

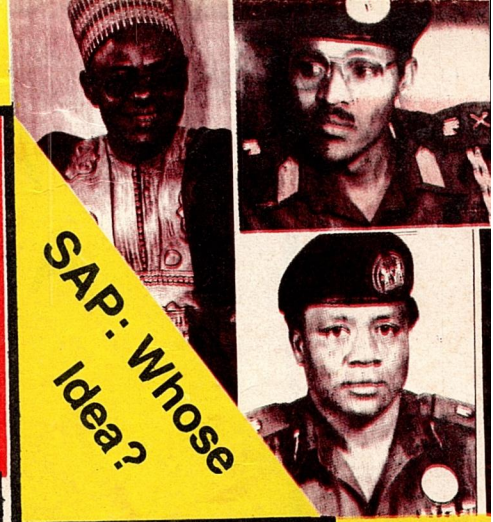
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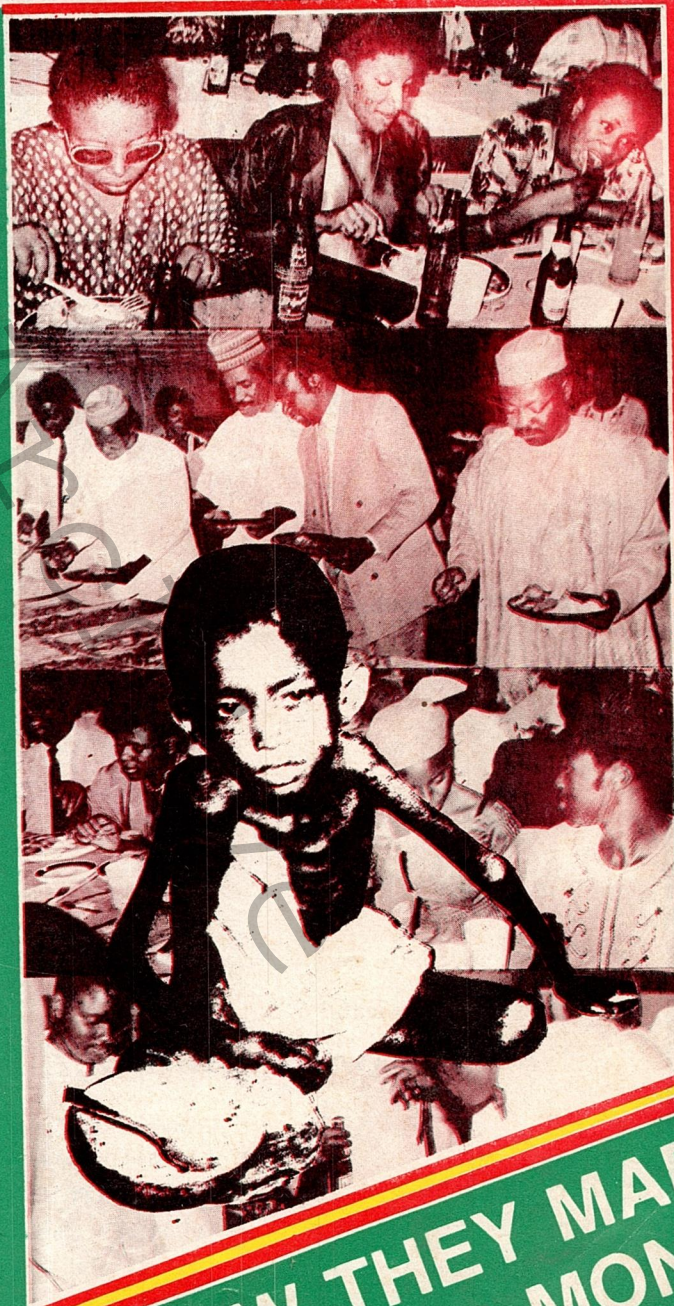
VOL. 2, No. 7

DECEMBER 1987

SAP: Whose
Idea?



How
THEY
LIVE
How
WE
DIE



**HOW THEY MADE
THEIR MONEY**

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PUBLISHER/CHAIRMAN
Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Danjuma Adamu
MANAGING EDITOR
Richard Umaru

EDITOR
Rufa'i Ibrahim

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:
Mahmud Tukur
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Tunji Osobu

CONTRIBUTORS:
Yahaya Abdullhaji
Siddique Abubakar
Sanusi Abubakar
Sa'idu Adamu
Umaru Aji
Iyorchia Ayu
Mohammed Bello
Zuwaqhu Bonat
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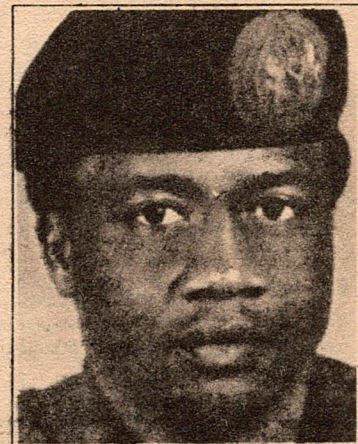
GRAPHICS:
Adamu S. Yashim
Mohammed Ali

ADMINISTRATION:
Chairman :
Abdulkadir B. Musa
Chief Executive:
Danjuma Adamu
Office Assistant:
J.S. Bosh

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In this issue

The rich-poor gap in Nigeria is very deep - as can be seen even from official statistics and figures. But just how comfortable and easy is the life lived by the rich, and how really deprived and miserable is the life of the poor? ... Page 7



The rich in Nigeria are fond of flaunting their wealth and boasting of having "made it". But just how are the vast riches and wealth made?...Page 24

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The Limits of Endurance

One country, Nigeria certainly is. But it is a country of two nations, two worlds. Two nations divided not along ethnic or religious lines; nor along the much talked - about North - South dichotomy; nor even by the River Niger; but by wealth and poverty. Ours is a country sharply divided into the easy world of the few rich and powerful, and the miserable and drab world of the poor majority.

This division of the country into one nation for the rich and another for the poor is the most fundamental fact about, and the most glaring aspect of, Nigeria today. It is a division that, especially in recent years, has been getting sharper and sharper by the hour, almost making nonsense of the concept of the middle class in Nigeria, and exerting its pressures on the poor in so many different ways. Poor health facilities, if any; poor food; poor education; lack of security of life and property; lack of opportunities for advancement; extreme poverty; raw deal at every turn, even in death - these are what the world of the poor offers its inhabitants. Theirs is a world in which the products of their own sweat and toil, their rights, are denied them and cornered by a tiny, parasitic class of the rich and powerful through direct exploitation, brazen stealing and all sorts of deals and rackets.

This sharp division, this situation of two nations in one country, exists and persists not because governments in Nigeria have not been aware of it. They have always been. But then governments in Nigeria have always been in the hands, not of the productive, working people, but of the few rich and powerful, in whose favour such unhealthy division works. Which explains why governments have responded to, and addressed this problem in a most predictable way: fashioning programmes often couched in fanciful, even populist language, whose ostensible aim is to redress this imbalance and make Nigeria a better place for all, but which have always ended up making the rich richer and the poor poorer.

It was so with Free Education in the defunct Western Region; it was so with Farm Settlements in the Eastern and Western Regions; it was so with the Housing Schemes in the Northern Region; it was so with Gowon's Universal Primary Education (UPE); it was so with Operation Feed the Nation (OFN); it was so with Shagari's Green

Revolution; it was so with Buhari's WAI Sanitation drive; and so it is with the present administration's Rural Programme (DFRRI) and MAMSER. More wealth and power for the rich and powerful, impoverishment and more powerlessness for the poor - that is what, in reality, all these fanciful programmes have meant.

Now, in fact, we have reached a stage when even in the governing circles, pretensions are no longer felt to be necessary. We are now being told, in clear language, by prominent members of this administration, that such things as telephone, air transport, electricity and even motor cars - services made possible and maintained by the sweat and labour of the working people - are not meant for them; and that, in any case, the poor in Nigeria have no reason being poor, that they should blame their pitiable situation on themselves. It seems, in fact, that the only thing left for Nigeria's poor is death - death in the throes of hunger, misery, extreme poverty and despair. But the working people of Nigeria, we are sure, will not accept this.

The situation in Nigeria, as we in *The Analyst* see it, is fast approaching a threshold - a fact not even the government can deny. All the tinkering with the economy, all the lofty intentions and all the fanciful recovery programmes fashioned so far - Low Profile, Austerity, Economic Stabilization, Structural Adjustment Programme - have failed to turn the economy around. Instead, they have only further wrecked it and have imposed and are about to impose, even more cruel burdens on a people about to reach the limit of their endurance.

The government's campaign to sell the latest impositions of SAP, like the increase in transport fares, telephone, electricity, water and postal rates, and in the prices of petrol, kerosine and diesel, have not convinced even the psychopants paid to conduct it. The Babangida administration should therefore not begin to believe its own propaganda about the present living conditions of Nigerians and how they regard SAP. As far as the overwhelming majority of Nigerians are concerned, the last eighteen months of SAP have been an unmitigated disaster, for Nigeria and Nigerians, and offer no hope for the future.

The Analyst believes that this regime should recognize these hard facts and allow the people of Nigeria to work out an economic recovery prog-

ramme which can take us out of the present quagmire. The election of the Constituent Assembly in the first quarter of 1988 offers a great opportunity for this. The Constituent Assembly should be democratically and directly elected without any interference from the military, the civil service,

... And Accountability in Local Governments

Information is reaching *The Analyst* daily that the new local government chairmen and councillors, who won the elections democratically, and not through rigging and fixing, are facing a serious new danger, which many of them are not even aware of. This danger comes from inside the very local government and civil service machinery they will be working with. In fact, if they are not vigilant many of these new councillors and chairmen basking now in the glory of their victory at the polls, will, by this time next year, be in jail-discredited and even disqualified from holding any other public office for the rest of their lives.

The conspiracy they are facing involves the siphoning of all the funds of the local governments before the handing-over to them next year. They will get a very hazy handing-over, if any at all, and in two months they will wake up to find that all that has been handed over to them are huge piles of claims by contractors and suppliers, bank overdrafts, salary arrears, etc. By the end of the first quarter they may find themselves unable to pay even the salaries of the local government staff. They will then have to go back to the ministries of local government with a begging bowl. The powerful barons controlling these ministries, the treasury and the rest of the civil service will then be able to dictate to them what to do and what not to do, on such crucial issues as the elections to the Constituent Assembly, traditional rulers, 1992, land, etc, etc. Those of them who try to resist or who are not regarded as reliable or fit to be in the local government councils will be carefully handled until the financial crunch comes to a head and they are handed over to a probe panel, investigated and jailed on some charge or other.

This conspiracy also serves several other purposes. For one, it covers up the massive looting of the local governments that has been going on up to now. Secondly, it knocks into the heads of ordinary people that whoever they may elect can be brought to his knees, if the power moguls are not behind him. Thirdly, it also prepares the

and the traditional rulers - as was the case with the just concluded Local Government elections. It will then be left to the democratically elected people to work out not only the constitution and transition programme, but also a genuinely Nigerian Economic Recovery Programme (NERP.)

ground for entrenching the power of the traditional rulers.

All those councillors and chairmen who genuinely want to serve the people who elected them should make sure that they take the following elementary actions:

- * They demand and receive full and comprehensive handing-over statements of accounts, of all the assets and liabilities of the local government councils, including detailed break-down of bank balances, contractors' claims, valuation of vehicles and other assets and the stages of payments on projects and the staff emoluments in all departments.

- * This should be done and completed and the final documents authenticated by the Secretary to the Military Government or his representative.

- * Copies of this handing-over statement of accounts should be given to every councillor and released to the public in the local government area.

- * All contractors' and suppliers' claims and all liabilities should be scrutinised and any dubious ones repudiated and measures taken to recover any funds already lost.

- * The chairmen and councillors should, within one week of taking office, declare their assets in a high court and make copies of this available to the Governor.

- * The people who elected them should be given full accounts of the finances of the L.G. council every six months and be mobilised to take part in the development planning, execution and monitoring, of projects and institutions, through local farmers, artisans, women and youth associations and trade unions.

These are six elementary steps to build public accountability at the foundation of the new councils and to promote democratic control of their resources. Any attempt to avoid this will only end in conspiracies, plunder and the collapse of even the limited democratic opening these elections represent. The undemocratic and corrupt feudal and bureaucratic forces can, and must, be exposed and defeated at this level of basic public accountability.

FUTURE FIELD MARSHALS

It was interesting reading your Earshot piece titled, 'A FIELD MARSHAL SOON! It was particularly interesting because on that very day of the 'Show of Stars' in Abuja I had discussions, or rather arguments, with some friends about the possibility of Babangida becoming a Field Marshal soon - in the next three years, probably.

I supported my arguments by trying to make them understand the number of years from Babangida's last promotion (1983), to the present one. I also tried to make them understand how the President jumped one rank, that is, Lt. General to General. I then cited the examples of the past Military leaders like General Gowon, General Murtala and General Obasanjo who all wore the rank of Lt. General before becoming full four star Generals.

This kind of promotions really speaks volumes about our country and its leaders. Our economy, we all know, is in a mess. One is thus tempted to ask: where did they get the money to be promoting themselves, leaving the poor masses to suffer? This is the only country that has Generals who haven't fought wars.

The masses of this country are watching with keen interest how the Military Leaders have been running the affairs of this our beloved country.

Aluta continua, victoria a certa!

David A. Wajhi
Kaduna.

Yes, They Are Rogues Not Rulers

Your issue on Emirs and Chiefs, has helped to expose these so-called custodians of culture and tradition in their true colour as cheats, hypocrites, psychopants, rogues, blood suckers and morally bankrupt individuals who live a parasitic existence. As you have rightly analysed, their nefarious deeds have historical roots and foundations. All of them are the same, be they emirs, Obas, Chiefs, Obis, Odemo etc.; from Maiduguri to Port Harcourt and from Sokoto to Lagos.

One striking phenomenon with them is their religious hypocrisy. They pretend to be religious while every bit of them, including their blood, is satanic.

The claim that they are traditional rulers is very puzzling. For there is nothing traditional about them, unless we describe African tradition as greed, sexual and material lust and dehumanization and oppression of the people.

The unfortunate thing about the whole issue of

traditional rulers in the country is the perpetual protection they enjoy from various governments. Nobody is surprised though, for, as you have rightly pointed out, most of those in governments are their sons, daughters or in-laws. Above all they now form part of the bourgeois ruling class, and are agents of multinational corporations.

If the traditional rulers in the country deny all that The Analyst has said, let them come out and challenge it publicly. Let Shehu Malami Bashir of Daura, Oba of Benin, Sijade and Yamusa of Keffi deny publicly what you have said on them. I challenge all the traditional rulers to come out and justify their existence on the labour of the working people of Nigeria.

I appreciate your cover story of The Analyst Volume, 2, No.5 on LEADERS OR LOOTERS.

But why are some Emirs not exposed on their shady deals e.g. the Lamido of Adamawa. Was it because one of the writers of the articles is from the ruling family? Why didn't he write to expose the sale of the Nguore Quarry in Yola Local Government to N.R.C at the cost of 3 million naira which the Emir claims belongs to his father - and such other deals?

Leaving out such things affects the credibility of your magazine.

Aston.
Yola.

Your cover story of Volume 2, Number 5, on our 'Traditional Rulers' is both interesting and revealing.

Your investigation was exhaustive enough, but you can't know all the evils of these feudal lords in all the nooks and corners of our country.

In my own village, Nimo, in Njikoka L.G.A. of Anambra State, for instance, our 'Chief' died about five years ago and from that day to date, some useless parasites have been fighting with charms, court suits and money to step into the vacant throne. Already many prominent and useful men and women, including a medical doctor who built the first hospital in our village, have been killed in the fighting to become Chief and as at now, our village is divided into many factions, each faction wielding anything possible to 'kill off' the other. I don't know what the Government of Emeka Omeruah is doing about this.

Whether the present junta will agree to do what the majority of Nigerians spoke - to abolish this long defunct institution - or not, remains to be seen. Our only hope though, is that a people's Socialist Revolution is inevitable in Nigeria and will take place sooner or later.

(Name And Address
Supplied)

The article I find most interesting in your issue on Emirs and Chiefs is the one captioned 'Peasant Revolts Against Chiefs'.

In that piece you highlighted the revolt of the down-trodden against their highly elevated traditional feudal lords in the past and recently. You mentioned the Rafin Gora incident as well as the revolts of "Agbekoya" in Ishara and Ogbomoso. This, plus the report on the Keffi incident of May 28th 1987, serve to underscore the fact that the traditional rulers constitute nothing but instruments of disunity, oppression, deceit, avarice and all sorts of moral decadence. How can these chiefs and emirs who help the multinational corporations in their illegal foreign exchange, and expropriate the peasants' lands, embezzle the proceeds from taxes and levies, receive bribes and gratifications from their less fortunate subjects, among other things, claim not to have outlived their usefulness?

If this obnoxious anti-social and retrogressive institution is not abolished from our civilized society, and a stop put to the unfortunate respect being accorded them by our constituted authorities, then the highly publicized War Against Indiscipline (WAI) should be thrown to the dogs.

Bashiru Yusuf Kabara
Nasarawa, Plateau State.

You've Not Convinced Me

I am not yet very much convinced by your commentary on the Traditional Rulers captioned - "Abolish Them," which appeared in your Volume 2, Number 5, of 1987, issue. And I have these questions to ask you:

* How do you see a Nigeria without traditional rulers since even developed countries such as Britain, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, etc still have them and owe allegiance to them and yet maintain democracy?

* Do you think your suggestion on this issue is in the interest of the grassroots, since many of them still have more respect for traditional rulers than they have for those democratically elected to lead them?

* Can't you see that even now many people still prefer settling their disputes before the traditional rulers to going to the law courts?

In view of all this, I suggest that the on-coming civilian government should give them some role to play, but not a significant one.

Maina Mustapha Ngala

HOW THEY LIVE, HOW WE DIE

JOHN Adamu had always considered himself a very lucky man. Born to a large peasant family of 12 at Gadani in Chikun district of Kachia local government in Kaduna state, he was lucky to be one of the first few kids in his village to enrol into a primary school some twenty years ago, at the age of 10. John graduated in 1974 and could not proceed to any higher institution. But being the lucky man that he was, or at least so he thought at the time, he only spent two years on the streets and slums of Kaduna searching for a job, before being hired as a labourer by one of the textile firms in that sprawling city. For six years John steamed himself amongst the factory looms and spindles, eking out a subsistence of some sorts from his forty-two Naira fortnightly wage until the textile 'crash' of 1982 - when he lost his job.

But as luck would have it, John again managed to secure another job eleven months later in Abuja, this time as a gardener in the home of a well-placed public officer, on a minimum wage of N120.00. In addition, John had the 'privilege' of staying in a one-room 'apartment' in his master's boys' quarters, where he did not have to pay for water and electricity.

Six months later, John married a girl from his village. On a wage of N120.00 and given the spiralling inflation of those Shagari years, life was not too comfortable for the couple. But they managed, supplementing their income by cultivating a small plot nearby. A handsome baby boy soon followed. Of course, John was excited, moreso because, with a remarkable coincidence, his wife delivered on the same day that one of 'Oga's Madams' also delivered a male child. The proud father dreamt of the time when his little son will grow up to have a good education, just like 'ogas' children.

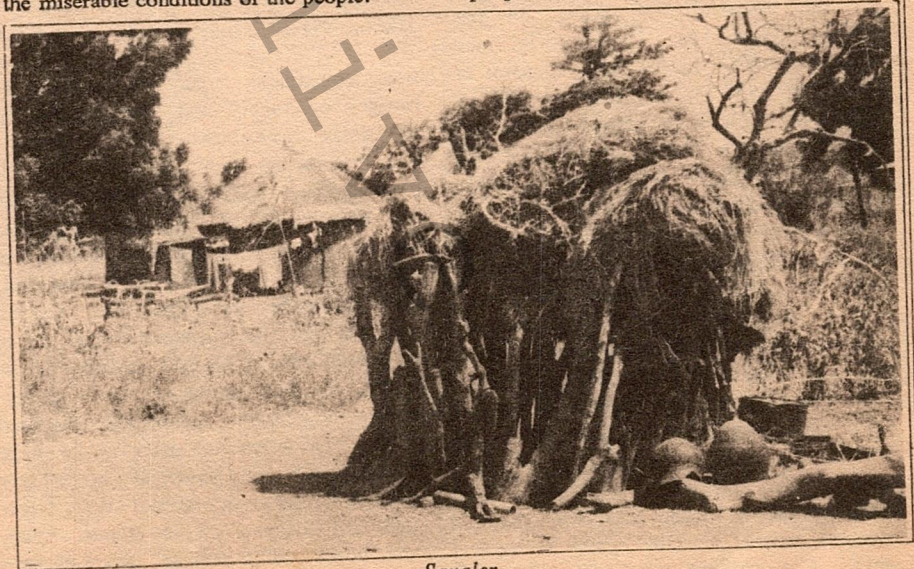
John's excitement was however destined to be short-lived; just as his stream of 'good luck' was soon to dry up. For, on Monday 28th May 1984, he received a letter terminating his appointment - one of the first victims of 'Buhari-nomics'. Since then, John has been in the labour

market, and his family has had to depend on the meagre and irregular amounts he gets from doing all sorts of odd jobs. John watched in great pain and much agony, as his wife and child emaciated and literally withered with malnutrition. Two months ago, what John considers to be the worst, happened: the little boy died. In heartrending misery John explained to *The Analyst*: "It was terrible. I felt light and weightless. I wanted to cry, but tears refused to come. I just sat there looking vacantly across the room, as relations came in to condole me amidst Murna's sobs and wailings. God, oh God, why must some people pass through such terrible things?"

The story of John Adamu is the story of Nigeria's hapless millions. Living in a magnificent country blessed with enormous human and material resources; being largely responsible for producing a significant proportion of the wealth of the nation with their limbs, brains and brawns, the vast majority of the working people of Nigeria are steadily and literally DYING from penury, hunger and disease. And as they waste, pine away and die, a tiny, parasitic and lecherous minority of the rich and the powerful in the society continues to live in unbelievable opulence and pomp; in complete disregard, insensitivity and even contempt for the miserable conditions of the people.

This miserable living condition of the vast majority of Nigerians has statistically been documented over the years by scholars and social researchers. For instance, a study on infant mortality carried out by P. Singha and B. Mortha in Kaduna State in 1980 found out that 168 of every 1,000 children born ended up dead before maturity. Another study by O. P. Verma on the state of health of children carried out amongst 23 village areas with a total population of 202, 180 in the Malumfashi district of the same state showed that approximately 400 out of every 1,000 children born die before reaching the age of five. For the whole of the country, available figures show that for 1980, the average infant mortality rate was 178 per every 1,000 live-births. By 1982, the situation had not significantly improved. The ratio then was 174 per every one thousand live births. More recent figures are not yet readily available, but if the collapse in medical services, in job opportunities, in peasant incomes and in the general adverse social and economic conditions of the people all these years are anything to go by, then the situation must not only have grown worse but indeed become alarmingly critical.

But, in fact, infant mortality rate is not the only index of the misery of the people of this country. There are others.



Squalor

COVER STORY

According to UNCTAD figures for 1985, the illiteracy rate in Nigeria remains as high as 57.6% of the population. Similarly, as many as 1,251 Nigerians have to share a hospital bed; and one physician has to, on the average, handle 9,591 patients. Death rate is 15.7% per 1,000 and the average life expectancy is merely 50.5 years. But as everybody knows, these statistics - terrible and damning as they are - do not reflect the actual situation on the ground, but merely average up the miseries. After all, how many villages have ever seen a doctor, and even where there are hospitals, have we not been told by even those treading the corridors of power, that these are now mere 'consulting clinics'? Indeed, in most of these hospitals patients know more about mortuaries than dispensaries.

But then, even for the living life is not a bed of roses. For those lucky enough to be employed, the situation is dismal. For instance, labour incomes (low as they are) have been declining in Nigeria since the 1975/76 fiscal year. In fiscal 1975/76 labour incomes constituted 32% of the Domestic Factor Income at 1973/74 values. But by 1982 this had declined to a mere 32.2%. (Today, the percentage of labour income vis-a-vis property and related incomes, i.e. profits, interest, dividends, rents and royalties, has suffered much more serious buffeting). But while this was happening, the share of income cornered by the rich and the powerful was rising. In the 1975/76 fiscal year, property incomes constituted 68%. In 1976/77, it rose to 71.5%. In 1977/78, it further jumped to 72.2%. In 1978/79, it reached 74.6% and rose further to 74.6% in 1979/80. In 1980, it was 75.5% and 74.6% in 1981. By 1982 it had peaked to 76.8%.

We are of course not unmindful of the fact that among the rich and the powerful there are some who would retort, on reading this, with stock explanations such as these: "these people are hungry and poor because they are lazy", or "Who says that God created everybody to be equal? If he did, he would have made all our fingers equal in length", or "we all have to make sacrifices if we want to develop". Some will even say, "why should anybody worry, after all, death is inevitable." The spritual charlatans amongst

these privileged classes will go ahead to even say that "this world is not our home" and that "we are just passing through, our treasures are laid up in heaven".

This is no doubt good refrain for a chart-busting country single, but hardly anything else. The claim that hunger, disease and inequality are inevitable is totally false, unscientific, and ahistorical. The falsity of such claims has been amply demonstrated by our history. This history has not only shown that hunger is not inevitable but has also demonstrated the significant and even *avante-garde* role which the peoples of the area known today as Nigeria have played in the evolution of man and his eventual mastery of his environment through the domestication of animals and plants, and the creation of the social and political organisation which goes with these. It



Wayas: Presided over Legislators' Looting.

was consequent upon this that the ravages of hunger and disease, and the brutishness, nastiness and uncertainty that they bring, were controlled. By the time mankind entered the Iron Age, and the technology of iron smelting had become common in the ancient kingdom of Kush in the Nile valley some three-and-a-half thousand years ago, iron smelting was also being independently practised in the central area of Nigeria, around *Taruga*. In fact, the Nok culture, based on advanced smelting of iron and tin (as evidenced by the Nok terracotta) dates as far back as 900 BC and stretched in a belt between Kagara in present day Niger State and Katsina-Ala in Benue. Later, there developed a similar advanced iron Age culture in the area around old Ife and

the existence of this civilisation has been proved by the excavation of sophisticated Ife bronze figurines. Around the valley of the Niger there are also evidences of iron smelting as early as the second century B.C. This no doubt provided the technological and material basis for the subsequent flourishing of the Igbo-Okwu civilisation.

The technological revolution and the transformation of the social and political organisation of the Nigerian communities which iron smelting engendered, led to the rise of more complex, more diversified communities and to the emergence of states which transcended family, clan and lineage ties and which organised social production on much more efficient and collective basis. By the turn of the 16th century, technological and political developments had given birth in the North to the so-called Hausa city-states system, the Kanem-Borno empire and the Nupe Kingdom. And to the south, the old Oyo and Benin Kingdoms were already established.

But this advancement of our people and the development of their capacity to increasingly master their environment, provide the basic necessities of life and ensure against natural calamities, got short-circuited by the colonial experience. For, the present features of the Nigerian agrarian crisis, particularly the food crisis and the alarming rate of malnutrition and disease amongst especially peasant farmers, children and the poor can be traced directly to the doorsteps of colonialism and the social classes it enthroned. The Nigerian peasants and other small producers like fishermen, hunters, blacksmiths and other artisans were not only conquered and dominated but had their productive economic activities entirely redirected to serve the interest of European trading companies and their servant appendages of local chiefs, middlemen, money lenders and clerks.

In collaboration with traditional chiefs, the colonial authorities enforced huge taxes on the people in British currency. To be able to pay this the peasants were forced to abandon the production of food crops for the production of cash crops like cotton, cocoa and rubber needed by the British industries. A recent study by Abdullahi Sule-Kano on the political

COVER STORY

economy of malnutrition amongst peasant families in Sokoto brings out this pattern clearly. The mounting pressure of colonial taxation in Sokoto Emirate, which rose from £20,095 in 1907 to £25,554 in 1908 to £27,284 in 1909 and to £30,138 in 1910, forced peasant farmers to keep increasing their cash crop out-put and the sale of whatever they had produced to eat in order to find money to pay tax. Where the peasant farmer could not find market for whatever he had produced, and where his little herd of animals had become exhausted, he was forced into *Ci-Rani* to search for food and wage-earning jobs in order to pay his taxes and to cater for his family. Increasing taxation far outstretched the peasant farmer's capacity for food production and had the direct consequence of placing him in a most miserable condition of poverty, hunger, malnutrition and famine in the slightest case of crop failure. As labour was diverted from food production to the production of export commodities and the construction and maintenance of colonial infrastructure, the shock-absorbing mechanisms of the peasantry which guarded them against natural disasters such as droughts and floods and prevented famines and mass hunger were seriously undermined.

By 1925 the colonial state report on farming indicated that "the harvest of foodstuffs in the northern provinces and particularly in the more northern areas, was not up to the average, and consequently in many parts reserves became depleted." In 1926 rains in most northern provinces ceased unexpectedly, resulting in partial crop failure. The consequence of all these was obvious - famine engulfed most parts of this region. And by 1948, the living conditions of Nigeria's peasantry had greatly deteriorated, so much so that in Sokoto province, for instance, even the then provincial Resident, Sherwood Smith, had to admit that "until the dietary of central Sokoto can be drastically revised, in terms of quality as well as of quantity, there can be no general improvement in standard of living.... unless bold measures are adopted starvation, not salvation, may well be around the corner."

But typical of colonialism's double-speak and the shedding of crocodile tears,

Sherwood Smith (who will be remembered here in Nigeria for his book, *But Always As Friends!*) saw nothing wrong in making sure that even in those trying times for the Sokoto peasantry, his province exported over 2,000 tons of dried fish; 1,113 tons of beans; 646 tons of millet, and 243 tons of onions - not to talk of the cash crops produced and exported abroad.

But in the midst of this misery, hunger and starvation for the peasantry, those Nigerians who had teamed up with the colonial masters, such as traditional rulers, middle-men and some clerks, were living fat from the crumbs falling-off the colonial dining table. A sizeable chunk of the taxes squeezed out of the people was cornered by the chiefs and their agents. Similarly, an elaborate hierarchy of middle-men and agents of colonial trading firms made huge fortunes from 'buying' and hawking for these companies. These middlemen and agents (the forerunners of Nigeria's later-day comprador bourgeoisie) defrauded the peasants in many ways. For instance, they would be given huge cash advances by the British companies during the 'hungry months' of the planting season. Some of these they would advance to desperate and needy peasants. Upon failure to pay up (which was often the case) the peasant would have no alternative but to pay in kind with his crops still on the field, at the middle man's price.

This basically is the source, for instance, of the fabulous wealth of the Dantata family. This has been brought out clearly in an interview which Y.B. Davies, CBE, OBE, a retired one-time Chairman of the UAC, gave to Dr. Collins Newbury of the Oxford University in March 1971. Davies revealed that in the late forties and fifties the UAC used to buy up to 30-35% of the total groundnuts produced in Nigeria. "To buy this quantity, we had to become not only a produce buyer, but also a banker and we have a vast channel of administration which included cash carriers. We used to reckon that over 25% of the total cost of all our purchases for the season was advanced in cash to traders before the season started. During the period when I was G.M. in Kano, which is the centre of the groundnut

trade, I remember one particular season when there was crop of well over half a million tons and we had in the hands of middlemen, two weeks before the season started, well over a million pounds. These excluded our advance to Alhassan Dantata who was at that time buying for us and he alone used to be advanced anything up to half a million pounds ... he was an individual who we knew will certainly meet with his responsibilities .. and we in the UAC persuaded him eventually to become a buyer on his own account."

Indeed, so much had Davies and his UAC 'persuaded' Dantata and other agents of colonial plunder that just before he died, according to Davies' own account, Alhassan Dantata told his ten sons to seek Davies' advice on how to carry on with his commercial empire.

Thus, Nigeria's social landscape during the colonial period was easy enough to draw. On the one hand, were the peasantry, other petty producers and an emergent wage-earning working class in the towns, the ports and barracks. They tilled the land, worked the mines, constructed the railways, loaded and unloaded the ships, come rain come shine. For these, they got literally nothing but misery, starvation, hunger, disease and even death. On the other hand stood a tiny class of colonial administrative officers, British company executives, emirs and chiefs, favoured agents and middlemen of the British firms and privileged clerks. This tiny group had everything going for them and were protected from the ravages of poverty and want.

As the dawn of Independence arrived, Nigerians looked forward in eagerness and hope for a new era, that would be more just, equitable and meaningful. They were to be disappointed. The eagerness and excitement over independence has since turned into dust and despair. The erstwhile independence leaders soon turned into independence leeches. While mass hunger, poverty and diseases continued unabated, and indeed in some cases even worsened, the new political and business ruling class prospered. They built palaces for themselves and christened them, mockingly of course, "People's Palace." They bought 'Pontiacs' and Rolls Royces, while the rest of the population-went

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about on foot or donkeys. They sent their children to 'Eton' and other such British elite institutions, while the sons,

daughters of the peasants and workers either went about illiterate or made do with the ill-equipped and dilapidating local school.

Indeed, Nigeria's First Republic was full of our own version of the 'tales of the Arabian Nights': that is tales of wealthy public figures displaying indescribable power and influence, in the face of mounting poverty and want. Take the case of the wedding of the then Federal Minister, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, to the daughter of the then Governor of the Northern Region, Alhaji Sir Kashim Ibrahim, on Sunday, 29th December, 1964. The occasion was attended by no other personage than the Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello himself. The dowry paid by Ibrahim Waziri consisted of: (i) a house, (ii) 21 pieces of gold shillings (iii) Fifty pounds as *sadaki*, (iv) 400 different sets of clothing, (v) 24 pairs of shoes.

On his own part, the father of the bride gave the couple a wedding gift comprising (i) six executive beds (ii) fifty gold shillings (iii) 85 sets of clothing (iv) 12 pairs of shoes (v) 400 pounds (vi) Three hundred gowns and (vii) two houses. This of course, was only what was publicly announced. It would have been interesting if the Sardauna had made his own gift public.

Then came the civil war - caused primarily by the increasing contradictions and cut-throat competitions within this ruling class of the privileged - and its opportunities and traumas. While the sons and daughters of the workers and peasants were the ones who got killed from bullets as well as starvation as a result of this war, the rich and powerful on both sides prospered. They sent their families abroad to continue their education, while they themselves made fortunes selling arms and munition or supplying the troops, or even cornering for themselves relief materials or 'war aid funds.' The Igbos and other Nigerians know these people and the businesses they now run.

And even after the war, Gowon's programme of the so-called three Rs (i.e. Re-

conciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation) only provided more fat for the rich and the powerful to feed on. In fact, the three Rs, along with the 'oil-boom' of the early 1970s gave rise to a new class of the super-rich who had inter-locking relationships in the military establishment, the federal and state bureaucracy, and the commercial circles. In the name of economic development, reconstruction, and the Operation Feed the Nation, huge amounts of public revenue, mainly from oil, were sunk into worthless projects only to be siphoned into private domestic and foreign bank accounts. Meanwhile, the conditions of existence of the working masses in the villages and urban slums continued to deteriorate further. Thus, by the onset of the sahelian drought disaster of 1972-74 the traditional food insurance system of the peasantry had been undermined to the extent that it could not withstand the food demand of the period. Hence the massive suffering and deaths of people and livestock that it occasioned. For instance, in his study of this particular drought, Michael Watts found out that "In 1973 when the Federal Government defined a disaster area north of 120 Latitude, perhaps as many as 8 million were directly experiencing the effect, of a major food crisis. Both in terms of the magnitude of food shortage and the degree of social and economic dislocation, the famine of 1972-74 was by local and official opinion at least as severe as the great famine of 1914".

It is on record that the Federal Government alone pumped in about 100 million dollars for emergency relief for the drought victims. There were also state government and private contributions to the drought relief effort. But as various commissions of enquiry, particularly the Justice Mohammed Commission, into how these funds and resources were disbursed have shown, the proceeds were cornered by well-placed bureaucrats, traditional rulers and business men. In Kano state for example, the one million Naira allocated for water supply to the drought victims simply disappeared.

The callousness of these pimps of misery, which members of Nigeria's ruling class are, did not however reach its zenith until the onset of the second republic.

This was the era of the jet-set, the era of the *obokun*, the era of 'Shagari style'. The tone was set very early in the life of the Second Republic, when the newly-elected legislators decided, against all principles of morality and probity, to award fat salaries and remunerations to themselves at a time when the real income of those Nigerians privileged enough to be employed was on the decline. This action by the law makers was in flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the 1979 constitution by which they got elected. For instance, section 16 of that constitution clearly stated that: "the state shall direct its policy towards ensuring (a) the promotion of a planned and balanced economic development; (b) that the material resources of the community are harnessed and distributed to serve the common good; and, (c) that the economic system is not operated in such a manner as to permit the concentration of wealth or the means of production and exchange in the hands of a few individuals or of a group."

But the scale of remuneration for public officers which the legislators of the Second Republic approved for themselves completely violated these provisions. In the draft estimates presented to the National Assembly by the President in 1980 for instance, a total of N12,810,786:0 was proposed as salary and allowances for the 95 senators for a period of only 9 months (April -December 1980).

Commenting on this self-granted bonanza at a lecture on the operations of the 1979 Constitution at the A.B.U. Zaria on 28th May 1980, Alhaji Balarabe Musa had this to say: "In a country where the annual income of the average able-bodied adult male is not more than two hundred Naira (N200.00), this proposal is more than scandalous; it is actually subversive of the political system the constitution seeks to establish."

His words of condemnation, timely as they were, were scoffed at by the ruling class who continued in their revelry without a care. But Balarabe Musa was not the only person to raise his voice against this scandalous profligacy. The late professor Ayodele Awojobi, in a lecture delivered at the University of Ife on Tuesday, 11th May 1982, also observed that in 1981 alone, each member of the Senate and the House of Representatives appro-

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ved for himself and actually collected N50,266 and N33,843 respectively as allowances only, in respect of (i) cost of maintenance of constituency offices, (ii) Consolidated allowances and (iii) allowances for salaries of personal staff. Of course most of these constituencies and personal staff were non-existent.

With this level of plunder, it is little wonder that this country has since then witnessed an orgy of brazen and wanton display of opulence, gluttony and mindless greed by Nigeria's rich and powerful in the face of excruciating destitution of the vast majority of the population.

In the first nine months of 1981 for instance, Nigeria imported vehicles and spare parts (meant mainly for the rich) worth N222 million. In fact, Leventis motors could not supply all the Mercedes-Benz saloon cars ordered by the rich in 1981 alone, in spite of the fact that 500 such orders were delivered in March of that year. (At that time, a Mercedes-Benz saloon was selling for a minimum of N17,000). And according to the Sunday Times of April 18, 1982, an average total sale of N1 million per month was that year being made by Leventis Motors, the sole Nigerian agent for the marketing of Mercedes-Benz cars in Nigeria, and there were about one thousand customers on the waiting list. Indeed, in the first eleven months of 1981, Nigeria was recorded as having imported a total of 38,521 saloon cars from Japan alone - most of which were meant as 'shopping baskets' for the girl friends and the wives of the rich.

Even after the Shagari administration had imposed its obnoxious and hypocritical 'Austerity Measures' and in the midst of the ravages of the tripple-digit inflationary storm of 1983, the *Nigeria Tribune* of June 5th 1983 reported the acquisition of a new addition to Mr. Joseph Wayas' fleet of private cars: a new Mercedes-Benz 500 saloon, i.e. the *obokun*, Bought at an auction in the Wharf at a cost of N50,000. With a chasis no. WDB 12603712018366, the car was delivered on April 26, 1983. Commenting, the satirical Tribune columnist remarked, "Mr. Wayas must be fabulously rich. He will have to pay N15,000 as insurance on the car, whose retail price in Nigeria is given as N75,000. So,

when the reader groans about austerity and when the NPN Federal Government clamps austerity measures on the country resulting in factory shut downs, unemployment and high prices, we should all give kudos to the likes of Mr. Wayas".

But Wayas' pastime was only child's play, compared to the pastimes of the jet-set. Since the late seventies Nigeria's rich compare 'favourably' with the West's Harry Oppenheimers and Arabia's Adnan Kashoggi. For instance, in 1983 John de St Jorre of the *London Observer* wrote about Isyaku Ibrahim's private jet, the Gulfstream executive jet, which Isyaku bought the year before (that is, 1982) at a cost of £5.3 million. The jet had an all-white crew on Isyaku's permanent staff, and is "constantly on the move criss-crossing the Sahara and the Atlantic (once four times in a week) travelling at the whim of its owner and his friends." On Isyaku himself, de St. Jorre had this to say: "Twenty years ago, Isyaku Ibrahim, a small, unassuming man ... was a minor functionary in the Nigerian High Commission in London. Now, as an arms and aircraft salesman and an all-purpose business man, he is worth at least £20 million ... he is also one of a growing group of Nigerian multi-millionaires whose wealth and life-styles have no parallel in black Africa."

But the opulence of Nigeria's rich extends to the palatial houses, mansions and holiday resorts and guest houses which they buy or build for themselves at home and abroad. One Millionaire's mansion in Lagos sports the following amenities: A 24 hour heavy guard and an internal security monitoring system, security fencing, swimming pool, tennis court, soccer pitch, mosque, servants' quarters, a big bore-hole, generator and an elaborate airconditioning system. He, in addition owns two Hawker-Siddeley 125 jets.

Another rich Nigerian, Bako Kontagora, semi-literate Chairman of Bi-water (Nigeria) Limited owns four known houses in London in addition to the ones he possesses here in Nigeria. These are located at 9F Logan Place London W8; 99 Logan Place London W8; 32A Uphill Road, Mill Mill, London N12 and 26 Hamstead Hill, London NW3. Bako in addition has one Rolls Royce Silver

Cloud and two Mercedes-Benz limousines shuttling between his houses in London.



Isyaku Ibrahim

While these rounds of orgy and revelry by the rich continue, the conditions of life of the mass of the working and suffering people of this country continue to stagnate and even deteriorate. Unemployment and underemployment are growing algebraically. Inflation is spiralling. Retrenchments continue without let. Social services are collapsing. And if the recent increases in air and rail tariffs, and the proposed complete removal of petroleum subsidy and increase in the unit cost of electricity, postal services, water rates and road haulage tariffs is anything to go by, then the poor would have nothing left to do, but to die off slowly, but surely.

But all is not lost, the people of this country still have an option. They have a choice between watching, like John Adamu, while their children, their spouses, their beloved ones and finally their entire generation pine and die-off slowly, one after another; or waking up to the challenges of their generation. The challenges of the times demand of them, individually and severally, to muster under the banner, to unite and organise themselves, for the purpose of taking their destiny in their own hands. For, no one else will salvage us from the pangs of want, disease and hunger but ourselves. Unite, and throw off your chains, o ye wretched of Nigeria! ♦
By Saidu Adamu and Richard Umaru
with Bala Usman and Ahmed Modibbo.

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SAP - Its origin and rationale

For over five years now the living conditions of most Nigerians have been worsening, on a daily basis. You see this everywhere you go in this country: in the haggard faces, the shrinking bodies, the ragged clothing, the rickety vehicles and in the groups of children, youths and adults hanging around, with nothing to do, in every nook and corner.

This reality of a people whose livelihood is being severely battered has been brought out clearly in the main cover story and in other articles in this issue. Also brought out here is how a tiny minority of Nigerians, sitting on top of the government and the economy, are wallowing, more and more, in fabulous wealth and living a life of extravagant luxury in this country, and abroad.

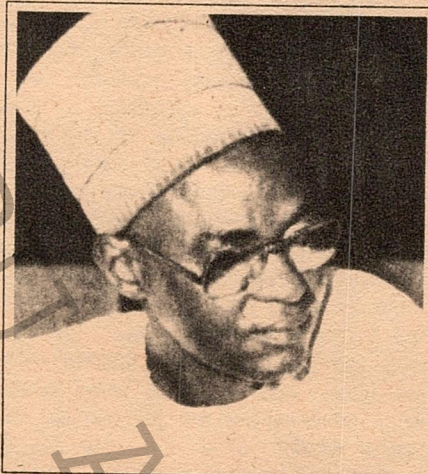
Now, let us take a look at the specific strategy adopted by the present Federal Military Government to bring about a recovery in the economy, paying special attention to its origins and purpose, in order to clearly understand what it actually amounts to, for us and for future generations.

THE JOLT

If these last five years (1982-87) have been particularly grim in the lives of most Nigerians, they have also been full of exhortations and promises that all these hardships, shortages and suffering are necessary and are part of the sacrifice we all have to make to revive our economy and improve our living conditions and to secure those of future generations.

The current cycle of generalised economic hardships, insecurity and exhortations to sacrifice goes back, formally, to that Monday morning of 19th April 1982 when Alhaji Shehu Shagari, then President, asked a joint session of the National Assembly to pass, without any debate, *Economic Stabilisation (Temporary Provisions) Act of 1982*. He told the legislators, and the whole nation that: "Our economic situation is serious and calls for urgent solutions. I have therefore found it necessary to introduce some measures which will help to contain the situation. These measures taken by themselves are not adequate

response to our present economic situation... I am therefore placing before you Enabling Bill, the passing of which will enable me to deal promptly and decisively with the situation."



Ex-President Shagari - started it all

The bill was passed within fifteen minutes with no debate and that same morning Shagari signed it into law. That same morning in his speech he had called for sacrifice similar to that made to save the unity of the country during the civil war. He said: "I am convinced we are capable of weathering the storm whatever the degree of sacrifice that will be necessary. We have shown the world that we can fight to maintain the sovereignty and integrity of this nation. If it is now necessary we will do it again in order to demonstrate that we are again prepared to fight to ensure the survival of our economy."

Brave words! But what did they amount to?

ORIGINS

The economic stabilisation policies of Shagari of April 1982 basically amounted to an attempt to revive the economy by cutting down public expenditure, restricting imports and attempting to diversify exports. It was very much along the lines of the austerity packages always recommended by the I.M.F. and the World Bank since 1944 when they were established.

In fact, almost exactly one year to the day the Economic Stabilisation (Tempo-

rary Provisions) Act was enacted, the Shagari regime formally applied for an I.M.F. balance of payments support loan of N1.9 - N2.4 billion. That was on 18th April 1981.

During the 1982 - 1983 period, a crack team of some of the top technocrats of the Nigerian bourgeoisie made up of Alhaji Adamu Ciroma, Chief Philip Asiodu and Mr. Gamaliel Onosode emerged to liaise with western banks, companies, and governments, the I.M.F. and the World Bank and to articulate the regime's economic recovery programme much more clearly.

The negotiations for an I.M.F. loan got stuck because the Shagari regime clearly could not risk its survival by carrying out some of the policies which the I.M.F. required, particularly the abolishing of import licensing, the removal of subsidies and the devaluation of the Naira. The I.M.F. could not afford to make an exception for the Shagari regime. But the IMF and the World Bank were clearly aware of the fact that a regime as monumentally corrupt as that of Shehu Shagari, and as rickety as it had become by 1983, could not carry out these policies, in the context of large-scale retrenchment and inflation, and still hope to survive.

In any case, there was already an alternative way of getting the same IMF programme implemented not directly by the IMF, but by the World Bank, its twin organisation. By the late 1970s, the IMF conditionalities, its operating style, posture, record and history, had made its intervention a great political liability to governments. In 1980 therefore this alternative way was formally established. As the *World Bank Annual Report 1981* records on page 67: "In fiscal 1980, the Executive Directors approved the initiation by the Bank of structural-adjustment lending - that is, lending designed to support major changes in policies and institutions of developing countries that would reduce their current account deficits while maintaining maximum feasible development efforts."

It is very significant that even this more flexible programme was politically difficult to accept by many countries.

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Former Leader Buhari - continued the programme

For, according to the same 1981 annual report, even in its first year of operation, the structural adjustment programme was difficult to accept. States the Report: "The difficulty that governments find in gaining political acceptance for the adoption and implementation of structural adjustment programmes has been and continues to be the single most important obstacle to rapid progress by the bank with Structural Adjustment assistance."

This World Bank alternative to the more rigid IMF balance of payments adjustment programme is, as the annual report states, intended to promote "maximum feasible development effort".

For sub-Saharan Africa the direction of this "development effort" was clearly defined in the World Bank report titled *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda For Action*, issued in 1981. In that report it is clearly stated that: "The agriculture-based and export oriented development strategy suggested for the 1980's is an essential beginning to a process of long-term transformation, a prelude to industrialisation".

In the foreword to the book the World Bank President Mr. A. W. Clausen emphasised the point that: "... African governments should not only examine ways in which the public sector organisation can be operated more efficiently, but should also examine the possibility of placing greater reliance on the private sector."

Since it formally started the structural adjustment programme the World Bank has left no one in doubt as to the type of

development the programme is geared to promote.

THE BLUE PRINT

By the time Shagari started his second term in October 1983, the Ciroma-Asiodu-Onosode team had come out with a blueprint for the economic recovery programme he was to implement. This blueprint was basically an adaptation for Nigeria of the structural adjustment programme the World Bank had started implementing in 1980.

Ciroma, Asiodu and Onosode became the troika to run the economy in Shagari's second, and last, term. Adamu Ciroma obviously hoped to move on to the presidency if they delivered the goods, whatever conspiracies Umaru Dikko and his cabal were scheming. Adamu Ciroma became the Minister of Finance and Asiodu and Onosode became the two presidential economic advisers to the great delight of the boardrooms of the subsidiaries of multinationals operating in Nigeria.

Whatever Shagari had up his sleeve, he went along with this troika, particularly as it seemed that this would buy him some time to settle with some of the restive Generals in the army and with the U.P.N. In any case, the cabal very close to him had no time to read the I.M.F. and World Bank papers necessary to adapt something and give it a good packaging. This gang had even very little time for reading even cheques, preferring to deal in raw cash or through their overseas agents.

Whatever were the political calculations Shagari was making, his first speech in his second-term set out what his new team of crack technocrats have packaged for him. In his national day broadcast on Saturday 1st October 1983 he placed structural adjustment firmly at the centre of his programme for economic recovery: "To revive and stabilise the economy on a longterm basis it is imperative that the country now begins the structural adjustment process required for renewed economic buoyancy. Macro-economic and sectoral policy changes will have to begin in order to shift resources to the productive sectors of the economy."

Three months later - on Thursday 29th December - when he was presenting his

1984 budget, he developed on this, setting out the structural adjustment policies: "Given our present financial situation and the trend in the demand for oil, it is clear that a structural adjustment of the economy is imperative. To this end we have taken a number of measures."

The ten major structural adjustment measures which Shagari set out within forty-eight hours to his overthrow were: 1. reduction of public expenditure; 2. only "core" capital projects to be funded; 3. diversification of revenue sources; 4. review of agricultural production strategy to attain self-sufficiency in basic foods and industrial raw materials; 5. privatisation of government parastatals and companies; 6. the imposition of new fees and the charging of higher fees for public services; 7. the importation of essential commodities in short supply; 8. secure a World Bank structural adjustment loan; 9. secure an I.M.F. balance of payments loan; 10. pay rescheduled short-term debts.

Shagari emphasised that this process of structural adjustment would be painful and once again, as in April 1982, called for sacrifices to save the economy. One important aspect of the first policy measure of reducing public expenditure which was not publicly enunciated, but seemed to have been secretly agreed upon within the federal government and by many state governments, was the widespread implementation of a policy of drastic retrenchments in the public services beginning from Monday 2nd January 1984.

This policy of trying to reduce public expenditure through retrenchment was to be forcibly enforced by the new military regime headed by Major-General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd). After the political appointees were sacked, the regular retrenchments of workers in the public and private sectors became entrenched as a major plank of the military government's economic policy in the last four years, right up to now.

THE BLUE BOOK

What is important to understand here is that it was the blueprint from the Ciroma-Asiodu-Onosode troika which was repackaged and issued early in 1984 as the *The Blue Book*, setting out the objec-

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tives, policies and programmes of the Federal Military Government headed by Buhari. The troika in fact continued to advise the new military government, with Onosode chairing the very important Projects Review Committee and Adamu Ciroma advising from detention - from which he was released earlier than most others of his status.

STAGES OF SAP

The notion that Structural Adjustment Programme started in Nigeria in July 1986, when President Babangida declared that it had started is, therefore, just a public relations gimmick. The basic direction of the economic recovery programme under these three successive regimes has remained the same - the only difference being that they represent different stages in the imposition of the World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme package on Nigeria. That is why, for example, the retrenchment of workers and the imposition of taxes, levies and fees on peasant farmers, artisans and other petty producers and traders became a marked feature of the F.M.G. under Buhari. And although these policies have continued after his overthrow on 27th August 1985, it was the devaluation of the naira, deregulation, privatisation, the credit squeeze and the consequent inflationary spiral that have marked the F.M.G. under Babangida.

It is not that Shagari, Buhari and Babangida were pursuing different strategies of economic recovery. It is merely like the same persons growing older through infancy, childhood, youth, adulthood and old age. And this person was not born in Ribadu Road or Dodan Barracks or the Federal Secretariat or Broad Street or in Abuja. He was born in Washington D.C., two good years before economic recovery strategy was a major issue in Nigeria. He was born and reared by the World Bank in order to reduce the political animosity and dangers aroused by the I.M.F.'s involvement in many Third World countries, produced by its record of arrogant disregard of local sensitivities and its harsh monetarism.

CUTTING YOUR COAT

The essential elements of this structural adjustment programme which the World

Bank started using in the 1980 financial year do not differ from the I.M.F. balance of payment adjustment programmes. In layman's language, what they both claim to seek is that every country should cut its coat according to size; and if it has already cut out and is wearing a coat which it cannot afford to pay for or even to wear, it should return it or cut it down in size, and pay any debt incurred in getting the coat.



President Babangida: SAP entrenched and finetuned

This sounds eminently reasonable and sensible. Why should anybody wear a coat which he cannot afford or which is too large for him? But that is not all. The World Bank and the I.M.F., which are merely agents of the tailor and the trader selling the coat, and of the money lender to both, claim the right to decide whether you can afford the coat; whether it is the right size; how to pay any debt incurred and how to even reduce the size of the coat if this is needed.

So it is misleading to say that all the I.M.F. and World Bank adjustment programmes aim to do is to get a country which cannot make ends meet to cut its coat according to its size. Their adjustment programmes, including the World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme imposed on Nigeria in the last five years, also means that the agents of the tailor, the trader and their money lender are the ones to take over your wardrobe and whole finances and cut not just one coat but all your coats down to what they regard as suitable size.

If we move away from this general meta-

phor and look at the specific reasons given as to why S.A.P. can bring about economic recovery for Nigeria and improve and secure the living conditions of Nigerians, we find that these reasons have no basis in the actual realities of Nigerian economy and how it has come to be what it is. And if the diagnosis of the nature and causes of our economic crisis which led to the prescription of S.A.P. to us is a baseless one, then the prescription itself shall obviously be useless. A baseless diagnosis can only produce a useless prescription in a human body or an economy.

Let us take only two examples of this diagnosis, namely the oil syndrome myth and the stifled private sector myth.

OIL SYNDROME MYTH

One of the major pillars of the diagnosis of the current economic crisis widely and vociferously used to justify S.A.P. has to do with the role of oil exports and oil revenues.

On 19th April 1982 when he stood before the National Assembly in an emergency joint session of both houses Shagari diagnosed that: "Our difficulties have arisen mainly because our economy has for nearly a decade been sustained by a single commodity. We must however understand that while this valuable but finite resource could still be a source of strength for Nigeria, it is only one source of prosperity for our people. We need to tap in a determined and purposeful manner our human and other resources."

About two years later in April 1984, *The Blue Book* containing the objectives, principles and programmes of the Buhari regime had almost exactly the same diagnosis: "The oil boom of the 1970s led to fundamental structural changes including a shift in the pattern of investment to the construction and service sectors, and increase in the importation of goods and luxuries and the neglect of the agricultural sector resulting in shortage of food supplies, high prices and a loss of foreign exchange earnings. The oil boom also generated large population drifts from rural to urban centres thus creating a large class of people who consume but do not produce any material goods. Governments of the country, encouraged by the large revenues, assumed a more pervasive role

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in the economy and virtually stifled the efforts of the private sector by their commitment to provide almost everything free to the people."

Recently on Wednesday, 23rd September 1987, the Minister of Finance, Dr. Chu Okongwu, in the government's most comprehensive defence of S.A.P. repeated almost the same diagnosis of the cause of our economic crisis. Dr. Okongwu said: "The 1970s witnessed the transformation of the Nigerian economy from one dependent on agriculture to one heavily dependent on oil... the heavy dependence of the country on imported inputs rendered the economy highly vulnerable to external shocks. Consequently, with the collapse of the world oil markets which started in mid-1981, an economic crisis emerged in Nigeria."

It is really shocking that three successive regimes in this country can have such a false and misleading view of the role of oil revenues in the Nigerian economy. For, this view, which of course they share with the World Bank and the I.M.F. and the western banks, corporations and governments, has no basis whatsoever in Nigerian reality.

The huge oil export revenues which Nigeria earned from the early 1970s, far from leading the country into a heavy dependence on oil exports, created an unprecedented opportunity for the country to use these massive petro-dollars to build the essential infrastructures and key industries required to transform and expand Nigerian agriculture to feed and industrialise the country, and most of Africa. Those who drew up the Second National Development Plan saw that opportunity clearly and stated it very clearly in the plan. But the opportunity was squandered. The criminal failure of the rulers of Nigeria, at least since 1970 to invest the huge public capital resources obtained from oil exports into productive sectors significantly enough to feed and industrialise the whole country, cannot be blamed on oil revenue, as if this revenue can invest itself.

Secondly it is also false to say that there was a decline in agricultural production and exports because agriculture was neglected and people moved to the towns, because of the oil boom. How can the agricultural stagnation and decline be

blamed on the oil boom when it was this boom which enabled the government to invest a total of N127.2 million in agriculture under the Second Plan of 1970-74; a total of N2.3 billion under the Third Plan (1975-80); and a total of about N8.8 billion under the Fourth Plan (1980-85)? If Nigerian agriculture stagnated and declined, it was not because of the oil boom which in fact enabled the government to make huge investments in agriculture. The cause of the stagnation is to be found in what was actually done with this investment, and whether the money went to the production of agricultural infrastructure at all, or whether it was used to undermine these and entrench parasitic, feudal, middlemen and rentier elements on top of the agricultural producers.

As for the rural-urban drift which the oil boom is said to have caused, this is also very misleading. If there was a drift to the urban areas, this was primarily because there was no investment to create productive employment all the year round in the rural areas and very little in the economic and social infrastructure, in spite of the fact that the oil boom created great opportunities for that. In any case, if the billions that were allocated to agricultural investment had actually been used to modernise and expand agricultural productivity, a surplus rural labour force would have been created which modern industries, some of which would produce agricultural machinery and inputs, would need.

Obviously, the oil boom was not a cause of Nigerian import-dependence. In fact, as shown above, it created a greater opportunity to industrialise the country, an opportunity which was not just squandered but *plundered* by many of the very same people who now talk so eloquently about the way the oil boom "distorted" our economy.

If the oil boom did not promote Nigerian import-dependence it would also not have made the country vulnerable to "external shocks", particularly over a decade after the boom had started. If the Nigerian economy is vulnerable to "external shocks", it was not because of the oil boom but because of those who, instead of using the oil petro-dollars to construct capital goods, basic materials,



President Reagan of U.S.

intermediate goods and consumer goods industries and modernise agriculture, only ensured that these petro-dollars were transferred for private investment and hoarding.

As for the decline in oil revenue in 1981-82 as a cause of the crisis, this is so dubious an argument. In the first place, even with the decline in oil revenue the amount earned was N10.82 billion in 1981; N8.72 billion in 1982; and N7.61 billion in 1983. This is massive foreign exchange earnings for a country in our situation.

The problem is not how much was being earned but how much was flowing out, and what was coming back in return. Between 1974 and 1979 the payments Nigeria was making for imports rose by 300% from N1.72 billion in 1974 to N6.91 billion in 1979. This rate was going to exceed any rate of increase in oil revenue. But it was in fact surpassed in the next two years. For by 1981 these payments for imports doubled to N12.91 billion and huge external debts began to be accumulated. This rate of explosion of Nigerian payments for imports was due to the grip that the Nigerian middlemen, foreign companies and big banks have on the economy which enable them to use importation, and other means to expatriate most of the petro-dollar surplus.

It is therefore misleading to blame the decline on oil revenue in 1981-82 for the crisis as the rate at which this income was flowing out and external debts were accumulating was inevitably going to exceed the rate of its inflow.

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This oil syndrome explanation of the causes of the economic crisis only serves to cover up the real causes of the crisis which S.A.P. entrenches by its emphasis on opening up the economy much more to foreign capital and the need for devaluation to promote the so-called export-led growth strategy of building up the country on European and American consumption of chocolates, and margarine and the like.

STIFLED PRIVATE SECTOR

A second major pillar of this explanation of the economic crisis used to justify S.A.P. which is also used by all three successive regimes has to do with the role of government, the public sector and the expenditure on wages salaries and essential public services.

The Blue Book of the Buhari regime sets this position out explicitly in the quotation from it above. And earlier on in his budget speech on 29th December of 1983, Shagari had stated that the government intended that one of its policy measures was to be: "... divesting government of holdings in selected corporations and companies; pursuing more vigorously the policy of cost recovery for services provided by government."

The present Minister of Finance, Dr. Okongwu does not depart from this position. In his recent defence of SAP already quoted from above he said: "The increased intervention of government in the economy fostered by the boom in revenues, resulted in the proliferation of parastatals and some public investments which were of doubtful designs, viability and in retrospect beyond the executive capacity of the relevant government agencies."

All this emphasis on the inefficiency, wasteful and stifling nature of the public sector are used to justify some of the major pillars of S.A.P. - particularly, the retrenchment of public sector workers; cuts in their wages, salaries and benefits; cuts in essential public services like education and health; imposition of fees on essential public service; privatisation; and general deregulation of the economy to free the private sector especially over currency exchange and interest rate.

But important as this diagnosis is for justifying S.A.P., it is baseless.

To say that the public sector in Nigeria stifles the private sector is to turn the truth upside down and stand it on its head. For, as everyone knows - and as hundreds of probe reports have brought out in detail - it is the private sector which not only stifles the public sector but actually sucks everything out of it and out of the country. Readers of this Magazine are already familiar with some of the glaring examples of the way private accumulation of wealth has wrecked public projects and institutions and siphoned off public resources.

In fact, if we just take a look at one area of the public sector where ostensibly billions were spent for public purposes, we find that almost all this was siphoned off by the private sector.

Consider the area of education, an area in which SAP has been promoting cuts on the excuse of using resources more efficiently. In education we find that public capital expenditure into all levels of education rose from N254.579 million under the Second National Development Plan of 1970-74 to a total of N2.988 billion in the Third National Development Plan of 1975-80. Average annual capital expenditure in education rose from N63 million in 1970-74 to N543 million in 1975-80. That is, it rose by *eight times*. But was there an increase in the number of institutions built and in enrolment by a similar proportion? No.

The number of institutions and enrolment only *doubled* in 1975-80, and, even that, only at the primary level. Who siphoned most of this public capital expenditure of almost N3 billion and stifled the educational sector of our economy so crucial for any form of progress?

CONCLUSION

It should be quite clear that SAP is a programme worked out by the IMF and the World Bank in the late 1970s. Its implementation started in the bank's 1981 financial year with the first set of structural adjustment loans going to Kenya, Turkey, Senegal, Mauritius, Guyana and the Philippines. The conditions - economic, social and political - of most of these seven countries should serve as a lesson for us.

The programme came to Nigeria from the World Bank in 1983 and has since gone through several stages. In the course of this the rationale for accepting it have been elaborated. As we have shown, the programme has no basis in the reality of the Nigeria economy. The broadening of the opposition to it should be accompanied by a deeper and concrete understanding of what it is, so that we do not move forward beyond SAP and find ourselves with it under another name. Its promoters, the powerful vested interests behind it, are afterall, good at packaging. ♦

By: Bala Usman.

POETRY

THE COMMON MAN.

The wretched of the earth you are
called trampled upon, cheated and exploited
the bourgeoisie, your class oppressors
have chained and blinded you
in collusion with their green-skinned kins
the bourgeoisie have become vampires
upon you.

Nigeria, your motherland, is sapped to the
motherland, is sapped to the marrow
your land now belongs to the latifundia
the countryside once a haven for you
now is property of the nouveau-riche
in thousands of hectares your land is excised
between the bourgeoisie and their green-
skinned
fraternalmen.

The labour market is replete with your blood
your sons and daughters roam the streets
jobs for them are like mirages
to survive your sons hew the trees
and your daughters are coerced into
prostitution
the harvest of sorrow is your lot for now.

Yet I say the world belongs to you
to cast away the yoke round your neck
to drive away you class oppressors
to cut the shackles on your legs you need to
grab the truth
you need to unleash the whirlwind
to sweep away the frail and fragile
swaggerers.

MUHAMMAD BABAN-DADA.

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The Hospitals: Those Who Survive

Chief of General Staff Lt. General Sani Abacha, in his nationwide broadcast announcing the December 31, 1983 coup, said of our hospitals that they were "mere consulting clinics". This, even at the time, was clearly an understatement. But if the General were to make his famous announcement today, about four years after, he must say of our hospitals - if he's to be taken seriously - that they are "mere mortuaries." Mortuaries where poor Nigerians - exploited, marginalized and alienated by an insensitive ruling class; crushed under the unbearable burdens of taxes, levies and the struggle to survive each day; and battered by the pressures imposed by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) - end up their miserable lives.

For most families in Nigeria today, seeking medical attention, even in the government - owned hospitals, has become something to be dreaded. The cost is too exorbitant for the scanty attention and inadequate treatment given the poor patient. All too often, a poor family with a sick member has to make the tough choice between paying for the treatment of the sick one and not being able to make ends meet or not paying and losing the sick one.

But for the tiny class of the rich and powerful in Nigeria it is a different reality altogether. When members of this class fall sick, they fly abroad for treatment often at public expense. And when they decide to get treatment within the country, they have available to them, the best private wards, the best trained medical personnel in attendance, and ofcourse, the best drugs.

The terrible conditions of our hospitals are better seen than imagined. But below are some real-life situations which should give the reader an idea of the frustrations, agonies and humiliations daily suffered by the poor in our hospitals.

CASE ONE

Mr. Bassey Udom Essien is a factory hand, employed as a mechanic in one of Lagos industrial complexes. Sometimes ago his young wife went into labour and within no time she became confused and started convulsing. His factory does not cater for the medical needs of the families of staff of his own calibre, and so he



A long wait to see a doctor.

took his wife to LUTH (Lagos University Teaching Hospital). LUTH at the time was having water problems and so could not accept her. By now his wife's situation had become really desperate. She was foaming in the mouth and the fits (convulsions) became continuous. They ended up in another medical facility where she had surgery (ceasarian section for toxamia of pregnancy), a N1,500.00 hospital bill and a baby most probably affected by the long delay in initiating treatment. To meet the bill, he had to sell his motor cycle and so he now has to commute by bus. Ofcourse with SFEM, he can never hope to own a motor cycle again.

CASE TWO

Mr. O. Nwachuku owns a small bakery. In 1979, he developed a problem of severe headaches, flashes in the eyes, pounding in the chest-especially while busy in the bakery-and occasional dizziness. He reported at one of the country's Federal Government - owned institutions where the doctors informed him of the severe blood pressure afflicting him. He needed to be on at least four different drugs for good control. At first he was able to cope financially with the purchase of the drugs which doctors informed him were necessary otherwise his eyes or his heart or his kidneys could be damaged and he could also become paralyzed. And his health improved markedly. Then the SAP/SFEM/FEM "wahala" started. Prices of all drugs sky-rocketed. And so did the prices of flour, and of course the baking business began to

suffer. He could not maintain his family and still afford his drug purchases. As his compliance (adherence to doctors orders) lessened because of his increasing inability to purchase his drugs he became less and less able to run his small bakery. He became unhappy and depressed both because of his illness and the fact of its ruining his business. He started contemplating selling off the business, which he was forced to do anyway when he developed stroke last July. He could not move one side of his body and he could not speak. He has regained some functions since then, but he is now an invalid with a family to cater for and no means of livelihood.

CASE III

Ja'a Agwai is a hard working Fulani herdsman. Late one evening he returned home with the herd to find his second child very ill with high fever and repeated convulsions. He and the wife are both forward-looking pastoralists, so they wasted no time in taking the child to a nearby hospital. Because of the trekking and the delay in getting a bus, they arrived at the hospital gate at about 1.a.m. The hospital had no chloroquine for the malaria their child had, and neither did they have a sedative such as Diazepam or Paraldehyde to stop the convulsions, which had by now become quite frequent. He was given a prescription for chloroquine, chazepam and paracetamol and he went to town feeling dejected, his heart pounding, because treatment had to wait his arrival from the purchase. He had to knock on the doors of several drug shops before he

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was able to purchase three drugs at 10 times their prices. At long last his child's convulsions were stopped at about 4.30 a.m. The attending medical and nursing personnel felt really dejected because of the possible consequences of a prolonged convulsion on a young brain. Certainly, after 20 minutes certain damages are permanent and this child fainted several times for more than one hour.

CASE IV

Mrs. Dooshima Tyohemba hails from Gboko. She is a farmer. Last January she had a second child. Unfortunately the milk could not flow for the baby to suck. Her doctors said this was as a result of the massive amount of blood which she lost following the delivery, that nearly cost her her life. Anyway her breasts have failed and she has been told that her baby needs pure milk feed at least for the first 4 months of his life, possibly in combination with cereal food for another 8 months before he can be weaned to the

diet every one takes in the family. Initially Lactogen was prescribed but she was taught how to make proper feeds from the artificial milk and was even strongly advised against using a feeding-bottle, which was just as well since buying a feeding-bottle is an expenditure she could hardly afford. During her few days of hospital stay the kind sister in the ward, who hails from her area, provided her with milk. At birth her baby weighed 3.4 kg and by the 2nd week he had gained at least half a kilogram.

Then she had to start purchasing the milk herself. To her consternation her baby needed 2¹/₂ tins of 500 gm each week, and this meant a N50.00 expenditure per week. For the life of her baby she could not afford N200.00 with which to buy milk each month. She could not even afford N100.00. As a practical solution to a difficult problem, she resorted to doubling the volume of boiled water for the recommended quantity of milk.

This of course worked, at least partially. Her baby could feed to his fill and sleep like all "satiated" babies. But his weight gain became poor and by the fourth month of life, he had become as dry as bones. Her bouncing baby had now shrunk down to 2 kg, with all the ribs standing out. 'Luckily' she had been told to add cereal to the baby's food by the 4th month, which she actually started doing by the 3rd month, in the form of pap. At 8 months he developed rashes in the month, and the legs started to swell up. When her baby became extremely lean, the doctors informed her that he had marasmus, which in simple language means a state of starvation in an infant. The swelling of the feet, according to the sister, means that her child is now developing kwashiokor in addition. Just imagine, kwashiokor at that tender age!

But such is the fate of the "lucky" ones who "survive" in our hospitals. The unlucky ones just die. ♦

CAUGHT OUT

Addressing a news conference in Washington recently, the Minister of Finance, Dr. Chu S. P. Okongwu, said that he was tired of talks on debt servicing and intermittent rescheduling procedures for reaching an understanding with the I.M.F. He said that Nigeria has done more under her adjustment programme than the I.M.F. and the World Bank had prescribed, yet foreign capital investment was still not flowing into Nigeria.

Who exactly is Dr. Chu Okongwu trying to fool? Has he forgotten what he stated in a book he wrote on the Nigerian economy, published by Fourth Dimension Publishers of Enugu in 1986, and launched in Lagos by the Inspector-General of Police. Alhaji Muhammadu Gambo Jimeta, on behalf of President Ibrahim Babangida, with a lot of publicity and fanfare in February 1987? Has the Minister forgotten that on page 45 of this book of 461 pages, titled *The Nigerian Economy: Anatomy of A Traumatized Economy With Some Proposals For Stabilisation*, it is stated that:

"We must realise that as our economy is the largest in Africa (and indeed one of the largest in the world - certainly from the potential population - income impact) it is not in the progressive short-term self-interests of the advanced countries to assist us towards self-reliant development and so condition our thinking and resultant actions. Essentially it is to their advantage that we remain a market for final consumer and

capital goods... it is in their interests that our final and intermediate consumption patterns be externally oriented, so it is in their interests to "scatter" our hard-won human capital, precluding thereby our effective utilisation of those resources."

If Dr. Okongwu has forgotten this passage then can he please tell us who wrote the book, or at least who wrote that part of it? If he has not forgotten how can he be surprised that the banks and the corporations and governments, which have been exploiting and suppressing us for over four centuries will now turn around to give us the capital resources with which to build our economy and shut them out of our huge home market and stand on our own? How can he expect the I.M.F. and the World Bank to assist us to do anything which can possibly free us from our dependence on themselves and on their masters and financiers? So who is Dr. Okongwu trying to fool? He has played a leading role in leading Nigeria down the blind alley called S.A.P. If he has now woken up to the fact that it is time he does his patriotic duty, to tell the Nigerian people that the whole S.A.P. thing is a dubious package, devised by the I.M.F. and the World Bank in the late seventies, to deepen the imperialist grip on any Third World economy in trouble, without directly involving the I.M.F., he should say so, and not go into any theatrical lamentations. This will not cover anything up. Chu Okongwu cannot fool the people of Nigeria. He can only succeed in making a fool of himself.

A DAY IN THE LIVES OF FIVE NIGERIANS

Everyone knows about the wide gap between the rich and the poor in Nigeria. Everyone, even the rich, talks about the need to close this gap. Many of us are even familiar with the figures and statistics showing the yawning rich poor gap in Nigeria.

But these figures, revealing as they can be, tell us little or nothing about the real agonies, deprivation, frustrations and humiliations daily suffered by the poor in Nigeria. Nor do they tell us much about the unbelievably comfortable, cosy, easy and idle life of the few rich and powerful in our midst.

Recently, *Analyst* correspondents spent a day in the lives of five Nigerians of different social and class backgrounds.

For ethical and other reasons we cannot publish the full names and identities of the individuals involved. But what follows has been drawn from real life situations:

... A Retired General

The sun was shining brightly when General Yinka Chucks Audu (retired) lazily opened his eyes and stretched in his enormous bed. He looked at the clock - it was 9 am. He got up, slipped his velvet bathrobe over his silk pyjamas (all bought at his favourite shop -

Harrods in London) and rang for his steward to bring him breakfast. Shortly, the steward came in, bearing a large tray with eggs, meat, fruit and orange juice and coffee. The steward placed the tray on a table near the bed, and went out without even having said "good morning sir". That was how the General liked servants to behave - they should not be too cheeky by trying to make conversation at this early hour of the morning.

The General sat down to his breakfast. But he had a sudden thought, and got up and took a bottle of brandy from a bedside cabinet. It was the best brandy, the general knew. It cost over 200 pounds a bottle in London. The GOC had brought it to him last night. The GOC knew that it was important to keep the retired generals in his domain happy - after all, in some ways they were more important than he was.

The General opened the bottle, sniffed the aroma, and poured a large shot into his glass of orange juice. This is the way to start a day, he thought to himself.

After breakfast, he took his bath, sprinkled himself with *Beautiful*, one of the most expensive perfumes money can buy, and selected one of his most beautifully embroidered kaftans. He had an important meeting with some American businessmen for lunch, and wanted to look every inch a gentleman.

When he had dressed, he called for his driver to bring his Mercedes to the

entrance of the house. He got into the car and instructed the driver to head for his office. As they drove out of the compound, with its spacious lawns and gardens, the general looked back admiringly at his house. It was a real mansion - with over 10 bedrooms, 4 sitting rooms, and every conceivable amenity. It looked like an English castle, which was appropriate, since the General, because of his early training, admired everything English. He had built the house at a cost of just over 1 million naira when he retired from the army - now, he thought, it was worth five times that amount.

As they drove, the General's thoughts wandered. He was thinking of his latest girlfriend - first year student at the university. She was younger than his daughter, of course, but that made things all that much more enjoyable. He thought back to the trip they had just made together to Europe - Rome, Geneva, Paris and London. He had spent over 100,000 pounds buying her the things she so loved - clothes, perfumes, and diamonds. But it was worth it, he thought, she would never leave him after all that. Or would she? Anyhow, he thought, next time I will take her to Rio where she will have the time of her life.

He thought of the new bed he had ordered for his guest house - it was round, and revolved when a certain button was pushed. It also played music and had a built-in video. It only cost N150,000, and was being made to his personal taste by the best furniture factory in the country. All the girls would rush to see it, he knew.

On the way to the office, they drove past a new mansion under construction. It belonged to a Lt. Col, presently serving

as a governor in one of the states. "This house will be bigger and more costly even than my own", he thought bitterly. "These boys are getting too big for their boots. Can't they have the decency to wait until they become senior officers before constructing such palaces? We never did this sort of thing in our time!"

By the time they arrived at the office, it was 10:30. The General called for his manager - an expatriate - who briefed him on the situation in his various business interests. These were extensive, and included shipping, banking, importing and exporting, bakeries, and of course a large farm. All of these were looked after by various foreigners. "After all" he thought, "you can't trust Nigerians, they will always cheat you if they can."

The main item on the programme for that day was a lunch meeting with two American businessmen who were interested in striking a deal with the General's company. They arrived promptly at 12:00. The General was used to the ways of Americans, and immediately welcomed them and made them feel comfortable in his spacious office. They had a round of whiskeys before setting off for lunch at the Chinese restaurant - the best and most expensive in town.

Over lunch they ate and drank plentifully, as they concluded their business deal. The Americans and his expatriate manager did most of the talking, but the general listened carefully to the details of the scheme. After all, it was his influence with the government that was required to get the deal through. When they had finished, and agreed on the terms, they shook hands and rose to leave. The General paid the bill - it came to only N525 naira for the four of them. "Not

bad", he thought.

As they left the restaurant, he glanced at his watch. It was 3:00. Just time for a quick hour of fun with his girlfriend. He dismissed the driver, and drove to the flat he had rented and furnished for her. He picked her from there, and they left for his well-secluded guest house. At 4:30 he dropped her home, and drove to the golf club for his usual afternoon round of golf.

After playing 9 holes in the company of his friend, also a retired general, he drove home for dinner. He saw his wife for the first time that day, and they sat down to a delicious meal of roast meat and chicken salad, washed down with beer. He was proud of the fact that he had one of the best cooks in town. In fact, he had the best of everything, and was proud of it too. "And why shouldn't I",

It was still dark when Ladi awoke in the cold of the harmattan morning. It was just 5 am. She collected some firewood, and began to heat water for her husband's bath and for that of her two grandchildren. She also put the *gwate* left over from last night's dinner to warm on the coals. They would, at least, have some breakfast today.

Her husband, Habu, awoke shortly after, and had some *gwate* before taking his bath. He soon left for the farm, as there was a lot of work to do on the bean harvest. The crops this year had been disappointing. The rains had been sporadic, army worms had destroyed their young maize plants, and now the beans, although the leaves had grown large and healthy, for some reason had failed to develop seeds, and there was little to be harvested but the leaves. But he went out to see what could still be salvaged.

Ladi usually went with her husband to the farm, but today was the big market day in the nearby town, and Ladi had to go and sell some of their meagre produce in order to get a bit of money. She woke her grandchildren, bathed them, and gave them breakfast. She then went to a neighbour's house to ask if she could look after the children when she went to the market. Her neighbour agreed.

Although Ladi loved her grandchildren, she sometimes wished that their mother -

he always said, "after all I have done for my country."

After dinner, he took a short nap to prepare himself for the evening's activities. Sometimes he stayed home in the evenings and received visitors - but he was fed up with people coming to beg him for money or favours. Sometimes he and a few close friends got some girls and had a party in his guest house or some other hidden place out of town, where they danced and watched blue films on the video. But tonight he was headed for serious business - politics. With the imminent return to civilian rule, he and others like him were determined to have a say in the new government. After all, he thought, if experienced officers like himself did not step in and control the situation, who knows, maybe some of those

socialist bastards might get elected and then what would happen to their business deals? Or even their wealth and property? Of course he had plenty of money in his coded Swiss accounts - even the socialists couldn't touch that, he mused.

The meeting that evening lasted until 2:00 am. By the time it was over, they had finalised all arrangements for the forthcoming elections to ensure that their candidates swept the polls. There were ways of arranging such things, and his group were masters of the art. They talked and discussed, all the time consuming roast meat and beer. By the time he got home he was exhausted and drunk. He fell into bed and slept soundly, dreaming of how much more money he would make when he and his friends controlled yet another government.

... A Peasant Woman

her own daughter - would look after them. But the children had been born before her daughter married, while she was still a schoolgirl, and was not in a position to look after them. So, naturally, she (i.e. Ladi's daughter) had sent them home to her mother. Then the daughter had gotten married, and the new husband didn't want the children from another man in his house. So they remained with Ladi.

Ladi, a woman in her late 40's, had ten children. Five of them had died, most of them in the early years of life. She thought with pain about the suffering these deaths had caused her. There was no hospital or even dispensary in their village - up to today. It was difficult and expensive to find transport to the town, and even when you got to the hospital you could not be sure of being attended to. Ladi knew that her children had died from common ailments - measles, diarrhoea, malaria, and other sicknesses for which cures and medicines were available - but not for the likes of poor peasants like herself.

She and her husband had struggled to send the surviving children to school, and all of them had finished at least secondary school. Three had even graduated from the University. All of them were doing well as businessmen and civil servants in the town and even in

Lagos. Her two daughters had married rich men, and were now very wealthy and sophisticated. But Ladi and her husband rarely saw their children. Oh yes, at Christmas time a couple of them would turn up, and the others occasionally sent small gifts of money or something like milk or sugar - rare luxuries in their impoverished village. But Ladi could envisage the comfort and luxury in which her children lived, and contrast it to the suffering and misery which she endured daily. "Sometimes I wonder what is the use of having children", she often thought.

Ladi had these depressing thoughts more and more frequently these days, as life in the village had become more and more difficult, and as she began to feel older and older. "What will happen when Habu and I are too old to go to the farm? How will we eat? Well, maybe we will die before too long and put an end to this miserable life".

But Ladi had a lot to do that day, and she put these thoughts out of her mind. She collected the produce that she was going to take to the market - a few *mudus* of *acca* some vegetables, and some *atili* fruits that she had gathered. Maybe all in all it would fetch her 5 naira or so. She put her basin of produce on her head and went out the door to begin the long 15 kilometre walk to the market.

LIVING

Before she had taken 3 steps, she was stopped by the messenger of the village chief. "I have come to collect your radio tax", he said. Ladi had vaguely heard that the government had imposed a whole series of new taxes - in addition to all the taxes and levies they were already paying. The new ones included tax on radios, on chicken, on goats, and other items. Only last year, they had suffered so much from the Task Force on environmental sanitation, which had charged them N20 for having grass in front of their house - how can you not have grass when you live in a village? But they had to pay. And now where was she to get money to pay the tax on the small radio, which had been a gift from one of her children? She tried to put off the tax collector by explaining that she was off to the market. In any case, she said, the radio had not been working for months because they didn't have money to buy batteries (and needless to say there was no electricity in their village). "Even if the radio is not working, as long as it is in your house, you must pay tax on it", said the tax collector. "I will give you up to next week to bring the money - otherwise we will have to come

with the police and seize the radio." With that he left.

Ladi's husband used to be fond of listening to the news, when they could afford the batteries; now, she thought, he will have to either hide the radio, or sell it to pay tax. So that is the end of his radio listening. Do they want to take away every small pleasure in our life?, she wondered. Then she headed for the market.

At the market, Ladi took her place in the sun besides other women selling similar commodities. She had to stay until almost 6 pm before she could sell her produce - all the other women in the market were also desperate to sell their goods, and they took much less for them than they normally would have done. At the end of the day, Ladi began the long walk home with N4.00 tied at the end of her wrapper. She had intended to buy some meat for soup, but the meat was so costly, and she thought of so many other things they needed the money for at home, that in the end she decided they could do without it.

She arrived home dusty and tired, but immediately went to the kitchen to prepare something for them to eat for

dinner. Her husband would be back from the farm any minute. There was nothing to make soup with except a few leaves. She boiled them with a bit of pepper, and mixed guinea corn flour to make the *tuwo*. The children needed meat and more nutritious food, but what could she do? There was nothing else.

Her husband soon came in, also tired and dirty from the farm, and full of complaints. The bean harvest was even worse than they first thought - they were not likely to get even two full bags from their big farm. He could barely eat his food for thinking about his problems. Ladi couldn't even bear to mention the latest tax that was being demanded of them. She would tell him in the morning, when he was not so tired, she thought.

Night fell, and brought the cold with it. They huddled together in the mud hut, trying to stretch the one ragged blanket over all of them. Ladi and her husband, and the grandchildren too, soon fell asleep, each glad to have sleep obliterate their problems, even if only for a brief moment. They all knew that the problems would still be there when they awoke the next day.

... An Alhaji Businessman

His day starts after the morning prayer, at about 6.00 o'clock - quite early for a businessman who has "made it". Sometimes, like on this particular day, he stays up reading "something light", and sipping expensive de-cafenated coffee or specially imported tea that has a classy aroma, for which there is always hot water stored in flasks the previous night; sometimes he does paper work, writing out instructions to employees here, signing a document or a voucher or cheque there; but a lot of the times he is lured back to bed, and to sleep, by the cool, quiet and serene atmosphere of especially his own living quarters within the complex that is his city home.

His is really a large complex, very modern, but planned and built in the architectural tradition of the Hausa, with a separate section for the wives, another for the kids and a detached, posh three-bedroom bungalow for guests. The complex comes to life at about six o'clock every morning, with the children

being woken up to wash, and prepare for school, and the house helps doing their daily chores - sweeping, mopping, cooking, watering and tending the lawns and flowers, and washing and starting the cars (of which there are five).

Breakfast for Alhaji S.T. comes at about 8.30 after a hot bath or shower, the traditional morning greetings with "madams", kids and the house helps and of course a few telephone calls. The breakfast is an elaborate affair, laid on the dining table that features a display of flasks, small metal, glass and plastic containers of all shapes in which are kept such things as butter, margarine, jam, imported honey, and specially prepared pepper for use on foods. This is not to mention the different packets of cereals that are arranged on the chest of drawers in the dining area.

Cereals, or porridge or specially prepared pap, followed by eggs, grilled kidney and liver served with fried plantain or potatoe chips make the

breakfast - which, he sometimes, as on this particular day, doesn't do much justice to.

This day, Alhaji S.T. is not travelling out of town. So, he is chauffeur-driven to his office in the city's busy commercial area. There is nothing today for him to attend to in the large pending tray. So he buzzes his secretary to bring in the day's newspapers and to prepare tea. His managers come one by one to discuss the day's business with him and to take instructions. Then he gives his secretary a string of telephone numbers of friends, business associates and government officials in all parts of the country. Most of the calls aren't through, so he stumbles out of the office in annoyance. And off he goes to visit friends and government offices, where he picks up the latest information on goings-on in government circles and listens to gossips of all sorts.

At about 1 p.m. Alhaji S.T. who is a contractor, a transporter and a manufacturer and commission agent, returns to

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the office - to find out if anyone has called or if there has been an urgent message for him. By this time, a lot of people have gathered in the office wanting to see him. He sees two or three briefly, and tells the rest to "please come back tomorrow". And his day is over. He returns home where a sumptuous three-course lunch prepared by his experienced and elderly male cook, awaits him.

His meal gulped down, and afternoon prayer said, Alhaji S.T. retires to his bedroom for rest and siester, which lasts till about 5.00 p.m. During this time, no one, not even his most favourite of three wives, is to come near his bedroom. "Alhaji has gone inside, come back at 5 o'clock or ring back at 5 o'clock," is the standard reply to any visitor or caller.

At about 5.00 p.m., Alhaji comes out to his sitting room, washed, fresh, perfumed and dressed lightly. He sees his visitors for a while, and then off he drives in a sports car, with a friend, usually to a posh guest house in a hidden corner of the old G.R.A., where other friends, both male and female, are already waiting. In the privacy of their hiding place - where almost everything, from chilled wine and the most expensive spirits to mineral drinks, and to grilled chicken and fried meat, is available on request from a cook/steward stationed there - Alhaji S.T. and his friends freely discuss politics, business, women, and and the latest state of the dollar in the world market.

Sometimes, the Alhaji rings home to

It was Tuesday, and as he does on other days Pa James Sanda came awake by the second cock-crow at dawn. As he came awake, the grandfather clock on the wall of the adjoining room struck 5.00 am.

Pa Sanda stretched his weathered arms, and looked across to the other side of the room where his wife, Jummai, slept. She was seven years younger than him and still fast asleep. "What could she be dreaming about?", he wondered to himself. "Certainly not about the wonderful youth we had, with its unbridled promises and hopes. That is long past," he thought.

Pa Sanda sat up in the bed, and as he is wont to, began the day with a short prayer. This early morning prayer is

say he'll have his dinner with friends or visitors in the guest house. Oftentimes, he comes back home at about 8.00 p.m., and has his dinner at about 9.00 p.m. Dinner, like his every other meal, is also an elaborate affair - chicken soup for a starter, a main course of *uwon shinkafa* (mashed ground rice) with beef and fresh fish in vegetable sauce, followed by fruit salad - and finally washed down with de-cafenated coffee taken with honey and cream.

This particular night, Alhaji S.T. is not going visiting friends or back to the guest house, so he settles back on the soft rug just by his couch to watch films on video. Now and then a visitor comes in, or the phone rings to interrupt his concentration. The nine o'clock network news does not appear to be of much interest to him.

In fact, Alhaji S.T. has not been in a particularly good mood this evening, due largely, to the series of invitations or naming ceremonies and marriages of relations sent to him through his wife. "These people think I print Naira", he had said to his first wife when she told him of these ceremonies just before dinner.

Alhaji S.T. looks at his watch (bought £7,500 pre-SFEM in London). It's 10.30. Time to go to bed, he says to himself, as he begins to switch off the T.V. video and other gadgets. But just then the door bell rings. It's one of his three night watchmen, leading his expatriate business partner based in Lagos. The expatriate has just arrived from Lagos with the

... A Retired Teacher

always a brisk business as it consists simply of a rendering of 'Our Lords Prayer'. But today as the old man says his prayer silently, his mind keeps churning over the usefulness of the habit. "Afterall", he muses, "for the sixty-seven odd years that I have been on this planet my prayers have largely remained unanswered". But then habit is habit, and the prayers must continue to be said all the same.

The prayers done with, Pa Sanda gets up from his creaky eight-spring 'Vono' bed and drags his feet to the adjoining parlour. But as he wakes up, the noise from the creaky bed wakes Jummai up. He asks her to prepare his bath water.

By 6.00 am. Pa James has taken his

last flight. Alhaji S.T. has been expecting him. Once inside and seated, the expatriate goes straight into business - starting with the good news.

Everything is fine with their business deals and transactions in Europe; the big official in Lagos still wants the million he has in Naira smuggled out and changed to dollars and is offering a very handsome commission; Rebecca, the beautiful Ethiopian girl Alhaji S.T. keeps in London, is happy now that her rent arrears have been paid, and wants to know when Alhaji will be coming to London.

The bad news is that that foreign contracting firm - which Alhaji S.T. has helped to secure a big contract - has not paid the agreed amount into "that coded bank account." "Those bastards...," Alhaji S.T. starts, then checks himself. "You just wait and see, I'll surely deal with them," he says at last. With the expatriate gone, Alhaji S.T. begins to ponder the implications of this bad news. The planned trip to Saudi Arabia for *Umra* (Lesser Hajj) through London - where he plans to leave his three wives and six children to shop and inspect the mansion and private jet he's planning to buy - may not materialize. It all depended so much on those "bastards" paying his own cut. Now, how am I to face my family with such news, he keeps asking himself as he turns and turns in his N25,000 bed, unable to sleep.

"I'll get those bastards! I'll show them!", he keeps repeating till the small hours of the morning.

bath and is fully dressed in his four-year old brown trouser and Kaftan, black cap and plastic sandals. Jummai brings him pap in a plastic bowl with a plastic spoon. Plastics, Plastics - how Pa Sanda hates plastics. "The world must be turning synthetic with this plastic everywhere", he laments. "Plastic shoes, plastic plates, plastic spoons, and even plastic clothes. Whatever happened to our good old earthen pots and calabashes?" Sometimes, Pa Sanda wonders whether people nowadays have forgotten that God has promised that the next time he destroys the earth it shall be with fire and not with water as happened during the time of Noah's ark. Where will plastic stand in the face of fire?

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Today was the last day of the month, and Pa Sanda's first programme for the day was to go to the local government headquarters to collect his monthly pension of seventy Naira. He mounts his old Raleigh bicycle and pedals down the dusty road to the L.G. headquarters. In as much as he always looked forward to this day when he receives his monthly pension, he also dreaded it in many ways. First, there is the interminable delay at the treasury. Sometimes this delay lasted the entire day or more, and often comes to an end only after a five naira gratification had been wrung out of his hands. Then, there is the crisis of deciding what to do and what to leave out with the money.

Life had always been an uphill struggle, but it is even rougher now with the incredible rise in the cost of virtually everything necessary for survival.

Sometimes Pa Sanda thought himself a little bit lucky. After all, all but two of his eight children had now finished schooling. And even though two of these had still not been able to get a job, he at least did not have to bother about their school fees. Besides, he had used the N1,900 retirement benefits he had got five years ago to build the mud house he now lives in. So he did not have to pay for rents anymore. And occasionally

those children of his now working do send him some assistance - although this has virtually trickled out since this so-called SAP was introduced.

But even with these, Pa Sanda barely managed. He still had two sons and a wife to fend for. And to make ends meet he has had to cultivate a nearby farm.

Today at the local government treasury, Pa Sanda is lucky - he waits for only five hours for his pension. He had reached his house by 1.00 pm. From his pension of seventy naira he takes out N30 and gives it to his wife as the month's 'chop money'. Then he changes into his work clothes, brings out his hoe and matchet, ties these to the Raleigh bicycle's carrier, and pedals to the farm to catch up with some work. The millet has become ripe for harvesting and the more time he wasted the more damage would be wrought by birds, squirrels and rabbits.

Pa Sanda works on the farm until 6.00 pm. Then he remembers that there is to be a meeting that evening at the village head's compound. The village head had not said what the meeting is going to be about, but Pa Sanda's friend had told him it was on the forthcoming local government elections. The district head's brother was contesting and the village head wanted to make sure that the people did not vote for anybody else, said the

friend.

Pa Sanda was fed up with "the antics of these bastards. We have had enough of this nonsense and I am going to tell the village head my piece of mind today", he fumes aloud to no one in particular.

He mounts his bicycle and heads home. But on getting close to home Pa Sanda begins to feel dizzy. He remembers why. He had exhausted the tablets which he takes for his high blood pressure and had not bought replacements. He had gone to the hospital yesterday and had been given a new prescription. But as usual, the government pharmacy had none in stock. As soon as he got home, he told himself, he would send Jummai to buy some from Godiya Pharmacy.

Unable to pedal his bicycle anymore, Pa Sanda disembarks and drags it behind him. But his dizziness gets worse. He then collapses to the ground unconscious.

Pa Sanda is carried home by passers-by. He wakes up momentarily and then goes back to deep slumber. He dreams of a place where there are no district heads, no police, no soldiers, no judges, no courts, no prisons and no sub-treasuries, but happy, well-fed and smiling faces. Faces and faces, all smiling laughing and chattering.

... A District Head's Wife

Hajiya Hansatu heard the buzzer ring three times - that was her signal. What does he want me for so early in the morning, she wondered. It was only 6:00 am. Her husband's buzzer sounded again, more impatiently this time. Hansatu was Alhaji's third wife, hence when he rang the buzzer three times from his room, she was to come immediately. The first wife had one ring, the second wife two, and so on. Hansatu reluctantly got up, covered her head, and went to meet her husband in his sitting room.

Hansatu's husband was the District Head of one of the districts of a northern state. He was always impressing on her how lucky she was to be married to him. After all, her own father was just a village head, and her immediate sister was married to a poor teacher. Only she was privileged to live such a life of prestige and luxury. She therefore owed her

husband a great deal and was bound to show him the greatest respect. How fortunate she was to be in purdah where no man could set eyes on her except her husband. Her sister actually had to go to the market herself, and on foot, since her own husband had only a bicycle. Not like Alhaji, the District Head, who owned three cars, including an American Oldsmobile and a Mercedes Benz.

Of course, Hansatu and the District Head's other wives rarely got to ride in the Mercedes, because they stayed at home most of the time. In fact, when Hansatu first got married, she had to follow the aristocratic custom which forbade a wife from setting foot outside her husband's house for a whole year after the wedding. Hansatu and the other wives had all followed this custom, including the second wife who was a daughter of an emir. Even when Hansatu was seriously

ill, she was not allowed to go to the hospital - instead a doctor and a nurse were called from the government hospital to come and attend to her in the house. Now, though, after some years of marriage, they were allowed to go out for an occasional naming ceremony or wedding - escorted, of course and only if the status of the celebrant was at least equal to her own. Hansatu was not allowed to attend her own sister's wedding, because her husband felt it would be too demeaning for his wife to attend the marriage of a commoner. Actually, Hansatu secretly believed that her husband didn't want her to spend a whole week in the village away from his suspicious eyes.

When Hansatu met her husband in his sitting room, he informed her that he was going on tour to supervise the tax collection in his district. The government had

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introduced some new taxes, and the peasants were refusing to pay. So he would go and see things for himself.

Hansatu was glad to see him go. She and the other wives were highly annoyed with their *maigida* at the moment. Although she and her mates did not usually get along well, at this time they were united. *Maigida* had just finished preparations for marrying another wife, a beautiful young Tuareg girl from Niger Republic - or so the wives had heard - who didn't even speak Hausa. This was going to seriously disrupt the household. Up till then Hansatu had been the favourite wife, and she particularly was going to suffer. The senior wife had been married to Alhaji for many years, and had a lot of authority in the house. The second wife was the daughter of an emir, and had to be respected. Until now, Hansatu had depended on her status as the most beautiful and the favourite to maintain her position - but now all that was going to disappear. She wondered whether *Maigida* might even divorce her if he decided to marry again after this one.

With these thoughts on her mind, Hansatu went back to her room, which was very large and decorated from floor to ceiling with China plates and enamelware containers, and with cabinets full of expensive clothes - if she lived to be a hundred years old she would never be able to wear all those clothes. Under her bed was a box full of gold trinkets, which she had bought with the money Alhaji occasionally gave her.

Hansatu called for *Iya*, the old woman who was her servant. *Iya*, and two other old women, had been in the family since they were children. They had once been slaves, and in fact were still treated like slaves. They did all the work in the house - sweeping, washing, caring for the children, and even cooking. The only times any of the wives entered the kitchen was when it was their turn to cook for their husband.

Hansatu ordered *Iya* to bring her some breakfast, and then to bathe the children and get them ready for school. She then began to think about what she would do for the rest of the day ahead of her.

She searched among some video-cassettes, and selected the latest Michael Jackson tape. She was about to slot it into

the machine when her attention was caught by a conversation she heard between two men going past the house. The men were abusing her husband, the District Head, because he had seized their land and sold it out to a wealthy businessman. She listened with bitterness to the snatches of the conversation until the men were out of earshot. "What do they know about it?" she thought bitterly. "These talakawa, they are so filthy and ignorant. I don't know why God even allows them to exist... And there are so many of them."

She then turned to watch Michael Jackson dancing across the TV screen, and forgot temporarily about the conversation she had overheard.

Later in the morning, an Alhajiya came to visit her with some new style gold bracelets which she had brought from Mecca. Hansatu admired them, and wondered where she would get the money to buy them. They were only N15,000 naira, but with her husband's wedding plans, she was not likely to be able to get that money out of him now. Hansatu told the woman to leave the gold with her, and she would try to find the money for them by the following week.

A neighbour came in to relate the latest neighbourhood gossip. Some politicians were arranging for the women of the ward to be taken in buses to various polling stations during the forthcoming election, so that they could cast their votes many times. Since the officials would not know the women, as they were usually in pur-

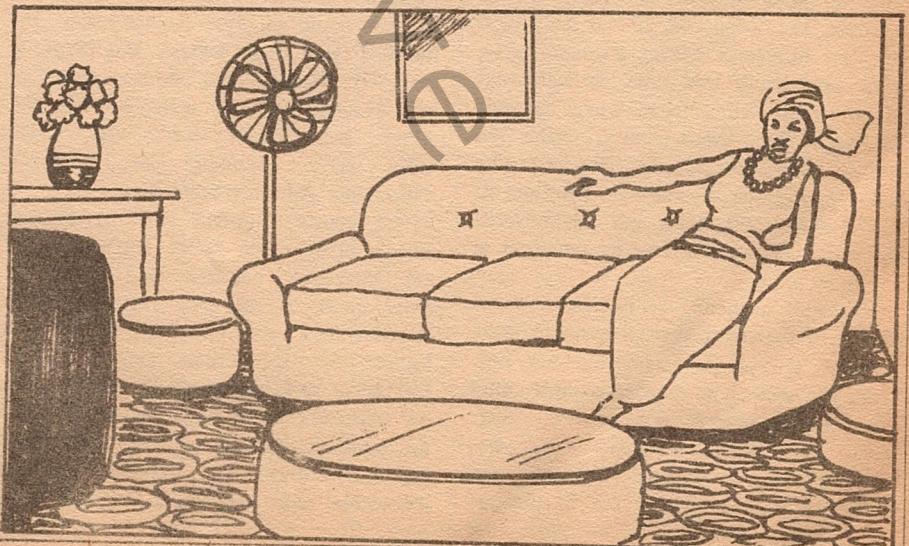
dah, and in any case had their heads well covered, they would not be able to identify them. Each woman was to get 10 naira for each time she voted.

It sounded like fun, and Hansatu regretted that she, of course, would not be able to participate, as her husband would personally escort them to the polling station on election day. And such antics were for ordinary women, not for the wives of the District Head any way.

And so the day passed, in petty gossip and video films. In the evening she had more visitors, and asked *Iya* to bring food for them. She was not at all pleased with the food that *Iya* had cooked, and when she had tasted the first mouthful, she spat it out, and threw the tray of dishes all over the floor. "How can you bring such rubbish for our visitors?", she shouted. *Iya* cleaned up the floor without saying a word, and went silently back to the kitchen.

The visitors soon left, and Hansatu was left alone. Her three children were hardly company she had nothing to say to them, or they to her. They did what they liked, ordered *Baba* around, and were thoroughly spoiled.

Hansatu fell asleep watching another video film - *Dynasty*. She wondered what it would be like to be the type of independent, glamorous woman depicted in the film, changing boyfriends like they changed clothes, and treating men like they were toys. It would certainly be a change from her own life. ♦



How They "Made It"

Dr. K. O. Mbadiwe, ex-Federal Minister, ex-Presidential Advisor, and self-confessed "political juggernaut and institution" once amused guests at a ceremony to mark the opening of his house (Peoples Palace) in his village when he said that the money used in building the house came from sources "known and unknown." This confession from K. O., a veteran politician to whom Nigerian politics owes much of what colour and humour it can be said to have, drew instant laughter from the guests, and fired a lively debate across the country.

That was almost thirty years ago. Exactly what it was that teased out such a confession from K. O. may remain unknown to us, but one thing is certain: what K. O. said about his house holds true for most of the mansions, riches, and wealth being flaunted by the well-to-do in the country today.

It was one of those rare occasions when the rich humour themselves and the rest of us, by being frank and thus letting us hear from the horse's mouth what we have always known: that they (the rich) "made it" in all sorts of dubious ways. In fact, for most of the wealthy people in Nigeria, the "known" (legitimate) source accounts for only a negligible percentage of their riches. More often than not, the "known" source is only a front, a convenient cover, for the "unknown" (fraudulent) source, from which the bulk of the riches come and through which Nigeria and Nigerians have always been short-changed.

The "unknown" source may be: direct looting of public funds; or inflation of a government contract; or a loan taken from a public institution without any intention to repay; or tax evasion; or direct bribe; or any of the many other devious ways officials and businessmen have been perfecting all through the years to milk Nigeria dry. But whatever it is, this dubious, fraudulent, "unknown" source, is often the real thing, the deep well from which corrupt public officers and businessmen draw.

The popular saying that behind every successful man is a successful woman may not always be true, not to mention

the male chauvinism which clearly informs it. But it is certainly correct, given the facts available in Nigeria and elsewhere, to say that behind every richman is a successful but shady deal.

It can hardly be otherwise in a country where generals literally start swimming in millions the very next day after retirement; where it sometimes takes a businessman less time to make a million naira than to write his full names; and where some public officers count their money in millions and boast openly of having "made it".

Consider the big names in Nigeria today, the real timber and calibres, the carterpillars and bulldozers of business, politics and the military. Which one of them can be said to have inherited money from dead parents or relations which can adequately account for what they now have? How many of them have a past that can really stand up to a serious scrutiny? How many of these big names familiar to you have not featured prominently but in bad light in one probe or the other, at one time or the other, whether it has been made public or not?

Among the many "unknown" sources through which the rich in Nigeria milk the country, direct embezzlement of public funds and inflation of contracts are clearly the better known. As a ministerial Committee appointed by Shagari soon after his inauguration as President in 1979 found out, inflation of contractual obligations and construction costs were (still are) higher in Nigeria than anywhere else in the world. Example: between 1977-78 Nigeria paid out N2,470.00 per hectare for irrigation schemes, while similar projects executed in other parts of the world cost much, much less - Liberia (N250); Cote d'Ivoire (N500); Ghana (N1,068). This is why every businessman in Nigeria is basically a contractor. The highly inflated costs take into account the kickbacks the contractor gives out to the awarding officials or political party or military barons, and still leave for the contractor an unheard of margin of profit.

The Shagari regime, as we all know, did

not publicise the report. And far from using the committee's revelation to check this monumental scandal, President Shagari only looked at the facts in the report, liked what he saw, smiled and then called his party men. And the party began. By the time it was over, the country's economy was almost completely wrecked. But his ministers, top aides, party barons and hangers-on were counting their money in tens of millions - all from this "unknown" source of contract inflation and direct looting.

In so many of the states controlled by some of the other Second Republic political parties too, officials and party bosses, "made it" through this "unknown" source.

And now, a few concrete examples of how they "made it", starting with the case of Mr. Anene Ayinotu, a Bendel state businessman and banned NPN big weight. The Company, of which Mr. Anene Ayinotu was Chairman, Herman Construction (Nigeria) Ltd., got a Federal Government contract in 1981 for the construction of the Abakaliki - Afikpo - Ohafia road, valued at N20.4 million. He was paid a mobilization fee of N4,083,470.00, out of which he gave kick-backs as follows: Professor Sunday Essang, then Minister of Works (N250,000.00); Mr. Victor Masi, then Finance Minister (N175,000.00); Professor Samuel Osamor, then Police Affairs Minister (225,000.00); Chief Joseph Nwankwu, NPN chairman of Anambra chapter, (N200,000.00) and Alhaji Umaru Dikko, then Minister of Transport (N450,000.00). The reader can guess by how much the contract was inflated to cover these kick-backs to officials, and how much Mr. Ayinotu himself must have made from this "unknown" source.

Another tycoon from Bendel, also a familiar name, Chief Daniel Okumagba, also "made it" big from such "unknown" sources. From just one deal in one day, the Chief, then chairman of the Ajaokuta Steel Rolling Company (1979-1983), made a clean N1,469,480 for himself.

But there are equally good examples from the Gowon era. Consider these two

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examples from Kano. First, the case of Alhaji Tanko Yakasai, a presidential advisor to Shagari, and a Commissioner of Finance in Kano during the tenure of the late Alhaji Audu Bako. As Finance Commissioner, Alhaji Tanko Yakasai arranged a loan of N2,301,699.00 for the building of Daula Hotel from J. E. Lesser of U.K., at 6% interest to be paid in between 1st July 1975 and 31st July 1979. By the time the Hotel was completed the cost had jumped to N7,473,620.00.

This phenomenal 300% rise in cost involved the inflation of the cost of hotel equipment supplied by Interpoges of Italy through a company called Barada Ltd., owned by, Alhaji Tanko Yakasai himself, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, Alhaji Sani Gezawa, a Kano traditional title holder, and others. Barada Ltd., was paid a total of N395,125.17 for these equipment - the actual cost of which, including freight, was only N163,197.00. Alhaji Tanko Yakasai and Co. thus ripped off Kano people of N231,928.17 from this deal alone. Worse, 90% of the equipment supplied were found to be worthless or already supplied earlier by J.E. Lesser. But that was how Alhaji Tanko and the others made it, and emerged prominent in the Second Republic.

And now the case of the Kano State Drought Relief Committee, of which Alhaji Inuwa Dutse, at the time the State's Commissioner for Agriculture, was chairman. In 1974-75, in the heat of the drought, the Federal Government gave the Kano government a total of N6.5 million for drought relief.

While many people in Kano State, as in many other parts of the northern states, continued to collapse and die from starvation occasioned by this drought, most of this amount was looted by Alhaji Inuwa Dutse and the Committee's Secretary, Alhaji Isyaku Umar, with the active connivance of Governor Audu Bako and his son-in-law, Alhaji Saleh Jambo. Various ways were devised for this looting. One of these was the raising of fictitious store receipt vouchers, a game in which the then Kano State registrar of co-operatives, Alhaji Muhammed Zakari, was an expert. A total of N1,297,480.00 was stolen in this way.

Another method they used was the under-

weighing of the bags of grain bought for the starving. This way, the sum of N678,618 was siphoned off.

Buying worthless equipment at inflated costs was yet another method used in the looting. The Committee, for instance, bought two irrigation units from Riverbank Ltd., a company owned by Alhaji Saleh Jambo, at the cost of N240,000.00 without any technical assessment - and both units proved to be worthless.

When not raising fictitious vouchers or buying worthless equipment, these officials sold out again, in Kano and even across the boarder in Niger Republic, most of the grains and animal feeds bought for distribution to the starving. Or they simply cornered these relief materials directly, for themselves and other big fishes. Examples: Governor Audu Bako himself got 200 bags of maize, 12 bags of beans, 50 bags of millet, 26 bags of guinea corn, 300 bags of cotton seed, and 150 bags of groundnut cake; Alhaji Sanusi Dantata got 20 bags of maize, 3 bags of beans, and 5 bags of millet.

Another good example of how public officers have "made it" while still in the public service, is the case of Reverend Canon T.A.J. Oluwole, who was head of the Civil Engineering department of the Federal Housing Authority. This man connived with a foreign consultancy firm, Doxiadis, to rip off the FHA of N6,575,404.30. Having "made it", he retired before the advent of Buhari regime, and went back to the pulpit.

Alhaji A.B. Manu, a Gombe (Bauchi State) based businessman provides a good example of those who "made it" through dubious state patronage. His transport company, A.B. Manu and Co., had only 6 trucks when it was incorporated in 1972. By 1975, the fleet had increased ten times, to 66, thanks to a November 22, 1972 North-West State Ministry of Finance circular directing all Ministries in the State to use only A. B. Manu and Co. trucks for haulage of goods from Lagos to Sokoto.

This apart, the then Governor, Alhaji Usman Farug, almost put the entire State Machinery at Alhaji Manu's disposal, lodging him at the Governemnt House, and cornering for him many contracts for which he was usually given advance pay-

ments - collected for him personally by the Governnor's ADC, Alhaji Bappa Jama'are, now Sokoto state police commissioner.

The Report of the Federal Assets Investigation Panel, set up by the late General Muritala Mohammed to probe officials of the Gowon regime showed clearly the various "unknown" sources from which many public figures in Nigeria today aquired their wealth. Familiar names from that period, who even now carry their shoulders high, like Ukpabi Asika, Edwin Clarke, Diete-Spiff, Samuel Ogbemudia and Chief Anthony Enahoro, are all shown in the report to have "made it" through one crooked way or the other. Take the case of Chief Enahoro, Gowon's Information Commissioner. Chief Enahoro refused to cooperate with the probe panel so the exact extent of his looting is unknown, but his was a major role in the FESTAC bonanza. He it was who presided over and directed the award of contracts worth N32,237,000 for the purchase of FESTAC cars alone. During his tenure as Federal Commissioner, he also aquired a lot of property all over the place, including a farm at Rigachukun in Kaduna State, which was dubiously aquired.

Acquisition of "loans" which are never meant to be repaid is another "unknown" source of wealth for especially officials. The case of Dr. Alexander Fom, a Jos-based businessman who wormed his way into the Board of BEPCO Ltd., a construction company established by the Gomwalk family, to loot the government of Benue-Plateau state through the award of dubious contracts is quite illustrative. By 1975, loans from the State Government to BEPCO amounted to N773,414.00.

From BEPCO, Dr. Fom aquired "loans" and moneys in various ways, which he used to acquire, in Jos and elsewhere, a lot of landed property and vehicles. Among these landed property, is the building at No 12 Ahmadu Bello Way, Jos now named Dele Giwa House.

Tax evasion is yet another "unknown" source of wealth. And in this aspect, Alhaji Mai Deribe - a Maiduguri - based business tycoon who owns a private jet and a home built at the cost of over N10.00 million - provides an example as

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good as any. The Special Investigation Panel (SIP) found that in 1982-83, Alhaji Mai Deribe's two companies - Dalarama Drinks and Deribe Hotels - evaded tax to the tune of N906,608.37. *The Analyst*, (Vol. 1 No 4) in its UPDATE column, showed how two prominent figures in Sokoto, both of whom are princes with eyes on the throne of the Sultan of Sokoto, namely, Alhaji Shehu Malami and Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki, helped, in no small measure, to wreck the Gusau Oil Mill. The thousands of shares owned by the two princes in the oil mill were actually bought for them by the Kano-based Lebanese businessmen, Raccab brothers, who were part owners of the mill.

Many more examples than space can permit here can be cited, but the foregoing suffices to prove the point that most of our rich men actually "made it" through dubious, often fraudulent, ways. But this account won't be complete without the mention of Alhaji Aminu Dantata, a prominent Kano businessman from the well-known Dantata family. A mention of him is necessary if only because the conventional wisdom is that he, like his brothers, was born into riches and had it all made from day one. But this is far from the truth. Alhaji Aminu Dantata, as records show, also "made it" in much the same way as many of the others mentioned above. He too had his "unknown" sources - as was clearly shown by the report of the Justice Wheeler Judicial Commission of Enquiry into the Kano State Tenders Board and the Ministries of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Finance, Health and Social Welfare and Education for the period January 1, 1970 to 9th July, 1975 (*The Analyst*, June 1986).

The report showed clearly how Alhaji Aminu Dantata, as Commissioner for Trade and Industry under late Governor Audu Bako, misused his position and abused his office, to dupe the Kano people, with the active connivance of the Governor and other officials who also benefitted financially from Dantata's exploits.

In a deal which the report described as "strange but true", a company, ADS (Alhassan Dantata & Sons Ltd.), of which Alhaji Aminu Dantata was Chairman, was "lent" 6378 tons of super phosphate

fertilizer worth N269,927.20 belonging to Kano State for sale to North-Central State government. This was done to enable Alhaji Aminu's company meet its contractual obligations to the North-Central State government. But the excuse used was that the Kano State government stood to gain by getting rid of the "old and deteriorating" fertilizer. This was patently false. In any case, ADS refused to honour the agreement to return to the Kano state government within six months, the same amount and quality of fertilizer, which it claimed to have ordered from overseas. After about three years of arguments, and even more strange but true deals and connivance with the Governor and other officials, Alhaji Aminu managed to get the Kano

state government to accept worthless and obsolete machinery supplied by his other company, NAMCO (Northern Amalgamated & Marketing Company Ltd.), to the State's Ministry of Agriculture as settlement of ADS's fertilizer debt to the government.

This then, is the real story of how the rich "made it." So, when next you hear them boast of having "made it", or see them pass by in their fashionable Mercedes Benz 190 or such other expensive limousines or catch a glimpse of them relaxing in their heavily fenced mansions or cruising the skies in their private jets, do not be deceived as to how they actually "made it". Always remember the 'unknown' sources. ♦

LET ME SPEAK

"Man Never Rests"

"I am the lonely son of Mr. and Mrs. Udegbo, from Amata Mgbowo in Awgu Local Government Area of Anambra State. I was born with fantastic physical conditions and I am the undefeated champion of wrestling competition in the town. In keeping with the customs, my parents wanted me to have many children since they themselves could not. I was equal to the task because I was strong and could work hard on the farm and tap plenty of palm wine which I so' and made some money. I thus married my first wife at the age of 22 years. I got three boys and one girl from her before she died. Subsequently I married other wives. In short I married seven wives not simply because I wanted to have many children to fulfil the wishes of my parents but because most of my wives died. Only three out of the seven are living now. You know there is no good hospital here in the village and I cannot foot the cost of medical treatment at UNTH (University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital) in Enugu. So I watched them as they died and I could do nothing.

"But, why do I have to pay tax and rates every year? Now I am in the first half of my sixties. I am already too weak and exhausted but I must continue



Mr. Udegbo

to work 12 hours daily. I get up 5.a.m. daily, go to tap my palm wine or to till the land if it is the planting season. I climb the palm trees three times daily to ensure that good wine is extracted. You see, you must tend the palm regularly if you want good wine that can sell well in the market. In between these, I make out time to sell the wine and, when necessary go to the farm. I return to my house after 7.p.m. daily, including sundays. I work all days of the year. I have no rest unless when I fall sick. That is why I named my last son Nwoke Ezuike, which means 'Man Never Rests'.

"My headache now is that the government wants me to pay not only taxes and rates, they also want me to buy licence for the shade in our village market where I sell the wine and buy licence for my bicycle which I ride on communal roads built by the village community. I have also to buy a licence for the palm trees which belong to my great grand father, and pay school fees for my four children who attend our community primary school. Even when the white men were here it was not as bad."

LIVING

Bakin Rijiya: Where Water is Gold

The people of Bakin Rijiya (Wase Local Government) and Ding-Jor (Langtang Local Government), both in Plateau State have many things in common. First, though they belong to two local government areas, they speak one common language - i.e. Taroh or Yergam. The Taroh are predominantly settled in Langtang Local Government Area, and also constitute about half of the inhabitants of Wase Local Government Area.

The other features shared by the Taroh in Bakin Rijiya and Ding-Jor are abject poverty and lack of even the most basic necessities of life. For the Taroh of Bakin Rijiya, life is a daily struggle.

With the rainy season and the long wait for corn and millet to yield gone, the biggest worry of every family in Bakin Rijiya is how to get water for domestic use. Bakin Rijiya, ironically, means the mouth of a well in Hausa. But there is not a single well or borehole in this village of about 4,000 inhabitants.

"Our basic problems here in Bakin Rijiya is water," Malam Ishaya Fabong, father of 12 children pointed out. Malam Ishaya said that the inhabitants of his village now trek a distance of about 10 kilometres twice daily to obtain water from the drying River Wase. "Very soon the shallow river will dry up and only heaven knows what will happen to us then."

Malam Ishaya, who was once a councillor, said that he fought tooth and nail to see that his village got a borehole, but to no avail.

"Water is a perennial problem for us here in Bakin Rijiya," observed a youth leader. He said that in a month's time the village will experience its worst moment of water shortage. "This time", he said, "the Wase Local Government may come to the rescue by sending a water tanker to sell water at the price of one naira per drum." Even then, not every Taroh man

can afford the one naira for a drum of water. "Money is difficult to get here", said one of the villagers.

This extreme poverty of the villagers is, like all else, exploited by the few privileged ones in the village - the money lender in particular. If a villager is desperately in need of water but has no money to pay for it, he turns either to a neighbour who is better off than him or, and this happens much more often, to the village money lender. Often, this spells real "wahala" for the man.

Explained one villager: "If you borrow money to buy water and you can't pay back immediately, then you must offer

According to one villager: "meat is a luxury thing, as far as I am concerned. Instead of consuming it we sell it in order to avoid the harassment we receive from the tax collector."

All adults in Bakin Rijiya are listed tax payers, who pay their taxes promptly - as evidenced by the piles of tax receipts tossed before *The Analyst* crew. "But we get nothing in return from the Local Government," lamented one of them.

Bakin Rijiya inhabitants spend most of their evenings entertaining themselves. The young and the old come together in the village square, singing and dancing - to forget their problems, at least for a while.

Sending children to school is a luxury to most Bakin Rijiya parents. "We cannot afford the exorbitant school fees, whether in the primary or post-primary schools," said Malam Ishaya Fabong.

According to most estimates, an average father in Bakin Rijiya earns only about N200 annually. "So if you pay N210 as school fees per child in a post-primary school every year how much will

you be left with?", Malam Ishaya asked. For now, he said, he can only pay the school fees of one of his children. The others only stay at home, helping out with domestic work and on the farm. "The story is the same with every family in this village," he pointed out.

Healthcare is another facility which the people of Bakin Rijiya need badly. They trek long distances to Wase or Langtang for treatment. "In the event of a snake bite or sudden serious illness, we only count on God's mercy, as the impoverished patient must find means of transporting himself either to a hospital in Wase, which is 15 kilometres away, or to one in Langtang, which is 25 kilometres away."

In case you don't know, Langtang Local Government is the home base of a



A family in Bakin Rijiya - misery and poverty all around.

your sweat and labour during the farming season. By this arrangement the lender will give you a piece of land commensurate to the amount borrowed to till the soil for him."

This way, the borrower ends up paying back, through his sweat and labour, an amount by far in excess of the amount borrowed - to the advantage of the money lender.

When not struggling for water in Bakin Rijiya, most of the inhabitants "kill" their idle time during the day hunting rabbits or smaller rodents such as rats. Although a good source of protein, the rabbits and rats caught are very rarely eaten by the inhabitants of Bakin Rijiya. Instead, they are smoked and sold to outsiders for what the villagers can get to buy water and to pay taxes and levies.

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number of Generals of the Nigerian Army as well as many high ranking military officers - both serving and retired - now running the affairs of the country. There are some serving officers of the rank of General from this local government in the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) and the Federal Cabinet

MANSIONS

Yet, the vast majority of the Taroh remain without any basic amenities. Reason: most of these highly placed officers have built for themselves modern - type mansions equipped with all the modern amenities and the most sophisticated gadgets. So, who cares about the hapless rural majority?

Most of the time young mothers in

labour are most hit because of the complete absence of a maternity clinic in the area. "Mothers die here like fowls because of complications during labour," a 40 year-old mother of six revealed.

About 20 kilometres west of Bakin Rijija and on the west bank of River Wase is a neighbouring village called Ding-Jor, whose 3,000 inhabitants share the same traumatic experience of life as that of Bakin Rijija villagers.

An imposing St. Mary's Catholic Church adorns Ding-Jor village. But as Malam Ibrahim Ganga, father of five children, said, "life for us here on earth is not easy".

"This year, it would appear as if we are going to experience the worst harvest in the history of this village. There was not enough rain this year. We are going to face more hardship this year and life will

even be worse in the coming year," observed Malam Ibrahim Ganga. Malam Ibrahim said he has few livestock. "Some of them must be taken to the market and sold to complement for my daily needs," he said.

According to Malam Ibrahim not all his five children attend school. "I cannot afford the high school fees. So at the moment I am educating only one who is attending a teacher's college. The rest must wait until things get better, the possibility of which is not foreseeable."

Asked why he won't go to Langtang to find means of livelihood, a Ding-Jor youth said emphatically, "there is nothing there. I don't envy life there. I hear many people are suffering there. Only a few people are enjoying there." ♦

By Danjuma Adamu.

The Poor of Enugu: Living in Filth and Noise

Perhaps, one of the most conspicuous aspects of the towns and cities of an under-developed society like Nigeria is the elaborate system of segregation in their physical layout and infrastructures. On the one hand, there is the low density part of the city, with its spaced-out plots of land, tarred roads, street lights, water, electricity, hospitals and clinics, exclusive club houses, special nurseries and kindergartens - called the GRA (Government Reservation Area). This is the detached noiseless zone of the city to which, during the colonial days, a visitor was welcomed with a warning inscribed on a big sign board: "NO NOISE: DO NOT HORN". The rich and powerful live here.

On the other hand, there are the poorer parts of the city - the slums and ghettos - which lack most modern amenities and have little to show apart from their unplanned roads and streets, filth, stinking open sewerages rickety structures and overcrowding. The poor are condemned to live in these parts of the city.

Anambra State is a typical example of a state where social discrimination of the type described above is very palpable. The two major cities; Enugu - the capital city and the seat of government from colonial days - and Onitsha - the main commercial town seated on the Niger - have the largest concentration of

population. Enugu has an estimated population of two million people. It is by nature one of the most beautiful cities in Nigeria. Its hilly topography, with the numerous valleys, provide the city with a perfect and natural drainage system while



Governor Emeka Omeruah of Anambra the green dwarfish savanna plants in the background, and the reddish soil, combine to exude a holiday atmosphere to the visitor.

Capitalist greed and hunt for profit have destroyed this natural beauty. Prior to the construction of the new federal dual carriage road from Enugu to Onitsha, a federal trunk 'A' road passed from the Middle-Belt through Nsukka, Enugu to Abakaliki.

This road divided the town into two,

separating the GRA, on the left side, from the ancient parts of the city where the down-trodden live, on the right. The village of Nike on the left side of the GRA has been expanding into a large population centre. With the construction of the so-called low cost houses by the Housing Development Corporation, the Abakpa Nike and environs were expanding toward the GRA - a threat to the peace and tranquility reserved for the rich. However, the town planning authorities took adequate precaution against that by ensuring that the village is promptly separated from the GRA. The new federal dual carriage roads permanently separate Abakpa and the workers' home at the low cost houses from the GRA - thus preserving the GRA at the centre and immunising it against noise, filth, diseases and all other social ills which are exclusively reserved for the poor. A new GRA has sprung up in the Independence Layout around the Government House, House of Assembly, and the University of Technology. This is an expansive area where magnificent buildings are springing up. Here again, the right to acquire land and set up buildings is exclusively that of the rich because they alone have the money to do so. The houses being set up in these reserved areas are either personal bungalows or duplexes of exquisite and

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exotic architecture, flush with decorations.

Out of the 2 million inhabitants of Enugu an estimated 90% or 1.8 million belong to the under-privileged class i.e. workers, artisans, petty traders, and the lumpen proletariat. These people are concentrated in Coal Camp, Uwani, Awkunanaw Achara Layout, Ogui/Asata, Abakpa Nike and Emene. Most live in squalid old houses in compounds that lack most amenities. The toilets are pit latrines built close to bathrooms and kitchens. The bathrooms are also used as urinals. In some cases, the latrines are bucket types that are removed by night soilmen. Regular cleaning is impossible because pipe-borne water is either very irregular or non-existent. The stench from the mixture of smells from the human urine and excreta constitutes a serious health hazard.

Outside the approved dwelling compounds, the picture is even worse. Streets have terrible potholes. In the Coal Camp area, the streets are still as narrow as they were when the first coal miners settled there in the beginning of the thirties. A stream which flows from the foot of the Udi Hill, creating a large open sewerage near the main street which is close to the famous motor spare parts market at Coal Camp, has been turned into a refuse dump. Here, heaps of garbage lie decaying in the water which is too slow to be able to flush them into a bigger canal or river. Yet at both banks, the street market spreads, and close to it women sit near their tables selling groundnuts and bananas and even rice to the store keepers and artisans. The scene is terrible, the smell is unbearable and the noise is deafening. The motor spare parts market is a street market. There is no special site walled off as a market. Instead, every street is lined with stores, stalls, houses and shops for vehicle spare parts. Lack of space had forced some of the traders to construct batchers that look like hives. Others simply display their goods on the streets. Instant repairs are also carried out by motor mechanics. Thus the noise produced by the hundreds of buyers and sellers as they haggle over prices during the process of bargaining is supplied with instrumentation by the clanging of iron bars, hammers and other tools to produce, par excellence, the music of

anarchy.

In this atmosphere of filth and confusion, the under-privileged workers and traders live, paying anything from 20% to as much as 40% of their monthly salaries (in the case of workers) for rent. Many workers in this income bracket do not rent any apartments. They live in shacks, workshops or in motor-parks. While the cost of renting flats has remained constant for the past ten years, that of single room apartments has risen from N10 in 1977 to N30 today i.e. an increase of 200 per cent. The reason is not far fetched. While the high income groups who rent flats often have enough to meet up their rents, the unabating rise in the cost of living, especially the cost of basic food stuff, has made the average low income workers, artisans and petty traders constant rent defaulters. After buying the minimum amount of food needed just to keep body and soul together, nothing is left for the other necessities of life. Because of this, most landlords now would rather build blocks of flats than build rooming houses.

The misfortunes of the poor town dwellers arise mainly from the fact that in the face of constant or even declining income there has been unbridled rise in the cost of living in the town during the past years. Apart from the 200% rise in rent,

the price of garri which is the staple food stuff has risen by 400%, from 20 cigarette cups for one naira in 1977 to now only 5 cigarette cups. A tuber of yam which cost one naira in 1977 now costs four Naira i.e. a rise of 300%. The price of beef and other sources of protein has more than quadrupled. A cow bought for two hundred naira in 1977 costs one thousand naira today. i.e. a rise of 600%. When the butcher adds his profit, then the poor worker pays through his nose. The SFEM has made matters worse. A tablet of soap which was bought for 15k costs one naira today i.e. a rise of over 800%. The cost of clothing, drugs and doctor's bills have also spiralled. From available statistics, we have discovered that to maintain the standard of living afforded by a worker who earned N150 monthly ten years ago, a worker today must earn not less than N750 per month.

The workers and poor people of Anambra, like their counterparts in other parts of Nigeria, have come to the end of the tunnel. But all is not lost for they still have a choice: They either submit and die slowly but surely. Or, they organize through their own collective efforts, to wrest power from their exploiters and change their miserable conditions for the better. ♦

By Onwudinjo Ude



The palace of a community Warrant Chief in Anambra State.

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Soviet Union: Seventy Years of Socialism

'What kind of revolution is it', western commentators and their megaphones elsewhere have kept asking, 'that needs restructuring, renewal and openness at its 70th anniversary?' 'Why,' they press on further with obvious glee, 'are the grandchildren of the makers of the Great October Socialist Revolution being compelled now, to talk about asserting (and even recovering!) the revolution's basic ideals of democracy, openness, social justice and the rights of workers (confirmed in practice, to be the masters of their country)?'

Such idle and routine speculations by Western commentators on the Soviet Union is evidence of the strange hiatus that has set in the stream of anti-Soviet broadcasts and publications in the wake of the current changes. The old, reliable and comforting stereo-types about the Soviet Union have become out-dated, and there is an obvious crisis discernable in the frantic attempts the western news media establishment is currently making towards fabricating more sophisticated ideological missiles to launch at socialism.

At first, Western journalists attributed the changes taking place in the Soviet Union to attempts by a young 'revisionist' Gorbachev and his 'modern', 'technocratic-minded' supporters in the party hierarchy to give communism a 'white-wash' by adopting 'capitalist' management techniques. And Margaret Thatcher even began to talk about a man the West "could do business with". Then, when some top ranking party leaders were removed in Soviet Asia and elsewhere for corruption and incompetence, a certain level of arbitrariness, including charges of domination by the Russian nationality, was attributed to the Communist Party leadership. But when managers of enterprises began to be removed, not by the authorities, but by workers, who were being 'managed' by professionally bankrupt people in their work places; and when the Soviet news media began to openly debate their country's internal problems, beyond merely calling black black and white white, but deeply analysing the sources of failures, mistakes and miscalculations, a certain level of anxiety

and even fear, began to creep into the speculations. Why this anxiety and fear?

Beyond all the rhetoric and hypocrisy, it can easily be seen that Western anxiety and fear is borne out of the vitality and immense self-confidence which characterizes Soviet socialism on its seventieth anniversary. For, in spite of the unprecedented human and material achievements which socialization of the means of life has made possible for the Soviet people in the short time span of seventy years, and at a time when the 'welfare' state has died a natural death and the far right under the leadership of Reagan and Thatcher is shepherding western workers into the abyss of unemployment, drug addiction, hunger and death, the Soviet people have embarked on a course of revolutionary changes directed at making life and work even more abundant, more interesting and ever more



V. I. Lenin ... founder of the Soviet State.

satisfying. What is the basis of this vibrating self-confidence of the Soviet people? *Glasnost* (openness, more democracy) and *perestroika* (radical restructuring) have become possible and feasible only because of the successes Soviet socialism has already achieved in the areas of work, everyday life, rest and recreation; and cultural, physical and scientific development, in the last seventy years.

The right to work, which is the principal condition for man's economic and

political freedom, is guaranteed each and every citizen of the U.S.S.R.; and not just 'work' - but work in accordance with an individual's vocation and professional training. Moreover, with continuing mechanization and automation of production processes, manual work, especially arduous and unsatisfying work, is being gradually eliminated. In stark contrast, official United States Department of Labour figures for November 1986 announce that as many as 8,283,000 citizens were jobless; and this figure which has since kept on growing does not even include the millions who have despaired of ever finding work and the five million who do not work a full week. Also, according to the French weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*, the unemployment rate in 1987 among young people in Japan, West Germany, United States and France is 6, 7, 12 and 23 per cent respectively.

And, in this enlightened and technically advanced age, when builders have at their disposal powerful and highly efficient machines that can be used in constructing multi-flat houses much faster and at lower cost than ever before, the number of homeless people in the world, and especially in western Europe and the United States, which this year is celebrating the 200th anniversary of its 'democratic' constitution, is growing at an alarming rate. For instance, a review of the situation in big cities prepared by the conference of U.S. Mayors shows that as many as three million Americans (other estimates put the figure at more than four million) are homeless. For example, in New York alone, 60,000 people have no homes; and in Washington, 20,000. At the same time, some 5,000 houses stand empty in the American capital!!

Let us see what the housing situation is like in the Soviet Union, by way of contrast. Before the October revolution, the country's urban population then was about 30 million, and they had 180 million square metres of housing, or six square metres per person. But this was only the average figure. In the workers quarters, even two or three square metres per person were regarded as quite acceptable.

In those years, eight houses out of ten

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were one-storey wooden houses without even the elementary amenities. The situation in the countryside was even worse: people had to live side-by-side with domestic animals, in wretched hovels with straw roofs.

The young Soviet republic could not radically change the situation overnight. Only by 1940 had it been possible to double the urban housing stock, but then, the Nazi attack in June 1941 interrupted housing construction. Moreover, the war left in ruins 1,710 cities and settlements and 70,000 villages, and 25 million people were rendered homeless. Thus the housing stock in the mid-forties was at the 1918 level. The overwhelming majority of the urban population lived then in communal hostels, with a family of four or five often occupying one small room.

But since the 1950s, a massive housing construction programme, which today puts the Soviet Union ahead of all other countries in the total number of flats under construction, has made it possible for the *right to housing* to be declared a Fundamental Right of the Soviet Citizen, guaranteed by the Constitution. And, what is more, rent for a flat does not exceed 3 to 5% of the income of an average worker's family, and the length of tenancy is unlimited. Today, about 85 per cent of town dwellers and 90 per cent of the people in the countryside live in flats and detached houses. However a housing problem exists, even in the Soviet Union, and the demand for housing is quite high, even outstripping population growth. But this is a peculiar housing problem, not the type that confronts a retrenched worker in Warri or the wretched jobless black worker in New York's Harlem. In the Soviet Union, it is not that some people have no place to live in. On the contrary, the housing problem exists largely because every one wants to move out into a bigger, better

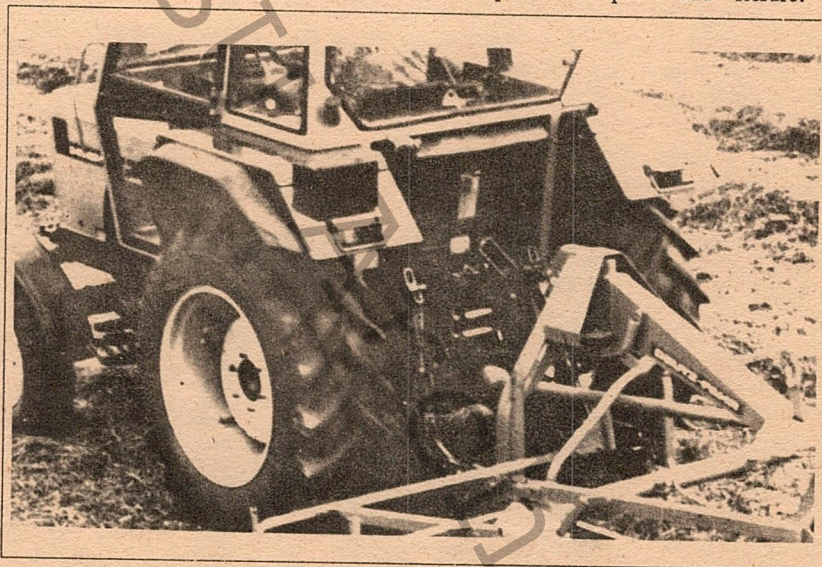
flat for maximally comfortable living. And every year, at least 10 million people do so.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health and education are two of the most important indicators, characterizing the "quality of life". Estimates by the WHO indicate that in the Soviet Union (which has over 1 million, or one-third of the entire world's physicians), there are 37 doctors per 10,000 citizens, which is the highest ratio in the world, compared to 22.5 doctors per 10,000 residents in the US, 20 in Italy, 15 in France, and 16 in Japan. The number of hospital beds per

over 300 million children in the world have no possibility of studying and even in the United States, where one out of every three citizens can hardly read or write (official US figures give 800,000 as the number of children of poor families that do not attend school) there are at present in the USSR over 135,000 general education schools with an intake of 40 million, and there are over 161 million people with higher or secondary education.

Added to all this are other equally impressive achievements in the areas of real income, general nutrition level, rest and leisure. For instance, the average

monthly income of a Soviet worker today is about 200 roubles (equivalent to over 300 dollars). Out of this, a worker needs only 18 roubles as rent for a small, three-room flat, and electricity and gas will only take 5 roubles from his income. The worker's telephone bill in a month will not exceed three roubles, while kindergarten fees for his child will only cost the worker 14 roubles; laundry and dry-cleaning services (for a family of four) will



Soviet farmer

10,000 of the population is 125 in the USSR, 65 in the US., 94 in Italy, and 84 in Britain. But dry statistics can hide a lot of nasty things. For, whereas in the Soviet Union medical treatment and vaccinations are completely free, and one does not need to pay a single Kopek for most drugs, (in any case, drugs are cheapest in that country), in the majority of capitalist countries one has to pay for expensive medical services. In the United States, for instance, a day's stay in a good hospital costs not less than 150 to 200 dollars, and a worker will, on the average, have to spend 200 dollars, or 10% of his earnings on medical services and medicines.

In the USSR today, education is not just free, but secondary school education is even universal and compulsory. While

only take seven roubles out of the workers' pay, and if he or she goes to cinema and theatre, say three times each in a month, this will cost only about 10 roubles. The worker can also subscribe to 2 newspapers and three magazines for 2½ roubles for the whole month. If we assume that the worker's spouse also earns the same income, between them they will need to spend only an average of 127 roubles (out of their total income of 400 roubles) per month for meat, offal, sausages, eggs, rice, potatoes and other goodies of life.

But the advantages of socialism only make success possible, they do not guarantee it. Seventy years of Soviet power, in spite, or indeed precisely because, of its achievements, has created the 'untouchable' *bureaucrat* and the

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apathetic, sheepish citizen and the sloppy worker. They are all products of the same process. "If you want to turn an individual into a bureaucrat" observed Alexander Karzanov, an eminent Soviet dramatist writing in a recent issue of the Moscow Journal, *Literary Gazette*, "all you have to do is to put him in a position where many people depend on him but he himself does not depend on them... In this way, bureaucrats can be baked by the thousands." On the other hand, you have the sheepish or apathetic worker, who refuses to challenge the bureaucrat, knowing fully well that even if his work is sloppy, socialism guarantees him an income-earning job.

The bureaucrat and the sloppy worker are what made *glasnost* and *perestroika* urgent and necessary. For a long time, managers, with party patronage, have become autonomous of the people they 'manage'. They decided what people should know and what they should not know; the same people decided what

should be published and read, shown on T.V. or on stage, as the capitalist cultural establishment bosses do. And in industry, managers set production targets for factories inside ministry offices and behaved like bosses inside factories; incompetent bureaucrats appointed to head enterprises fail to utilise scientific and technological achievements to improve the quality of production, leading to waste and scarcity of needed commodities. In agriculture archaic, or unimaginative methods of economic management result in occasional widespread shortages of meat and dairy products.

Radical restructuring now makes it possible for people in their own enterprises to decide how they should live and work, not some blunt, stony and unyielding rules and regulations. People can now choose their own leaders and participate in electing and placing their administrative personnel. Restructuring also makes it possible for enterprises to make greater profits, and the workers to

take home bigger pay packets; workers can now form small collectives, 'hire' the means of production from enterprises, and operate it on the basis of a mutually beneficial contract which considerably raises productivity and income.

Glasnost - saying and writing what you think - is openness in political decision making and in matters of state. It also entails responsibility on the part of the citizen, namely, that he or she must be an active participant and architect of the developments in the country. This is what socialism is all about: a *continuous and qualitative* transformation of society based on the power of the people, openness and genuine democracy. That socialism is marching forward with such vibrancy and confidence towards the 21st century, while bourgeois society is stagnating, and even facing imminent recession, is the source of the anxiety and fear about the Soviet Union discernible in western media sources today. ♦

By Sa'idu Adamu.

BURKINA FASO

Sankara is Dead - Long Live Sankara

"Either I will end up an old man somewhere, reading in a library, or mine will be a violent end, because we have so many enemies. Besides, I know that nobody will ever be able to point at me and say, 'that's the former President of Burkina Faso'; they will say: 'there is the grave of the former President of Burkina Faso'.

Sankara in an interview with a Swiss journalist, Jean - Philippe Rapp.

That his would be a violent death, proved prophetic. For, on October 15, 1987, Sankara was ambushed and brutally killed by soldiers as he prepared to go for afternoon games. Along with him twelve of his closest advisors, and about one hundred others lost their lives in the carnage that day. It was Burkina's fifth military coup since 1966, and one of Africa's bloodiest.

But people are not just pointing to his grave and saying: "That's the grave of the former President of Burkina Faso". They are saying, and doing, much more than that. They are trooping to the grave in their thousands - uncowed by the sheer



Thomas Sankara ... still alive in many hearts

brutality of Sankara's murder and unfrightened by the gun-totting and fierce looking soliders guarding the shallow grave. And they are saying: "Herein lies the body of Thomas Sankara: the hero of Africa"; "Though you are gone physically, you will always be with us in spirit"; "That's the grave of our former President, the hero of our Revolution"; "They have not killed you; they have only made you immortal"; and much more.

And they said a lot more by not

coming out on the streets to dance or jubilate, or showing any excitement, or doing anything that could even remotely be construed as a nod of approval. They said a lot more by refusing to agree to stage a solidarity march in support of the new leaders. The students in particular, said a lot more by booing the new leaders and calling them "assasins" and "bandits," and shouting, "Sankara or nothing," when the new leaders tried to address them.

The people of Burkina, and the rest of the world, said a lot more by refusing to swallow the crude explanations for Sankara's murder offered by the trio of Captain Campaore (Sankara's closest friend and Second in Command), Major Jean-Baptiste Lingani, and Captain Henri Zongo who styled themselves the "15 October Popular Front." The Front's charges that Sankara was "autocratic," "a renegade", "a mystic," "a traitor," and their claims that they killed him to "stop the degeneration of the revolutionary process" and embark on "rectification," only fuelled the people's anger, and made the Front its own first doubter.

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A lot was said too by the shock and outrage felt, and by the condemnation the turn of events in Ouagadougou drew from all concerned people around the globe.

But what led to this tragic incident in Burkina? Why should the death of a thirty-seven year old leader of a poor, landlocked country cause so much stir and draw such outright condemnation from concerned people across the entire globe? What was it that made Sankara tick and so liked and accepted by his people that they could dare the gun totting soliders and risk their lives by openly showing their anger and opposition?

Captain Thomas Sankara became President of Upper Volter (the country's name before it was changed on August 4, 1984 to Burkina Faso) on August 4, 1983. His was a case of riding from prison to power. The country's military government headed by Major Jean - Baptise Ouédraogo, which Sankara had served in as Information Minister and then Prime Minister, had thrown him (Sankara) into detention following sharp disagreements which led Sankara to openly dissociate himself from the repressive policies and actions of the government. It was Captain Campaore and Captain Henri Zongo who led the famous Commandos from garrison town of Po to Ouagadougou, toppled the government, and put Sankara in power as President - with the help, of course, of progressive groups in the country.

It was thus a coalition government that Sankara came to head. An uneasy one at that, comprising three main groups: Association of Communist Officers (or RCC), led by Sankara heading the military wing; the Patriotic League for Development (LIPAD), an umbrella bringing together trade unions and progressive organizations; and the Union of Communist Struggles (ULC). By the first anniversary in August 1984, the Communist Group, a relatively new formation, was brought into the coalition.

As in most former French colonies, there is in Burkina Faso a high level of political consciousness and a strong tradition of left politics, with its innumerable groupings and factionalization. It was not surprising, therefore, that there soon emerged splits, caused by differences in perception and approach,

within the ruling coalition. By the first year of the Revolution, in fact, the split was already becoming evident. President Sankara himself, during the Revolution's first anniversary, admitted that the government's political line was "diversely interpreted and experienced," and said the government would take "steps to clarify it (political line)" and reduce the country's "many revolutions" to just one. By now, of course, LIPAD was already accusing Sankara of exhibiting "Bonapartist tendencies" in his behaviour, and complaining of arbitrariness in the collegiate form of leadership.

SPLITS

Such a split was inevitable. The Sankara group believed that if the revolution was to succeed the peasants - constituting about 90% of Burkina's population - must be mobilized to support it, through the Revolutionary Defence Councils (CDR's). For Sankara, the CDR's were the "shock troops," the real backbone of the revolution. LIPAD - with its powerful and influential trade unions - saw this as a direct threat to the highly privileged position of its leading members and a challenge to the position and status of the unions as the sole spokesmen of Burkina's progressive forces. And they began to oppose it.

But what touched the thin skin of LIPAD even more, and finally pitched it, on the one hand, against the Sankara group and the CDR's, on the other, was Sankara's relentless war against elite privileges. For Sankara, nothing could be more unjust than the previous practice whereby over 60% of the country's budget went to cater for the interest of the few urban elite, the 30,000 civil servants in a country of 7.0 million people. "The simple and brutal question" before the revolution, Sankara once said with characteristic bluntness, "is the choice between champagne and water," between, that is, paying for the privileges of the urban elite - some of which he sometimes derisively called "petty-bourgeois egoists" - and providing for the 7 million peasants and masses - the wretched of the earth. As a first step in his fight against the tiny minority in the civil service, which he said was imposing its petty-bourgeois life-style

on the people and not reflecting government's commitment to the masses, Sankara cut the perks of top civil servants.

And counting on the support of the masses, Sankara proceeded to take even tougher action against these "petty-bourgeois egoists." In the new government that he formed in August 1984, LIPAD's representation was reduced significantly. Then followed the dismissal of Soumane Toure, Secretary General of the influential *Confederation des Syndicats Burkinabe* (CSB), and the arrests of some trade unions leaders.

Entrenched in Burkina politics, and set in their ways as real labour aristocracies, the major trade unions began to fight against this onslaught on their privileges and to plot against the government and Sankara. In this, they apparently had the support of Captain Campaore and some others in the ruling CNR. Thus, when in May this year some union leaders, including Soumane Toure, were accused of subversion and arrested, Captain Campaore used his position as Justice Minister to release some of them. And with this, the line became more sharply drawn: CDR's vs the unions, Sankara vs Campaore. A confrontation was inevitable.

But it could hardly be said that the die was cast, that the resolution of the difference had necessarily to involve a bloodbath. Of course, there were other political differences in addition. For instance, the question of what kind of political party to form, how and when. Sankara's line was that a political party should be created not in "a mechanical way.. through a simple decision from up to down," but "through increased conscientization of the people." Campaore and co wanted a political party, or parties, controlled by the trade unions - in short, another bureaucracy run and controlled by labour aristocrats. Still, all these were not differences that the government could not contain, or that could not be settled amicably, among comrades through debates and discussions and, if need be, concessions and compromises based on the highest principles of the revolution.

To understand the incident of November 15 therefore, one must look beyond these

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squabbles and splits. It is particularly instructive though, that on all the key issues Captain Campaore, while mouthing Marxism, was to be found not on the side of the people but on the side of privilege. This alone speaks volumes about the man, puts a big question mark on his revolutionary credentials, and exposes his motive as nothing other than personal ambition for power.

Campaore and his colleagues now claim that they had to act swiftly because Sankara had planned to have them arrested and executed. This is bunkum. This is a most unfair thing to say about a man who, as the facts now clearly show, so trusted Campaore that he would not believe the rumours, which came thick and fast, of Campaore's schemings, or attach sinister motives to some of Campaore's actions which were clear signs of treachery, or even heed the warnings from even his own wife. How, anyway, does a leader protect himself against his closest friends? To move against Campaore and co, to adopt a philosophy of "kill before you are killed," as many observers now suggest Sankara should have done, would have been the surest way to substitute fascism for the revolution in Burkina. Sankara was not one to do that. But by loving Burkina more than he loved himself, by totally committing his life to the revolution he led, Sankara fell victim to his comrades-in-arms' ambition, envy and left-wing infantilism, which were fuelled and exploited to advantage by reactionary forces inside and outside of Burkina, and by imperialism.

Campaore, Lingani and Zongo clearly had much to envy in Sankara. Tall, handsome, articulate, Sankara naturally towered above them. Their charge that Sankara personalized the revolution, that he was autocratic and mystical was, in a sense, a manifestation of their resentment of this.

But, given the stage of the revolution, when there were still issues of tactics and direction to be settled, it was inevitable that things would revolve around a personality. Sankara, with his verbal agility, gift of wit, clarity of purpose, penchant for action and his unquestioned sincerity and commitment to the cause, easily fitted the role. But it was not a

role he liked or enjoyed acting. He saw the danger in it, and was on record for constantly pleading with especially the media to discuss not his person but the revolution, to "tell the truth about the revolution."

Outside Burkina there were forces and countries all too ready to exploit Campaore's ambition and his differences with Sankara in order to get at the latter and thus, at least, slow down, if not stem, the revolutionary tide sweeping across Burkina and the West African Coast.

First, there is Mali, Burkina's immediate neighbour to the east, with its reactionary leadership that has never forgiven Sankara for calling on Malians to revolt. Further east there is Cote D'Ivoire with whose leader, Houphet Boigny, Sankara has never been in the best of terms, largely because of the latter's decisive role in the ouster of Auoussou Kofi, Boigny's relation, from the top post of Air Afrique.

There is also Togo, where the leader, General Eyadema has been blaming Sankara and Ghana's Rawlings for the attempted coup against him early this year. Then there is also Nigeria, where the leadership felt slighted some months ago by Sankara turning down its offer to fly him to Addis Ababa in a presidential jet.

It is particularly instructive that it was to these very countries that Campaore first sent delegations to explain the situation in Burkina after Sankara's murder.

Outside Africa, France in particular has been piqued by Sankara's refusal to toe the line and to support the formation of a "Francophone Commonwealth," and his frequent criticism of the French role in Chad. On the whole, Sankara's conduct in Burkina and outside has been a major irritant and a threat to Western imperialist interests. His sharp-cutting rhetorical jibes against imperialism, his emergence on the African scene as the major spokesman of the progressive forces, and his ability to inspire and arouse the hopes of the youths and progressive forces on the continent, did not mark him out as a leader with whom the West could "do business together."

Given such a line up, and the presence

of treacherous friends around him, it was easy to imagine President Sankara sreaming in the smoky plots of his many enemies. And, as it turned out, Campaore, Lingani and Zongo were, in a sense, the executioners - spurred by their left-wing extremism, envy and lust for power, and goaded by imperialism. Nothing proves this better than the fact that, for almost four days after killing Sankara, Campaore couldn't show his face in public (he was too tired, the world was told), and many weeks after, he had no programme of his own to announce to the people, except to say his "Popular Front" will continue with the revolutionary process started by Sankara.

Perhaps, in acting out their plot, Campaore and co - out of touch with the people and reality - grossly underestimated both the strength of the bond that existed between Sankara and the people and the extent of Sankara's popularity inside and outside of Burkina. Perhaps not. But one thing is certain: By killing him, they only succeeded in immortalizing him. By pumping bullets into him and ending his thirty-seven year life here on earth, they only helped, in a sense, to give him a new life - one completely out of the reach of the long knives and hands of assassins and bandits. And now, no matter what they do or say, no matter how far they go to falsify history, Sankara's name will always be listed among the real heroes of Burkina and of Africa, and his memory will always be a source of inspiration to all lovers of progress and justice in the world.

But it is not just out of sympathy, or emotions, or even a revulsion for violence, that the people of Burkina and Africans generally will honour Sankara and keep his memory alive. They will do so because of what Sankara did for Burkina, for Africa and for mankind in general, and because of the examples he laid.

In his short 50 months as President of Burkina Faso, Sankara did for the country much, much more than what all his four predecessors did in the twenty three years they shared as leaders of Burkina. His greatest contribution lies in his arousing the popular imagination in Burkina and beyond; his raising, significantly, the

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level of political consciousness in Burkina, and his inspiring in the people confidence in themselves and in their country. Sankara helped greatly to awaken his people to the alternatives that exist to their pitiable situation to the almost limitless possibilities open to a mobilized, conscious and united people.

For Sankara, being President of Burkina was not just another job. It was a commitment. A total one. And he brought to the office such courage, such sincerity of purpose, -such ideological clarity and such enthusiasm that are matched by only a few leaders in Africa and elsewhere.

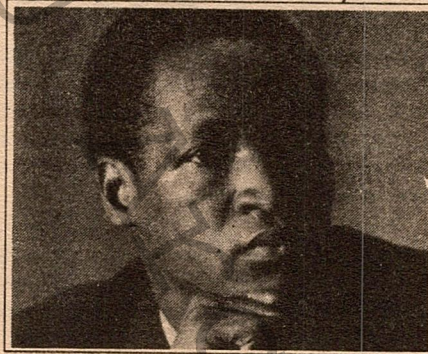
For him, the goal of the revolution was, to liberate and emancipate the Burkinabe people from the capitalist oppression and exploitation which have been their lot for too long, restore their confidence and dignity, and transform Burkina's society and economy from their dependent, neo-colonial state into a socialist one. This was difficult task, he knew, but one that, he believed, had to be undertaken by the people themselves who must first be politically educated, conscientized, and mobilized. For him, the most immediate goal is thus a People's Democratic Revolution.

This was why Sankara had so much faith in mass organization and placed so much emphasis on political education. He knew what the task at hand needed: a completely new approach to things; new concepts and models that could cope with the battles and struggles that must be fought and won; and new structures and institutions to give practical meaning and expression to the new ideas and new realities. That was why he was constantly admonishing especially intellectuals to discard worn - out and self-serving theories and models and to fashion new ones to fit the new conditions and realities of Africa.

That was why Sankara himself was always out there with the people, swimming like fish in water among them, discussing the revolution, explaining things to, and in turn learning from, them. That was why Sankara worked tirelessly to create the Revolutionary Defence Councils (CDR's), and to see that they established root, and served as the backbone of the revolution, giving

practical meaning to the concept of people's power and giving them access to, and a measure of control over, decision - making.

Thus, with Sankara's sharp - cutting rhetorics, his ability to reduce complex issues to the level of the ordinary people's comprehension, and the vigorous political education programme instituted in the country, a new and higher level of political awareness and consciousness was soon reached in Burkina. The people began to understand their situation and its real cause and to see that it was within their power to change it. And through the CDR's they began to learn how to do this, how to



Campore: only helped to immortalize Sankara

take their own destiny into their own hands. Thus, a new way of thinking and a new world of ideas were opened to them. And what emerged from both were self-confidence and a higher level of patriotism.

The change of the country's name from Upper Volta on August 4, 1984 by Sankara helped greatly to heighten the people's awareness and sense of patriotism. It was more than a symbolic gesture. It represented, in a sense, a rupture, a complete break with the past, in order to begin anew. With the new experiments going on in the country, and the impact Sankara was making on the world stage, Burkina Faso began to attract the attention of a world that hitherto hardly knew of her existence under the old name of Upper Volta. Sankara put Burkina on the world map and consciousness by burrying Upper Volta.

But at the more concrete level, Sankara's achievements were no less

significant. The landlocked country Sankara inherited was one of the world's poorest - with a per capita income of only about \$100; 98% illiteracy; 50,000 people to a doctor; infant mortality rate of 180 per 1,000; little or no natural resources; agriculture ravaged by drought and French agribusiness; a severely battered economy; a society divided along primordial lines; and a population ravaged by drought, hunger, disease and depair.

But by raising people's awareness, by inspiring in them confidence in their ability to change their situation, by actively encouraging the CDR's, by identifying with the people and their aspirations, and by prudently managing the country's economy, Sankara helped in his four year tenure, to change much of this. In fact, in some areas feats were achieved.

Examples: under a programme to immunize children against measles, yellow-fever, and meningitis, 2.5 million children were vaccinated in just 15 days - to the utter surprise of the skeptical United Nation which thought this impossible; houses were built and allocated on plots covering 62,000 plots of land in 3 years (as against 60,000 between 1960 - 83); 8,363 hectares of land were planted with trees yearly as against 1,868 hectares yearly between 1960 - 83; 102 boreholes were dug yearly as against 20 before the revolution; and 11 State enterprises in financial difficulties were revived, with 2,575 jobs saved, in 3 years.

These apart, there have been other achievements. As regards transportation, bus service was introduced for the first time in Ouagadougou in October 1984 (financed from the cuts in the perks of top civil servants), and now the bus services have been extended to 23 of Burkina's 30 provinces. As regards housing accommodation, radical reforms were undertaken in legal, administrative and financial institutions to give legal right to the urban poor to secure comfortable accommodation, free from the fear of eviction by landlords.

Sankara's achievements were no less spectacular on the economic front. With the goal of building an independent economy firmly in mind, Sankara banned

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the importation into Burkina of food items and fabrics and made compulsory the use of local ones; launched a campaign to boost the growth of some cash crops and self sufficiency in food; and, through encouragement to the CDR's and the launching, in 1985, of the PDB (Popular Development Programme) and, last year August, of the Five year Development Plan - in the reflection, conception and planning of both of which people were really involved - the mobilization and utilization of local resources and initiative was raised to a higher level, to the obvious benefit of the economy. Even the World Bank in its 1987 Report, acknowledged a modest level of economic growth in Burkina, a no mean achievement given the daunting problems Sankara inherited

It is for all these achievements and

examples that Sankara will remain immortal. Of course, as a human being, he had his weaknesses and shortcomings, and made mistakes. But not

SANKARA: BIODATA

Born December 21, 1949; third of 10 children (6 girls, 4 boys) of Joseph and Marguirita Sankara, at Yako.

Attended Lycee Ovezzin Coulibaly in Bobo Dioulasso. At 17, admitted into the Prytanee Militaire de Kadiogo (PMK) in Ouagadougou (1966), where he obtain-

ed his Baccalaureat.

At 20, selected for an officer's course at the Military Academy at Antsirabe in Madagascar.

At 24, after being commissioned Sub-Lieutenant went for a course at Parachuting School in Pau, France.

Served as Information Minister in Col. Saye

Zerbo's government (1980-82), and resigned following disagreements.

Became Prime Minister in Ouedraogo's government after helping to overthrow Col. Zerbo; was later removed and detained.

August 4, 1983, became President after a popular revolt.

even Campaore can doubt his (Sankara's) sincerity and commitment. He was a leader who lived his words and led by examples. He did not just mouth revolution like many people in Nigeria and other parts of the world are wont to. He lived it in his everyday life - identifying with the people, moving freely among them without tanks or even

blaring sirens, simple in his style, inexpensive in his taste and totally selfless. He was not known to have built mansions for himself or to have fat bank accounts.

And because he did so much for his people and Africa, because he meant so much to us, and because he raised our hopes, Sankara's memory is sure to occupy a very large place in the mental luggage of all true Burkinabe, all patriotic Africans, and all lovers of progress

throughout the world.

And to Campaore, Lingani and Zongo we repeat this handwritten message written on a scrap of paper which was wedged with stones on Sankara's grave: "Don't think you killed him. You only made him immortal." ♦

By Rufa'i Ibrahim

STRUGGLES IN THE FRONTLINE

Zionism/Apartheid: The Ugly Face of Two Sisters

What has Zionism got to do with Apartheid? Isn't the state of Israel located thousands of kilometres from the frontline of the struggle against the Apartheid regime of South Africa? Is Israel not merely having relations with South Africa like many other western nations? Why the emphasis on Israel, and the Zionist movement that produced it, as particularly important sustainers of apartheid? Is all this not just Arab, and muslim, propaganda to confuse black Africans and to keep them away from those who can help them? Is it not just a guise to impose Islamic and Arab domination on sub-Saharan Africa? How can Jews who have very recently suffered from the racist genocide of Nazism, loosing many millions in Hitler's gas chambers, have anything to do with any form of racism? Is this not all atheistic and communist propaganda against Israel which has now become the guardian of the holy places in and around Jerusalem, the cradle of christianity?

All these and other such questions are

asked daily in Nigeria in many homes, schools, colleges, congregations and social gatherings, whenever the issues of the struggles in the Southern African frontline, and this country's relationship with Israel, are raised.

In fact, currently there are several sinister local and foreign evangelical organisations be'rh christian and muslim, which are actively trying to prevent Nigerians from understanding the truth about the relationship between Apartheid, Zionism and our' own national and continental survival. For christian audiences these organisations try to evoke an emotional and irrational personal identification with the state of Israel on no other basis than the association of names in the area with names mentioned in the Books of the Old Testament.

Christian congregations are moved, and aroused, to identify with the contemporary state of Israel by the clever

use of passages like this one from the Old Testament: "And the Lord spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, when ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord". (Leviticus 25:1,2).

Muslim congregations, on the other hand, are viciously aroused against Jews, not just the state of Israel, with quotations from the Quran and the various Hadiths dealing with the complex relationships between the early Muslim community at Medina and the various Jewish clans of the area like the Banu Quarayza and the Banu Quaynuqa. These quotations are deliberately distorted to promote racial and religious hostility against Jews, completely alien to the true spirit of Islam.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

In this systematic way many Nigerians are denied their right to understand one of the most important problems of the contemporary world which has a great

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deal of importance for the progress and survival of their nation and the freedom and dignity of black people all over the world. Instead of there emerging, within Nigeria, an informed, patriotic and coherent position in support of the struggle against apartheid in the South and Zionism to the north, Nigerian public opinion is encouraged to become warped, and twisted; and is manipulated to serve the dubious vested interests of cliques and individuals in each Nigerian government which finds itself stuck, incapable of forging national unity and promoting national development.

For Nigeria, and its 100 million people, the question of the nature of the relationship between Apartheid and Zionism is not just an abstract one, or even a distant one. It has increasingly become one of immediate and direct, strategic significance touching on our sovereignty over our major economic resources, our territorial integrity, our national defence and our individual and collective survival.

The following developments in the last eight years should leave no Nigerian in any doubt as to what is at stake:

1. *February 1979*: A giant South African tanker with a 250,000 tons capacity, known as the *Jumbo Pioneer*, and another tanker known as the *Kullu* were arrested in Nigerian territorial waters illegally loading Nigerian crude oil for shipment to South Africa under an arrangement with British Petroleum Co. Ltd. According to the captain of the *Jumbo Pioneer*, the tanker had made six previous trips to Nigerian territorial waters illegally loading 1.5 million tons of oil, which was equivalent to about 6.6% of South Africa's annual consumption. The Nigerian security forces found heavily armed Israelis on the ship. On 1st August, 1979 the Federal Military Government nationalised British Petroleum assets in Nigeria, explaining that "the most effective way to stop Nigerian oil from reaching the enemies of Africans in South Africa was to cut BP off from

Nigeria's crude oil supply". This patriotic and decisive action by the Federal Military Government, led by General Obasanjo, has since been seen only as a means of pressurising the Thatcher government not to recognise the puppet Muzorewa regime in Rhodesia. But actually it has far-reaching strategic significance for Nigerian sovereignty, territorial integrity and national defence, in the longer context of the aggressive plans of Zionism and Apartheid against Africa and Africans. It went beyond the negotiations on Zimbabwe at the Lusaka Summit of August, 1981.

2. *22 September, 1979*: At about 2.00



Racist Botha, Zionist Peres ... two of a kind.

a.m Soviet and American military intelligence satellites recorded a flash and an explosion over the South Atlantic coast of South Africa. Later analyses indicated that this was a nuclear device being tested as part of the joint Israel-South Africa nuclear bomb production programme. Some analyst suspected that it was in fact a neutron bomb, designed only to kill human beings and other living creatures, leaving all material property intact. Israel and the racists of South Africa have a special interest in this type of nuclear bomb because they plan to use it against African and Palestinian townships and other settlements, and therefore want a device which will only kill the human inhabitants and leave the buildings and other properties intact. They want to wipe out the people whose lands they have seized with very little damage to property and to themselves because they inhabit the same country or live close-by.

3. *21 August, 1986*: The world woke up

to find a mysterious disaster killing, officially, 1,200 people (unofficially about 5,000) around Lake Nyos in the Cameroon highlands, only about one hundred kilometres from the Nigerian border. Subsequent investigation indicates that this was not a volcanic eruption, or some natural disaster at all, but an Israel - U.S. test of a neutron bomb, similar to the one tested over the South Atlantic in September 1979 (*The Analyst* Vol.2 no. 4, 1987, p. 18-19). Significantly, after the visit of the Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, to Cameroon, which coincided with the Lake Nyos neutron bomb test, he and President

Paul Biya of the Cameroon entered into a military agreement, which involved the sale of armament worth seventy million dollars to the Cameroons. These armaments include twelve Kfir jet fighters and four Arava short take-off and landing planes.

4. *June 1987*. An announcement was made that the Cameroons government and the Paz Oil Company, an Israeli company in

which the Isreal government has 75% of the shares, are to sign a long term crude oil supply agreement. *The Financial Times* of London, of 26th June, 1987, reported that part of the oil is not for Israeli domestic consumption but is "for sale to an unidentified third country through international trading companies..." This third country is obviously South Africa, which is in fact likely to get all the crude oil, because the Paz Oil Company has not made moves to get formal permission to import Cameroonian crude oil into Israel; and does not seem to have any plans to do so.

This crude oil for South Africa is actually going to be lifted by this Israeli government company within a few hundred kilometres from where Nigerian security forces arrested the *Jumbo Pioneer* and the *Kullu* in February, 1979 and found them under heavily armed Israeli control, loading Nigerian crude oil illegally for South Africa!

Nigeria is located on the coast of the

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Southern Atlantic Ocean where Israel and South Africa tested a nuclear device, most likely a neutron bomb in September 1979! Nigeria has a border of 1,582 kilometres with the Republic of the Cameroons. It was very close to that border that Israel and the U.S. tested a neutron bomb in August 1986!

Now Cameroons has entered into a military and crude oil supply agreement with Israel and indirectly with South Africa. This crude oil is most likely going to come from the area of the estuaries of the Rivers, Rio Del Rey and Akpayate and the Calabar channel, over which Nigeria and Cameroons have been in dispute. This border dispute has generated tension in the area which is now one of the richest sources of oil on the South Atlantic coastline. Clashes occurred between Nigerian and Cameroonian troops on 16th May, 1981 at Ikan and up to now the border dispute on land and on the river channels and estuaries remains unresolved, in spite of several exchanges of high-level visits.

Meanwhile, Cameroonian oil production, most of which comes from, or very close to, these disputed areas remains shrouded in secrecy. The amount exported from here is considerable and for 1986 the World Bank estimated that the export earnings from this oil came up to 1.1 billion dollars. Moreover observers are predicting that since the Cameroonian crude oil is for South Africa, the aircraft and other military equipment that the Cameroons is going to get may be part of a tripartite arrangement, since South Africa is very keen to get African crude oil and has a lot of interests in the Kfir jet fighter plane and may even get South African Jews with Israeli citizenship to service and maintain these planes in the Cameroons.

The strategic implications of all these developments in the last eight years for Nigeria and for all Nigerians are very grave and have many dimensions. As to why the state of Israel has built such a strategic alliance with South Africa, leading its Defence Minister, General Ariel Sharon to declare in 1981 that: "we must expand the field of Israel's strategic and security concerns in the eighties to include countries in the Persian Gulf and Africa", is something which Nigerians

have to face up to for the sake of their own survival and not only because of any brotherly and humane concern for the Africans in South Africa or for the Palestinians.

Why a map showing the range of Israeli F15 fighter bombers includes Nigeria in the outer ring of 4,030 kms from Israeli bases is part and parcel of this larger question: We have seen before our eyes how Israel acting directly and through the USA and other countries has done everything to keep Iran and Iraq tearing each other apart for the last six years. We can therefore see how Israel takes care of its "strategic and security concerns" in the Persian Gulf; and should be able to foresee how it will attempt to do this, together with South Africa, in Africa.

To know the truth about the relationship between Apartheid and Zionism is therefore of crucial importance to all of us in Nigeria, if we want to act as rational human beings and not as religious robots and faithful morons, teleguided to destroy ourselves for other's vested interests and sinister designs.

RACISM

The essence of the relationship between Apartheid and Zionism is that both are colonial-settler ideologies aimed at subjugating and seizing the land of other people. Both claim justification from the Old Testament of the Bible by distorting the notion of the chosen people, the elect of God, into a racist notion. The Boers claim a special destiny as a chosen people. The Zionist Jews also do. Both evoke the biblical notion of this. But the notion of the chosen people in the books of the Old Testament is that of a people having a special relationship with God because of their total submission to him; and therefore they are "chosen" due to the depth of their religious faith in God. The Boers and the Zionists however twist this and claim to be a chosen people because of their race and special racial destiny to civilise part of the world outside Europe.

The racist and colonial-settler basis of Apartheid is well-known in Nigeria. But very few people know how much Zionism is equally a racist and colonial-settler ideology, even among those who have heard of the United Nations General

Assembly Resolution 3379 of 10th November, 1975 which formally defines Zionism as a racist ideology.

Since Israel has no single document called a constitution, its constitution is defined by a number of declarations and basic laws like the Law of Return of 1950 and the Nationality Law of 1952.

Starting with the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel of 14th May, 1948, we can see clearly the racist and colonial-settler basis of Israel, for the declaration proclaims that:

"We members of the People's Council, representatives of the Jewish Community of Eretz Israel (Land of Israel) and of the Zionist movement here assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate over Eretz Israel and by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz Israel to be known as the State of Israel. The State of Israel shall be open for Jewish immigration and for the ingathering of the exiles...."

The Law of Return of July, 1950 entrenches the racist and colonial-settler basis of Israel by providing that every Jew on returning to Israel automatically becomes an Israeli citizen unless he formally renounces this automatic right before an Israeli Official. The other people of Palestine made up almost entirely of Arabs of both christian and muslim faiths do not have this right. In fact, the declaration reduces them to the status of "the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel."

Just as the Boers claim over 80% of the land of South Africa as White South African land and drives the African and other peoples into rural ghettos and deserts called *bantustans*; so the Zionists of Israel claim exclusive Jewish right to all the area they claim is the "land of Israel" which was supposed to belong to them for the last five thousand years.

The first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben Gurion, puts this racist notion bluntly. He stated that the right of a Jew to settle in Palestine is:

"inherent in him from the very fact of his being a Jew, the State does not grant the right of return to the Jews of the diaspora. This right preceded the state,

STRUGGLES IN THE FRONTLINE

its source is to be found in the historic and never-broken connection between the Jewish people and their homeland".

The brutal imposition of the racist state of Israeli in Palestine produced immediately over one million Palestinian Arab refugees of both christian and muslim faiths. In 1947 before the imposition of the State of Israeli by Zionist arms and money, the total population of that area of Palestine under British mandate, that the Zionist took over was 1.8 million. Out of this 0.50 million were Jews, most of whom were very recent immigrants. The Jews constituted about 30% of the total population. The Arabs amounted to 70% of the population. The next year, that is 1948 after the war, the total population in the area, now called Israel, was 1.1 million; out of which Jews constituted 0.87 million or 86% and Arabs reduced to 0.25 million or 13%. Over one million Arabs whose ancestors have actually been living in the area for thousands of years, belonging to various Christian Churches and Islamic sects, were driven and made refugees overnight.

RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

But Zionism is not only racist. It is built on open religious discrimination against anyone who does not believe in Judaism, whatever faith he may have.

According to the Israeli Law of Return, one of the basic laws constituting the Constitution of Israel, a Jew is defined as follows:

"a Jew means a person born to a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion."

Even if your mother is a Jew, but you convert to Christianity you cease to be a Jew under Israeli law. A Judge of the Israeli Supreme Court, Justice Landau, made this very clear in the famous case of Oswald Reifeisen versus Ministry of the Interior of 1958. In his ruling, which was part of the 4 to 1 majority decision declaring a Jew who has converted to Christianity no longer a Jew, and therefore no longer entitled to Israeli citizenship, Justice Landau stated:

"A Jew who cuts himself off from the heritage of the national past of his Jewish people, by changing his religion, accordingly ceases to be a Jew"

This Oswald Reifeisen who was born in

Poland of a Jewish mother and of the Jewish faith had converted to Christianity before he tried to settle in Israel in 1958. The Israeli Supreme Court in a landmark decision declared that he had ceased to be a Jew and therefore had no right to Israeli citizenship under the laws of Israel.

The discrimination against all other religions other than Judaism is entrenched in Israel's basic laws. In the Declaration establishing the State of Israel of 14th May, 1948, it is clearly stated that the State will be run "as envisaged by the Prophets of Israel".

This fact about Zionism and Israel are covered up in their propoganda especially the one directed at Africans who are christians. Many Nigerian catechists who defend Israel, mistake this modern creation of European imperialism and racism with the great figures of the biblical past. They do not know that, even if they had Jewish mothers, they cannot become Israeli citizens because they are christians. How many of the religious bigots confusing people in churches and mosques all over Nigeria know that on the other hand 45% of the Palestinian Arabs are of the christians faith and they suffer from intense religious persecution from the Israeli authorities? How many know that many of the most militant Palestinian revolutionary leaders (the so-called "terrorists") are christian and have been as bitterly hunted down and killed by the Israeli Mossad, Shin Beth and the C.I.A.? All these facts are covered up in the propoganda over Zionism and Israel by both the Zionist themselves, the christian and muslim reactionaries who hate all Palestinian fighters, whether muslim or christian, because they are for national liberation and for an independent and secular Palestinian state in which every citizen shall have the right to practice his faith and belief.

The extent of religious persecution of christians by Israel came out when the Zionist conquered all of Jerusalem in the June 1967 War. The Catholic Community of Bethlehem had to appeal to the Pope to intervene to save them from Israeli persecution. In a cable to the Pope of 3rd September, 1967 they pleaded that: "We catholic refugees, natives of Beth-

lehem, the City of Nativity, are still prevented from returning to our homes and our families.... we call on your Holiness and the conscience of the world to ensure that we may be allowed to return as soon as possible."

In fact one of the facts about Israel which the religious bigots trying to wreck Nigeria hide from ordinary people is the fact that many christian churches are openly opposed to the state of Israel and to Zionism. They, for example, conceal the fact that the Vatican, inspite of its role in the service of imperialism, still refuses to recognise Israel and to have diplomatic relations with it. Other christians churches of the Prostestant and Greek Orthodox variety are also opposed to the racist and the religious chauvinism on which Israel is built.

In fact Palestinian Arab christian leaders like Bishop Najib Qubain of the Arba Evangelical church; Bishop Hilarion Kabbus of the Greek catholic church and Nimal as - Siman of the Latin church, have regularly exposed Israeli persecution of christians.

This persecution involves the Israeli claims over Jerusalem which according to United Nations Resolution of 29th November, 1949 should be an international entity. This issue over the status of the City of Jerusalem is one of the stumbling blocks in the Vatican's relationship with Israel.

"The Holy See remains therefore convinced that the only solution which offers a sufficient guarantee for the protection of Jerusalem and of its holy places is to place that city and its vicinity under an international regime. Only such a regime can properly safeguard the rights of the various religious faiths interested in the safety and free access to the Holy Places."

Four days after that note was circulated the Israel Knessett passed a law on 27th June, 1967 annexing the whole of Jerusalem.

Within about two years the Israeli authorities not only discriminated against all other religions but even allowed the desecration of some of the holy places. In August, 1968, one of the holiests of Islam's Mosques, the Nasjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem was burnt.

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CONCLUSION

There are many other aspects of the relationship between Apartheid and Zionism which we have not touched above. We have not for example traced their origin and history as rabid instruments of western imperialism for the subjugation and exploitation of the people of Africa and the Middle East. At one stage the British were offering the Zionist millionaires a "national home" in various highland areas of Africa, like those of Kenya and Uganda. So the settler-colonialist roots of both are very important.

We have not also touched on the extent to which both remain dependent on imperialism. The vaunted military achievements and so-called agricultural feats of Israel are part of the "master-

race", "chosen people" propaganda intended to frighten others, as every close study of the surrogate Israeli economy and military has shown.

By concentrating on the strategic

agents of destabilisation are putting up to cover the nature of Zionism. These sinister forces, whether under christian or muslim disguise, do not want us to see behind the appearances and realise the

real nature of Zionism and why we have to mobilise all the patriotic and popular democratic forces to support the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, to defeat it, and build an independent, secular, and socialist, Palestinian State for all the people of the area, of all races and of all religious faith and beliefs. This struggle in Palestine against Zionism is organi-



ANC's Tambo, PLO's Arafat... fighting the twin evils.

threat, the linkage between Zionism and Apartheid and the threat this poses against Nigeria; and by focussing on exposing the racist and racial chauvinism of both, it is hoped that readers will begin to see beyond what dubious paid

cally linked to, and is inseparable from struggle against Apartheid, imperialism and capitalism in Africa. They are two crucial elements in the contemporary global struggle for national liberation, socialism and peace. ♦

EARSHOT

WHEN ELEPHANTS FIGHT...

The occasion of the launching of a book with the title of **DIPLOMATIC SOLDIERING** is a most unlikely one for blunt, straight-talking by those at the high table who, in this case, happened to be soldiers. But then, isn't there something contradictory about the title itself? **DIPLOMATIC** and **SOLDIERING** rarely go together, and soldiers — at least the Nigerian variety — are better known as big-time farmers and shipping magnates than as diplomats. But these are rare times when really very rare things do happen.

Anyway, it was this occasion that General Obasanjo chose to deliver his verdict, or more precisely to indict, the Babangida administration on a number of its policies and actions; to wit, the political transition programme, SAP, the blanket ban on politicians, and the

continued detention of former leaders Buhari and Idiagbon. Since then, things have not been the same in ruling circles: feathers have been ruffled, egos have been hurt, and it seems even the smiles and some of the sunshine are beginning to vanish.

The reaction to the General's indictment has been swift, and predictable; with the media doing a hatchet job for the government, those in government themselves (Aikhomu, Alfa, Akhigbe, and even IBB himself) jumping to their own defence and condemning Obasanjo for speaking out; and others like General Gowon (who is now being rehabilitated by this regime), also joining the chorus on the side of the government. And in the days ahead, there will even be more attacks on the former leader, especially from his

professional colleagues and professional praise singers.

Which all means in a word, that all is not well within the ruling class. Certainly, the elephants — sorry, the Generals — are fighting themselves. Not unusual, you might say, and you would be quite right. But the odd or rare thing about this particular fight is that we the grass aren't suffering. And perhaps even stand to gain — at least from the revelations and exposures that each round of the elephant's fight entails. Besides, even though this government has reached a stage with SAP where to stop is just as difficult as to continue, Obasanjo's criticisms may force at least some re-thinking or soul-searching.

So, why all the jitters in some circles about what the General said?

PARTING — SHOT

"Nigeria is such a big country, (that) such incidents as have been reported should not create any alarm". That was the reaction of Vice-Admiral Augustus Aikhomu when pressed by newsmen in Lagos on Saturday, December 12th, 1987 to comment on the nation-wide scandalous conduct of the just-concluded Local Government Elections.

Aikhomu, in a subsequent statement at Dodon Barracks, four days later, further argued: "If you consider that N.E.C. was put in place four months ago to prepare for an election of this magnitude, you will agree with me that the result we have seen despite the constraints and the logistics problems, was commendable". (*New Nigerian*, 16/12/87).

Given the serenity of his Ikoyi offices and residence, Aikhomu may indeed have very little to be alarmed over! But for most Nigerians, the incomparable ineptitude and unbridled malpractices, which accompanied this month's local government elections are much more than sufficient cause for alarm. They are, in fact, cause for boundless fury.

How can anyone — repeat, anyone — buy or even advance the argument that the size of the country, or time, is at the bottom of the December 12, 'show of shame' by the National Electoral Commission (N.E.C.)? After all, was it not the same N.E.C., and the Government which appointed it, which only a few months back scoffed at, and poo-hooped, all those concerned citizens who had warned that the time before the December 12 date was too short for N.E.C. to complete arrangements for a hitch-free polls?

N.E.C. told Nigerians that it had all the time it required to conduct a free and fair election, and Nigerians — ever so patient and trustful — took N.E.C.'s word at its face value and gave it the benefit of doubt. See what N.E.C. has done: betrayed that trust and squandered our goodwill! No *post facto* rationalizations can obliterate this reality!

And yet N.E.C. was warned early enough. Did some of us not speak out against the dangers of involving traditional rulers (a group rabidly opposed to any democratic representation and popular government) in the preparations and actual conduct of these elections? In spite of this, was it not the same N.E.C. which not only involved this parasitic group in these preparations but even went ahead to grant them powers to vet candidates and, in many places, even to be the custodians of the electoral roll and other election materials?

THE MUDDLE OF '87

At any rate, was it not obvious right from the beginning that N.E.C. was set on a course that was bound to lead to a monumental miscarriage of its brief and the subversion of any genuine popular representation at the grassroots level? Take the following facts for instance:

- N.E.C.'s insistence that a prospective candidate must resign his appointment with the public service before being considered eligible was tantamount to discriminating against workers and the poor in favour of the money-bags and their running-dogs.
- N.E.C. was building the foundation for the massive rigging and other malpractices which occurred on December 12th when it failed to ensure that the voters' registers were displayed in all registration centres as required by law, and when also it imposed a compulsory and forfeitable deposit of N25.00 on objections to any name in the register.
- N.E.C. obviously did not intend for poor Nigerians to take part in those elections when it went out of its way to make the cost of contesting for councillorship or chairmanship so prohibitive. The following, for example, was the minimum financial cost for candidacy as required by both the relevant laws and the exigencies on the ground:

CHAIRMAN COUNCILLOR

- | | | |
|--|----------|----------|
| (i) Deposit | N50.00 | N200.00 |
| (ii) L.G. Election Fee | N20.00 | N20.00 |
| (iii) Tax Clearance Cert. | 200.00 | 200.00 |
| (iv) Transportation etc. | 50.00 | 50.00 |
| (v) Photographs/Posters | 1,300.00 | 1,300.00 |
| (vi) Documentation | 15.00 | 15.00 |
| (viii) Cost of paying polling agents to man a minimum of 50 and 1,000 stations for councillorship candidate and Chairmanship candidate respectively at N5.00 per each candidate. | | |

<u>5,000.00</u>	<u>N2,500.00</u>
N6,785.00	N3,135.00

In a country where the minimum wage is only N1,500.00 per annum and where the Per Capita Income is put at about N500.00, this can only mean that N.E.C. wants elections to be a pastime of only the rich.

But, as the nation-wide reports on the conduct of the December polls have already amply demonstrated, the rigging of that election was not done by only some of the candidates and their agents. Many highly-

placed officials of N.E.C. did rig the elections using all sorts of bureaucratic ploys. The conduct of the elections in the Zaria Local Government is a case in point.

There, one Sambo Aliyu submitted his papers as a Chairmanship candidate and was screened and had his name displayed on 28th November along with those of 12 other candidates for the same office. N.E.C. subsequently disqualified five of these candidates, amongst whom was Sambo Aliyu. The grounds given by N.E.C. for disqualifying Sambo were:

- (a) that there was no evidence that he had paid his development levy, and
- (b) that there was no evidence that he had resigned his appointment with the public service.

The fact is that Sambo retired as required by the law before the 12th October deadline given by N.E.C. And as a recently-retired public servant, Sambo's development levies had all these years been deducted from his source, as is the practice in Kaduna State. All these facts were contained in the C.V. Sambo was asked by N.E.C. to submit. Besides, evidence of payment of development levy was an extra demand imposed by N.E.C. in Kaduna State but not covered by the Electoral Law or the Guidelines.

At any rate, Sambo challenged his disqualification in court, and at exactly 5.00 p.m. on Thursday, 10th December, 1987 the court delivered verdict in his favour. At exactly 4.46 p.m. on Friday 11th December (i.e. on the eve of the elections) N.E.C. wrote officially to Sambo telling him he had been allocated number 9. Sambo subsequently informed his supporters of his number. But about three hours later, at exactly 6.38 p.m., Sambo received another letter from N.E.C. saying his number had been changed to 10.

The story of what happened with Sambo Aliyu is typical. It demonstrates, once more, how and why bourgeois elections will always be manipulated by the rich and the powerful, unless and until the people rise up and organise themselves to put an end to this vote-stealing. And if nothing else, the massive turn-out of voters on December 12 indicates that the people of Nigeria are indeed keenly desirous of electing people who will genuinely represent their interests.

What is left is for them to organise NOW against future rigging of the type we have just witnessed. History is on our side!

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