

READING NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE IN EVERYTHING

On page 5 of THE GUARDIAN of February 15, 2001 is a news item with the heading "Blasts: ACF alleges removal of bombs from North." In it the Assistant Secretary-General of Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) Alhaji Inuwa Abdul-Kadir was reported as claiming that the bombs that exploded at Ikeja were removed from the North for fear of coup by the North.

This is very disturbing because the young people from the age of forty will believe it. Whereas the situation then was that the North was firmly in control of Nigeria when non-Yoruba troops and ammunitions were removed from the West to Lagos in 1967.

It was sequel to several representations by the Western region's elders demand that non-Yoruba troops, which they called occupation army, be moved out. Then the crises leading to war had peaked and Yorubas were very very few in the army, mostly trades men.

The Daily Times, then independent and edited by Henry Kayode Odukamaiya (Acting Editor) of Friday May 26, 1967, carried a front page news with the screaming headline "NON-YORUBA TROOPS QUIT WEST NEXT WEEK" which contained the following Federal Government statement:

"After further consultations with members of the Supreme Military Council, the head of the Federal Military Government and Commander -in-Chief of the Armed Forces has decided to remove all non-Western troops from Ibadan and Abeokuta."

"The movement of troops will commence early next week and should be completed by Wednesday."

"The troops so moved will be used to re-inforce the Lagos Garrison and the contingents at Ilorin and Jebba."

"Arrangements are also being made to assign additional troops to the Lagos Garison from all area commands."

"These troop movements have been ordered in further implementation of previous understanding among members of the Supreme Military Council."

"The Federal Government assures the country that adequate arrangements have been made to ensure the security of Lagos and the other areas involved in these troop movements."

"All citizens are therefore assured of adequate protection and security and are urged to go about their normal business and maintain their friendly co-operation with members of the Armed Forces".

Undoubtedly, with the movements of troops, the military hardwares followed, mostly to Lagos, the Federal Capital in firm control of Northern dominated Federal Government.

On the same page of Daily Times was the statement (a threat) from the fourth Area Command of the Nigerian Army in Benin:

"On May 19 and 22 at 6.45 am two military jet aircraft flew over Benin in a most provocative manner.

"These jet aircraft are believed to be of the fighter or bomber craft and not known to be owned by the Nigeria Air Force nor operated by the Nigerian Airways."

"This command hereby warns the operators of these aircraft to desist from this dangerous display".

"In order to protect the lives and property and people of this region all aircraft involved in future flights of this nature in complete violation of the air space of this region, will be engaged with an effective and sustained"

And then the same page carried news item captioned "ENUGU TALKS"

"Delegates have been arriving in Enugu for today's meeting of the region's consultative assembly. Details of what will be discussed at the meeting were not known yesterday, but observers believe the assembly will take far-reaching decisions on the current Nigerian situation."

I have taken time to reproduce the foregoing to prove Abdul-Kadir wrong and to express my fears that some evil forces within and outside this country are engaged in spreading falsehood, circulating spurious intelligence reports and using religious fronts in creating confusion and disunity which may lead to serious situation of unmanageable proportions if we do not start exposing and resisting.

When the news that M.D. Yussuf had assumed the leadership of Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) rent the air, I was very disturbed. Reflecting on his performances in the Nigeria Police Force, especially when he headed the Special Branch and as Inspector General of Police, I cannot imagine him becoming a regional leader.

He was completely a Nigerian in his duties and in words and actions. We knew each other very well, not person to person, but in our activities. Even when I was popularly called "Curtis Joseph, the communist" he was concerned with my personal qualities which he took pains to know. And I knew many things about him which put him on a high rank in my admiration of him as a very sincere and hard working detribalised Nigerian. When he joined the presidential race, I was prepared to do anything I could to canvass for him though age, health and purse were (and still) against me. Because I knew he would be a Nigerian (not a Northern) president.

Yes, Nigeria has been invaded by many forces. One is religion. I have to warn Nigerians of the evil forces that have taken shapes of religion and causing a lot of havoc in the country. The two leading religions in Nigeria, Christianity and Islam, have been led to pitch camps against each other. One rooted in the North, the other rooted in the South which was not hitherto the situation. There is only one creator as advocated, canvassed and proclaimed by all. One uses Allah (Arabic), the other uses God (English).

We have local names in as many languages and dialects as are in Nigeria. The aboriginal or traditional ones function more quietly, but very effectively in soothsaying, divination or seeking remedy for ailments or cover up for evil deeds or running after wealth.

British Council provided handsome financial inducement for the purpose.

There were areas derisively referred to as Kafir (Pagan). I watched the BORI ritual dancing and other traditional dancing in those "Kafir" areas. The Fulani ceremonies I found fascinating or sometimes brutal. It is interesting that they have dialects. Some far North greetings: opinde, fili jam etc. In Niger and Ilorin area it was, Aku, Aku, repeatedly.

There were concentrations of Southerners of different ethnic groups in the North. They socialised and inter-married, especially in Maiduguri and among Fulanis and Nupes. But I was in many villages that there were no Southerners at all.

I met no hostilities on ethnic and religious bases anywhere. And no one asked me about my religion. I even inaugurated the Mid-West Movement at Nguru in 1956.

If the spirit of nationalism that led us to independence in 1960 has waned and people are retiring to their tents, the geographical bond is still there and recognised internationally. We were able to survive the tragedy of military occupation though at very disastrous costs and opt for a democratic set up.

Unfortunately, we conducted elections at all levels without a constitution. When we finally got it, it was a unitary constitution which we term Federal. How this was conjured out of a so-called constitutional review put in place by General Abdusalami Abubakar nine months rule is very suspicious. But if we rehearse the frantic activities of Britain and America after the sudden death of Abacha during which time they used the Secretaries-General of the Commonwealth and the United Nations and sent powerful delegations each to prevent Abiola from actualising his presidential electorate victory, we can guess correctly the secret behind it.

I have known since the late 1970s that falsifying of history was part of American C.I.A. weapons. I had not thought Britain would be involved until I saw the current copy of Pears Cyclopedia 2001 - 2002 (named General Election Edition) and looked up record on Nigeria for 1997, 1998 and 1999 which reads:

- 1997 Multiparty municipal elections held.
- 1998 Widespread boycott of Legislative elections; Abacha dies in mysterious circumstances; his successor Olusegun (spelt Olesegun) Obasanjo promises to restore civilian rule.
- 1999 Obasanjo's People's Democratic Party (PDP) wins elections and Obasanjo becomes President; stability is threatened by growing ethnic conflict.

If you think this is a mistake in recording that Abubakar succeeded Abacha let us refer to 1966 which reads: Civilian government overthrown in military coup by Major General Aguiyi Ironsi who is then ousted by Colonel Yakubu Gowon. *WHAT OF THE 5 MATTERS ?*

Nigerians accepted the "inappropriate" Abubakar Constitution just to get the military off our backs, and then re-write the constitution or hold a Sovereign National Conference for restructuring the country. But contrived confusions in the National Assembly, ethnic clashes and then the Sharia slot leading to religious violent clashes and ethnic loyalties which has taken toll of .D. Yussuf and many prominent Northerners nationalist spirit.

One of Obasanjo's first head-ache and heart-ache was the volume of our indebtedness to IMF/WORLD BANK. He cried out, knowing fully well that with this sort of unverifiable and recurring debt hanging over our head, we can never develop.

And this was what Babangida introduced into our national system through the Structural Adjustment Programme for which he earned a rare British Knighthood in 1989 when he and his pregnant wife were in London as guest of the Queen, Elizabeth II. You can see how "democratic" the British are in honouring the head of a despotic military government.

Britain is known as a Christian nation with the monarch as the head of the church. The Anglican Communion Church in Nigeria is about the largest in the country. America was once a colony of Britain. The Anglican Church is hardly known there and is not a member of the British Commonwealth. But American sponsored or oriented Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria are most vocal. They have different names and different methods of worship. All of them are not free as they should be in the North.

One Ogundamisi once accused Britain of being behind the creation of the criminal Sharia. Any time it was raised in the BBC, the reply was always "the people want it." The most vocal of BBC personnel is Robin White, who recently interviewed President Obasanjo recently, I always refer to him as INQUISITOR OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN CONFIDENCE GAME.

He was rude in the interview. He even asked Obasanjo if he will not quit after his four year term like Mandela did. It was very suggestive and an indication that his bosses do not want Obasanjo.

Now we are caught in a dangerous religious tangle. If these people really believe in one God and their membership and churches increase daily, and if their prayers are effective, why is our country in so much mess.

And why can't they see in vision that our problem is the West with the IMF/WORLD conditionalities imposed on us? And why no MIRACLE REMEDY?

P. AYO CURTIS JOSEPH

P.O. BOX 1326

YABA, LAGOS

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