



NIGERIA DAY AT THE EXPO 2000.

WHAT HAS NIGERIA GOT TO EXHIBIT ?

Nigeria, richly endowed with natural and human resources remains the most populous black country in the world but merely a shadow of itself and potentials as a result of the massive corruption, injustice and inequity that has been the hallmark of past and present governments. With over 250 different ethnic groups, it is the 6th largest oil exporting country in the world. But it has nothing to show for it more than abject wretchedness for the majority of Nigerians who live below poverty levels in a land of so much wealth. While the prosperity rate of less than 10% of the population continues to grow at an incredible proportion, the poverty level and suffering of the average Nigerian has increased beyond belief. This is simply because of the greed of a handful of powerful elite, the northern oligarchs and the powerful military which seeks to control and dominate every facet of life and resources in Nigeria.

Today, Nigeria like most other third world countries on their national day at the EXPO 2000, attempts to show the world how beautiful and investment-friendly the country is. At the world exposition a picture is painted of a country that has overcome its difficult political problems of military dictatorial regimes which has completely crippled the country since the past 30 years. In general, Nigeria is presented as a country that has totally embraced democracy since the fraudulent elections which brought Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo to power in May 1999. But behind this facade of deception which the west have bought wholesale and even markets on behalf of Nigeria, lies the stark reality of the continued military dominance and connivance with multi national concerns to dictate the affairs of the country. The political events and the executive decisions that have transpired in the last 17 months have simply confirmed the position of sincere and objective critics. That is, the military, aided and propped by multi national companies and western governments cannot really leave the political scene in Nigeria and that all major decisions are made in accordance with their interests as priorities. It is against this background that we feel it expedient on our part to show the other side of this massive propaganda which presents Nigeria as a democratic

country despite the factual contradictions and the massive use of military force to settle purely civilian issues.

When the north was producing groundnuts as a major revenue earner for the country, the revenue distribution was made in a way that the regions kept the bulk of whatever it could produce and pay tax to the federal accounts. The same was true of the western region when it led in the production of cocoa. For the past decades that the Niger-Delta has become the major revenue earner for the country through oil exploration and exportation, this trend has been reversed. The federal government have confiscated all the resources and have devastated the environment beyond repair. The attempt by the people of the Niger-Delta to struggle for their right to self-determination and control of their natural resources has been met with the most brutal force of the federal government both in the past and the present dispensations. The brutal and judicial murder of Ken Saro Wiwa and nine others by Gen. Abacha was only a tip of the iceberg.

In his desperate effort to satisfy and assure the multi national companies that security can be provided for their continued exploitation of the country, Gen. Obasanjo ordered the military invasion of Odi. This bombardment and sacking of the oil-producing town of Odi in the Niger-Delta was done under the pretext of searching for a handful of criminals. This order which he gave just six months on assumption of power led to the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and the complete destruction of Odi. This mindless killings did not stop there as he sought to impress both his political patrons and his western benefactors.

Given the injustice which the Yorubas felt following the detention and killing of the 1993 Presidential election winner; Chief MKO Abiola, coupled with the state sponsored elimination of top Yoruba elites, they were forced to review their continued membership of the Nigerian state. At the end, they decided to remain in Nigeria but were determined to fight for a greater

autonomy from the centre in the form of self determination. It was in the light of this that groups like the O'dua People's Congress (OPC) among others sprang up from the age-old pan-Yoruba group; Egbe Omo Oduduwa. This was for the purpose of protecting Yoruba interest and to fight for the practise of true federalism in Nigeria. As a way forward, a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) was proposed where all the peoples that make up Nigeria could sit and discuss how they interrelate and continue to live together as one in this country.

It is noteworthy here that this progressive social movement which is now at the forefront of the fight for self-determination and control of natural resources is being viewed as a tribal organisation by the western media despite the popularity which it enjoys at the grassroot of both the Yorubas and other minorities. The fact that it has even inspired the formation of similar groups in other parts of the country does not convince them as they sought to classify their activities as ethnic or tribal. This is because, they are opposed to self-determination which is viewed as a threat to their corporate interest of exploitation. Should self-determination takes hold and the resources controlled by the people who own them, these multi nationals will have to negotiate with individual groups which may not be that easy. So the more forcefully unified the country is with a strong central government, the easier it is for exploitation. This explains the diabolical interest and position of the multi nationals.

The position of the OPC has never been taken lightly by the government at the centre which is bent on maintaining the status-quo. This situation has led both sides on a collision course and it explains why the government is bent on persecuting



them out of existence. As the group has become more insistent on their demands, Gen. Obasanjo has become more aggressive in persecuting them. In November, 1999 he gave the scandalous order that anybody who identifies himself as a member of the OPC should be shot on sight if he resists arrest. The police have capitalised on this blanket cheque to kill, maim and detain real and imaginary enemies of the government. This singular order has led to the deaths of hundreds of innocent citizens while uncountable number languishes in various detentions. Last week alone, hundreds of people died in what has been described as ethnic clashes in Lagos. In reality, what we are seeing is the coming to fore of the boiling political tension and reaction to injustice that has been suppressed for so long a time by use of military force. The president have now banned the OPC and similar groups to forestall any real grassroots opposition. This will not help matters as it does not proffer any solution for the problems they highlight.

GERMANY: Be fair and civilise: STOP DEPORTATIONS TO NIGERIA.

Even at the height of Gen. Abacha's dictatorship, Germany never acknowledged the persecution of political activists from Nigeria. Today, it is therefore not surprising that it has continued to defend the government of Gen. Obasanjo despite the worst record of killings in any civilian regime and vigorously deporting Nigerians known to face threat to life in Nigeria.

STOP THE DEPORTATION OF ADEBAYO ALABI: A known activist and member of the OPC and the Campaign for Democracy (CD) has been in Germany since 1998 when he applied for asylum. He has continued the campaign which led to his flight from Nigeria under the auspices of The VOICE Forum and The Caravan - for the rights of refugees and migrants. Despite the obvious evidences of his activities and the threat to his life, the German state is threatening to deport him to Lagos; where only a week ago hundreds of people were killed in his neighbourhood in Nigeria and hundreds more detained, including all the leaders of his group. As we await the decision of the court in Magdeburg following his court hearing last Friday (20/10/00), we ask you all to support his right to stay here and be free from persecution if not outright death in Nigeria.

Write support letters and faxes to:
Verwaltungsgericht Magdeburg . zu Händen
 Richter Wagner. Fax: 0391-6067032

Innenministerium des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt, Halbehrstädter Straße 2, 39112 Magdeburg, Fax: 0391/ 567 55 20



STOP THE DEPORTATION OF AKUBUO A. CHUKWUDI: By far the most recognisable name of refugee activists in The Caravan, he has been a member of the OPC grassroots support base since formation. He applied for asylum seven years ago in Germany and has never ceased to campaign for the rights of refugees and migrants in this country. While highlighting the plight of his folks back home in Nigeria with every given opportunity, he has taken the fight for the rights of refugees to unimaginable level. This has earned him the wrath of the German state which, instead of rewarding him for highlighting this problem is now attempting to deport him for the second time, having failed in 1998.

Write support letters and faxes to:
Verwaltungsgericht Schwerin. Wismarsche
 Straße 323 19055 Schwerin Fax: 0385-5404114

Innenminister des Landes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Dr. Gottfried Timm. Arsenal am Pfaffenteich. Karl Marx – Str. 1. 19055 Schwerin. Fax: 0385-588-2974. 0385-588-2972

The cases of ALABI and AKUBUO are just two examples of the thousands of similar cases which exists in Germany. We call on the federal republic of Germany to put an immediate halt to the deportation attempts of all Nigerians and respect our rights.

We also call on the international human rights community to watch carefully the massive abuse of human rights in Nigeria even under this purported "civilian" government which has not the slightest respect for the rights of Nigerians.

With respect to the above, we demand:

1. Open condemnation of the Obasanjo regime and the security services for the massacre of the inhabitants of Odi town in the Niger Delta and the burning, looting and sacking of the town.
2. The immediate lifting of the ban on the Odua Peoples Congress (OPC) and other similar organisations in pursuit of self recognition and self determination for their Nationalities.
3. The immediate release of Dr Frederick Fasheun (OPC President) and other OPC executives, leaders and members arrested in a witch-hunting and clamp-down exercise in an attempt to kill the noble objectives of the movement.
4. Immediate stop to the use of military force against peaceful demonstrations and protests.
5. The immediate removal of the price-tag on the head of Ganiyu Adams, a leader of the OPC.
6. A stop to the incessant attacks and the persecution of the people of the Niger Delta and a demilitarisation of the region as is evident by the movement of tanks and heavy armoury there in an attempt to silence for ever voices opposed to the pollution of the habitat, the marginalisation, exploitation, extermination and impoverishment of the inhabitants.
7. Acknowledgement of human rights abuses of the Obasanjo regime and the palpably volatile security situation of the country where thousands are displaced, in hiding or seeking refuge in military barracks for fear of life.
8. Protection and recognition of those seeking refuge in Deutschland as a result of persecution and threat to life.
9. Open engagements for the convening of the Sovereign National Conference (SNC), with unrestricted participation of the OPC, MOSOP, MASSOB, APC, Egbesu Boys, Bakassi Boys, other interest groups in the Niger Delta and the country at large, to avoid Nigeria becoming a stateless country.

KARAWANE Für die Rechte der Flüchtlinge und MigrantInnen



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