the deception, they all banded together under various political canopies, looted the treasury, and sucked and sapped dry the life-blood of the nation. So much for their religious piety!

TWINS OF EVIL

Yes. If anybody is in doubt about who the real manipulators of this country are, and about their adeptness at using religion and religious sentiments, even at quoting the Bible and the Qur'an to whitewash their seamy deals and wicked strategies, need he do more than refer to the Abiola-Benson



Abiola, Benson: Quarreled over the spoils.

correspondence of 1979? Abiola, of course, everybody knows. T.O.S. Benson, too, is not exactly unknown — a Minister of Information in the Tafawa Balewa government, he became a top notcher in the defunct NPP. Chief Benson claims to be a prominent Lagos Christian, while Chief Abiola is even a *Baba Addini*. But these differences did not prevent the two coming together in big business.

For some time, the two friends wheeled and dealt together, garnering for themselves millions of naira in the process. But as often happens to such relationships, things fell apart over the sharing of the juicy morsels. Benson accused Abiola of deliberately excluding him from a juicy telecommunication sub-contract, a charge which Abiola promptly refuted. Benson was, of course, unimpressed. In the end

they both took the matter to the Almighty for adjudication, liberally quoting the Bible and the Qur'an. In his letter to Abiola, Benson thundered: "... only Allah knows what you are capable of doing to people who are not well-placed. But let me remind you, that in the words of Psalm 52 Verse II, 'Power belongeth to God'. And so it is also written in the Qur'an. It is also pertinent to mention that financial power corrupts, just as absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Of course, Abiola was not one to be beaten in this type of game. He responded in a newspaper advertisement on November 8, 1979, thus: "I wish to state that if you know anything about what it is to be a Muslim, you will appreciate that Muslims derive no pleasure in ruining their fellowmen as you claimed. I can say,

without any fear or favour, that I am not merely a stout Muslim, but my life and attitude has been guided by Islamic injunctions. . . . It is a general adage that 'the devil will always cite scriptures to suit its purpose'. I am not, therefore surprised by your quotation from Psalm 62."

The grandmasters of the religious chess board played out their hands most openly during the period 1977-1983. Today, they have left the show for their cretins in Abuja. This rowdy crowd has since started parodying the motions of the Shari'a shouting-match of 1977-78.

In a nation where, today, a single meal a day is becoming a rarity for the vast majority of the population; where children are dying in their thousands from malnutrition; where millions are going about unhoused and unclothed; where every day large numbers are being driven mad; and where life in general has become nasty, brutish and short, a select, over-fed, over-clothed, and over-pampered few are wasting our time, and diverting attention from the real issues of the day.

But Nigerians everywhere are fed up. They have begun to see through the gimmicks of these hypocrites. Like Abdullahi Dan Fodio, they are beginning to recognise the fox behind the *qadi's* attire. They are beginning to identify the devil behind the priestly cassocks. The people shall crucify the real devils in their midst. It is just a matter of time.

By Pius Gbasha, Sa'idu Adamu and Gabriel Abu, with Sule Mohammed.

USE AND ABUSE OF RELIGION

In their essence, religious tenets can be instruments for forging peace, progress, and social justice in society. This is as true of Islam as it is true of Christianity.

While in a few cases, leaders have used these religious tenets of Islam and Christianity to cement social bonds and move society forward, in many other instances the opposite has been

the case. Military and civilian dictators masquerade themselves as religious leaders to harass, intimidate and oppress their people in collaboration with imperialism. The following examples from Iran, Sudan, Pakistan, Guatemala and Libya illustrate how religious ideas could be used for or against the people. Please read on:

IRAN: A Revolution Betrayed

Today, apart from Ayatollah Khomeini, Hashemi Rafsanjani is, perhaps, the most powerful man in the Islamic Republic of Iran. As speaker of the Iranian *Majlis* (Parliament) and as the Acting Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Armed Forces, he wields enormous power in the country. The 200,000 strong peoples' militia, popularly known as the Revolutionary

Guards, are directly under him. The hierarchy of mullahs organised around the Islamic Republican Party take orders from him. Indeed, his influence over the Ayatollah Khomeini is so strong that he recently made him to take a decision which no observer of Iranian politics would ever have dreamed the Ayatollah would have taken in his life time: to accept the

COVER STORY

United Nations resolution 598, order a cease-fire with Iraq, and resume peace talks. A decision which the Ayatollah said was like drinking a "cup of poison".

Given this exalted position of Rafsanjani in the Iranian political and spiritual hierarchy, and given the puritanical posturing of the leaders of the Iranian revolution — a posturing which has led to the hanging of several hundred women for an offense as small as refusing to wear a veil — the least one would have expected from a leader like Rafsanjani is the observance of the most basic principles of decency. But in Iran, decency is for the ordinary people and not for some of the leadership, whatever noise is made in the *Majlis* and the mosques to the contrary.

While his Revolutionary Guards round up Iranian women for not wearing the veil, and while Iran's executioner-judge, Ayatollah Khalkhali, sends such women to the gallows, Rafsanjani busies himself in his numerous hideouts having fun.



Rafsanjani: Moral double standards.

An attractive Canadian female journalist, Carole Jerome, herself a mistress of Khomeini's former foreign minister, the late Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, has opened a little window into the moral bankruptcy of most of the present Iranian leadership. Recalling an interview she recently had with Rafsanjani, Carole recounts how Rafsanjani "spent much of his energy making a play for my beautiful Iranian translator — he even went so far as to remove his cloak and sit with his chest partly exposed".

The story of Rafsanjani is, in a sense, the story of the Iranian revolution — the story of a revolution betrayed. Perhaps in no other way will the extent of this betrayal be understood and appreciated than by recounting the massive wave of demonstrations held in Iran on the ouster of the Shah in 1979. For instance, the American news magazine, *Time*, of January 29, 1979, which is no friend of revolutions, reported the scene in Tehran on the announcement of the flight of the Shah from the country thus: "... people danced in the streets and hugged and kissed one another in joyous abandon. 'The Shah is gone! The Shah is gone!!!' they shouted. They garlanded their windshield wipers with flowers that seemed to dance in the air. They toppled statues of the Shah and his father and blacked out his picture from bank notes. Demonstrators and army troops embraced, red carnations sprouted incongruously from the barrel of soldiers' rifles."

For weeks the entire country was in a state of euphoria. The police were in hiding, the SAVAK (the Shah's secret police) disappeared underground. After about four months of

literally non-stop demonstrations by the Iranian people against a most fascistic dictatorship, the 2,500-year-old monarchical system had been brought down.

To fully appreciate what great relief this was to the Iranian people, and to understand the hopes for the future rekindled in every Iranian, we must dwell a little on the atrocities perpetrated both by Shah Pahlavi and earlier monarchs.

Perhaps the most graphic display of the monarch's total lack of patriotism, and his callous insensitivity to the hopes and aspirations of the Iranian people is best demonstrated by his handling of Iran's oil resources. In 1901, the Shah granted a concession to a British engineer — William D'Arcy — giving him exclusive rights to exploit the country's oil resources. The conditions were shamelessly loaded in favour of the foreigner: Iran was to receive only 16% of the profit; 20,000 pound sterling shares in the venture, and a miserable promise of an additional £20,000. Seven years later oil was found in commercial quantity, but the promised £20,000 had not been paid. In 1909, D'Arcy incorporated the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC). And from then on it was business — but business more for Britain than for Iran. Five decades later, the total investment in Iran's oil industry made by the British amounted to £22,000,000, yielding for them a profit of £800,000,000. But for Iran, its profits amounted to a mere £105,000,000, most of which was cornered by the Shah and his clique.

Naturally, this rape of the Iranian people and their resources by foreign business concerns and their lackies generated popular resentment and protests. Sporadic riots broke out in different parts of the country. Secret societies opposed to the monarchy mushroomed. Leading this ferment were those social groups most affected by the autocracy of the monarchy — merchants, and the clergy, who were closely linked up with them.

This ferment was to force the monarchy to grant political concessions leading to Iran's first *Majlis* (Parliament) in 1906. This experiment in constitutional monarchy was however to be short-lived. Incessant bickering between the secular and ecclesiastical members of the *Majlis*, deftly manipulated and encouraged by the palace, ensured its premature demise.

But this was not to be the end of the popular protests and organised resistance against the Shah and his foreign masters. By 1941 a popular organisation called the Tudeh (Masses) Party had emerged in the country to champion the struggle of the people.

The popular upsurge in the country was eventually to lead to the election of a fiery nationalist, Mohammed Mossadeq, to the *Majlis* in 1949. By 1951 the popularity of the man and his uncompromising nationalism had earned him the prime ministership of the country on the ticket of the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the Iranian economy. Naturally, Mossadeq's first port of call was the oil industry, which he nationalised without blinking an eye. But this immediately made him the number one enemy of the powerful Western oil mafia. The CIA received 400,000 dollars and a simple enough instruction: 'Mossadeq must be finished'. Reactionary mullahs, verandah boys, and royalist troops were mobilised under the command of General Zahadi. The tanks rolled down Tehran's streets, slaying thousands on their way. Mossadeq was overthrown. The Shah returned to the throne triumphantly, and within a month about 600 army personnel, all members of the Tudeh Party, had been purged from the military. Over 7,000 members of the party were arrested. And in one prison alone,

the Qasr prison, 100 members of the Party were hanged. The Tudeh had resigned itself, arms akimbo, while Mossadeq was being overthrown. Now they had become the number one target of the Shah.

The history of Iran thenceforth became a history of official terrorism. The army was reorganised, strengthened and armed to the teeth. A new vicious and royalist secret police, the SAVAK, was constituted. The entire society was bureaucratised under a single party, called the Resurgence Party, whose supreme commander was the Shah. This was the period of the so-called 'White Revolution'. The purpose of all this was to marginalise Iranians, and under the cover of industrialising the country, to introduce foreign-motivated programmes which serve Western business interests at the expense of Iranians.

Of course, all these meant further hardships and suffering for the people. This led to the emergence of radical and populist organisations committed to the overthrow of the Shah, the wresting of genuine national independence, and the ending of foreign domination. The most prominent of these new organisations were the Mujahedeen and the Fedayeen. Founded in 1964, the Mujahedeen was a radical muslim organisation committed to popular and progressive Islam. The Fedayeen, on the other hand, was formed in 1971 and was a Marxist-Leninist organisation with Maoist and Castroist leanings. These two organisations believed in instant action and a guerilla approach to the Iranian problem, and wasted no time in establishing fighting columns in the urban centres.

Since the extermination of the Tudeh however, direct contact on a routine basis with the people became increasingly the preserve of the mullahs. The clergy was well placed to take the leading role in the anti-Shah campaign. They had a network of mosques that criss-crossed the country. They had ready-made cadres in the form of theological students and low and middle ranking priests scattered all over. They controlled a respectable amount of wealth gotten from tithes, gifts and direct donations from the merchants. And they were in daily contact with the people through the obligatory prayers and other spiritual gatherings.

The first salvos in the new wave of discontent was fired by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1964, when he criticised the Shah's industrialisation programme. Khomeini was promptly arrested by the SAVAK. In May 1977 the country's intelligentsia started writing critical letters and articles in the press. And when, between June and August the same year, the government attempted to relocate slum dwellers, 50,000 Iranians spilled into the streets in protest. In January the following year the administration had the temerity to sponsor a virulent attack against the exiled Khomeini on the occasion of the death (some have said, in the hands of SAVAK) of his son. Iranians were scandalised. Four thousand theology students at the holy city of Qom went on a mass demonstration, demanding for the Shah's head. Their example spread like bush fire throughout other Iranian cities and towns. Meanwhile, in the working class city of Abadan, the SAVAK was brewing a more horrendous potion of intrigue. On the evening of 19th August, 1978, about 500 of the city's inhabitants seated themselves in a cinema theatre to enjoy a movie. Half way into the show, agents of the Shah's secret police bolted the entrance and exits of the theatre and set the whole place ablaze. After the ensuing tragic stampede and hopeless cries for help, 410 lay dead — men, women and children — grotesquely mangled in the charred ruins. Iran, indeed the entire world, was stunned. Millions of Iranians poured into the streets in unprecedented demonstrations of their rejection of the murderous regime of the Shah.

From then on, as far as the Iranian people were concerned, there was to be no more peace until the dictatorship was toppled. September 7, 1978; martial law declared in Tehran and eleven other cities. September 8, 1978: hundreds of demonstrators slain at Jaleh Square in Tehran. September 9, 1978: Tehran oil refinery workers go on indefinite strike. September 11, 1978: other oil refinery workers at Isfahan, Abadan, Tabriz and Shiraz join the strike movement. September 12, 1978: print workers join. October 1, 1978: other oil workers join the wave. December 1978: millions spill into the streets all over the country shouting 'death to the Shah', and at night on roof tops chanting 'Allah-u-Akbar'. December 10: some soldiers join the demonstrators. December 31: a nationwide general strike brings the economy to a halt and forces martial law administrator, General Azhari, to resign. January 16, 1979: the Shah capitulates, flees Iran tail in between his legs. February 1, 1979: Khomeini returns after 14 years in exile.

The people of Iran had triumphed. A blood-sucking



The Shah: Chased out of Iran.

armour plated vampire of a dictatorship had been overthrown, against all odds, and in defiance of the so-called informed Western predictions.

But it was a costly victory for the people of Iran. In the course of their courageous struggle against the Shah, mothers lost many children, husbands their wives, children their parents, and spouses their loved ones. Indeed, between 1971 and 1977 alone, a total of 355 Iranians were murdered by the security forces of the Shah. Not to talk about the hundreds that just simply disappeared, and the thousands who were maimed and deformed from gun shots, electric shock, horse whips, and other horrendous forms of torture which was SAVAK's speciality. At the height of the martial law, on September 18, 1978 to be precise, over 500 demonstrators were gunned down at the Jaleh Square in Tehran.

But what became of this revolution? What happened to the rekindled hopes for a new beginning? How did the spiritual guides, the bearded, beads-carrying clerical leaders of this revolution shepherd the Iranian society?

The answer is simple enough: they dashed the hopes of the people, diverted the course of the revolution, and turned it upside down. Barely weeks after Khomeini's return, a clamp-down on all popular organisations and progressive individuals began. Workers strike committees, which had organised the strikes and protests against the Shah, were systematically disbanded and their leaders liquidated. In their place, mullah loyalists were entrenched. The cadres of Mujahedeen and the Fedayeen, who had led the assault on barracks, royalist

fortresses and ammunition dumps, distributing fire arms to the demonstrating youth, were systematically disarmed, detained and slaughtered. In their place, the rump of the SAVAK was exhumed, around which a new secret police loyal to the mullahs, the SAVAMA, was built. Women, who had made courageous contributions to the popular insurrection, tending the injured, carrying food and medicine, preparing molotov cocktails and even physically engaging in street battles, were especially singled out for the most callous repression. The Family Protection Act of 1975, which had given protection to women on issues like polygamy, divorce, and family relations, was first of all reviewed and subsequently scrapped altogether. The mullahs enacted a decree making the wearing of the *chador* (veil) compulsory for all women. And when about 10,000 women protested against this in Tehran in March 1979, the *Hezbollahi* thugs were let loose on them. Within a few weeks, thousands of women lost their jobs. Many were arrested, and scores sent to the executioner.

All vestiges of popular democracy were expunged from the statute books. The Mujahedeen and Fedayeen were banned. The Kurdish, Arab, and Azerbaijani and other national minorities were trampled under foot; the universities were purged of so-called communists and their sympathisers. A new constitution was enacted placing the entire society and government in the firm grip of the mullah-led Islamic Republican Party (IRP), with Ayatollah Khomeini as the 'grand spiritual guide'.

But perhaps the greatest crime, and the most painful betrayal, that the Ayatollah and his mullahs have wrought on the Iranian people lies in the bloody eight-year-old war which should have stopped the moment the Iraqi invaders were kicked out of Iran in 1982. As a result of the senseless decision of the Ayatollah to conquer Iraq, the country lost about a million of the most active segment of its population, and another 630,000 maimed and permanently impaired. Estimates of Iran's total military expenditure between 1980, when the war started, and today, stands at about 77.5 billion dollars, according to the Stockholm-based International Peace Research Institute.

But what went wrong? How come a revolution which cost so much and which promised such a great deal, withered away so soon? Why should a revolution led by such 'holymen', such 'ascetic' men, so easily turn out to be such a monster?

Here again, the answer is straightforward. The Iranian revolution was a revolution led by a wrong social group for wrong — very wrong — reasons. From the beginning of that revolution to the end, those on top of it were the merchants and affiliated members of Iran's traditional middle class. The merchants were the ones that funded the mullahs right from the word 'go'. The merchants were the ones that held key positions in the IRP structures. And the merchants were the ones who have benefitted most from the 8 year tyranny of Ayatollah Khomeini's rule. The glib, rancorous and prolific sermonising about Allah, the Shari'a, and 'spiritual guidance' was largely to intimidate and bamboozle the Iranian people.

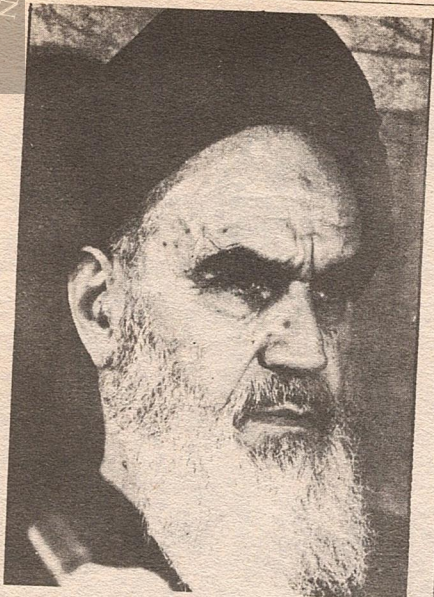
A few examples will suffice to illustrate this point. The Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, current Acting Commander-in-Chief of the country's armed forces and right hand man of the 'czar' of the Iranian revolution himself, the all-powerful Hojatoleslam Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani, essentially belongs to this merchant class. The son of a nut farmer, Rafsanjani became in the 1970s a reasonably wealthy man through dubious deals,



*Ashraf Rabie (fought against the Shah but murdered by Khomeini's men):
"How stupid they are; these small pebbles which want to block
the tormenting floods and rivers of life."*

the most important of which was property speculation with the collaboration of a construction company called Dezh-Saz-Castle Builders.

The 'czar' himself, i.e., Ayatollah Khomeini, and his son Ahmad, are by no stretch of the imagination men of small means. What is true of Rafsanjani and the Ayatollah and his family is also true of many more leaders of this 'holy' state. This is why they will condemn the yankees, organise processions against the U.S., kidnap all sorts of people, and generally decry imperialism, and at the same time make huge personal profits of hundreds of millions of dollars buying highly inflated arms from the CIA and MOSSAD through such international crooks like Manucher Ghobanifar, Adnan Kashoggi and Albert Hakim. For, as R. Keivan correctly observed way back in 1984, the war itself, and the smashing of the left, as well as the erosion of the democratic achievements of the Iranian revolution, can only be for one interest: "The interest of the U.S. In political terms, society has become so passive that people from all classes



Khomeini: Took his "cup of poison".

infinitely prefer the past to the present. They associate the U.S. with the past and thus welcome it. America which was cursed after the revolution, is now looked on with a favourable eye by important segments of the population and thought to have been right all along."

If anybody was previously in doubt as to who the war was benefitting, that doubt was put to rest when Khomeini saw that the Iranian armed forces were on the verge of collapse and took his 'cup of poison' and accepted ceasefire. Reports Van Petrossian for *The Guardian* (London) on August 11, 1988: "Ayatollah Khomeini's decision caused the black-market value of foreign currency and goods to collapse. The dollar fell from 1,450 rials to about 700 rials — from 20 to 10 times the official rate — before settling down at about 500 rials. . . . The impact on those who had banked on high black-market prices has been devastating. Several traders are said to have committed suicide. Seven top money changers and some businessmen have suffered heart attacks. Heart specialists have been besieged."

The Ayatollah Khomeini and the mullahs say they are carrying out Allah's will. The facts however show that for eight bloody years, they have been mammon's servants.

SUDAN: The Shari'a Debased

When in 1983, in nearby Sudan, Field Marshal Ja'afar Nimeiry realised that his rule was hated by the Sudanese people, he brought the Muslim Brotherhood into his government and imposed what he called the Shari'a Laws. This violated the Sudanese Constitution which had been worked out on the basis of the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972. This agreement brought peace to the Sudan after 17 years of civil war (1955-1972). In that war, one of the most important issues was freedom of worship for all Sudanese, and an end to any attempt to impose muslim law over christians and others.

Nimeiry used this agreement to consolidate his rule after the coup that brought him to power in 1969, only to turn around in September 1983 to destroy the basis of that agreement by imposing what he claimed was muslim law on the country.

He did this because he, and the section of the Sudanese ruling class he had come to represent, had become so corrupt, greedy and incompetent that in 14 years (1969-83) they had wrecked the economy of this richly-endowed country of over 20 million people. It is now so deeply in debt that the Sudanese pound is worth virtually nothing.

Sudanese of almost all religious and political tendencies, except the fascistic Muslim Brotherhood, built up by the CIA in the 1950s to oppose Gamal Abdul Nasser's Arab nationalist programmes, rejected Nimeiry's so-called Islamisation. The majority of muslims in the Sudan refused to call Nimeiry's new laws Shari'a. They just called them "the September Laws".

This action of a drowning Nimeiry gave greater justification to the rebellion led by the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) which had started in May 1983. From a local affair, the SPLA developed into a national liberation movement committed to a united, secular, independent and democratic Sudan.

As the SPLA intensified its guerilla war, and the trade unions, other opposition groups, and large sections of the population came out to challenge Nimeiry's corrupt regime, he declared himself an *Imam*, and in April 1984 imposed a state of emergency.



Nimeiry: Alcoholic champion of 'shari'a' laws.

The following year, he executed a 76 year old Qur'anic scholar, Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, leader of the Republican Party of the Sudan, who had courageously exposed the very anti-Islamic nature of Nimeiry's regime and its fascistic Muslim Brotherhood supporters. Taha was charged, tried and convicted on the false accusation that he had ceased to be a muslim.

This regime of Nimeiry's is the one responsible for the so-called "Operation Moses", in which leading figures of the Muslim Brotherhood in the regime, and others, got millions of dollars from Israel and American Zionists for the secret transportation of thousands of Ethiopian *Falashas* from Ethiopia to Israel, where they live as black, second-class citizens in that racist enclave.

Nimeiry and his cohort of so-called Islamicists were also responsible for one of the earliest deals to dump toxic waste in Africa.

In 1985 Nimeiry was overthrown, and as the SPLA, led by John Garang, correctly foresaw, that did not mean the end of the reactionary, bankrupt and divisive policies he had come to represent in the Sudan.

The present Sudanese government, controlled by oligarchic clans like the Mahdi and the Mirghani clans, and by the Muslim Brothers, is continuing with this pseudo-Islamic fascism. It is also facing increasing patriotic resistance from all parts of the Sudan.

PAKISTAN: Zia's Double Face



Zia: Good riddance.

Pakistan, on the other hand, provides one of the classical examples of how a corrupt and repressive military and bureaucratic clique seized power and tried to use religion to sanctify its rule. The obvious failure of General Zia ul-Haq to stabilise the military dictatorship he led for eleven years (1977-88) and to eliminate all democratic political forces in Pakistan, and his spectacular assassination in an aircraft explosion on 17th August, 1988, have aroused a lot of interest about Pakistan.

What most outsiders do not know is that Zia seized power through a military coup in July 1977 as part of a well-orchestrated campaign of destabilisation, supported by the United States of America. This was directed against the democratically-elected civilian government of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), led by the late Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto. Zia subsequently hanged Bhutto on a dubious charge of murder, in 1979. A leading role in this campaign of systematically destabilising a democratically-elected government in order to create the right conditions for a military coup, was played by a fascist organisation masquerading as a political movement committed to Islam. This organisation was the *Jama'at-i-Islami* of Pakistan, which in the 1970 elections suffered a humiliating defeat by the PPP when it received less than 5% of the votes. Its leader, Mina Tufail, was in fact a relation of Zia.

The *Jama'at* was sponsored into existence by the British to oppose the anti-colonial movements in the Indian sub-continent, under an Islamic cover. It opposed the Indian National Congress because it claimed it was Hindu-dominated. It opposed Ali Jinnah's Muslim League because it had a non-theocratic programme.

Since independence, it has emerged as a clearly fascist organisation, particularly from the early 1970s, as Pakistani scholar Aijaz Ahmad describes succinctly:

"The *Jama'at* has always been a semi-secret, conspiratorial organization of trained and highly disciplined cadres, giving priority to organisational efficiency and loyalty over numerical strength. In its political work, it has always concentrated on urban centres rather than the countryside, which it considers largely irrelevant for its political strategy of urban agitations, selective terror against the urban left, recruitment from among the urban petty bourgeoisie, and infiltration of existing apparatuses of the Army, bureaucracy. . . the *Jama'at*'s

propaganda among vast numbers of troops was officially sanctioned by commanding officers on the battalion level and above. Generals, like Zia himself, a close relation of Mina Tufail, the present Chief of the *Jama'at*, provided ample protection for secret cells of the *Jama'at* inside the Armed Forces; it was the only political organization which had such opportunities. . . . Since the elections of 1970, we have witnessed a similar process of the *Jama'at*'s successful bid to infiltrate every other civic institution and social structure as well. In addition to the Army and bureaucracy, which are of course critical in conspiratorial takeovers, the *Jama'at* has attached special significance to the educational institutions and the vernacular press, partly in pursuit of long-term ideological hegemony over the petty bourgeoisie but more urgently because students and newspapers play a decisive role in the mass-scale urban agitation which is in turn necessary to create the type of social crisis which can be used to legitimize political intervention by the Armed Forces, for instance the urban agitations of March-July 1977 which provided the justification for the coup that followed. *Jama'at*, the student front of the *Jama'at*, is now the largest and most disciplined organisation in the country. This dominance has been obtained through years of perseverance, painstaking development of elite cadres, monetary benefits for its members, enormous amounts of available funds, and organized terror campaigns against opponents among students and faculty alike."

It was however not the *Jama'at*'s propaganda and terror that sustained the Zia military dictatorship. It was sustained largely by massive military aid in armaments, training and intelligence from the United States of America. Many of those who are misled into seeing Zia as a patriotic muslim leader, for example, do not know his true nature and background. He was one of the planners and executors of the 1970 massacre of Palestinians by King Hussein of Jordan, known as Black September, when tens of thousands of Palestinians were killed, maimed or driven out of Jordan. Brigadier Zia ul-Haq, as he was then, was military advisor to King Hussein at this time. It was his role in this assault on the Palestinians cause which confirmed American confidence in him as a future alternative to the Pakistani politicians, when the time was ripe.

Zia continued in this role as a paid henchman of America in the Middle East up to his death. By mid-1986 the Pakistani Army was, together with American official and semi-official troops, the main foreign guardians of the Saudi Arabian regime. Zia had in Saudi Arabia one division of 13,000 infantry soldiers, with two armoured and two artillery brigades numbering a total of 10,000 men. Besides these 23,000 Pakistani troops, there were numerous air force and naval personnel, all to ensure that the corrupt and parasitical Saudi monarchy continued to rule that country in the service of America.

Zia and his cohort of crooked generals and crooked mullahs were handsomely paid for this mercenary service by the Saudis.

But the value of the Zia military dictatorship to the USA really rose when they decided in 1980 to start sending arms to the right-wing rebel forces trying to overthrow the Afghanistan government backed by Soviet troops. In 1979-1988, Zia received about 3 billion dollars in American aid,

following Israel and Egypt closely in the list of the top receivers of US military aid. It is not surprising that he was killed while sitting next to the American ambassador to Pakistan, Arnold Raphael, who groomed him to seize power in the mid-70s when Raphael was the senior political officer in the U.S. embassy in Islamabad. In the same C-130 Hercules plane was Brigadier General Herbert M. Wasson, the U.S. defence attache and former deputy commander of the U.S. Central Command in charge of the American rapid deployment force targetted on the Middle East.

Not only did the Zia dictatorship serve American official interests in Afghanistan, its leaders also lined their pockets through armaments deals and a booming narcotics trade. General Akhter Rahman, who died with Zia, and was the boss of Pakistani Military Intelligence, was widely known to have made millions through the drugs trade.

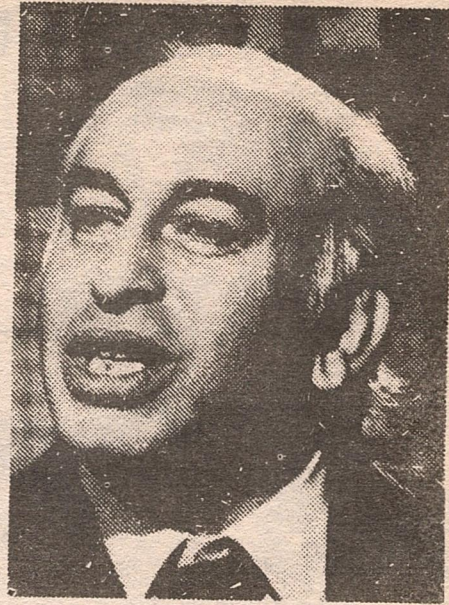
So bad was the drugs trade involving the Afghan rebels that by last year, Pakistan had a very serious drug addiction problem in its own population. There were reported to be about half a million known drug addicts in the country.

Not only did drug addiction become rampant under Zia, but divisions along religious and ethnic lines among Pakistanis also worsened.

The Zia regime, for example, persecuted Pakistan's Shia minority. In fact, the murder in Peshawar in the first week of August 1988 of Allam Arif Hussaini, the leader of the main Pakistani Shia group, was by Zia's security services.

In spite of the regime's Islamic posture, Pakistani Muslims of different ethnic groups were encouraged to slaughter one another. The Punjabis were set against the Muhajirun; or the Sunnis against the Shia, in an almost monthly round of rioting, massacres, assassinations, and violence. All this was under a regime claiming to be promoting Islam — the religion of peace.

The economy of Pakistan was, on paper, shown to be averaging a growth rate of 6%, but in fact it was on the verge of bankruptcy, as Dr. Mehsul Haq, the Finance Minister, admitted in June of this year. But not only was the economy in shambles, but the government's own economic survey for 1987-88



Zulfikar Ali Bhutto: Murdered by Zia.

confirmed that income distribution in both rural and urban areas was worse than it was in the 1960s, when 22 families controlled two-thirds of the country's wealth. Under Zia, this two-thirds was probably controlled by a dozen serving and retired generals and rich mullahs.

It is not surprising therefore that when the dictator was blown to ashes in the sky he was only mourned in Washington, London, Riyadh and in some top circles in Lagos, Kaduna and Kano. In Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and all over Pakistan there was rejoicing. Sweets and flowers were thrown on the streets and the popular saying was: "Thirty people may have died, but millions have been saved".

That is how dictatorships go, no matter how cleverly or brutally they try to use religion to cover their oppression.

GUATEMALA: Born-Again Butcher

In the Republic of Guatemala, in Central America, half a world away from Pakistan, we also find a military dictatorship misusing religion to sanctify its brutal exploitation and oppression. In Pakistan, General Zia ul-Haq and his cohorts used a version of fundamentalist Sunni Islam. In Guatemala, General Efraim Rios Montt, retired, used a version of fundamentalist evangelical Christianity. Both have failed. Zia has been assassinated, leaving Pakistan torn, divided, unstable and bankrupt. Rios Montt was overthrown in another military coup in August 1983. Since then, Guatemala's protracted civil war has intensified, and the ramshackle military-political structure he tried to consolidate is daily crumbling under the onslaught of Guatemala's revolutionary forces.

In Guatemala, with a population of about 7,000,000, the ruling oligarchy, fully backed by the U.S., has been trying to stabilise its domination of the politics and the economy of the country since the CIA-instigated overthrow of the patriotic and democratically-elected government of Jacobo Arbenz in July 1954. In spite of its rampant election-rigging, vicious and systematic use of death squads and electronic surveillance and sophisticated counter-insurgency warfare, the Guatemalan oligarchy, backed by the U.S. and Israel, has failed to eliminate



Rios Montt: Even God could not save his regime.

the democratic and revolutionary organisations and their guerilla armies.

It was in an attempt to crush these forces that a section of the Guatemalan oligarchy brought in the retired General Rios

Montt, a former Chief of Staff of the Army, who in 1974 contested and lost the presidency on the ticket of the Christian Democratic Party. Having lost the election, Rios Montt was brought in as President in a military coup in March 1982. The lessons for Nigeria, with its power-hungry retired generals and a desperate ruling class, is clear. This is how the journal of *NACLA—Report on the Americas*, explains the situation:

"In Guatemala, evangelical churches swelled after the devastating 1976 earthquake. Evangelical organizations and faith missions responded with millions of dollars in aid and a legion of missionaries to dispense it. They brought the survivors a message too: that the earthquake was a warning from God for Guatemala to repent its sins. In 1976 church membership leapt to 14%. Growth was steady for the next five years and surged again in 1982 by 18%. By now, 22% of the population — 1.5 million people — had converted.

"By 1982, the prospect of an imminent guerilla victory frightened evangelical leaders. On the initiative of two US preachers, hundreds of congregations 'interceded with Christ through prayers that the March elections would bring a miracle to save Guatemala from the devil's grasp'.

"The electoral fraud brought no miracles, but a military coup sixteen days later did. To the delight of the evangelicals, the army named as head of a three man junta, General Efraim Rios Montt, a devout born-again Christian and member of the Church of the Word, a mission of the California-based Gospel Outreach. Rios Montt promptly appointed church elders as senior government advisers. One sponsor of the prayers of intercession, Florida preacher Hap Brooks, hailed the coup as 'the greatest miracle of the twentieth century, formed in heaven before it was formed on earth'.

"The frenzied counter-insurgency campaign that followed Rios Montt's takeover did not spare Protestants. In one gruesome incident, helicopter-borne troops landed in the village of Tuchabuc and slaughtered 30 members of a Pentacostal congregation as they worshipped. Yet evangelical leaders failed to raise a word of protest, and all exempted Rios Montt from responsibility for his soldiers' excesses. The aim of the army's *Plan Victoria '82* was to break the guerilla movement by destroying its base of support in the Indian highlands. But military strategists recognised that lasting gains depended on

instituting permanent controls over the rural population. This was where the evangelicals' tendency to collusion made them valuable allies of the military.

"In the newly established 'strategic hamlets', they became the preferred liaison between the army and the local community, leading civil defence patrols and weeding out guerilla sympathisers. Army commanders in turn rewarded this cooperation by appointing evangelicals to posts of local authority.

"By October 1982, the army had driven the insurgents out of much of the highlands and on to the defensive. Most evangelical leaders decided that this was an appropriate moment to demonstrate their support for Rios Montt in public. As their occasion, they chose the celebration of Protestantism's centennial in Guatemala. At a November rally, over half a million people crowded into Guatemala City's Campo de Marte in the greatest display of evangelical zeal ever witnessed in Latin America. For nearly two hours, the crowd heard Argentine evangelist Luis Palau lavish praise on Rios Montt's Guatemalan "Miracle".

"It was the biggest show of public support for Rios Montt in his seventeen months in power, suggesting that a mobilized evangelical community could become a lasting base of political support. There was even talk of a political party with an 'evangelical agenda'. But as the clouds of right-wing hostility gathered around Rios Montt, it became apparent that the same qualities that made evangelicals such docile subjects — sectarianism, passivity and 'apoliticism' — made them reluctant allies in a political showdown. Instead, they became a liability, evidence to Rios Montt's enemies of his fanaticism.

"Rios Montt's overthrow on August 8, 1983, has not lessened the pervasive ideological influence of Guatemala's evangelicals, nor their usefulness to ruling groups. But it has dispelled the notion that they could become an active political force. They have simply gone back to their traditional 'apolitical' stance."

Rios Montt has been kicked out of the Presidential Palace in Guatemala City. The ruling oligarchy which put him there and removed him when his born-again repression failed to stem Guatemala's revolutionary forces will soon be kicked out of the whole of Guatemala.

LIBYA: Religion For Social Justice

Religion can be used to advance the cause of the people, or to subvert it. Whether it is used for the one or the other is determined by the material interests and social composition of those using it. Libya provides an example of how the Islamic religion can be used to advance the cause of the people.

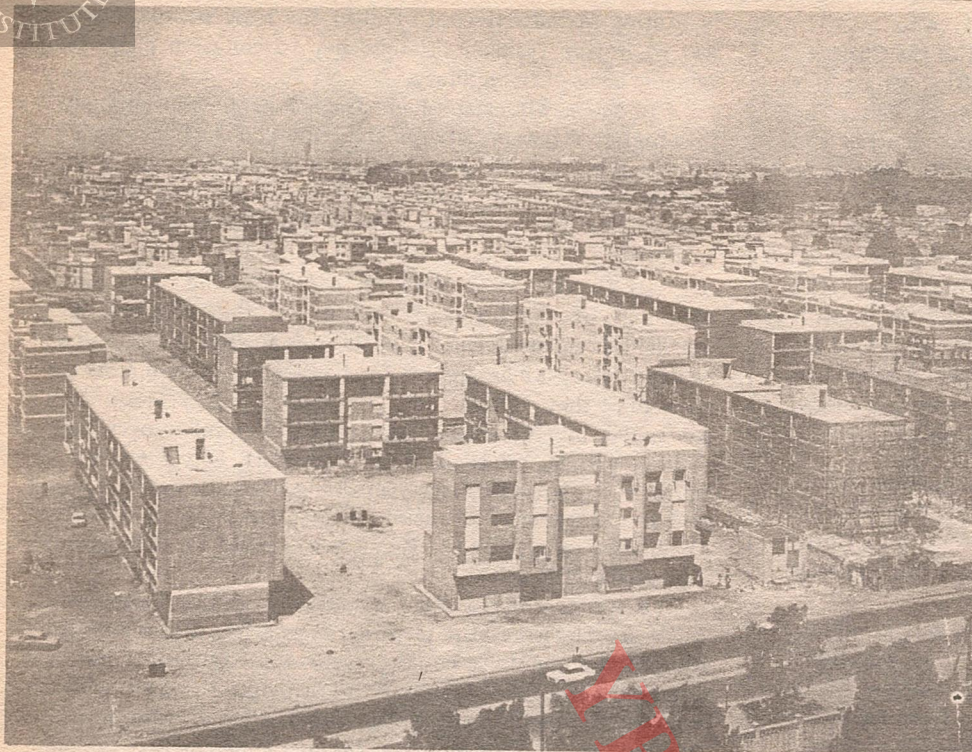
The Libyan Revolution of September 1, 1969, was a historic turning point in the country. On that day the Libyan monarchy, headed by King Idris El-Sanusi, was overthrown by young army officers under the command of a 29 year old major, Muammar Gaddafi. Although a descendant of the great Sanusi family which led the resistance against Italian

occupation of Libya, the King literally turned the human and material resources of the country into private fortunes of relatives, friends and foreign companies.

Even though Libya had become independent since 24th December 1951, and had made a net revenue totalling 4.3 billion dollars from oil alone between 1962-69, little progress had been recorded in the economic and social development of the country. For example, the number of students attending secondary schools increased from 537 in 1951 to 6,237 in 1969. The country's food imports rose from 1.7 million dollars in 1959 to 95 million dollars in 1969. Agricultural export, on the other

hand, declined from 4.2 million dollars in 1956 to 108,800 dollars in 1968. Very little progress was recorded in other social service sectors like health, housing, transport, etc.

Since 1969, Libya has been declared an Islamic State, where the Qur'an serves as the constitution and the sole point of reference in personal matters. No alcohol is brewed, sold or consumed in Libya, and there are no prostitutes parading the towns and villages. But the Islamic State of Libya does not rely on such external appearances as proof of its Islamic character. Factors which make it a popular Islamic state are the ways in which the leadership has made efforts



Houses for the people in Libya.

to establish a just society since 1969, in accordance with Islamic principles.

By the time of the first anniversary of the Libyan Revolution in September 1970, the government had increased the minimum wage by about 50%. It also set out to provide housing to all those in need, free of charge. Rents were slashed by 40%. The government also made interest-free loans available to people to build their own houses. By the second anniversary of the revolution, the Libyan government had made factory workers part-owners of the companies where they work. This entitled the workers to receive up to half of the profits declared by the companies.

In the case of the peasants, the 1969 Revolution eliminated landlessness — farmers were in many cases given up to 25 acres in addition to interest-free loans to purchase farm inputs. This interest-free loan was payable in 20 years. As for the agricultural estates owned by the Italians, these were confiscated and distributed to the farmers in the nearby villages and to farm labourers.

Since 1969, Libya has recorded tremendous achievements in the provision of such basic services like housing, education and health. For example, the government built 480,156 houses between 1975-1980.

In the case of education, the number of pupils in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools rose from 214,954 in 1969 to 809,268 in 1980, an increase of about 400% in just one decade.

The most spectacular achievement in the field of education is the way the enrolment of girls rose dramatically. At independence in 1951 there was not a single girl enrolled in secondary school. But by 1975, 43% of the 734,000 total enrolment in schools were girls. In the case of primary schools, 46% of the total enrolment of 556,000 by 1975 were also girls. Of the 12,000 enrolled in universities in 1975, 17% were girls. By 1981, Libya with a population of just three million people had a total of 870,000 students in school. This means that by 1981, about one Libyan in every three was in school. Indeed, between 1969-1988, Libya had almost wiped out illiteracy.

In the provision of health care too, Libya's achievement is very impressive. For example, the number of hospital beds increased from 6,421 in 1969 to 14,695 in 1975. And by 1980, the ratio of hospital beds to population stood at seven to 1,000; and that of doctors to population was one to 1,000. This is comparable to the advanced countries. Similarly, only five years after the revolution,

as many as 102 health centres had been built. The attention given to health by the new government had by 1980 made Libyans among the healthiest people in Africa.

But the beauty of the Libyan revolution does not just lie in these statistics, impressive as they are. Indeed, these real achievements would never have been realised but for the fact that the regime paid careful and serious attention to ensuring that power was firmly placed in the hands of the people. The democratic principles promoted by the new regime were based on such authorities as that provided in the Holy Qur'an, Suratul Al-Imran, Verse 160:

"It is by the great mercy of Allah that thou art gentle with them, for if thou hadst been rough and hard-hearted they would surely have dispersed from around thee. So bear with them and pray for forgiveness for them and take counsel with them in matters of administration." (emphasis added).

On the basis of such holy injunctions, the Gaddafi-led government embarked on a bold democratisation programme in the Libyan society. This involved the setting up of People's Assemblies in the urban and rural areas, in homes, factories and offices, and even within the armed and security forces. The standing army was disbanded, and a people's militia was given responsibility for defence and security. Libyan women, who had suffered centuries of oppression under patriarchal domination dressed in Islamic garb, were consciously encouraged to take part in all aspects of public life — the militia, the professions, and in cultural revival.

Today, whatever the many shortcomings which the Libyan revolution — like all other popular revolutions — must have, Libya everywhere is a force to be reckoned with, and the Libyan people are the better for it. The experience of Libya shows that there can certainly be marriage between Islam and social progress, but this matrimony has to be one entered into and led by the popular masses, and not by self-proclaimed *qadis* in the clothing of foxes.

By Hawwa Mahdi, Bata Usman,
Gabriel Abu, Alkasum Abba, and
Pius Gbasha.

A THEOLOGY FOR LIBERATION

Early in 1983, the Catholic Pontiff, Pope John Paul II, paid a pastoral visit to the small Central American republic of Nicaragua. As is usual, when the Pope's plane landed at the Managua International Airport, the country's ecclesiastical and governmental dignitaries were on hand to receive and welcome him to the land of Sandino, home of the Sandinistas. Pope John Paul II got off his plane and started shaking the hands of the dignitaries, one after the other. When he got to Nicaragua's Minister for Culture, the poet-priest, Rev. Ernesto Cardenal, the Pope quickly withdrew his hand. And shaking his head vehemently, apparently in admonition, he stalked away.

This incident, which was televised to the whole world, came to many Christians as a rude shock. Though it was widely known that Rev. Cardenal, along with such other Nicaraguan priests and faithfuls involved in the Sandinista administration were at the time not in the best of relations with the Church, it was nevertheless still a shock.

However, this disgraceful scene at the Managua Airport was only symptomatic of the storm which, for the past two decades, has been raging in the Catholic Church, and indeed within the Christian faith, over what ought to be the proper conduct of a christian with regard to the social, economic, and political issues of his time. Whereas the conservative church hierarchy, true to its age-old slavish linkages with imperialism and the ruling oligarchies has consistently argued that christians in general, and priests in particular, should only concern themselves with saving the soul of man, and with life hereafter; a new, radical, even revolutionary, tendency has emerged challenging this orthodoxy. This new tendency holds that the proper role of a christian, both priest and laity alike, is to identify with the poor and the down-trodden, and to join their struggles, whether peaceful or armed, towards seizing political power and restructuring society.

This fresh impetus in theology and christian praxis today finds its most lucid and complete expression in

what has come to be termed 'Liberation Theology'. And it is indeed not surprising that this 'Liberation Theology' has come to have its deepest roots in that part of the world that boasts of the largest concentration of christians on earth, and which has, perhaps more than anywhere else, suffered most from centuries of exploitation, repression and domination. This is Latin America.

The watershed in this divide in the Church were two events of historical note: the martyrdom of the Colombian revolutionary priest, Camilo Torres; and the publication in 1967 of the papal declaration, *Populorum Progressio*, which addressed itself to the development problems and needs of the Third World.

These two events gave impetus to the calls for a radical reorientation of the work of the Church and the role of christians in the struggles of the oppressed people of Central and South America, and the Third World as a whole.

These radical viewpoints crystallized during and around the time of Pope John Paul II's visit to Colombia in 1968, and the Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM), which took place in the Colombian city of Medellin that same year.

But what are the basic tenets of this liberating theology? Let us turn to Sergio Arce, a Cuban priest, for an answer. According to Arce, Liberation Theology, "obligates us as christian theologians to liberate humankind from the misrepresented christianity that has been forced on it; from the Constantinized Church that has been conveyed to it; from the adulterated gospel that has been preached to it and from the emasculated Christ to whom it has given witness".

In other words, to the liberation theologians and activists, the orthodox christianity that has been handed down to South and Central America, and the rest of the world, by the churches of Northern Europe and North America has been a distorted and falsified christianity. It has been a distorted and falsified christianity in three major respects:

1. It has been a 'Europeanised'

christianity, whereas true christianity while being universal, must make itself relevant to the peculiarities of the soil it seeks to sprout from;

2. It has been a gospel which has become adulterated as a result of almost two thousand years of close and intimate association with the court and the ruling oligarchies, whereas true christianity is for, and with, the poor, the hungry, the oppressed, and the downtrodden; and

3. It has been a christianity which has emasculated, which has ignored, which has suppressed and caricatured the concrete example of the life and work of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Thus, it follows that if theology is to liberate itself from the stranglehold of the cultural subjectivism of Europe and North America, from the vice-grip of the economics and ethics of feudalism and capitalism, then it must go back to the original gospel of Jesus Christ and to the basic tenets of the early christians. That is, it must go back to the period when christianity was the religion of the poor and the



Pope John Paul II: Whose side is he on?

oppressed, and not when — as it is now — it had become the religion of the court, the emperors, the princes, and the money-bags.

Thus, to get the true essence of christianity, to re-acquire genuine 'christian mentality', we have to go back to that primitive christianity and, in particular, to Christ's example. Christ was not a prince, he was not rich but poor. He lived with the poor, spoke against injustice, and was crucified by the rulers, by Pontius

Pilate, for his advocacy. And like Christ, the early christian fathers lived with the poor, fought against the injustices of the authorities of their day and resided amidst the poor. For these, they, along with their believers, were persecuted.

Jesus Christ and the early christian fathers, argue the liberation theologians and their activists, did not just preach for the salvation of the soul. They also, and perhaps even more importantly, preached and struggled for the material wellbeing of their followers. Jesus Christ turned water into wine and multiplied bread and fish so that his disciples could feed. They did not address themselves only to celestial things, but also to this real world — material, palpable, concrete, earthly, political, social, and economic.

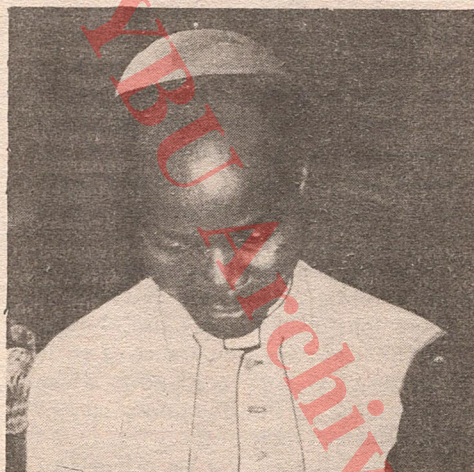
As Rev. Arce has argued, "Jesus Christ, who was a real, genuine person, a human being of his time, was not a ghost or 'superhuman'. As a human being, he took human options, in accordance with the human time in which he lived, the circumstances of his life, and as part of his calling We are not required to be Palestinian Jews like Jesus of Nazareth, but rather to be 'Christ' to our neighbours!"

It is obvious, therefore, that Jesus Christ and the early christians were revolutionaries in their time. As the Cuban leader, Fidel Castro, told Jamaican bishops in 1977, "to be a christian in the era of the emperors was worse than being a communist in Pinochet's Chile, worse than being a communist in Brazil or Argentina. Of course, just as communists have been persecuted during the last decades. . . so was the history of the christians for many centuries. Why? Because the ruling classes, the slave owners, the ones who ordered the gladiators to kill each other in the circus, the ones who enjoyed all the social privileges, all were sworn enemies of the christians because the christians opposed all that. Who were the early christians? The poor, the poorest people, the humblest people, the slaves were the first christians. And they were persecuted for centuries until at last one emperor became a christian himself."

But not only was early christianity revolutionary, it was also relevant and in organic harmony with the social and economic aspirations of the masses of the toiling people of that

part of the Middle East where it sprouted: It was not a christianity which was removed from the material, social and political realities of the people.

But, as both Camilo and Castro have noted, as soon as christianity left the abode of the poor and became sanitised as the religion of the court, it lost all these qualities. From that moment, christianity and the church became conservative and anti-poor. The revolutionary essence of Christ and his testament became muzzled, and the church placed itself at the service of the ruling classes. The church and christianity became ossified. "Christianity ceased", as Rev. Arce has put it, "to be Christ, or a faith, and became a sacralized culture, a sanctified civilization and a stereotyped ideology, with its dogmatic



Okogie: For the rich or the poor?

philosophy; it became an imperialist socio-economic structure, with its unjust spiritual superstructure".

Or, as Camilo Torres poignantly lamented, "Nowadays, unfortunately, the church of Christ — the son of a carpenter, as Saint Luke says, the one who did not have a stone on which to lay his head — unfortunately, that church appears as a church prostituted by the rich".

What liberation theologians, therefore, seek to do is to return to the source, to go back to the basic teachings of Jesus Christ and the early christians, and to relate these teachings and principles, as Jesus did in Palestine, to their own societies in their own historical time. In doing this, they will not only be fulfilling their primary duty as christians and the children of God, but they will

also be living up to their responsibilities to their societies and to their neighbours, in fulfillment of God's injunction: 'Love your neighbour as yourself'".

When the Latin American liberation theologians and activists take a look at their societies, at their countries, they see a continent that has been subjected to plunder and spoliation for more than four centuries; they see children dying en-masse from malnutrition; they see thousands and millions go unfed, unclothed, and unsheltered. And the true christians and patriots that they are, their hearts bleed. They bleed because, as Camilo also lamented, "Christians, and Catholics, seem to be stoic spectators of the downfall of a world which appears alien to them. . . . They believe that in the words 'my kingdom is not of this world' the term 'world' has the significance of 'present life', and not 'sinful life', as it is in reality. They forget Christ's prayer to the father, 'I do not ask you to remove them from the world, but to deliver them from evil!' We often remove ourselves from the world, and do not deliver ourselves from evil". Their hearts bleed because after all, as Saint Thomas Aquinas once pointed out, even the practice of virtue requires certain minimal economic conditions.

Looking around their Latin America, the liberation theologians, christians and revolutionaries that they are, see clearly that the greatest problem facing their people and societies is not any so-called 'cold war', or a much mythologised communist holocaust, but enervating poverty. They see poverty everywhere — a poverty punctuated here and there by islets of wealth enjoyed by the ruling oligarchies and their foreign patrons. They see poverty — mass poverty — at an age when science and technology have advanced to the extent that this poverty could be vanquished within notime.

In anguish, they ask why? why? and why? They find that orthodox theology or philosophy cannot provide the answer to these crucial questions. So they turn to history, and the science of Marxism-Leninism. And then clear as crystal appears the answer: their Latin America, like the rest of the underdeveloped

world, is riddled with mass poverty is infested with disease, and rendered impotent because it has, for over four centuries, been plundered by imperialism with the active connivance of the local ruling oligarchies. Their people have been made to live in the condition of animals — in unchristian conditions of existence — so that these oligarchies and their imperialist masters can continue to enjoy the loot squeezed out of the sweat and blood of the masses. They see clearly that salvation and the solution to this does not lie in praying for the souls of the victims of this system, or admonishing the rich to part with a fraction of their loot through occasional charity, or pleading with the ruling oligarchies to promote democracy. No, they understand that salvation lies in the overthrow of the existing economic, social and political structures; in the peaceful, and if needs be, forcible capturing of power from the oligarchies and the use of this political power by the poor and the oppressed to re-order society.

In short, they realise that, as the respected Bolivian priest, Dom Helder Camara, once put it, "the Bible does not end with revelations, but with revolution".

Or, as the Argentinian priest, Juan Garcia Elorrio, argued as far back as 1968, "only revolution is an effective means of actually making the love of every man and of all men a reality".

But Monsignor German Guzman Campos put it even more forcefully: "Christian love does not mean that the exploiters should continue to exploit, but that the exploited should rise up against all those who exploit them. It is nonsense to talk of a 'bond of love' when the established order and a few privileged groups can create a situation involving poverty, the need to beg, the abandonment of children, prostitution, violence, illiteracy, starvation among people. The Catholic Church is facing a dilemma: either it takes its stand on the side of the oppressed majority, or it remains linked — in a 'bond of love' — with the oligarchical structures. Either it is a church of the true Christ or it is simply an institutional church".

And the liberation theologians and activists of Latin America, having come to this realisation, would not be distracted in the noble and christian



*Ernesto Cardenal:
"I am a Marxist for Christ and his Gospel".*

tasks they have set for themselves by the manipulations and cat-calls of imperialism and its local lackeys that they are communists or anti-church; or that revolution is unchristian. As Rev. Ernesto Cardenal explained in 1982, "There's no incompatibility between christianity and marxism.

community of brothers and sisters, and love. But he did not tell us which scientific method to use in order to arrive at the goal. Science has to tell us this — in our case, the social sciences. Some take one science, others another. But if anyone substitutes Marxism for christianity, that person has made a mistake. . . . I have said many times that I am a Marxist for Christ and his gospel, and that I was not drawn to Marxism by reading Marx, but by reading the Gospel. I am a Marxist who believes in God, follows Christ, and is a revolutionary for the sake of the Kingdom".

This, in a nutshell, is what Liberation Theology stands for: it is at one and the same time a theology which seeks to liberate people, christians and non-christians alike, from oppression and exploitation, so that they can better serve their God, and at the same time to liberate the church and christianity from the caricature that has been made of them since the ruling classes

"Nowadays, unfortunately, the church of Christ — the son of a carpenter, as St. Luke says, the one who did not have a stone on which to lay his head — unfortunately, that church appears as a church prostituted by the rich."

They aren't the same thing — they are different — but they are not incompatible. . . . Marxism is a scientific method for studying society and changing it. What Christ did was to present us with the goals of social change, the goals of perfect humanity, which we are to co-create with him. These goals are a

captured christianity for their own exclusive use.

For us in Nigeria, in particular, caught up as we are in the intricate manipulative web that has been spun by our oppressors, through the exploitation of divisive religious sentiments, the message of the liberation theologians and activists is particularly clear. We should wake up from our slumber, dispel the suffocating and soporific fog that has been cast on us by charlatans parading themselves as religious leaders. With one voice, and in unison, we should join in the struggle to make our fatherland truly one and free; always having at the back of our minds Dom Helder Camara's timeless warning: "With us, without us, or against us, the eyes of the people will be opened. Woe to christianity tomorrow when those eyes open, if the church still gives the impression that it is in alliance with the powerful to exploit the poor!"



Daniel Ortega: Nicaragua's strongman.

By Richard Umaru.

REPRESSION

Hidden Agenda Of The Religious Right

In the United States, it has historically been the case that the main church groups — both Protestant and Catholic — have been in the forefront of struggles for progressive change, from their support for the civil rights movement of the 1960s, to the movement to end the war in Vietnam; and more recently, in their prominent role in the anti-apartheid campaign, as well as in the 'Sanctuary Movement' giving refuge to victims fleeing from political repression in Central America. While there have always been many who opposed the churches' role in these struggles, the most notable face of organised christianity in the U.S. has usually been a progressive one.

However, with the presidential campaign of 1980, and the subsequent election of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States, a large number of evangelical fundamentalist and pentacostal religious groups — previously considered to be outside the mainstream of religious life in the U.S. — came to national and international prominence. They had, of course, been around for a long time, but the growing right-wing political tide in America thrust them into the foreground. Through the use of TV evangelism, and other sophisticated communications media, these groups loudly claimed to be representing the "true American values". They even claimed to be the "moral majority". But behind this smokescreen of supposed moral revival lay their true agenda — to support the reactionary domestic policies of Reaganism, which give to the rich and take from the poor, as well as to pursue an active role in the Third World in support of repressive, dictatorial regimes, and aiding in the overthrow of progressive ones — all in the name of "fighting communism". For these groups of the religious right, communism is equated to the anti-Christ. Thus the religious right-wing organisations took on the role of the moral defenders of the Reagan doctrine in international affairs.

Progressive church groupings like the National, and World, Council of

Churches, as well as supporters of Liberation Theology in the Catholic Church, believe that religion is a tool to be used for the pursuit of social justice here on earth. After all, they point out, Jesus Christ was not crucified simply because he was a saint, but because he challenged the unjust status quo of his own time. For these progressive churches, religion must be on the side of the oppressed against the oppressors.

The followers of the new religious right hold no such notions. Even

around the world where these groups operate.

So far, most of the activities of these right-wing fundamentalist groups have centered on Latin America, and to some extent in the Far East, particularly in the Philippines. However, they are currently making rapid inroads into the African continent; and even in Nigeria, many of these groups can be found in major towns and cities. They operate insidiously, concealing their foreign connections and funding — but they are busy pursuing their hidden agenda which is cloaked in religious guise, and aimed at deluding their followers and the wider society.

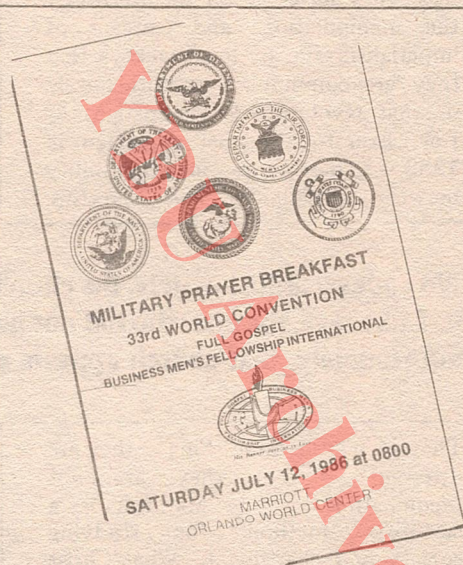
These right wing groups include many of the fundamentalist sects (i.e., those who believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible), as well as pentacostal groups (those who practice speaking in tongues, faith healing, and prophecies). Some of the most prominent of them are:

CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST

Led by Reverend Bill Bright, this organisation operates in 149 countries around the world. It is funded by reactionary U.S. millionaires Nelson Bunker Hunt, cowboy Roy Rogers, and Wallace Johnson, who are all known for their financial support for right-wing causes. Its supposed aim is to fulfill the "great commission" (Matthew 28:18-20) to evangelise the world in this, what they consider to be the "last generation". The organisation is heavily involved in Latin America, supporting retrograde causes like that of the Nicaraguan contras. In Nigeria, it is represented by the Great Commission Movement, which has an imposing headquarters complex in Jos, Plateau State. The Campus Crusade for Christ International has an annual budget of well over 30 million dollars, and over 5,000 full time staff.

CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING NETWORK (CBN)

Founded and headed by politician-evangelist Pat Robertson,



God in the service of the U.S. military?

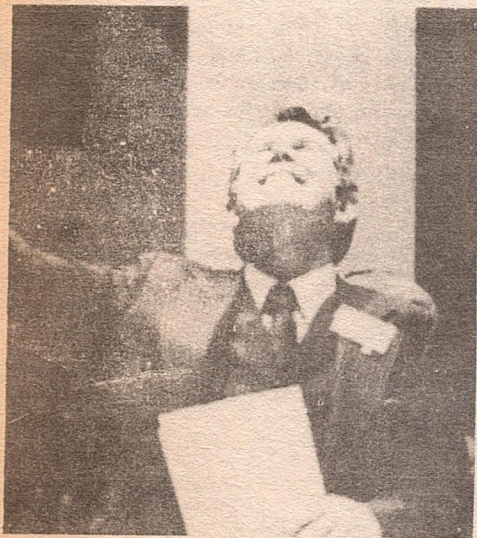
though many of their leaders have become multi-millionaires, and even though many of their supporters live very much in this world, as members of the top echelon of the U.S. military-industrial complex, these groups claim that their only goal is salvation in the hereafter. They feel they have already been chosen to go to paradise, so nuclear war is no threat to them — in fact many of them even welcome the idea.

But this religious right has a hidden agenda beyond that of saving souls. This agenda consists of two things: firstly, to make the leaders of these groups extremely wealthy; and secondly, to actively participate in frustrating any movements for social change, whether in the United States itself, or in the many other countries

CBN produces evangelical programmes like the "700 Club" and "Another Life", which are shown on many TV channels around the world, including

Nigeria. The CBN collects over 200 million dollars a year from its viewers and supporters, including donations from many large U.S. corporations. The CBN has been heavily involved in propagating reactionary ideas through its religious broadcasting. It has been a firm supporter of the contra bandits in Nicaragua, and of reactionary dictators in Latin America and elsewhere. It also produces propaganda for the racist regime in South Africa.

For instance, in the "700 Club" broadcast of 11 September, 1986, the topic was "Who is the ANC?" The programme showed what it claimed to



Pat. Robertson: Friend of Apartheid.

be ANC atrocities in South Africa — a 'necklace' killing (where a victim was burned alive with a petrol-filled tyre), and another person being stabbed to death by a crowd. In between these scenes were shown pictures of Oliver Tambo and Winnie Mandela, advocating all-out war against the South African government. This programme concluded with an interview with Pat Robertson's friend (and a former employee of CBN), reactionary Senator Jeremiah Denton of Alabama, who claimed that U.S. 'softness' towards supposedly 'terrorist' groups like the ANC jeopardised U.S. supplies of crucial rare metals like chrome, platinum, and manganese, which are crucial to the U.S. defence industry, and

supplies of which come to the U.S. from South Africa.

In another programme supporting the racist regime, aired in 1986, black co-host of the "700 Club", Ben Kinchow, went to South Africa in March of that year, and sent back a live broadcast via satellite. Kinchow testified that with only one exception — a "whites only" sign on a beach — he personally did not experience any racism in South Africa! The programme also featured a live interview with Foreign Minister Pik Botha — at a time when other U.S. journalists were not allowed access to the top leaders of the racist regime. But for friends of the South African racists like Pat Robertson's CBN, access was obviously not a problem.

FULL GOSPEL BUSINESSMEN'S FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

This organisation is not a church or sect as such, but comprises members from all christian denominations, including Catholic charismatics. It is a pentacostal organisation, made up largely of professionals, businessmen, and serving or retired military officers. It was founded in Los Angeles, California, in 1952, and today operates in 92 countries, including an active movement in Nigeria. Its members include a number of right wing evangelists and other activists. The members speak in tongues, praise Jesus, practice faith healing, and engage in prophecies. Members meet for prayer meetings, prayer breakfasts, and banquets, at which they offer personal 'testimonies' and praise the Lord.

In the case of the Jos, Plateau State, chapter, the branch normally meets in the Hill Station Hotel for regular prayer breakfasts and other events. Recently, this chapter organised a week-long prayer meeting at the Hill Station, to save the world from "The International Conspiracy of Witches". Viewers of the TV evening news in Plateau State that week were treated to the astonishing sight of prominent individuals in the Jos community, including judges, doctors, university dons, etc. shouting, waving their arms in the air, and generally carrying on like lunatics in full view of the TV audience — all in their effort to save the world from the "International Conspiracy of Witches".

The Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship has very close political ties with the Reagan administration. James Watt, former Secretary of the Interior, and Herbert Ellingwood, former assistant to the Attorney General (now working for Pat Robertson) are among its members, as are many military men and those in the defence industry, like Sanford McDonnell, Chairman of the Board of McDonnell Douglas corporation. A Full Gospel pamphlet produced in the U.S. lists some of its prominent members in the U.S. defence establishment:

"The Secretary of Defence, who built us two prayer rooms in the Pentagon, Lt. General Dick Shaefer, Col. Speed Wilson, Col. Hank Lackey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Commandant of the Marine

YUNG MOON

rk

s Vision



Moon: "God is phasing out democracy".

Corps, the Chief of Naval Operations, the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. . ."

Even Ronald Reagan himself has given 'testimony' at Full Gospel meetings, and has credited a Full Gospel prayer group for "instantly" healing his ulcer during his term as governor of California.

In Latin America, Full Gospel was active in bringing to power and supporting General Rios Montt in Guatemala. Montt came to power in a military coup in 1982, and exercised power in Guatemala with an iron fist, repressing, torturing, and slaughtering much of the population, including Catholic priests and protestant evangelical pastors. In December 1982, a group of North Americans

COVER STORY

interviewed a church pastor who was a Montt supporter. They asked him about the army massacres of indigenous people. The pastor replied:

“The army doesn’t massacre the Indians. It massacres demons, and the Indians are demon possessed; they are communists.”

SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS

This group has operated in Nigeria in past years. Its full name is the Summer Institute of Linguistics/Wycliffe Bible Translators. Under the guise of translating the Bible into various indigenous languages all over the world, they were actually doing the work of the CIA. They had a headquarters in Zaria, and operated in several parts of Nigeria until they were exposed and expelled some years back.

UNIFICATION CHURCH

An organisation which is now beginning to make inroads into Nigeria is the Unification Church, usually called the Moonies, under the leadership of South Korean Rev.



Montt: Born-again dictator.

Sun Myung Moon. This sect, which aims at global theology, believes that Rev. Moon is the new messiah. The Moonies believe that a final war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union is inevitable, and in fact is a holy crusade against communism which will lead to the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. The Moonies are

closely associated with the World Anti-Communist League and with other fascist groups. In fact, most of their founders were associated with Nazi and fascist causes. The Moonies are openly against democratic government. Rev. Moon himself has said that “God is phasing out democracy...”

For the religious right, then, the Christian crusade goes hand in hand with anti-communism. It is enough to declare that your enemy is a demon-possessed communist to justify exterminating him. This is the true agenda of the religious right. They are daily making more and more inroads into all corners of Nigeria, as Nigerians — both christians and muslims — seek escape from their bitter economic situation in religious fundamentalism. Nigerians should beware of the activities of these groups in their midst. We must closely scrutinise and expose those groups and individuals who — in the name of doing the work of Jesus Christ — are actually doing the work of imperialism and Ronald Reagan.

By Patrick Obi.

PROFILE

OMAR MUKTAR

A Giant In The Desert

For 20 years, between 1911-31, a giant of a man straddled the shifting sands of the North African desert. He was a giant not so much because of the hugeness of his frame. Not even because of his martial disposition. He was a giant because of the largeness of his heart, because of the unconquerable spirit that lay inside that frame. And because of his unquenchable patriotism.

This man was no other than Sidi Omar El-Muktar, The Lion of the desert. The terror of Italian colonialism in Africa. The towering minaret of Libyan resistance.

Born in 1862 at the oasis settlement of al-Qasur, south of Benghazi, Omar Muktar had his early education at the Sanusiya school at Janzur. This basic education was further advanced at Jaghbug. While still in his youth, his sterling qualities as a leader and a patriot were unmistakably glaring. The local tribal leader Sheik Sayyed Ahmad Al-Sharif was one of the first to recognise these qualities. He nominated him to represent the tribe at community meetings. Soon Omar Muktar was selected to serve in the contingent that fought against French incursions at Wadai. After an exemplary service at the front, Omar Muktar returned to his home at al-Qasur in 1906.

He was soon to take up arms again in the subsequent



Omar Muktar

Libyan war of resistance led by the Sanusiya between 1911-17. When that war came to an end in 1917, through a negotiated truce with the Sanusiya Brotherhood, Omar did not let down in his commitment. He mobilised his fellow Bedouin countrymen even in peace time, to resist Italy's indirect colonial overtures.

But the real test of this great son of Africa — a test which was to leave his name writ large on the sand dunes of the Sahara — came with the second Libyan war of resistance against the Italians, which was fought between 1923 and 1932. It was an energy-sapping, protracted struggle, which went through three distinct phases. At the beginning, the Italians employed traditional strategies of pitched battles. They deployed 20,000 troops, armed with artillery, rifles, and other weapons of a classic standing army. The Italians enjoyed a superiority in men, materials, and fire-power. This superiority enabled them to easily overrun the coastal urban centres. But when they moved into the hinterland and tried to employ the same strategy, they found themselves in quicksand.

This is where Omar Muktar seized the initiative. With lightning speed, he mobilised the Libyan resistance. A hitherto fragmented society, divided along lines of lineage, clan, and tribe, soon found a unifying factor — the defence of the motherland. Even before the world knew about Mao Tse Tung and his guerilla bases; even before it knew about Vietnam and the battle of Dien Bien Phu, Omar Muktar set about organising and leading a sophisticated guerilla operation. From each Bedouin tribe a dozen or so sturdy young men were selected to form the nucleus of Omar's guerilla army. An elaborate network of supply lines was established, linking previously disparate communities with Omar's mobile headquarters. A similar network of informants which extended right into the ranks of the enemy forces was also put in place. A labyrinth of safe houses, munition dumps, and camel watering holes, was also carefully organised.

With this infrastructure and a total number of men under arms which at no time in the war exceeded 700, Omar Muktar started his decimation of the invading Italian vandals. In a flash, bands of between 10 and 20 guerillas would descend on the enemy camps at night, eliminate the commanders, blow up fuel dumps, disrupt supply lines, and in a matter of seconds, melt into the limitless expanse of the desert night. And in the morning, the same members of the band would go about meekly as ordinary shepherds, as date hawkers, and some even as the 'moronic' servants of the Italian colonial officers and their families. Indeed, that colonial anthropologist, Evans-Pritchard, who did a study of the war, speaks of how many of the Tuaregs who carried identity cards were in reality militants of the guerilla struggle.

The Italian counter-offensive was ineffective. The Italian war machine was cumbersome and unwieldy. The massive outlay of men, munitions and material at their disposal ended up being like an albatross around their neck. Their techniques proved totally useless against the elusive nature of Omar's strategy. In desperation, the Italian commanders employed every trick they could find. They strafed the Bedouin villages, murdering men, women, camels, and other livestock. They herded the population into 'protected' camps. They constructed several hundred kilometres of barbed wire fences, in an attempt to block the guerilla supply lines from Egypt. They harassed the tribal chiefs into signing away their sovereignty. But all these were to no avail. Omar Muktar's men kept the heat on. Throughout Libya, there were almost nightly engagements.

In one year alone, Italian commanders reported 53 engagements and 210 skirmishes. Springing from among the people, the guerillas would hit the barracks in the towns and retire to the villages. With lightning speed, they would hit the colonial military bases at the ports, and withdraw to their caves. The next day, they would be mingling in the bazaars of Tripoli and Benghazi, only to mount another ambush of enemy columns shortly thereafter.

Governor Teruzzi, the colonial boss of Cyrenaica, was so frustrated by this tactic that he lamented in a note to his home government: "against 200, 500, 1,000, 2,000 rebels, dressed in picturesque rags and badly armed, often 5,000 or 10,000 of our soldiers are not sufficient, because the rebels are not tied down to anything, are not bound to any impediments, have nothing to defend or to protect, and can show themselves today in one place, tomorrow 50 km away, and the following day 100 km away, to reappear a week later, to vanish for a month, to disperse to fire from afar. . . on a patrol of inspection, or on a column which files along the edge of a wood, or at the foot of a hill."

"Even before the world knew about Mao Tse Tung and his guerilla bases; even before it knew about Vietnam and the battle of Dien Bien Phu, Omar Muktar set about organising and leading a sophisticated guerilla operation."

The basis for this phenomenal feat of Omar and his men was their inseparable and organic link with the people. Their supplies were gotten from the voluntary contributions that each tribe made to its guerilla detachment. Their wives and children were taken care of by the communities. The camels and horses they used were supplied gratis, fed gratis, and replenished gratis by these same communities. Under the intimidation of the colonial invaders, a tribal chief would publicly submit to the Italians, but privately organise the transmission of supplies to Omar's heroic fighters.

This intimate bond between the fighters and the people was further cemented by the unifying ideology of Sufism. Omar Muktar, like the great leader he was, employed these Sufist ideals in a deft and brilliant manner to boost the morale of his men, to consolidate their patriotic zeal, and to lay the basis for the foundation of an emergent Libyan nationalism.

It should be remembered that during the active periods of this guerilla campaign, Omar was no longer a young man. Indeed, at the beginning of the guerilla campaign in 1923, this remarkable patriot was already 60 years old. Yet he brought such youthfulness, such vigour, and such enthusiasm into the cause despite his years.

But every man, and every war, has its bad moments. In the long run, the massive resources available to the colonising

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power, as well as the betrayal by internal opportunistic elements, combined to win the day for the Italians. But Omar, like the patriot that he was, fought to the bitter end. At the ripe old age of 69, Omar Muktar was wounded in battle — on September 11, 1931. Helpless and bleeding profusely, Omar was dragged to the town of Suluq, where he was hanged before a crowd of 20,000 who silently cheered him even in death. In death, as in life, Sidi Omar Muktar remained triumphant.

It is not for nothing that even his arch enemies, the colonial plunderers, had to admit and acknowledge his greatness. "Our irreducible enemy, the faithful and able servant of Idris, the heart and soul of the Cyrenaican rebellion" — that was how General Rodolfo Graziani described him. And so he was.

By Alkasum Abba.

CAMILO TORRES

A Priest And A Revolutionary

*"The duty of every christian is to be a revolutionary;
The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution"*

In 1929 Madam Isabel Restrepo de Torres gave birth to a bouncing baby boy in the quiet upper class quarter of Bogota, the capital city of the South American Republic of Colombia. The little boy was duly christened Camilo Torres, in accordance with the family's deep catholic traditions. At the time, little did his parents know that this little boy was to become one of the most revered revolutionaries in the contemporary history of South America.

Like his other privileged upper class contemporaries in Bogota and other Latin American countries, Camilo Torres attended Jesuit-run elementary schools in Colombia before eventually drifting into the Seminary, where he was ordained a priest. After his ordination, Camilo studied sociology for a masters degree at Louvain, in Belgium. On graduation, he taught at the same university, rising to the position of Vice-Rector.

In 1958, Camilo returned to Colombia and was appointed lecturer in sociology at the Bogota National University, doubling up as the university's chaplain.

From a very early age, Camilo was sensitive to the social problems of his country and to the poverty and abject misery and suffering which he saw around him. In fact, it was this sensitivity which led him into the priesthood, as well as to the study of sociology at the university, in the first instance.

Camilo brought this empathy with the poor and the oppressed to his

teaching. Within no time he became the university's most popular teacher. He mobilised students into participation in community programmes designed to help the poor and the underprivileged. And when, in June 1962, students at the university went on strike, and many of them were expelled without even being given a hearing, Camilo defended the striking students and he was in turn spontaneously 'elected' by the students as Rector.

The conservative establishment in



Camilo Torres

the university, and within and outside the Catholic Church, could however not take this. The Archbishop of Bogota consequently directed Camilo to resign from his posts in the university. On leaving the university Camilo Torres joined the Higher School of Public Administration, as Dean. This position enabled Camilo to be an ex-officio member of the Board of the strategic Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform (INCORA).

The Colombia of Camilo's time (like the Colombia of today), was a nation in which the majority were so poor that they lived a sub-human existence, while a tiny oligarchy of the rich and the powerful owned more than 90% of the land and lived a life of pomp and pageantry. In Bogota, the capital, over one million of the city's two million or so inhabitants were literally homeless — it was a city in which every one hour at least four children died from hunger and disease, "a city of children and of thieves", a city of sub-human, non-persons.

Camilo Torres committed himself to fighting this sordid state of affairs. From his base at the School of Public Administration he organised schools for the children of the poor. He set up vocational training centres and spear-headed peasant grievance campaigns.

Camilo's commitment to the struggle for the liberation of the poor, as he persistently argued, was based on the gospel of Jesus Christ and the christian ethic of love and the brotherhood of all men. Says Camilo, "Saint John tells us: 'Anyone who says that he loves God whom he does not see, and does not love the neighbour whom he does see, is a liar'. However, that love of neighbour must be effective. We shall not be judged according to our good intentions alone, but chiefly according to our actions on behalf of Christ, represented in each one of our neighbours: 'I was hungry and you did not feed me; I was thirsty and you did not give me drink!'"

Having thus argued, however, Camilo was quick to add that just professing love for one's neighbour is not enough. That love, if it is to be real, if it is to be concrete, must be

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effective. And the only way to make it effective was through radical and revolutionary transformation of the social system: "If the welfare, the alms, the few housing plans, and what has been termed "charity" do not suffice to feed the majority of hungry persons, or to clothe the majority of badly clothes persons, or to teach the majority of those who are unlearned, we must seek effective means of achieving the prosperity of the majorities. These means will not be sought by the privileged minorities who hold power, because such effective means generally force the minorities to sacrifice their privileges. . . . Hence, it is necessary to take power away from the privileged minorities, so as to give it to the poor majorities. This is the essence of revolution. Revolution, therefore, is the means of achieving a government which will feed the hungry, clothe the naked, teach the ignorant, and perform works of charity and love of neighbour, not only for a few, but for the majority of our neighbours. Hence, revolution is not only allowed but is compulsory for christians who see in it the only effective and extensive way of practicing love for all".

Camilo fervently believed that it was the duty of the church, priests and all christians in the underdeveloped countries to commit themselves to the revolutionary transformation of the economic and social structures of their countries so that the oppressed of these countries may regain the dignity and material well being to better serve God. In a lecture tour of Europe in 1964, Camilo warned that if the ruling oligarchies of Latin America and other parts of the Third World were going to continue to "profane democracy by violence, it is important that they know we are going to meet force with force".

Camilo was so married to the aspirations of the oppressed that he persistently argued that "revolution is a christian imperative". The christian, he would argue, if he is to be a genuine christian, in both words and deeds, must have to participate in furthering structural changes that would lead to a more just society. Indeed, on one occasion he lamented: "the catholic who is not a revolutionary, and who is not on the side of the revolutionaries, is in a state of mortal sin".

If there was any one thing that Camilo Torres hated it was the manipulation of religious sentiments by the reactionary and oppressive oligarchy to divide the people in their struggles against oppression. He once told his followers: "we cannot allow anything as sacred as religion to continue to be a tool for exploitation on the part of the oligarchical classes".

On another occasion, Camilo asked, "What good does it do for us to hold discussions between catholics and communists over whether God exists or does not exist? Why are we locked up here in the coffee shops, discussing whether the soul is mortal or immortal, when we know that poverty is mortal? We shall not allow ourselves to be deceived by such discussions. We shall deal with matters of benefit to the Colombian popular class; we shall hold a campaign; we shall do what we shall be judged by as christians: whether we have provided food, whether we have provided drink, whether we have provided housing, whether we have provided clothing, whether we have provided education".

Not for Camilo the sectarian distractions within christendom. Not for him the artificial division between believers and non-believers in the struggle for human dignity and against oppression. "No one", he would argue, "is going to judge us on whether we have devotion to one saint or another. We believe that Christ is in each one of our neighbours, whether they be communists or protestants, and that, in particular, Christ is in each one of the poor of Colombia. Whatever we may do for any of the poor, we are doing for Christ".

For, as the Cuban Priest, Sergio Arce, has correctly pointed out, the most important point about this revolutionary priest is that "he lived his faith, not as a theory, but as a practice, without thereby underestimating the need for theory".

On his return from his European lecture tour, Camilo organised a political movement called the United Front of the People, in 1965. In June of that same year, the inevitable fallout with the Colombian church occurred. Archbishop of Bogota, Cardinal Concha, pronounced that "the activities of Father Camilo Torres are incompatible with the very ecclesiastical habit he wears". Rather than allow himself to be silenced by the pro-oligarchy and pro-imperialist church hierarchy, Camilo requested that he be allowed to temporarily revert to the status of a lay person, explaining that, "I sacrifice one of the rights which I love most dearly — to be able to celebrate the eternal rite of the church as a priest — in order to create the conditions that make the cult more authentic".

From then on, Camilo threw his complete energies into organising for the Colombian revolution. He started a weekly paper called *Frente Unido*, the first issue appearing on August 26, 1965. In one of the editorials of this weekly paper, Camilo argued that whereas it may be true, as Cardinal Concha had argued earlier in that year, that all authority comes from God, and that the scriptures and the teachings of the Popes have tended to condemn the overthrow of 'legitimate' authority, it was in fact the people who appointed that authority, and when this authority is against the

"The christian who is not a revolutionary, and who is not on the side of the revolutionary, is in a state of mortal sin."

But the beauty of Camilo's ministry and example did not lie solely in what he preached or theorised. No, it lay in what he practised; in his concrete and practical contributions to the struggles of the Colombian working and struggling classes, to the Colombian revolutionary movement.

people, then it is not legitimate and is a tyranny. In this situation, to take power from such authority is "not only permitted but is obligatory for christians who must see in it the only effective and complete way to achieve love for all".

In October 1965, Camilo put into practice what his *Frente Unido* had

been preaching: he left for the mountains to join the guerilla columns of the Marxist-Leninist Army of National Liberation (ECLN). His message to his fellow countrymen as he left for the mountains was simple and matter-of-fact: "Legal avenues are exhausted and only the way of force is left. . . . I have involved myself in the armed battle. From the mountains I will continue the fight, with arms in hand until power is conquered for the people. . . . Not one step back! Freedom or death!"

Four months later, news filtered out from the mountains to Bogota, that at the young age of 37, this

devout priest, this committed academic, this proletarian theologian and unflinching revolutionary, had been killed in battle on 15th February, 1966, gun in one hand, the rosary in the other, and an unquenchable love for the masses in his bosom. He had fallen fighting for what he believed in, for what he believed was his duty as a christian and a Colombian.

Camilo Torres Restrepo had been killed by the bullets of the fascist Colombian security forces. But Camilo lives on. He lives in the heart of the revolutionary upsurges going on in Colombia, South America, and other parts of the Third World today. He

lives in the many Camilo Torreses that have sprouted and are sprouting around the world today. He lives in the theology of liberation which is now raging on in the Catholic Church, conquering many more hearts and souls. But above all, the soul of Camilo Torres reigns in the innermost cells of all true christians, in the pores of all revolutionaries, irrespective of their creed. For, like Camilo, and with Camilo, they are, one and all, proclaiming: ". . . not one step back! Freedom or death!"

By Richard Umaru.

UPDATE

JOLLY TANKO YUSUF From Hysteria To Xenophobia

There is a genuine fear all over the country that there are internal and external forces systematically preparing the ground for another civil war in Nigeria, only eighteen years after the last one. This time, the civil war is being prepared around political conflicts ostensibly built on religion.

Some of the parallels are striking. Some of the moves and manoeuvres are similar. Some of the personalities are the same! This is what makes the whole thing seem like a bad dream which refuses to go away, even in the daytime.

In the mid-1960s, one of the leading politicians who drummed up violent anti-Ibo hysteria which prepared the ground for our bloody tragedy of 1966-70 was Jolly Tanko Yusuf, the Waziri of Wukari. Now that he is the best of friends with millionaire Arthur Nzeribe and other active advocates of the political polarisation of Nigeria along religious lines, Jolly Tanko Yusuf may not like the Nigerian public — particularly the Ibo Christians — to be reminded of his role in the anti-Ibo hysteria which had such a bloody and ghastly outcome for Ibos and for other Nigerians. But try as he might, Jolly cannot run away from the shadow of his past.

According to the *Nigerian Citizen* (Wednesday, 21st October, 1964) Jolly Tanko Yusuf, as the Provincial Commissioner of Benue Province, told a 70,000-strong campaign rally at Keffi that the Northern People's Congress (NPC), whose Commissioner he was, must rule Nigeria for ever. The Provincial Commissioner gave eleven reasons for this. The most important reason, he argued, was that the NPC was the only party that could prevent the Ibonization of Nigeria. Foaming at the mouth, Jolly Tanko Yusuf thundered:

"There is acute unemployment problem facing Eastern Nigeria today, where there are as many as 100 graduates not mentioning secondary and primary school leavers roam the streets aimlessly (sic). If the UPGA wins the elections there jobless fellows will not only push out few Northerners now serving (sic) in the Federal Public Services but also replace those serving in the North in the name of 'one Nigeria'."

For good measure, he went for the Ibo State Union, urging his audience to "Reject the Ibo State Union by rejecting NEPU at

the poll for your own good, for that of this region, and of your children. Because it is only the NPC leaders under the directive of Allah that are honest and deserve to rule the country."

It does not take much to imagine what the effects of such vicious propaganda will have been on the Keffi unemployed, semi-employed, applicants and school leavers, after the January 1966 coup, particularly after Ironsi's unification decree and the jubilation that accompanied these by Ibo chauvinists. This crude anti-Ibo rabble rousing must have obviously played a part in fueling the pogrom that soon followed.

Yet, twenty-two years later, the very same Jolly Tanko Yusuf would travel to a meeting organised in Ibadan by the United Christian Association, and on Saturday, 6th September, 1986, would summon journalists and shamelessly utter these hypocritical words: "Chief Awolowo did not rule the country because Nigerians were brain-washed to believe that he would serve only the interest of the Yorubas" (*National Concord*, Tuesday, 9th September 1986). But Jolly did not stop at that. Having placated the Yorubas, the Ibos also had to be placated



Jolly Tanko Yusuf

too, and whitewashing Zik's political image was naturally the most opportunistic thing to do. He said: "the same thing applied to Zik who was seen as an Ibo leader". Jolly capped it all by observing that a Yorubaman should become the leader of the country and this leader must be a christian.

Thus it was that in one fell swoop, Jolly Tanko Yusuf, yesterday's fierce defender of the NPC, who just two decades ago publicly declared that "it is only the NPC leaders, under the directive of Allah, that are honest and deserve to rule the country", became transformed overnight. Who says miracles no

longer happen?

The hysteria that Jolly Tanko Yusuf generated at the Ibadan meeting of the United Christian Association was against muslims, who are now the newly-discovered enemies. From anti-Ibo hysteria in 1964, our Jolly has in 1986 turned to anti-muslim xenophobia. But then what did Jolly Tanko Yusuf lose from the carnage of 1966-1970? He rose from a Provincial Commissioner to Ambassador to Presidential Liaison Officer, and is now a millionaire. Such are the juicy rewards of generating hysteria and xenophobia!

LABOUR

WHICH WAY THE N.L.C.?

The Nigerian Labour Movement is in disarray. It is plagued by a labour aristocracy of union leaders who have contented themselves with careerist prospects and the making of a lot of money at the expense of the welfare of the workers. For instance, during the retrenchments since 1982, most union leaders did not do more than make empty noises, as they continued to collect millions of naira every month from the workers' check-off, guaranteed for them by decree.

The political education of the workers, one of the most important functions of any labour movement, has received no serious attention from the union leaders and officials in the industrial union or at the level of the Nigerian Labour Congress.

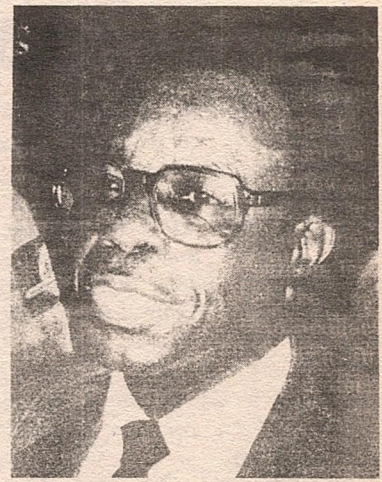
Union leaders continue to draw fat salaries, allowances and loans from the union funds. And even some union officials indulge in the wasteful luxury of expending union funds on litigation to settle their personal squabbles over posts. For instance, the leadership struggle in the National Union of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions Employees (NUBIFIE) has consumed a whopping N500,000 of union funds. What most workers do not know is that huge sums of money accrue into the coffers of the trade unions every month. NUBIFIE, for example, has about 70,000 members and collects from them as union dues over three million naira annually!

In that same union, the Acting National Secretary, A. A. Taiwo claimed N26,500.00 for housing loan and further, he is asking for another N30,000.00 to bring his flat to a "habitable stage". In addition, the same Mr. Taiwo is asking that his accumulated leave between 1983-88, totalling 270 days, be commuted to

cash. And when it is calculated, it comes to N23,082.06. On top of this, he is asking for N10,000.00 vehicle repair grant.

The present travails of Nigeria's labour movement have their own background. The labour movement in Nigeria started under colonial rule which influenced its character. The petty-bourgeois approach to the anti-colonial struggle constrained its development. Its composition and dynamism has also been determined by the generally low level of development of modern industry and agriculture in the country.

But in spite of all these limitations, the Nigerian Labour Movement has played an active, and initially a vanguard role, in the struggle for national independence, national unity and social progress in this country. Before the emergence of any of the political parties that came to control the governments of Nigeria, the first Trade Union Congress of Nigeria was, in July 1943, calling for the

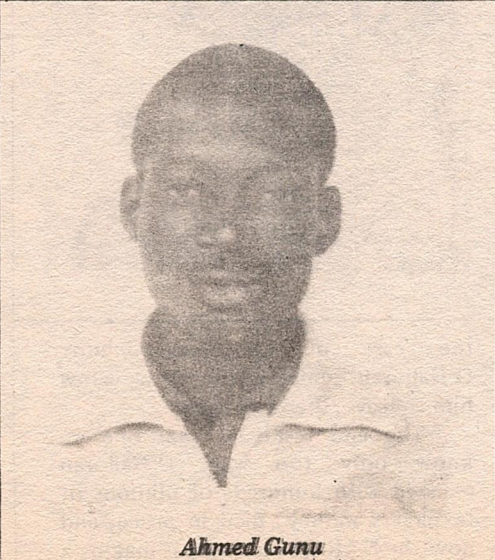


Ogunkoya: Hatchet-man

industrialisation of Nigeria and "the nationalisation of mining, and timber industries, township transport and other important public services". Moreover it was doing this through its paper, the *Nigerian Worker*, whose circulation reached 10,000 copies in 1944.

In 1949, the Nigerian National Federation of Labour committed itself to bringing about a socialist republic in Nigeria. At this time it was the most important trade union centre in the country and was spearheading the militant nationalist struggle, which was reaching its peak.

In its submission to the Political Bureau in June 1986 the present Nigerian Labour Congress continued on this path and categorically stated that: "... we believe that only a socialist option can ensure a viable and stable political and economic arrangement in Nigeria", and that this requires "... a people's government in which the workers, peasants, progressive professionals and intellectuals, students, etc. play a leading role".



Ahmed Gunu

LABOUR

But instead of the labour movement being in a position to carry on with this struggle to a successful conclusion, it is now politically and administratively in disarray. Elections to many industrial unions and to the NLC are only a few months away and there is no socialist platform around which to rally the progressive forces.

The bankruptcy of the Nigerian labour aristocracy has helped the Babangida regime to cripple the labour movement at the industrial and

political levels. Retrenchment is being intensified. Privatisation is advancing. The labour movement seem incapable of fighting these although as the April and October 1988 strike waves show it still has the capacity to resist these policies, and advance forward.

The immediate way forward for Nigerian workers therefore, is to deal with the labour aristocrats and bureaucrats in their unions by voting them out in the forthcoming elections. There is also no alternative to a

sustained political education of the workers so that they would rise above the levels of ideological consciousness at which the ruling class wants to keep them. To make all this possible, genuine workers' democracy and accountability must be made the basis of the current struggle to revive the NLC and carry it forward to play a leading role in the fight for a genuinely independent and socialist Nigeria.

By Ahmed Gunu.

FROM THE PRESS

'JAIL THEM'— OONI

Nigerian traditional rulers and tycoons seem to carry their bankruptcy and backwardness with them wherever they go. For example, on 8th August, 1988, Oba Sijuade, the Ooni of Ife, at the Emancipation Day celebrations in Trinidad and Tobago, told the Trinidad Express that "if it were left to me most pressmen would be behind bars". He was, of course, seriously taken up in the Trinidad and Tobago Press for this brazenly fascist statement.

The Trinidad-born American Black power militant of the 1960s, Stokeley Carmichael, who has lived

Someone must have told Oba Sijuade Okunade, the Ooni of Ife, that Trinidad is a province of Ife giving him the divine right to treat us like a bunch of fools.

When, last Friday, the *Mirror* exposed the facts that the visiting Nigerian had been sued in his homeland over a sex scandal, and that he was a Christian, not an Orisa, the Ooni and his entourage, and a handful of gullible Trinidadians were down our throats.

How dare we write such things about the Orisa Chief?

The *Mirror* was racist, others argued.

And they ranted and raved.

But none, not one, not even the Ooni himself, disputed the facts that we reproduced.

Instead, putting emotions before integrity, the Ooni's supporters suggested that we should sweep the leader's mess under the carpet, at least until after he left the country.

But that's precisely what government and the established media did in

in West Africa for many years, told his compatriots that: "In Nigeria, as in all former British colonies, the chiefs were instruments of oppression of the people. In fact the British paid them salaries, so perfect they were to the system of colonialism and exploitation. Today it is little different. They are backward elements while Africa is moving forward. I am surprised to learn that supposedly progressive people in Trinidad and Tobago have turned to someone like the Ooni for inspiration."

But what really got the urbane Sijuade to come out in his true

fascist colours with that outburst about pressmen was a front page story in a Trinidad newspaper, The Mirror, of 5th August, 1988, which related his scandalous court case with the Sodipo family and his business interests. This and the editorial that accompanied it, so incensed the Ooni that he got lawyers then and there in Port of Spain, Trinidad, to threaten The Mirror with a libel suit. The Mirror treated the threat with the contempt it richly deserved, and wrote another editorial reiterating its stand. Below is the editorial of The Mirror of 12th August, 1988:

vain effort to recover some of the loot.

The *Mirror* is not into that kind of hypocrisy, which borders on criminal negligence in media terms.

If there is a story to be told, if the facts are there, and moreso if the culprit is, or pretends to be, a leader in society, he or she must be exposed.

If democracy is to have any meaning, the media must play an important role, one no lesser than that of the judiciary or the executive arm of government.

The Ooni, however, and his colleagues in the Nigerian power structure, are accustomed to operating differently. Very often, might becomes right, and the rule of the gun supercedes the rule of law, with justice being buried under piles of bodies of ordinary citizens.

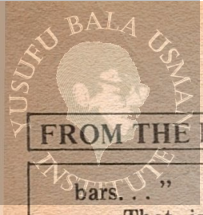
It was not surprising, therefore, that this so-called man of religion could say to the Trinidad and Tobago public before he left (via the *Express*): ". . . He said, however, that had he been a politician, "if it were left to me, most press men would be behind



Ooni of Ife

the case of the late Johnny O'Halloran: conceal the facts, allow him to leave, then raise hell.

The end result of that one we know only too well. O'Halloran escaped with hundreds of millions of taxpayers money, died in peace, and now the NAR Government is making a



bars. . ."

That is an open attack on our constitution, which guarantees the freedom of the press.

But there was the *Express* proudly reproducing it.

Had Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua or Errol McLeod of the OWTU said the same thing, the *Express* and *Guardian* would have savaged them in front page editorials.

But the Ooni, this Joker from Ife, wins praises from them for uttering such threat.

Let us make this point: at no time, either before or during the Ooni's visit, did we attack the Orisa

religion or its followers in Trinidad and Tobago.

In fact, this paper has a history of encouraging traditional religions, of boosting local culture.

But we will not be cowed by the likes of the Ooni or other traditional parasites who have lived off the fat of the land and the sweat of the people.

Those who wish to be hoodwinked by archaic, outmoded crap may feel free to so do: after all, this is a democratic society, not some fiefdom ruled by the wave of a hand or the barrel of a gun.

The vast majority of our people,

though, will have no part of any Nigerian overlord telling us what to do in our own country.

As for the threat by the Ooni to sue this paper for 10 million dollars, we treat that with the contempt it deserves.

We have no apology to give him; rather he owes this nation an apology for his ancestors having sold ours into brutal slavery.

He owes us an apology for having openly threatened the freedom of the press enshrined in our constitution.

Blackness is no excuse for either arrogance or stupidity.

REVIEWS

THE DEVIL CRUCIFIED

Lucifer, Satan, the Beast: call him whatever you will, the one thing he has, which sets him apart from other beings, is his evil nature. And evil, everyone knows, is the trade mark of the Devil — that demon who is always waylaying and ambushing man, debasing man's humanity.

How beautiful it would, therefore, be to have this Beast, for once at least, cornered and nailed to the cross. How lovely it would indeed be to prevent him from continuing to "pursue the task of building Hell for the people on earth. . . ." But — hold it. Three days after the people had crucified this Demon, and had gone away singing songs of victory, his acolytes on earth — dressed in flowing gowns, dark suits and ties — took him down from the cross, knelt before him and prayed, beseeching him "to give them a portion of his robes of cunning". Thus was the Devil's evil ways inherited by man — of course, not by all men, but by that man whose trade mark is his swollen belly.

It is on such devils that Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* (Heinemann, London and Ibadan, 1982, 254 pps.) dwells. Originally written in the Kenyan language of Gikuyu, the book is the macabre story of the Devil's disciples in our midst — men and women who worship at the shrine of the god of money, and whose sole profession is the stealing of the product of our collective sweat and blood.

Ngugi's story is a story richly sauced in African folklore. He tells us that the imageries often used in stories told to the young in the fields at daytime, or by the fireside at night — imageries of the witty young man or woman pitched against the man-eating, one-eyed ogre; of the weak but clever hare against the brutish lion; of the good, hardworking producer against the wicked thief — that all these are imageries that reflect the good, as well as the evil, in society. Good here being used to refer to collective wellbeing; and evil to destructive, anti-social behaviour. For Ngugi, good and evil are not abstract attributes, but concrete, earthly phenomena. Muturi, a worker character in the story, argues, "the nature of God is the image of the good we do here on earth. The nature of Satan is the nature of the evil we do here on earth. The question is this: What are evil actions, and what are good actions. . . ? There are two kinds of Man: he who lives by his own sweat and he who lives by the sweat of others".

Devil on the Cross is not a mythical story, even if centred, as the plot is, around a Devil-sponsored competition in a "Thieves and Robbers Den" in Kenya. The competition is organised to choose "seven Experts in Modern Theft and Robbery" with prizes guaranteed in "Bank Loans and Directorships of one of several Associations of Finance Houses". Preposterous as this theme may initially sound, all the major characters in the novel can easily be identified with living and dead names in Nigeria's public and business circles, in the universities and the clerical establishment, and in the armed and the security forces.

Take Mwaura, the *matatu* (i.e. *molue* bus) driver in the novel, for instance. Mwaura is a 'Devil's Angel' — a struggling, but vicious, petty businessman. As Mwaura used to say, there is no universe that he will not visit, no river that he would not cross, no mountain that he would not climb and no crime that he would not commit, "in loyal obedience to the molten god of money". Listen to Mwaura's standard boast: "I would sell my own mother if I thought she would fetch a good price!" Now, look around you here in Nigeria. How many Mwauras can you see amongst businessmen and women; amongst factory owners; and amongst the so-called transporters?

Or take the example of the second competitor in this contest of thieves and robbers, Gitutu wa Gataanguru. Gitutu "had a belly that protruded so far that it would have touched the ground had it not been supported by the braces that held up his trousers. . . . Gitutu had no neck — at least, his neck was not visible. His arms and legs were short stumps. His head had shrunk to the size of a fist. . . . His walking stick was decorated with pure gold. While he talked, Gitutu stroked the side of his belly with his left hand and swung his walking stick with his right hand (and he) panted as he talked, like a person carrying a heavy load". The revelations made in Gitutu's testimony of theft and robbery were equally obscene. Just listen to his vain boasts: ". . . my real home is here at the Golden Heights, Ilmorog. I call it my 'real' home because it's where my wife and children live. It's like my HQ. But I have got many other houses in Nairobi, Nakuru and Mombasa. I am never happy staying in hotels. When I am on a smuggling mission I like to spend the night in a house that bears the name of Gitutu wa Gataanguru. Of course, those are the houses known to the

REVIEWS

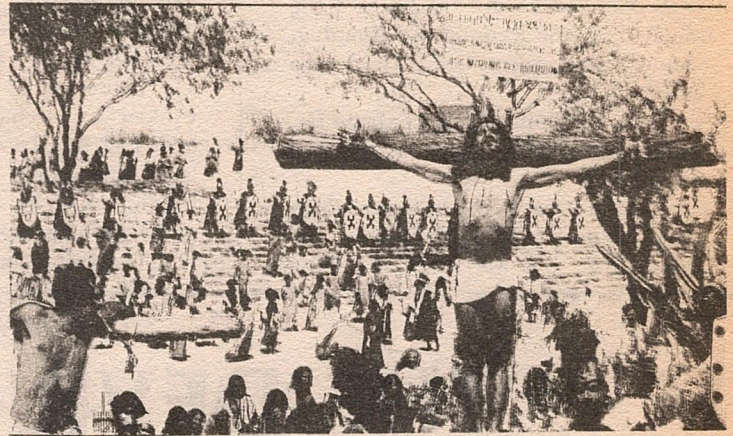
mother of my children. But I have a few other private lairs in Nairobi. Those are for me and my *sugar girls*. And for my car, I normally go about in a *chauffer driven Mercedes Benz 280*. But in addition I have a *Peugeot 604* and a *Range Rover*. Those are for *my personal use*. The mother of my children drives a *Toyota Carina*. Just a little shopping basket for carrying goods from the market. There are other vehicles — lorries and tractors — that I need for my business activities. I won't waste your time counting those. Oh! I was about to forget my young girl friends. I gave one *sugar girl* a Christmas gift of a *Toyota Corolla*, and I bought the other one a birthday present, a *Datsun 1600 SS*. Modern love is inconsistent with a tight fist!"

And what are Gitutu's abiding 'commandments'? "Real where you never planted, eat that for which you never shed a drop of sweat and drink that which has been fetched by others!"

No wonder. Gitutu learnt his principles of theft from his father who, as a black member of the colonial *native tribunals*, had learnt how to "straighten the law here, to break it there, and particularly how to bend it here and there to make it serve certain ends", such as grabbing other people's land. It was also his father who left him the following legacy, just "before he died of the disease of over-eating": ". . . A salary is nothing for a man with a family to look up to. But at the same time we black people cannot manage petty trades that need patience. . . . A career of theft and robbery is the only one for anybody who calls himself an adult. Learn from the whites, and you'll never go wrong. The whiteman believes that there's no business to beat that of theft and robbery". Thus armed with these cunning words of his father's, Gitutu proceeded to make his 'fortunes' through deception, land speculation and smuggling.

Is Gitutu a far-fetched character? Doesn't his description and even boasts, for instance, fit many of the stinking rich amongst members of the Nigerian bar, the chambers of importers and the blackmarketeers who masquerade as industrialists?

Kihaahu wa Gatheeca is another member of this band of robbers and blood suckers — but of a slightly different, and for us in Nigeria, all too familiar, cast. Soon after setting out on his journey on the highway of self-seeking individualism, Kihaahu realised that holding public office in the state is the surest ticket to theft and robbery. Says Kihaahu, "I saw that as soon as people accumulated property they all wanted to enter parliament. With my own eyes, I have seen someone sell his farm and auction his very beautiful wife in order to meet his election expenses. I paused to think: what's in this business, which has become the object of so much infighting, to the extent that people are prepared to scatter millions of bank notes about and sell their wives and daughters and farms? So plunge Kihaahu did, into the murky, greasy and violent horse-trading that is Kenyan politics. Having bought his way into a local government council, and become the chairman of it's *Housing Committee*, Kihaahu knew he had arrived at the gold mine. His game is a game all too familiar in Nigeria. Hear him: "I can remember one time when the council demolished some shanties at Ruuwa-ini. The plan was to erect a thousand houses there instead. The money was loaned to the Council by an Italian bank. The company that won the tender for building the houses was Italian. But, of course, it has first given me a small backhander of about 2,000,000 shillings. I



Brazilians re-enacting the crucifixion of Jesus.

put the money in my account and knew that the campaign money had been repayed. Now I waited for the returns on my investment in the elections. It was only after the houses had been built that I found what I had been looking for. Anybody who wanted a council house first had to buy me a cup of tea worth 2,000 shillings. I made another 2,000,000 that way. . . . These days I don't wait for the council before I pocket titbits. I have teamed up with some Italian foreigners and have formed a construction company: Ruuwa-ini Housing Development Company. It is my company that usually wins tenders from the Council". Kihaahu's long-term ambition is to one day build and hire out to the masses "houses the size of a nest", constructed in such a way that they can be folded and carried about on shoulders!

However, even amongst this decadent band of robbers and speculators are to be found characters like Mwireri wa Mukiraai, who advocate self-reliant theft, or the doctrine of "patting your stomach alone in a corner".

An advocate of national capitalism, Mwireri argues: ". . . Modern theft is of two kinds. There is the kind of theft that is domestic or, let's say, a national affair", and there is another kind of theft — "in this case, the thieves and robbers of one country go to another country and steal from the masses there and take the loot back to their own country". Mukiraai, of course, resolutely rejects the second kind, evoking, in the process, the evil ire of his fellow brothers. Mwireri's death warrant is sealed.

The Master of Ceremony had to apologise for Mwireri's 'infantile effrontery', on behalf of Kenyan thieves and robbers, to the delegation of International Thieves and Robbers: "Distinguished guests, we are your slaves. You have come back to see what we have done with the talents you bequeathed to us in grateful recognition of the services we rendered you in suppressing those of our people who used to call themselves freedom fighters. That is good. I would like to remind you that even today we have continued to hoodwink our people into believing that you did actually leave the country. That is why we don't call you foreigners or imperialists, or white robbers. We call you our friends. Therefore I beseech you please resume

your seats. . . so that you can hear the stories of all the other man-eaters. Don't worry about Mwireri wa Mukirai. We shall take care of him".

Man-eaters indeed they are all. Drinkers of the blood and sweat of workers and peasants. These are the real earthly Devils the scriptures have alluded to. At the end of the novel, Waringa, the heroine of the novel, also comes to this realisation. The workers too come to understand that the Devils amongst us are actually those barren people with barren bellies, swollen not by disease, but "fattened by the fruit of our sweat and blood". The real Devils, the workers realise, are those who occupy the houses built by workers, leaving the builders out in the rain; they are those who eat the food grown by peasants, while these

peasants sleep with their stomachs gnawing through the night; they are those who put their children in exclusive schools built by workers, while the workers own children go struggling for food with pigs and goats on rubbish heaps and in dust bins.

Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* is a gripping, provocative account of the plundering of a people's common heritage. It is an account told by a master of the art. But above all, it is the account of a committed artist. It is compulsory reading for all those interested in the genuine liberation of their motherland.

By Sa'idu Adamu.

SPORTS

SEOUL '88

Triumph Of The Amateurs, Triumph Of Socialism

The XXIV Olympics has come and gone, leaving with it pleasant memories to last another four years until the world's sportsmen and women reconvene again at Barcelona, Spain, in 1992. The South Korean government which hosted the Olympics can beat its chest for organising one of the most successful Olympics ever hosted by any country, even though this feat was achieved by massive repression. In terms of attendance, it drew 160 nations, including most of the socialist countries which had initially threatened to boycott the games. Thanks to their decision to attend, the world has had the opportunity to witness and to attest to their spectacular display of sports prowess. The Seoul Olympics has, on the whole, shown the triumph of socialism over capitalism in sports as in many other fields, even if in monetary terms the actual beneficiaries are the multinational corporations whose investments made them good money within a very short time.

When the United States hosted the XXIII Olympiad in Los Angeles, the attendance was limited to just the U.S., Western Europe, and some so-called Third World countries, numbering just about 100. Because of the boycott by the socialist bloc, the

XXIII Olympiad had all the glamour of Hollywood show biz. However, in terms of serious sports competition it was reduced to a joke. This came out clearly when the Soviet Union, at about the same time, hosted the "Friendship Games" for all those nations that boycotted the Los



Ogbemudia 'the achiever':
Why didn't he achieve?

Angeles Olympics. The outcome was startling. While the U.S. and the other nations were clowning at Los Angeles and clapping their hands for setting new records, the very same records were being shattered at the Friendship Games. For example, in the pole vault, swimming, hammer throw and

javelin, the Los Angeles records were eclipsed.

Back to the Seoul Olympics. Right from the beginning it was obvious to all that the real competition this year would be more between the socialist nations than otherwise. For in the first three days, the medal table showed the Soviet Union being followed by the East Germans, who were in turn closely followed by the Bulgarians. The weight lifting event showed the prowess and supremacy of the Bulgarians. They cleared the 50kg, 75kg, 100kg, and 125kg contests. Although the U.S. made an impressive showing in boxing, this can be easily attributed to the absence of the Cubans, who have dominated all previous contests in all categories, from flyweight to heavyweight since the 1960s.

With the commencement of the field events and the indoor games, the claim of superiority and finesse by the U.S. was not only shattered, but the U.S. was in fact humiliated. The Soviet Union eliminated the U.S. at the semi-finals of basketball, which the U.S. has traditionally dominated. The Soviet Union proceeded to clinch the gold. The U.S.S.R. also beat the U.S. 4-0 in soccer.

The performance of the Soviet Union in the field events was not only

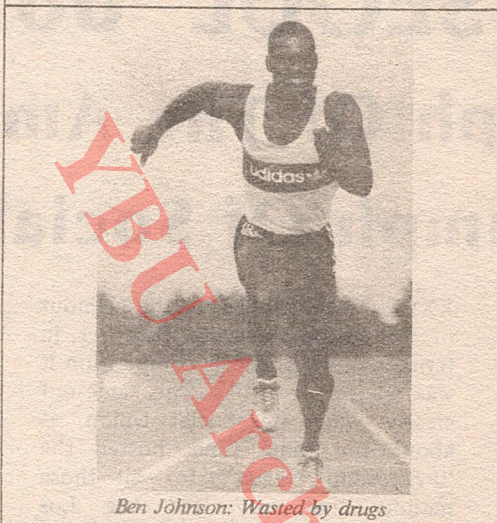
marvellous, but it was interesting when one considers how it became an entirely socialist affair. In the hammer throw, the Soviet Union took the gold, silver and bronze after the other throwers had been marginalised. In the pole vault, which was contested for five and a half hours, the Soviet Union did not even join in the early part of the competition until after the 5.70 metres mark had been reached! By the time the competition became very tough, only six competitors — three of them from the Soviet Union, two from East Germany and one from the U.S., continued. The coaches from East Germany even insisted that the increase in height should be in multiples of 50 centimetres. By the end of the competition, the Soviet Union not only took away the gold, silver and bronze medals, but even its silver medalist broke the old record. It was indeed one of those events that dramatically showed the spirit of the Olympics.

Of course, Africa was very much present at Seoul. But the presence was more that of officials than of competitors. Nowhere was this more evident than in the Nigerian camp. The Nigerian contingent was made up of 75 sportsmen and women and an astonishing 300 officials, with three members of the AFRC shepherding the flock. And what did we have to show for all these? Of course, not even a zinc medal. In the track and field events, despite our highly rated athletes such as Egbunike, Chidi Imoh and others, there wasn't a single African in the 100 metres final. In fact, even "Egbunike of Africa" (courtesy of Arap Moi), had to be contented with a fifth position! On the medals table, Nigeria, the "giant" of Africa and the "greatest" black nation, led the rear, plodding in the 160th position. Only the Kenyans managed to secure any glory for Africa by their brilliant performances in the long distance running events.

By the time the Olympics came to an end, not only had the Soviet

Union emerged as the leader on the medals table, but even the total gold it won were more than all the gold medals won by the leading Western capitalist countries put together, excluding the U.S.! In soccer, despite Brazil's traditional superiority, it was humbled by two goals to one by the Soviet Union. This gold medal brought the total gold haul of the Soviet Union to 55, plus 31 silver and 46 bronze. In other words, the total number of medals won by the Soviet Union was 132. East Germany placed second, while the USA had to be content with third position.

But why this triumph for the socialist countries at Seoul? This



Ben Johnson: Wasted by drugs

question is particularly important for us in Nigeria at this time that our sports officials are talking glibly about the advantages of emulating Western Europe and North America, and turning to professionalism.

The answer, of course, is simple enough. Firstly, in the socialist countries sports is an integral part of everyday life. The sports facilities are free and open to everybody. Indeed, right from kindergarten, sports is part of the daily diet of a child's upbringing for both mental and physical development.

Secondly, in the absence of such debilitating pressures as unemploy-

ment, high medical bills, hunger and homelessness which bedevil everyday life in the capitalist societies, the socialist citizen is free to fully develop his potentials in sports as well as in other fields.

Thirdly, one feature which is often ignored but which is nonetheless central to sports in the capitalist societies today, is that sports is big business. As a big business, it has to be a source of massive profits for the sports barons: Adidas, Kodak, NBC, Seiko, etc. While the sports superstars are proclaimed by the media to be making millions of dollars from their respective sports, and from advertisement rights, in reality they are milch-cows — always under pressure to be in the headlines, always haunted by the fear of getting old and going under, and everywhere chased by the taxman. They have sold themselves — body and soul — to their coaches, managers, and to the companies whose products they advertise.

This is professionalism in all its naked ugliness. This anxiety to always be on top is indeed the key to understanding the drug scandal which now threatens to destroy the ennobling ideals of the Olympics in particular, and international sports competitions in general. This profit motive and the commercialisation of athletes themselves is what is also responsible for eliminating mass participation in sports in these capitalist nations, with all its obvious consequences.

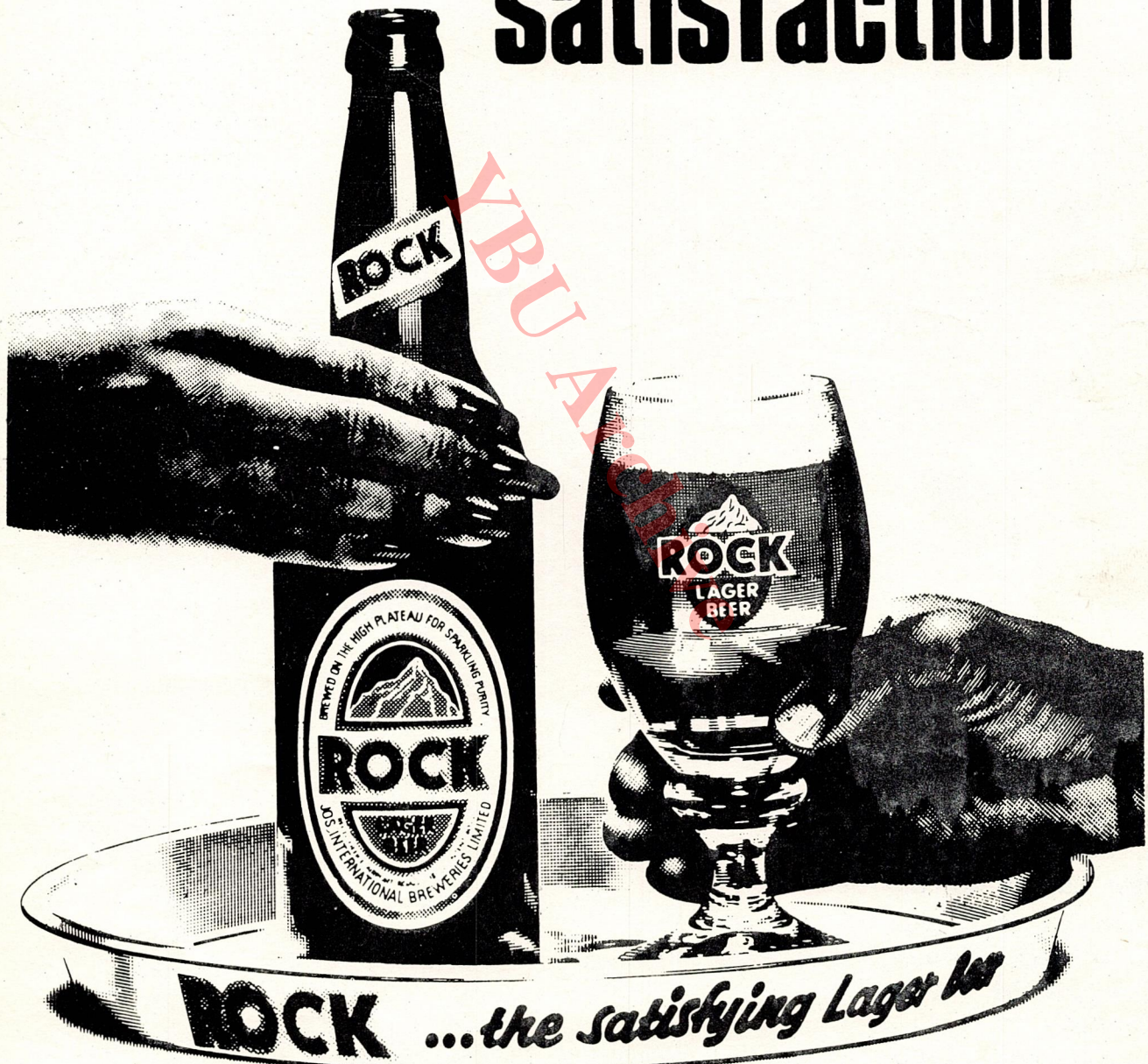
Nigeria therefore has a choice — to continue going down the valley of international disgrace in sporting competitions through aping the decadence of the capitalist West, or to face up to the challenges staring her in the face, and to move forward and start laying the foundations for a new beginning in sports as well as in the economy and politics. Whichever way, posterity will judge us.

By Sule Mohammed.

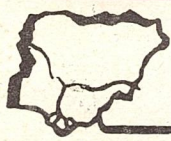
NOTICE TO READERS

We wish to apologise to our numerous readers over our inability to bring to them in this edition, as earlier promised, the second part of our article on 'The Battle of Cuito Cuanavale.' However, this shall be published, unflinching, in our next edition.

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ONE COUNTRY, TWO NATIONS



THE REAL EXTREMISTS

In his recent definition of extremists at Kuru, President Babangida said that extremists are "uncompromising, fanatical or immoderate in their views... (They) do not bother to delineate where their own rights end and where those of others begin. They are not believers in the politics of equality; they are not democratic."

According to Babangida, these extremists are of two types: ideological and religious. Both, he says, are going to be excluded from the transition programme.

Fine. But who are actually the real extremists in Nigeria today? Are they those who just shout down others at meetings and make a lot of hullabaloo, playing to the gallery for mere crumbs? Or, those who deny and violate the right to life of the majority of Nigerians, through their seizure of our

national wealth, leaving the rest of us pining away under extreme conditions of disease, hunger and poverty?

The custom-built limousines in the picture above, bought with money belonging to all Nigerians, are each worth over ₦750 000.00. This amount can build a rural hospital, fully stocked with drugs and equipment. It can also build a cottage industry capable of providing dry-season employment for a whole village.

The parasites riding these limousines are surely not only robbing the political rights of millions of Nigerians, but even denying them their very right to live.

Mr President, are the owners of these limousines, and others like them — military and civilian — not the *real extremists* in Nigeria today?