

5. Supplementary Information

Democratic Action Committee and Nigerian Democratic Review-Collective (DACOM/NDR-C): A Report to National Conference: Calabar, December 1990

(a) *Historical Antecedents: NYAC and APMON*

In July 1973, a number of young Marxist-Leninist activists operating in Lagos met and formed the Nigerian Youth Action Committee (NYAC). The committee brought together young men and women who had been active in the labour and student movements. The birth of NYAC came as a qualitative development in the workers' struggle.

In August 1974, with the admission of new members, some of whom had just returned to Nigeria from Europe and America, NYAC adopted a new Marxist-leninist programme and a new name, the Anti-Poverty Movement of Nigeria (APMON). The new organization was not restricted to Lagos: Branches sprang up in Kaduna, Zaria and Ibadan. There were also branches in the Universities of Lagos and Ibadan, as well as in the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. In September 1974, APMON established a monthly journal, *The People's Cause*. In its maiden edition, *The People's Cause* carried APMON's programme, Anti-Poverty.

APMON was fully involved in the workers' struggle over the Udoji Wages Review. It threw its journal into the struggle for a fair deal for workers and against the rising intolerance and repression of Gowon's regime. By the end of 1974, *The People's Cause* had become very popular among workers, students, youths and intellectuals; branches of APMON had also sprung up in various unions, cities and universities across the country.

Toward the end of 1974, the Udoji Wages Review Commission published its Reports, followed by government's White Paper. Both the Report and the White Paper showed discriminatory dispensations against several categories of workers and salaried professionals, including doctors in state hospitals. Simultaneously there were rumours of impending salary increases for members of the Armed Forces. APMON joined the struggle against both the Udoji awards and the rumoured salary increases for soldiers.

In January, 1975 APMON published a 2-page paper, "In Support of Nigerian Workers". The paper spread through the country like a wild fire. On January 1975, four members of APMON: Gbolaga Akintunde, Charles Akinde, Tony Engurube and Edwin Madunagu were arrested by the Military Police in Lagos, and later transferred to the Special Branch of the Nigerian Police. Their subsequent detention accentuated the wave of popular protests, led by University students.

The Students' Union of the University of Lagos brought a suit in a Lagos High Court against the government demanding the release of Edwin Madunagu, then a Mathematics teacher at the University. The case and the ones brought in connection with the other comrades were handled free-of-charge by Gani Fawehinmi. The cases, as expected, ended with the confirmation of the detention orders.

Edwin Madunagu was released on May 29, 1975, while the other three comrades were released on August 2, following Murtala's coup of July 29.

The reorganization of APMON after the release produced an internal crisis. A faction led by Akintunde, Engurube, Bene and Edwin (at a stage) opted for the formation of a Communist Party; the other faction opposed this. In the end no Communist Party was formed, but APMON remained divided. The second faction withered away, while the first faction continued to expand. It also continued with the

publication of *The People's Cause*. The first faction became the sole inheritor of APMON's tradition when it held a National Congress in Lagos on Christmas Day (1975), and appointed a National Executive Committee, as well as an Editorial Board for *The People's Cause*.

(b) *Revolutionary Movement for the Liberation of Nigeria (REMLON)*

A major organizational leap took place in June 1976. The leading cadres of APMON, including Bene and Edwin merged, with a revolutionary group in a peasant location near Ile-Ife to form REMLON. Edwin resigned his appointment with the University of Lagos and, together with some others moved to the peasant location to take up residence. Bene who was also a teacher at the University of Lagos moved to the University of Calabar. (We may omit the history of REMLON for the 12-month period it existed).

APMON held a National Congress at Ibadan in July 1976. By then it had been firmly established in the leading universities in the country.

At the University of Ibadan, APMON had helped to establish the Patriotic Youth Movement of Nigeria (PYMN) in 1975. The first General Secretary of PYMN and most of the leading cadres of the movement were members of APMON.

(c) *The Calabar Group of Socialists*

After the break-up of REMLON in May 1977, Edwin moved to Calabar. Here he joined Bene in further developing the students group which she had started to organize on arrival there in 1976. In July 1977 Edwin attended the Zaria Conference and presented two papers on behalf of the Calabar Group which had adopted the tentative name of Movement for Progressive Nigeria (MPN).

After the Zaria Conference, the Calabar Group of Socialists was formed: It embraced industrial workers, school teachers, civil servants, university workers, students and teachers. A crisis leading to factionalisation occurred in December 1977, but the "Ali Must Go" uprising of April 1978 brought the factions once again together. The tendency or faction which later transformed to DACOM had on its leading members: Assimlta, Bene, Eddie, etc.

(d) *The Emergence of DACOM/NDR-C:*

Following the abortion of the various attempts made in the Nigerian Left in the 1970s to form an authentic, nationally-based, mass oriented and revolutionary Marxist-leninist organization, elements of the pre-1979 Calabar Group of Socialists who did not associate with any of the Second Republic political parties, organized in Calabar, the Democratic Action Committee (DACOM), to continue the popular-democratic and revolutionary struggle of the working people in Calabar and its environs. Later on, DACOM started expanding beyond Calabar. It then became national. Among the leading cadres were Assimlta, KK, Efanga, Bene, Eddie, etc.

In 1983, DACOM and some Marxist-Leninists outside the organization combined to launch a popular-democratic magazine, *The Nigerian Democratic Review* (NDR) (Executive Publisher: Edwin Madunagu; Editor: Biodun Jeyifo). The Editorial Board of NDR became known as NDR-Collective or NDR-C. In 1986, DACOM and NDR-C fused and became DACOM/NDR-C. The new formation has remained national.

DACOM/NDR-C was conceived and established as a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist formation committed to the mobilization of the working and toiling people of Nigeria for revolutionary struggle for socialism. For this purpose DACOM/NDR-C is committed to working for the creation of a Marxist-leninist vanguard party, led by the Nigerian

working class but mobilizing the peasant masses and all those oppressed by the Nigerian neocolonial capitalist's social order. DACOM/NDR-C believes that the state-form of socialism is nothing but the dictatorship of the proletariat.

DACOM/NDR-C is organized according to the Leninist principle of democratic centralism. Hence, it is fiercely democratic and centralist at the same time – in the best tradition of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin. DACOM/NDR-C believes in discipline and collective leadership, in theory and in practice. DACOM/NDR-C does not belong to any international doctrinal formation. But it maintains and develops international fraternal and solidarity relations. It is in theory and practice neither Stalinist, Trotskyist, Maoist, etc. It was simply Marxist-Leninist, communist and revolutionary.

DACOM/NDR-C stands for revolutionary proletarian internationalism based on equality and mutual respect.

DACOM/NDR-C believes that in the working people's struggle for revolutionary capture of power all forms of struggle, made possible by history, should be used and combined appropriately. Hence DACOM/NDR-C which is not in principle opposed to electoralism, organizes its political activities on two levels: popular-democratic and revolutionary – each level having its own organs and structures. DACOM/NDR-C stands uncompromisingly for women's liberation, popular democracy, human rights, secularity of the state, national equality and revolutionary internationalism.