



## END OF YEAR REPORT FOR 2023

### MOVING TO THE NEW SITE

2023 has been an exciting year for all of us at the Institute. It is the first year we have spent in our new office premises. Our new address is 16 Circular Road, GRA, Zaria. In January we began the move from our former rented premises just about a half kilometre from the new site. It was a very hectic time as we did most of the work ourselves, with a little help from hired hands. This involved dismantling the furniture, packing up the several thousand books in the library, and the over 2000 files in the archives and moving them very carefully to the new building and setting everything up. We had ordered custom-made furniture for the new site, and this had been assembled and arranged before the move.

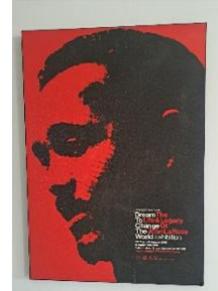
The new building was constructed on land donated to us by Attahiru Usman with the funds we realised from the work we did as Social Studies Sub-Consultants to Allott Nigeria, the main environmental consultants on the ESIA (Environmental and Social Impact Assessment) for the proposed Kano to Maradi Railway line in 2021-2022. The building was designed by us to hopefully meet our requirements for the immediate future and for the long term. It includes a large library, a reading room, an archive room, a digital access room, a large conference room, a kitchen and coffee room, and office space for the librarian, archivist, directors, and others. It was designed to be a self sufficient building with a borehole for water supply and powered by solar energy.

We put up some posters and photographs to give an added touch to the walls, and also to honour our heroes and mentors.

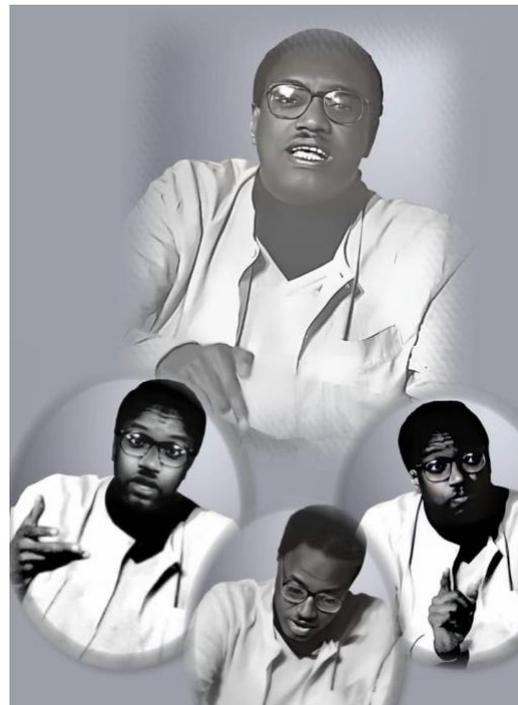
The move took several weeks and was quite exhausting, but when it was finally finished, we were extremely happy with our new home.



*Dr. Segun Osoba, Chairman YBUI*



*John LaRose*



*Mural in Conference Room*

Of course there were a few teething problems, some of which we are still sorting out, and some needed equipment to be obtained before the Institute is fully functional, (particularly in the area of digitization of the library and



*Muhammad Dikko Yusufu*

archives) but we have made progress and will continue to do so in the next year, and likely after that as our needs grow.

Of course we also needed to plant a garden to create a conducive environment for our activities, which was a project that took quite some time, but by the time the rainy season began in May it had started to look lovely.



## RESEARCH PROJECTS –

### Land Grabbing and Poverty in Nigeria

The major research project that we began in 2023 was an outgrowth of our previous research on the Face of Poverty in Nigeria. This was research on Poverty and Land Grabbing in Nigeria. From our previous research, we realized that the issue of land grabbing was a major factor in exacerbating poverty in rural, and also in urban, areas in Nigeria. The more we investigated the issue we saw that it was a huge topic, with documented cases all over the country, and having critical impacts on livelihoods, as well as on other issues like migration, insecurity, community cohesion, family roles, and many others. We developed an ambitious research proposal intended to cover all areas of the country, and urban as well as rural areas. We knew that a project of this magnitude would require an extensive period of field work, as well as considerable background research into government records, media reports, historical reports and other information sources. Although we applied for funding for this work, none has yet come through. We therefore decided to begin the project in a limited geographical area with field research by Dr. Adam Higazi and Abdullahi Eggi,

who had already done work on this topic for us in the Face of Poverty project. They began work in Adamawa, Taraba and Bauchi states in the North east zone of the country with several weeks of field work interviewing in affected communities in each of these areas.

They will then move to Jigawa State, where we already had obtained a large amount of material on land grabbing from Sani Zorro, a journalist and former member of the Federal House of Representatives, who has been fighting on behalf of his constituents against the very numerous instances of land grabbing in Jigawa. We had a zoom meeting with him where he gave us extensive background on the issues, and he also sent us many documents and court records of the cases which the communities had initiated.

We know that this is a very long-term research project, but we feel it is an extremely important one, with enormous impacts on the lives of many Nigerians, and we will continue to implement it in stages to cover many areas of the country. We hope to obtain some funding that will enable us to carry it out with the exhaustiveness it deserves.

Our major projected outcome in this project is to develop a path for legislative action that would protect vulnerable people from the predations of the rich and powerful. The goal is to enable the drafting of a bill that would ensure justice in the system of land appropriation and draw widespread attention to the issue. The outcome of the research will include a report/book, a documentary film and podcasts.

While we have begun implementation of the research on land grabbing, we also began to collect information that would provide the background for other research areas that we intend to pursue. Among these are:

[How carbon credits sourced from forests and savannah resources can help to mitigate insecurity in the North-West zone of Nigeria.](#)

It is well known that the security situation in the states of the North West zone of Nigeria is very dire. Banditry and terror-related violence are widespread and are destroying the

lives and livelihoods of the residents of the area. It is also realized that the predominantly military-led strategy pursued by the Federal and State governments cannot completely eradicate these threats. Among the roots of the banditry and terrorism is the desperate poverty of the people, their lack of viable livelihoods, whether through agricultural activities or pastoralism. Part of the solution for the problem must lie in developing livable and economically beneficial environments that can create the opportunity for the inhabitants to have access to education, health services, and good infrastructure that can enable them to live productive lives. A huge financial investment will be required to enable this to happen.

The forests of this region at present provide the hiding place for the bandits, but the forests also have the potential for creating the financial basis for developing the basis of the mitigation efforts through the sale of carbon credits.

In order to develop this concept further, the Institute commissioned two researchers from the Department of Geography at Ahmadu Bello University to conduct a GIS survey and mapping of the forest resources in the North West zone. This has enabled us to know the total area covered by forests, their coordinates, the nature of the fauna (tree varieties) prevalent in the forests, and the location and nature of the resident communities. This information provides a background from which the potential of carbon credits can be developed. We intend to pursue this research further in the new year.

### Documenting Climate Change

The Savannah-Sahel zone of Nigeria, in the northern region of the country, is an area of extreme climate fragility, and changing climate conditions have severely impacted the livelihoods of the residents of the area. Although climate change is widely referred to, the actual facts of the changing climate in Nigeria and West Africa have not really been documented over time. We have thus attempted to search for empirical evidence of changing weather patterns by sourcing weather information from organisations and

institutions that have a long history of documenting this, such as the Institute for Agricultural Research in Zaria, whose records go back as far as 1924, and other government research institutes in different parts of the country that have kept records. This research is still in the early stages, but we intend to pursue it in the following year.

### Engaging with Tetra Tech for the SPRING project

The U.K. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office are mounting a programme called SPRING, Strengthening Peace and Resilience in Nigeria, which focuses on farmer-herder conflict issues. We investigated the possibility of obtaining funding for our proposals which seem to be covered by the terms of this project through engaging with Tetra-Tech, an international organisation which is putting in a bid for funds through the SPRING programme. We have sent Tetra-Tech a Capacity Statement, outlining our experience in research and consultancy, along with the CVs of those who could participate in the project, based on their skills and areas of expertise. We are waiting to hear the results of the bidding process and whether we would be involved as a local partner for Tetra-Tech.

### LIBRARY

Our library now houses a total of about 7,000 volumes. These include the rich library of late Dr. Yusufu Bala Usman and those of Norma Perchonock. Many of Dr. Usman's books are extremely rare and many, including important government reports and white papers, are not obtainable elsewhere. These provide a wealth of resources for researchers. We also have a number of books from other donors, including 410 from Hadiza Bala Usman, consisting mainly of recent memoirs, novels and best seller, and 26 children's' books from Mariatu. Glenda Pattenden also organized a donation of about 14 books from the estate of Sarah White and from New Beacon books. In addition, she has sent us a donation of multiple copies of children's books, many of which are meant to be donated to area school libraries. These are in addition to the over 600 books and papers

that were donated from the collection of John LaRose in the previous year.

We are finalising arrangements for registering library users so that the library can be open to the public. The registration form and other information has been placed on our website so that those wishing to use the library facilities can register on line.

The library is also in the process of obtaining recommended books for some departments in Ahmadu Bello University. There is a dearth of required reading material in many areas, and we hope to make many of these available for students to read in our library.



*Section of the Library*

## ARCHIVES

### [Yusufu Bala Usman Archive Documents](#)

In 2022, IFRA sponsored the digitization of the political files of Yusuf Bala Usman. This consisted of 90 files which were sorted, filed, digitized, boxed and shelved in the archive. These files constitute 4% of the total Institute's archive collection. These files were digitized by our archivist, Abdullahi Ibrahim assisted by Ibrahim Umar. The Director of IFRA congratulated them for the excellent job they did.

Digitization is a painstaking task. During 2023 a lot has been achieved in the area of organizing the archive. The work achieved during the year will make tracking files easier, because the content of every file is assessed recorded and filed according to the content of each file as against the existence of stray

document in files that do not tally with the file name.

On-going work:

Preliminary work on phase 3 of the YBUI archive digitization commenced in May 2023. This category of the archive files is made up of the undigitized files numbering about 1,970 which constitute 85.3% of the total archive collection. These files constitute the primary files ready for the final stage of digitization. As at 31st December a total of 1,050 files have been sorted, cleared, stretched and filed based on categories.

Projected work in 2024:

It is expected that by the end of this year the remaining 970 files will be sorted, cleared, stretched and filed based on categories thus paving way for the last stage of the digitizing process: Scanning/ snapping or photocopying, labelling and boxing of the archive files.



*Archive Room*

## PUBLICATION

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of September we released to the public copies of our new publication, ***The Historian and Society: Selected Historical Writings of Yusufu Bala Usman***, edited by George Kwanashie and Norma Perchonock. We had been working on this publication for some time, and it was finally finished in time for the memorial anniversary of Bala Usman. Reviews of the book were commissioned to be written by Dr. Samaila Suleiman of Bayero University, Kano and Professor Sani Umar of the University of Abuja. These reviews were published in newspapers and gave the book wide publicity. It was also advertised in social media. The reception of the book has been very positive.

We are selling the books directly from our office, and there has been a high demand for them. Copies of the book have been distributed to libraries and history departments in nearly all Nigerian Universities as well as other institutions, in order to make it available to students and researchers. It is interesting that the book seems to have sparked a demand for other works of YBU, particularly those that we had republished in previous years: *For the Liberation of Nigeria*, *Nigeria Against the IMF*, and *The Manipulation of Religion*. In May of 2022 the Institute had mounted an exhibit of our books at the Nigerian International Book Fair in Lagos to publicise our new publications. The response from that event, although positive from the point of view of comments, was however rather disappointing in terms of the sales that were generated. We are happy that there seems to be a revival of interest in the writings of Yusufu Bala Usman, as they are now more relevant than ever.

## RECONSTITUTION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PANEL ON NIGERIA SINCE INDEPENDENCE RESEARCH PROJECT

The Presidential Panel on Nigeria Since Independence Research Project began in mid-1979. In June 1980, President Shehu Shagari formally constituted it as an independent panel under the Cabinet Office, with many noted historians as members. Its aim was to (a) To identify, collect, and publish primary source materials, particularly written documents and oral accounts, on the History of Nigeria since Independence. (b) To organise and publish a series of studies on important aspects of the history of Nigeria since independence; and(c) To conduct all these with the purpose of making available, as widely as possible, to the people of Nigeria, analyses and interpretations of the nature of their historical experiences in the last twenty years so that historical consciousness which fosters the independence, self-reliance and unity of Nigeria is developed.

The publications that resulted from this exercise were very important, but they are now out of date. Our Institute felt that is time for a revival of the Presidential Panel to bring the studies up to date. We therefore wrote a Concept Note intended for the President of the Federal Republic, with suggestions about how the Project could be revived, in hopes that this proposal can be acted on and move historical studies back into the mainstream from which they had been relegated for many years.

## CONFERENCE IN HONOUR OF Dr. SEGUN OSOBA

On December 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, a Conference was held in Ijebu Ode to honour Dr. Segun Osoba, noted historian and political activist, and also the Chairman of the Yusufu Bala Usman Institute. The Institute was a participating sponsor of the event, which had been organized mainly by former students of Dr. Osoba. The theme of the Conference was History and the Persistent Struggle: Social Change, Nation -Building, and Constitution-Making in Post-Independence Africa. The Conference had about 80 participants, mainly

**AVAILABLE FROM 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**



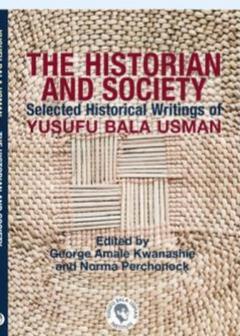
On the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, 2023, The Yusufu Bala Usman Institute will commemorate the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the historian, political activist and public intellectual, Dr. Yusufu Bala Usman, by presenting a new book of his historical writings, entitled *The Historian and Society*.

**The Historian and Society: Selected Historical Writings of Yusufu Bala Usman**

This selection of writings by Yusufu Bala Usman spans the years of his engagement as a leading Nigerian historian, political activist and public intellectual (1972-2005). These documents have shaped the discourse on education to address the needs of Nigerian students and bring them to bear on the specific issues of the time in order to provide solutions to contemporary problems, without regard to institutional disciplinary boundaries. These writings illustrate a number of important themes that shaped Usman's work. These include the nature of political change, how they develop and how they provide through the impact of the struggle of resistance and the creation of new social structures. The nature of the nation and national identity, the role of international relations in the search for the status of post-colonial society, the nature and meaning of political power and the necessity of political participation in the process of change.

Through the examination of these issues, Usman clearly demonstrates his commitment to exposing their underlying nature and promoting the advancement of his nation and narratives which are starting to lay the way of progress for the people of Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

**GEORGE KWANASHIE** is a retired Lecturer in History at Ahmadu Bello University and Osoba State University. He was a colleague of Yusufu Bala Usman and worked with him for many years. He is currently the Director of the Yusufu Bala Usman Institute in Osoba, Nigeria. He was a long time colleague and associate of Yusufu Bala Usman.



Edited by  
**George Amale Kwanashie  
and Norma Perchorick**

**Purchase copies in our office**

At 16 Circular Road, GRA, Zaria, Kaduna State; or order by sending What's App message with name, address and phone number to +234 806 860 9088. Deposit amount in Access Bank, account number 1222460232. When we receive the alert, we will send copy to you either by Taxi or Post Office. Please inform us of your preference.

**Price is N3,500. Paperback.**

historians from tertiary institutions in Nigeria and other African countries. The Director of the Institute presented a paper entitled “Segun Osoba and Bala Usman – Partners in the Struggle for the Liberation of Nigeria”. The paper was based on the correspondence between Osoba and Usman as found in the archives of the Institute, and attempted to shed light on the personal and intellectual relations between the two scholars, and also to highlight the issues of the time that were significant in the struggle of radical activists in Nigeria. In addition to presenting a paper, we also participated in the preparation of a book comprising the articles that Dr. Osoba had published in newspapers and magazines designed to raise awareness of important issues. We proofread all of the articles that had been collected and made comments. The book was printed and distributed at the Conference. It was entitled “Selected Writings in Defence of Human Rights, Social Justice and Equity”. We have received copies of the book and will distribute them to libraries and other research institutions, as well as selling them through our website.

#### REFORESTING ZARIA INITIATIVE

This organization which was sponsored by YBUI was registered as an NGO in March 2023 to continue the work the Institute had begun with the Zaria Afforestation project. During the rainy season tree seedlings were donated to the following: Mobile Police Barracks, 300; Zaria Birni da Kawaye (district head), 610; Sabon Gari District 655; Waje District, 620; Islamic Trust of Nigeria 300; Unity Alliance (Mosques and Churches) 200. We are continuing to raise seedlings of a number of varieties, particularly indigenous trees, to distribute in 2024.

#### COMMEMORATING THE DEATH OF SARAH WHITE

Our Good friend Sarah White, the widow of John La Rose, both of whom founded New Bacon Books, died in January 2022. An exhibit was held at the British Library on October 29<sup>th</sup> to honour her memory. We wrote a tribute to Sarah which was included in the booklet for the exhibition.

#### PENDING PROJECTS FOR 2024:

The Institute is intending to sponsor the [publication of a book on \*Perspectives on Corruption and National Security in Nigeria\*](#), edited by Dr. Yusufu Abdullahi Manu of the Federal University Dutse, Jigawa State. Chapters of the book are currently being submitted and reviewed and hopefully the book will be ready for publication later in the year.

In partnership with Ahmadu Bello University Zaria we are [proposing to develop courses at the Post Graduate Diploma level](#) that we intend to offer for qualified students in some subjects that are not presently offered at the university, such as Security and Strategic Studies, Leadership and Management, and others. We have had discussions with officials of the University and we are in the process of developing content for these courses which will ensure that they reflect the values and perspectives of the YBUI.

#### FINAL THOUGHTS

Looking back on 2023, it has been a very busy year, with a few notable achievements, and many other projects being incubated that we hope to bring to fruition in 2024. We are branching out into new areas of activity in order to stay relevant with the changing times and conditions, while still adhering to our core values. We hope to continue on a path to growth and progress in the future and build an Institution that continues to be a beacon of enlightenment for future generations.

We thank everyone for their support over the past year and wish all a healthy and happy New Year. And for our troubled world, we earnestly hope for peace and justice for all peoples.