

# Opinion

## Projections and imperatives

By Edwin Madunagu

ON Sunday, September 12, 2010, *The Guardian* carried an opinion article, "What happens if the 2011 elections fail?", written by an American intellectual and diplomat, Dr. John Campbell. The writer had served as America's ambassador to Nigeria between 2004 and 2007. He is regarded in America and, I am sure, by American-worshippers in Nigeria, as an "expert" on Africa, and is currently a Senior Fellow for Africa Policy Studies at the United States Council on Foreign Relations. The article in question had appeared in Foreign Affairs before its appearance in *The Guardian*, and a book by Campbell, *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*, is scheduled to be published next month. I should, perhaps, add that Campbell is not the only establishment intellectual in America to view our country with pessimism.

As an intellectual, a senior diplomat, and a senior policy analyst for the American government, Campbell tried to ensure that the core projections in his article, "What happens if the 2011 elections fail?", followed his perspectives and main premises. But then there are some of his projections that can stand on premises and perspectives other than his. Put more simply, one can endorse some (not all) of Campbell's projections without necessarily "buying" his premises and perspectives. A good illustration is what Campbell said in the opening paragraph of his article: "The end of a power-sharing arrangement between the Muslim North and the Christian South, as now seems likely, could lead to post-election sectarian violence, paralysis of the executive branch, and even a coup".

Proceeding from different perspectives and premises, other than the nonsensical "Muslim North", "Christian South", etc, one can easily foresee "post-election sectarian violence, paralysis of the executive branch, and even a coup". It is because of this feature of Campbell's article, among other features, that one must resist the temptation of dismissing the article, or simply abusing the

author, however provoked one is. I would, of course, be very surprised if any Nigerian leftist, or even a genuine patriot, dismisses the article. You may abuse the man, if that does you any good, but that should be after you have fully appreciated what he said: the perspectives, the premises, the projections and predictions, and above all, the fundamental interests and concerns informing the entire exercise. So, let us attempt a systematic appreciation.

Side by side with Campbell's opening projection, which we have already quoted, we may make a less extreme, but more ideological, projection: Whichever way the current "election crisis" goes, however it is "resolved", if Nigeria survives, the minimum result we would have is a re-organisation of the Nigerian state, a re-organisation that may not mean anything to establish politicians and mainstream elites but would mean a lot to Nigeria's radical patriots and leftists. I do not mean a transformation of the basics, but a re-organisation of the capitalist state which leaves both the capitalist political economy and the basic character of the state intact. The conditions for a transformation do not yet exist, and none of the main forces now in combat can do it. But objective conditions for organised radical and popular intervention in the political process exist even now, and are bound to deepen.

We have already dismissed Campbell's notions of "Muslim North" and "Christian South" as nonsensical. The man should be told, as politely as possible, that Nigeria is much more complex than that, and that it is scandalous to associate such a public statement with him. But then, this particular scandalous, but false, view of Nigeria, like many others, is encouraged by Nigeria's ruling classes, ruling blocs and ruling politicians. Let me explain. In the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the dominant ruling class party, all the sides in the "zoning debate" - the supporters, the opponents, and the fence-sitters - agree that there is need for "balancing" the presidency at all times. By this is meant, for

instance, that if the President is a Southerner and a Christian, then the Vice President should be a Muslim and a Northerner. But if the President is a Southerner and a Muslim (as in the case of Moshhood Abiola in the June 12, 1993 election), the Vice-President cannot be a Northerner and a Christian, as the "balancing logic" would suggest. The Vice-President would be a Northerner and (still) a Muslim (as in the case of June 12, 1993).

The explanation is that although the notions of "Muslim North" and "Christian South" are nonsensical the core of the Northern power bloc is Muslim. What is critical in this analysis is that "the North" is different from the "Northern power bloc" and the latter is different from "the core of the Northern power bloc". But Campbell, deliberately or ignorantly, equates the third with the first. The situation is however different in the South-for historical reasons: the core of the power bloc in the South is Christian. But if the South is resolved into its zonal components, then similar analysis can be made for the Southsouth and the Southeast, but not the Southwest. In fact, the Southwest explains why the type of analysis we have made for the North cannot be made for the South. But Campbell, again ignorantly or deliberately, went on with his "Muslim North" and "Christian South".

The import of all I have tried to explain is that it is not sufficient to dismiss and abuse. It is important to understand. The rule, always, is: "Weep not, laugh not, but understand". It is by understanding what others, especially your opponents, are saying and doing and why they are saying and doing them, that you can design effective and appropriate responses. In the case under discussion the question is why John Campbell, with all his education, exposure and experience, would continue to commit the type of scandalous errors he committed in his article.

Even without going into further analysis, we can see that if the main contradiction in Nigeria can be presented as the one between

the "Muslim North" and the "Christian South" then analysing the Nigerian crisis will not only be effortless but will fit neatly into imperialist perspective and format. Imperialist intellectuals love to present the world in a single page of graphs and charts, and "compel" every region or country on the planet Earth to fit into that single page. The page is then presented to their political and business employers for action. So easy, is it not? Yes, but that is why these intellectuals and their employers are ceaselessly frustrated. The "experts" are sacked, new ones take their place, and the cycle is repeated, but no deeper or clearer understanding of the world they seek to dominate forever.

Campbell explicitly stated in his article what America's core interests, core concerns and core dilemmas are in Nigeria at the moment, and why a "peaceful Nigeria" is desirable to America. I cite two passages. In the first paragraph he said that if the 2011 elections lead to chaos, then "Washington may no longer be able to count on Nigerian partnership in addressing African regional and security issues such as the conflicts in Darfur, Southern Sudan, and Somalia". And in the last paragraph of the third column, he said: "if Delta militants sense that Washington is opposed to a Jonathan candidacy, and should he withdraw or lose, they might escalate their attacks on US-owned oil facilities, thereby cutting off production. If, on the other hand, Northern leaders see the United States as supporting Jonathan, they are likely to become even more estranged from the federal government. The North would likely see support of Jonathan as part of the perceived U.S. war on Islam". These were Campbell's words.

Now, Nigerian politicians and the educated elites cannot quarrel with Dr. John Campbell, a diplomat and establishment intellectual, for stating what the interests of the Obama administration, his employer, are. In any case, it makes no sense (or, does it?) to love Obama so much and yet hate his very valuable instinctual adviser.

*To be continued next Thursday.*

# Opinion

## Projections and imperatives (2)

By Edwin Madunagu

WE have been looking at the article, *What happens if the 2011 elections fail?* authored by Dr. John Campbell, a former American Ambassador to Nigeria, and carried by *The Guardian* of Sunday, September 12, 2010. In the first part of my appreciation published last Thursday, October 28, 2010, I dismissed Campbell's concept of "Muslim North" and "Christian South", in relation to Nigerian politics, as nonsensical. But I did not dismiss some of his projections into Nigeria's future. I am continuing with my appreciation today, and I shall be focusing on three points: Campbell's view of the zoning "palavar"; the flashpoints of violence; and the Obama administration's dilemmas and possible responses to the Nigerian crisis.

I think I should state, or rather re-state, that I do not regard John Campbell, a current *Senior Fellow for Africa Policy Studies* in American's *Council on Foreign Relations*, and thus an American "expert" on Africa and an establishment intellectual, as frivolous or stupid. He was also not "speaking for himself." I hold that Campbell is brilliant in his own sphere and that he was reflecting the thinking in the highest echelon of the Obama administration. My assessment stands even if, today, the man himself is made to recant - for political and diplomatic reasons - and pleads that he had been "misquoted." It is important to bear in mind that in a certain, non-trivial, sense America is an "insider" in what has been happening in Nigeria since the death of General Sani Abacha in June 1998.

I shall reconstruct what Campbell said on zoning into a two-stage narrative, and in each stage select the critical statements. *State one:* "In 1999, active and retired military officers, along with a few civilian allies, oversaw the transition from military to civilian rule. They established the non-ideological People's Democratic Party (PDP), selected Olusegun Obasanjo, a Christian from the South, as the presidential candidate; and placed him in office with a Northern Muslim Vice President. An

elite consensus formed around an unwritten power-sharing agreement, which dictates that presidential candidates would henceforth alternate between the Christian South and Muslim North... With the advantages of presidential incumbency, and access to unlimited oil money, Obasanjo secured elite support for a second presidential term in 2003. Northerners reluctantly acquiesced to rotation cycle of two terms rather than the one they had foreseen in 1999."

*Stage Two:* "Once re-elected, however, Obasanjo reneged on his two-term promise by attempting to run again in 2007. This bid was defeated due to public anger and Northern leaders' insistence on power sharing... Yar'Adua's subsequent death and Jonathan's presidency upended the power-sharing agreement. Unlike in every previous election since 1999 no elite consensus exists for the 2011 polls, nor is there an Obasanjo-like figure strong enough to impose one... Many in the North believe it is still their turn for the Presidency, but the Northern power brokers do not agree on who should be their presidential candidate."

If we purge these statements of elements that I have described as nonsensical, there is really nothing that Campbell has said or "revealed" that we, in Nigeria, should regard as new or strange. What is important, in the context of the present discussion, is that this American diplomat, intellectual, and "official expert" in *Africa Policy Studies* has said so. I refer to several entries in this column since June 1999. In particular, I refer to *The agreement that produced Obasanjo* (March 15, 2001); *What really happened in 1998?* (October 24, 2002); and *Towards the 2011 elections* (May 13 and 20, 2011).

Pulling all these materials together, it appears to me that four periods are critical: (1998-1999), (2002-2003), (2006-2007) and the present period which started with the death of President Yar'Adua on May 2010. The narrative on zoning can then be reconstructed like this: It would appear that agreement was reached in the first period to rotate the presidency between the North and the South. But the agreement was not

written, neither was there a consensus as to how long the presidency could reside in one "hemisphere" before it is moved - one presidential term of four years or two presidential terms of eight years. In the second period, Obasanjo forced a consensus on two terms. In the third period Obasanjo attempted to shift agreement to three terms, but the attempt failed. The agreement on two terms was thereby re-affirmed. In the current period the agreement has again run into crisis, as happened in the second and third periods. But no new consensus has yet been found.

On the fear of post-election violence which, if serious and widespread, could pose "special challenges for Washington", Campbell identified three flashpoints, namely: "ethnic and religious violence in the Middle Belt, Muslim extremism in the North, and the ongoing insurrection in the oil-rich Niger Delta." He wrote before the Independence Day bomb attacks in Abuja and could possibly not have anticipated it. He also did not mention the armed robbery and kidnapping phenomenon which competing and disaffected politicians and disenfranchised youths are increasingly feeding into. Now, every patriotic Nigerian must be genuinely apprehensive, Campbell or no Campbell. But we have seen from the first part of this article where American administration's interests lie. To put it mildly, they are different from ours.

Finally, Campbell asked himself the question: "Given these realities, what can the Obama administration do?" He split his answer into two, namely, what the Obama administration cannot do and what it can, and should do. On the first, Campbell said that the administration "cannot reform the electoral commission, nor can it change Nigeria's corrupt political economy, which is fundamental to vote-rigging efforts." And the administration cannot "intervene behind the scenes" to forestall a post-election crisis "as some Nigerians are privately urging the administration to do." I urge readers to take note of Campbell's words which I have taken the liberty to underscore.

On what the administration can, and

should do, Campbell suggested a list of measures: establishing and publicising the "benchmarks it would use to measure improvement in the electoral process; focusing election-related assistance on select states where polling in recent elections has been better than elsewhere"; to be "scrupulously neutral on presidential candidates while reiterating its call for free, fair and credible elections; and "supporting such civil-society organisations as the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) which actively works to strengthen the rule of law in Nigeria." We know what the Obama government is already doing in these areas. But, as we also know, it is doing all this in Nigeria not for the love of Nigeria, but for the protection of its immediate and medium-term interests as partially listed in Campbell's article.

Suppose, in spite of these efforts, there is still a "bloody crisis that splits the country along regional and religious lines?" Campbell asked himself in his article. He was pessimistic: "In that event, neither the Obama administration nor any other foreign government or international organisation will have much leverage." The only remaining option is for the Obama administration and other friends of Nigeria to "seek to mitigate the humanitarian consequences and prevent the resulting instability from spreading to other parts of the continent."

I would like to conclude this two-part appreciation of Dr. John Campbell's article by drawing attention to his words in the preceding paragraph. And this is an important lesson for all Nigerians and all ideological-political currents: the *right*, the *centre* and the *left*. The lesson is this: There is a limit to what the "international community", led by America, can do, or be willing to do in a really serious national crisis, whatever its cause. Remember - Liberia, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Beyond Campbell, however, it is also true that there is a limit to what the "international community" can do if Nigeria moves away, radically and decisively, but also ideologically and in terms of system of governance, from the current *lumpen capitalist political economy of state robbery*.

• To be continued next Thursday.

11/11/2010

# Projections and imperatives (3)

By Edwin Madunagu

MALLAM Adamu Ciroma and Chief Edwin Clark are Nigerian elder statesmen. For the avoidance of doubt, I shall define a Nigerian statesman (and not a statesman in general) as a Nigerian male who has been in national public life, occupying senior government or state positions, for a long time. I use the term "government or state," rather than "political," quite deliberately: A Nigerian statesman is, in general, not an Opposition sympathiser. The few exceptions are those Opposition sympathisers who, in spite of the Nigerian state, have become national institutions. A Nigerian statesman is also by definition not a youngman. Hence the qualification "elder" is, in fact, unnecessary. But I am sticking to the popular usage.

I have known Adamu Ciroma and Edwin Clark for a long time; the former since mid-1977 or thereabout, and the latter since early 1975. I encountered Chief Clark when he was the Federal Commissioner of Information and chief publicist in General Yakubu Gowon's military administration and I was a detainee of that government. I encountered Adamu Ciroma when he was the Governor of the Central Bank and I was involved in politics and agitation with workers of the apex bank. I remember the two statesmen as ideological conservatives. But Clark's conservatism hit the Socialist Movement more sharply and directly than that of Adamu Ciroma. Today, 35 years later, I don't think my evaluations require any essential revisions.

On national political questions Adamu Ciroma and Edwin Clark used to be on the same side, or were expected to be on the same side, until the current upsurge of ethnic nationalism in Nigeria. In spite of their present bitter conflict, currently being fought out in the print media, and perhaps, by some other means, Ciroma and Adamu will be classified as *conservative* and *rightist* when the "Nigerian question" is posed as contradictions between the interests of the working and toiling people against those of the ruling classes and power blocs.

My *first proposition* here is that the "Nigerian question" can be posed powerfully, popularly and credibly in those terms in spite of the rise of ethnic and micro-ethnic nationalism. In fact, I cannot readily see in what other terms the "Nigerian question" can be posed even if you give equal weight to the class question and the ethnic question.

My *second proposition* which is the core of this article is that the type of political antagonism embodied, symbolised and expressed in the open debate between Ciroma and Clark portends grave danger to the nation and, in particular, to the toiling and working people and the poor masses. My current fear is that like during the (1966-1970) crisis and civil war, the common people, most of whom are unemployed or half-employed, together with leaders of civil and popular-democratic organisations, radical patriots, and even "comrades," "socialists" and "Marxists" and the new phenomena - ethnic militias, armed robbers and kidnappers - will line up behind their various "war leaders." That eventuality must be prevented, or neutralised. That is the *imperative*.

The *Vanguard* newspaper of Friday, October 22, 2010 carried the front page headline: "North 'll deploy legal means to stop Jonathan - Ciroma," with a rider, "Accuses Obasanjo of polarising the country." The opening paragraph of the report reads: "Erstwhile Minister of Finance and leader of the Northern Political Leaders Forum, Mallam Adamu Ciroma, said Wednesday, that the North would use every legal and democratic means to scuttle the 2011 presidential ambition of the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan." He spoke, according to the report, in an interview with the Hausa Service of Voice of America (VOA).

Ciroma's argument was that Jonathan's ambition was "dishonourable" because it went against the "agreement for power sharing between the North and the South." Ciroma accused former President Olusegun Obasanjo of encouraging President Jonathan to enter the 2011 presidential race. The president's ambition, under Obasanjo's encouragement, according to Ciroma, was

polarising the country and threatening the "peace and unity" which Obasanjo fought for in the Civil War. The elder statesman was reported to have said that he tried in vain to persuade Obasanjo to tell Jonathan to drop his ambition.

So far so good, as the saying goes. There is nothing in this segment of Ciroma's interview that he or someone else had not said before then. But, then, hear this: "If President Jonathan manipulates the party primaries and eventually emerges as PDP presidential candidate in 2011, the North would deploy other options, including a consensus candidate, to command popular support." In the context of this statement that "consensus candidate," if Jonathan "manipulates" the PDP primaries, could come only from outside PDP. The battle would then be, in Ciroma's projection, between the North and Jonathan. This projection is disturbing, Clark's description of Ciroma as a "political lightweight" notwithstanding.

But if Adamu Ciroma's statement was disturbing, that of Edwin Clark which was reported a few days later, was doubly so. Both statements were strong, but were strong in different ways. While Ciroma's statement was strong in stating his views on the North-South question, Clark's statement was strong on the abuse of Ciroma. It is granted that every strong political statement against an opponent, in addition to being "offensive," invariably sounds insulting or abusive. This is, perhaps, inevitable especially if the statement is directed against a "big" man or woman. But this is a different "kettle of fish" from a statement intended, primarily, not to state a position, but to abuse.

Chief Edwin Clark's statement titled: "Adamu Ciroma, your utterances will lead to the disintegration of Nigeria," published as a newspaper advert and also reported in several Nigerian newspapers between October 24 and 25, 2010, is of the latter category. I am relying on *The Nation* of Monday October 25, 2010 for both the advert and the report. I shall, in the near future, look at this phenomenon of abuse in Nigerian politics

and political commentary. But for now I shall try to purge Edwin Clark's statement of abuse and extract what may be regarded as his position on the North-South debate which the ruling classes and power blocs - of which both he and Ciroma are prominent members - have imposed on the nation.

There are two passages *One*: "My dear friend, I appeal to you to place Nigeria first and do not promote your personal interest, at the expense of a strong, united country in which all sections or political zones are treated equally." *Two*: "What decent and true patriotic Nigerians are asking for is a single term of four years for Jonathan in order to complete the eight-year term of the joint ticket of the late President Umaru Yar'Adua and himself."

On Sunday, October 24, 2010, *The Nation* carried a full-page advert titled: *Presidential Election and Zoning: the position of Ohanaeze Ndigbo*. It was signed by the organisation's President-General, Ambassador Raph Uwechue. The fourth paragraph of the four-paragraph statement says, in part: "Ohanaeze Ndigbo firmly believes in the reality and absolute equality of the six zones and holds the view that the topmost executive office in the land - Prime Minister or President, which has eluded the two geopolitical zones of Southsouth and Southeast since the birth of our nation half a century ago, should now go to them in turn in unbroken succession as a matter of national priority, before any other zone can justly claim the right to a second or even third term."

On the basis of this position the organisation pitched its camp with Dr. Jonathan in the 2011 presidential contest, and called on its compatriots to do the same. This quoted paragraph appears to agree, in part, and in general terms, with my extracts from Clark's statement. But the apparent "agreement" ends in general terms. If they step into any logical detail, if they go into the history of zoning and the current zoning debate, or project the actual geopolitical movement of the presidency, say in the next 10 years, the "agreement" will collapse or become unsustainable.

• To be concluded next Thursday, hopefully.

# Opinion

## Projections and imperatives (4)

By Edwin Madunaga

THE *Guardian* newspaper published my two-part appreciation of Professor Eskor Toyo's lecture, *Project Nigeria: The journey so far*, on October 14 and 21, 2010. Towards the end of the second part of that article, titled: *Eskor Toyo on self rule*, I said: "My political conclusion is also straightforward: Every Nigerian is free to take any position or make any demands concerning the future of Nigeria. In particular, any Nigerian, or any Nigerian group, can campaign or agitate for any type of geopolitical restructuring: true and fiscal federalism, regionalism, or even separation. Radical patriots and socialists are also free to put their programmes and manifestoes before the nation and fight for them. But whatever any group or individual may demand should proceed from historical facts, not a falsification of history. No one should distort history simply to be able to proceed in a straight line to his or her current political preferences."

One of such historical facts is that the struggle for Nigeria's independence was a pan-Nigeria struggle to free the whole of colonial Nigeria from British occupation and rule. Our struggle was "not a struggle to free the Hausa-Fulani, or Yoruba or Igbo, or Ibibio, or Ijaw, or Kanuri, or Efik, or Tiv, etc, but the struggle of Nigerian peoples for the freedom of Nigeria." Put differently, the anti-colonial struggle in Nigeria was not a struggle to recover the pre-colonial states and sovereignties which the British conquered, dismantled and integrated. It was a struggle to make Nigeria - which the British created - an independent and sovereign country. Good or bad, this historical fact is irreversible.

That is a summary of my position on this question in the article of October 14 and 21, 2010. But on Wednesday, October 27, 2010, *The Guardian* carried a letter - to the editor sent in by a reader, Leye Ige. Titled *Eskor Toyo*

*on self-rule*, it reads: "Does the history of those civilizations/communities end with British occupation? So, in order to arrive at this 'Troika' version of Nigeria, all communities must accept their defeat by Britain? What I can conclude from your summary is simply the denial of the National Question. And I am sure you are aware of the debate between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg on this."

Now, Leye Ige has asked two questions, and made a comment. If I take the comment as a question then, I have three questions before me. It is important I answer them, one by one, because they relate to the National Question which is very important to our country at this time. It is also important to me intellectually and politically. To the first question I will answer categorically: No, the history of pre-Nigeria civilizations and communities did not end with British occupation. I would however, add that these civilizations and communities have been radically transformed, together with their relationships with other civilizations and communities within the new entity called Nigeria.

We still have, for instance, traditional rulers as we had before the British came. But they are no longer almighty in their power, or supreme in their authority. Everyone knows who is now the master: the once all-powerful traditional rulers, or the Nigerian state. If a Nigerian community declares war on another community today we know what would happen, or is expected to happen. Having said this, I take it that Ige was asking for clarification. And I have provided it. I would however, request that Ige should try not to confuse a request for clarification, or for implication, with a refutation. I did not say what his question would have led readers to believe I said.

I would, most humbly, commend the two-part article, and, of course, Eskor Toyo's lecture, to Ige for a second reading. I would, in addition, ask him to note the caveat with which I started the second part. It is intellec-

tually unacceptable to attribute to me what I have not said or to implicitly distort what I have said in order to be able to use it to continue a different battle to which you are *ab initio* committed. I am not talking now of "political acceptability," which is a different thing altogether. Politics, especially Nigerian politics, admits of, and thrives on, distortion. I know it, and I am not afraid of it, having suffered it continuously for a very long time.

Now, to Leye Ige's second question: "So, in order to arrive at this 'Troika' version of Nigeria, all communities must accept their defeat by Britain?" There are, in fact, two questions in this single question: the 'troika' question and the question on accepting defeat. Again, I take it that Ige is asking for clarification or implication, not making a refutation. We can guess what Ige means by the allusion to "Troika." I think by this meant Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo. If my guess is right, then my answer is straightforward: The "Troika" nation has never been acceptable. The 50-year attempt to reform this unacceptable structure has not been too successful, as Ige and I can see. And the reasons for this chronic failure and frustration have to do with the capitalist and anti-popular perspective, principles and interests that have informed and guided the actions of Nigerian rulers since "independence."

As for the second part of Ige's second question, the issue of "communities accepting their defeat," I can only say that all the communities in Nigeria - including the "Troika" - have since rejected that defeat, *but in the context of Nigeria*. But if anyone, or any group, now wishes, for any reasons whatsoever, to reject or reverse the original defeats of the communities by Britain (since the latter destroyed pre-Nigeria sovereignties one by one), let him or her "get on with the job," as American would say. And those who believe that it is better to proceed, not only historically, but also dialectically (in light of our

long association and integration) and fight for through-going democratization and elimination of internal colonialism and capitalist exploitation should also "get on with the job."

We now come to Ige's third and last question, the one on Rosa Luxemburg, Vladimir Lenin and the National Question. Yes, I am familiar with the writings and actions of Rosa Luxemburg on the "self-determination" of nations. I am also familiar with the writings and deeds of Lenin on that question. Finally, I am familiar with the debate between the two giants of Marxist Theory and Socialist Revolution. I am not denying, and cannot be denying, the National Question. The reality (and complexity) of the National Question in Nigeria has been a regular theme of this column since its inception early in 1985, that is, more than 25 years ago. Ironically, one "comrade" from the Northern part of the country once said that I must be a "tribalist" since I was obsessed, so to say, with the National Question.

Recognising the National Question is simple enough. But articulating a practical response to it at a particular stage of historical development is always a very difficult problem. It is more so when you are articulating a solution in the context of a programme of socialist revolution and workers' power. That was the problem Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels faced - especially in relation to Poland and Ireland. It was the problem Lenin and Luxemburg faced, especially in relation to (the same) Poland and the non-Russian groups in the old Russian Empire. But, neither Marx, nor Engels, nor Lenin, nor Luxemburg, ever denied the National Question. On account of the complexity of the problem each of them had to modify his or her views a couple of times. The problem of the time, the debate all the time, was the resolution of the National Question, not just morally, but in the context of socialist revolution and workers' power. I shall return to this subject.

• *Concluded.*