

The Structural Adjustment Programme and the Transition to Civil Rule in Nigeria (1986-1993)

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Résumé: L'auteur essaye de démontrer le lien organique entre les Programmes de transition économique (PTE) et le Programme de transition politique (PTP) dans le cadre du processus de désengagement sous Babangida au Nigeria. Le PTP était un mécanisme destiné à faire diversion pour la mise en oeuvre du PTE qui était envisagé dans le Programme d'ajustement structurel (PAS). La prolongation du PTP reflétait la capacité de Babangida d'utiliser l'instrumentalité du SAP pour coopter et élargir la classe économiquement mais aussi politiquement dominante. La résistance de la population au PTP fût à l'origine une conséquence de la crise engendrée par le PTE. La résistance au PTE a entraîné la création de structures dont les travailleurs se servent pour défier l'Etat. Cependant, l'opportunisme de la classe politique et les querelles internes parmi les forces démocratiques a en effet renversé la tendance et affaibli les structures de la résistance.

Introduction

The current Nigerian economic crisis has its origins in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Jumbo loan taken in 1978 by the Obasanjo regime. The civilian government of Shehu Shagari inherited this and was unable to control its squandermania and coupled with the world oil recession, the Economic stabilization Act was introduced or the popular 'austerity measures' (Abba *et al.* 1985; Usman 1986; Bangura 1986). The manner the measures were discriminatorily implemented and their differential impact on varying social classes created social tension and strife. The toiling people looked up to the 1983 elections for changes in leadership. However this was massively rigged (Adamolekun 1985; Falola and Ihonvbere 1985; Joseph 1987; Ayeni and Soremekun 1988). Indeed as Forrest argues (1986:22), the loss of economic control was the prime reason for the downfall of the regime. Heavy rigging in the elections contributed to its unpopularity (Forrest 1986).

When the dominant fraction of the bourgeoisie realised that the interest of the bourgeoisie in general was endangered (Othman 1984), they decided to sponsor a military coup in December 1983. Indeed, the coup was greeted by an euphoria because of the momentary relief it granted. Soon after the Buhari Junta arrived, it promulgated draconian decrees and established all sorts of Tribunals to govern the society and deal with the civilian politicians

and the entire civil society. The Junta's attitude to economic recovery was harsh and anti-people. The people were not taken into debt repayment (Forrest 1986; Olukoshi and AbdulRaheem 1985:97; Dike 1990). A reign of terror was unleashed on the people, their social conditions did not improve and yet there was no time-table of return of power to civilians.

It was in the context of this growing disenchantment, low morale and militarization that the Babangida military junta took over power in August 1985. The Babangida coup is popularly referred to as the 'IMF coup'. This is because the coup settled the jinx over whether Nigeria should take the IMF loan, the coup was generally welcomed by the international community and financial speculators, above all the coup introduced the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), a programme designed by the IMF/World Bank which indeed has similar or worse effects and consequences for Nigerians. The Babangida junta knew this. But to defuse tension and sway the people the junta opened up the IMF loan question to an open debate by the public. And overwhelmingly the Nigerian people rejected the loan and asked for a popular and autochthonous strategy of economic development. This strategy the government claimed is found in a 'Home Grown' SAP (Ayagi 1990:97-98). The regime put in motion the economic package in light of severe external pressures, but to contain domestic internal disenchantment, the government had to put in place a Transition Programme with two facets, the political which will usher in a Transition to civil rule i.e. the Political Transition Programme (PTP) and the economic programme through a vigorous implementation of SAP which will mark the Economic Transition Programme (ETP).

At the outset therefore, it could be discerned that the Nigerian military government had a conception of the kind of economic and political programmes it wanted to implement and indeed institutionalize. And the attitude towards the two programmes were contradictory. Although the main objective was to fulfil and meet the interest of foreign creditors, however the conditions imposed, both economic and political have produced contradictory results. While economic liberalization has led to more opening up and worsening conditions of the toiling people and accumulation by both the external and internal fractions of the bourgeoisie, political reforms have led not to a complementary liberalization but authoritarianism and repression. This is for two reasons: first the political arena needs to be shrunk to contrive the space so as to avoid dysfunctionality in the system, second the state required a high dosage of leverage to control and check the people whose resistance to SAP policies were going to upturn the system.

This brings us to a crucial issue namely the interest of foreign powers and agencies in democratisation, in the light of the contradictory implications of SAP and second that the dominant fraction of the indigenous ruling class are not so much concerned with the transition to democracy as

they are with mere transition to 'civil rule' and they are more concerned with accumulation of capital than with any serious agenda of political power. This is at least the case with Nigeria where the current SAP policies have thrown up the so called 'New breed' politicking against the 'old breed', and has created an opportunistic 'SAP political class' that was nothing other than a *hallelujah* political class having benefited from the 'settlement' or largesse and pilfering outlets created in the economy by Babangida who operated an economy worse than Schatz's pirate capitalism.

SAP : Principles, Objectives and Impact.

As a concept, adjustment was the idea of Dr. J.S. Odama, the Economic adviser to President Shehu Shagari, who as the head of a Committee of Experts set up by the Federal Government in 1983, recommended it, as a way out of the country's economic crisis.

... a fundamental Structural Adjustment directed primarily towards self reliance. The period of crisis as the one we are currently experiencing ironically provides a unique opportunity to effect such fundamental structural adjustment. The process would no doubt be painful, but the adjustment in our view offers the best prospects for a virile and responsive economy (Odama 1987:11; Harrison 1993).

It was since that time that the phrase 'Structural Adjustment' became popularised.

Babangida, in his address to Nigerians upon the announcement of SAP, on June 26, said (Ayagi 1990:98; Olukoshi 1991; Collective 1988; Phillips and Ndekwu 1987):

Our Structural Adjustment involves new uses of wealth, new property relations, new products and production processes, new attitudes to work; new consumption habits, and new interaction with the rest of the world. It seeks to harmonize what we consume with what we produce. Using our own domestic endowment of human and material resources.

Four points need to be underscored here. First, the opening up of the IMF standby loan for debate was meant to mobilise broad based support for the Babangida junta, second, even before the debate on IMF loan was considered, the government had introduced a 15 month national economic emergency, and through its 1986 Budget proposals (Olukoshi 1991:69).

... the Babangida administration articulated and implemented measures which were akin to the recommendations of the IMF for structural Adjustment in Nigeria. Not only was the petroleum subsidy reduced by 80 percent, the government also committed itself to a policy of privatising and commercialising public enterprises... (and) liberalise the country's trade and exchange system.

Third, the Adjustment measures were given the semblance of being original and indigenous whereas they are a creation of the IMF. Fourth, SAP

pretends to demand equal commitment and sacrifices from all, whereas, it was actually directed at the toiling people and the manufacturing class.

The objectives of SAP in Nigeria are (Olukoshi 1991:70-71): (a) restructuring and diversification of the productive base of the economy in order to reduce dependence on the oil sector and on imports; (b) the achievement of fiscal and balance of payments viability over the period of implementation of the programme; (c) the creation of the basis for a sustainable non-inflationary or minimal inflationary growth; and (d) the reduction of the dominance of unproductive investments in the public sector, the improvement of that sector's efficiency, and the enhancement of the growth potential of the private sector.

The main elements of the Nigerian SAP are: (a) strengthening of demand management policies; (b) adoption of measures to stimulate domestic production and broaden the supply base of the economy; (c) adoption of a realistic exchange rate policy through the establishment of a Second-tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM); (d) rationalisation and restructuring of the tariff regime in order to aid the promotion of industrial diversification; (e) progressive trade and payments liberalisation; (f) reduction of complex administrative controls, and fostering reliance on market forces; (g) adoption of appropriate pricing policies for public enterprises and (h) rationalisation and commercialisation/privatisation of public sector enterprises.

The core measures around which the Nigerian SAP are built are meant to:

- (a) redress the serious overvaluation of the naira through the establishment of viable Second-tier Foreign Exchange coupled with adjustments to the official rate with a view to attaining a convergence of the two rates;
- (b) relieve the country's debt burden and attract a net inflow of foreign capital while keeping a lid on foreign loans, and
- (c) overcome observed public sector inefficiencies through improved public expenditure control programmes and the rationalization of parastatals.

SAP has not improved the Nigerian economy and indeed it has left it worse off, the debt crisis has assumed a monumental dimension, in industry there is low capacity utilisation, the peasantry has been further pauperized, the working class social condition has fast deteriorated with wage freeze, cut in provision of social and infrastructural services, the middle class has virtually decomposed and has been reconstituted, the ruling class now has an entrant SAP economic class (Bangura and Beckman 1993; Mustapha 1993; Nnoli 1993; Asobie 1993; Aina 1989; Bangura 1991).

Ihonvbere (1991:81-82) summarised the position thus:

the regime pursued a vigorous trade liberalization policy, devalues the currency by over 600 percent, sought and obtained loans from the World Bank, provided very generous incentives to transnational corporations and

kept up the policy of retrenchment and privatisation and/or commercialisation of public parastatals. In addition, the regime introduced a floating interest rate, relaxed the indigenization decrees, controlled the rate of growth of money supply by squeezing domestic credit, placed an embargo on appointments, froze wages and deregulated the economy in general. At the same time, funding to the educational sector was cut by about 35 percent; schools were closed or merged; subsidies were removed from social services and petroleum and related products, and emphasis was placed on regular debt servicing.

... only transnational corporation, speculative drug pushers, currency traffickers, consultants and middlemen, as well as top army officers and bureaucrats are full of praise for the SAP.

Various agencies as the UNICEF have come to advocate the need for 'SAP with a human face' though the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA), while the World Bank itself through its most celebrated report, 'Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth', not only one admitted of the faults in SAP but also requested for human centred policies and programmes by African Governments, which it accused of corruption and maladministration (World Bank 1989:5-10).

However, the critique by those agencies and institutions still remain faulty because they fail to challenge the underlying philosophical assumptions and bases of SAP (Momoh forthcoming).

SAP: The Political Question and Democracy

Most scholars agreed on the relationship between SAP and politics. Indeed, it is contended that 'specific adjustment policies throw up specific types of politics and institutional structures' (Bangura 1986:24). And the emphasis on the market mechanism as the chief regulatory force of resource allocation is seen as an attempt to strengthen the bourgeoisie and weaken the limited strength of the working class (Bangura 1986:25). In other words, the bourgeoisie attempts to reconstruct the social base of its power over the state to meet the fresh demands of adjustment programmes (Bangura 1986:6). The objective being to realign classes and fractions of classes in line with beneficiaries and those disadvantaged by adjustment programmes, this now determines the direction and tenor of politicking.

Herbst (1990:592) shares in the foregoing viewpoint when he submits that the political logic of structural adjustment: '... involves not only the switching of constituencies by African governments, but an entirely new mechanism through which leaders relate to their clients. Under the political systems established after independence, governments were able to provide a variety of resources — jobs, low prices for basic goods, preferential access to government projects — to favoured constituencies. The whole point of structural adjustment is to eliminate, or at least significantly curtail government's ability to offer these kind of advantages to their

constituencies'. Of course such leaders know that this is at the risk of a political cost. And the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who also recommend these harsh measures cannot pretend not to know their political import, this is what makes the whole charade of external pressures for democracy hollow. Because either way, for military rule or democratic autocrats, authoritarianism requires to be unleashed as a complementary measure to co-optation, bribery and corruption of the elites and leaders of popular circles and movements.

As Olukoshi notes (1991:8)

... authoritarian and populist measures form part of the arsenal of the post-colonial state enmeshed in the politics of adjustment, simultaneously trying to relate to the external and internal supporters and opponents of the programme, the former being overwhelmingly made up of international financiers led by the IMF and the World Bank, the latter made up of the majority of the citizens of the adjusting country. The extent to which a state is a strong, a weak or a middle-of-the-road adjuster, or even a non-adjuster is a creation of the way in which politics of the reform process is played out among the key actors involved in it.

As we shall demonstrate shortly, the role of these actors defined in class context more than anything else shapes and determines the limits and possibilities of the project of democracy. Most of the polemics and argumentations on the subject matter of democracy under a structural adjustment regime fail to take into account the inter-relationship of those social categories and process in their inter-connections and entanglement with the post colonial state. The additional problem this poses is that it does not allow us, given the particularities of individual countries to know whether the limits of one form of democracy has been explored or exhausted and why. So, our argument here is that it is not so much that popular democracy or liberal democracy as mutually exclusive or organically related projects cannot be carried out, however, their defining character remain the specific social milieu and balance of forces prevailing at every historical conjuncture.

There is no law that says a liberal democratic project must be accomplished before popular democracy is put on the agenda. On the most part, this attitude is text-bookish, analytical and clinical.

There are three major reasons why SAP is a political question and hence brings to contest the issue of the nature and control of the state and governance. First, the economic problems which occasioned SAP are blamed on the 'failure of the state'. Second, although the market forces strategy is canvassed in order to open up and further dominate the economy by external forces, the advocates of SAP require adequate state protection, guidance and direction for SAP to be implemented as a corollary, the recomposition of social classes and accumulation also means the redefinition

of the objective of the state. Third, the way the economic policies are implemented even within the context of the non-interventionist state and all the faulty assumptions that are made to rationalise this, which Agbaje (1992) summarises poses the Nigerian state as an obstacle to development because it dominates economy and society, corrupt, renew and encourage private capitalism — the state is likely to receive the backlash because the adjustment state has not restructured the Nigerian political economy, positively. At any rate, the theatre of class struggle and the objective of class politics is the capture of the state or political power. Social crisis and social contradictions only provide the substratum for that.

When the International Monetary Fund leaders talk of market forces and opening up the economy, it is not in the hope that the National bourgeoisie will participate although some fractions of the domestic bourgeoisie will benefit, but it is in the assumption that Multinational Corporations will further consolidate their stronghold over the local money. What this also means is that the state will partially abdicate 'Sovereign authority for policy making to the World Bank as the international Monetary Fund' (Bratton and Rotchild 1991:266). And what this has done is to undermine and to undercut rather than boost the legitimacy of incumbent home governments. Worse still, those agencies go to the ridiculous point of blackmail in ensuring that their conditionalities are carried out. What then is the essence of governance, what then is the essence of independence no matter how shallow? The answer to these questions cannot be sought at this superficial level. This is because the Neo-colonial state was structured not to promote good governance, democracy or a radical strategy of development (Nzogola-Ntalaja 1989:121). The substructure that created the African State, 'monopolistic production, the primitive accumulation of capital and petty commodity activities, encourage the growth of authoritarian values, political malpractices and patron-client relations' (Bangura 1988:34). However, because the bourgeoisie in post-colonial Africa is still in formation, there is no way it can abandon corrupt democratic practices and the primitive accumulation methods in order to build and consolidate itself. It is for this reason that the argument for a return to pure market forces, a stage which Western Monopoly capitalism itself has outlived, is rather premature.

Bangura (1988) summarises:

The advantages derived by the national bourgeoisie in the use of monopolistic and primitive methods of business activities have not yet been exhausted. The transition programme in Nigeria is, therefore, more concerned about political order and laying the political foundations— a new authoritarianism for the successful implementation of the structural adjustment programme than with the development of democracy.

What comes out clearly here, is that accumulation is central to the authoritarian disposition of African states and this has to do with the nature

of their political economy which gave rise to specific domestic ruling classes which are still in their formative stages and therefore are not in a haste to embrace the 'Market forces argument'.

Beckman (1992:2) disagrees with the haste with which the African state is written off because

It is less helpful for those struggling to make the state serve the interest of national emancipation and popular democracy. The misreading of the state and the balance of forces at work is an invitation to all sorts of dangers including defeatism, adventurism and co-optation on the side of popular democratic forces.

He identifies three statist tendencies which cut across the left-right genre that attempts these discussions, first the neo-patrimonial theory, the monopolistic theory and the comprador theory. He faults those theories on the premise that first, they fail to take the African ruling classes seriously in their economic and ideological commitments, second, the stake of external forces is underestimated in processes of state and ruling class formation and third, the organisational experience of subordinate classes and their ability to have impact on the state is ignored. Such an undialectical attitude, he argues, will only reinforce a vicious cycle of decline or decay in the understanding of theories of state and crisis and stir social and political forces of their capacity for responses (Beckman 1992:11).

The fundamental issue that arises here is one of understanding the process of the reconstitution of the Nigerian dominant political class and its relationship to the democratic agenda. Although there is no agreement about who is to build the liberal democratic project. Ibrahim (1986) sees it as a collective project of all forces, both the bourgeoisie and the masses, whilst Bangura (1988:34) sees it as a project that falls on the shoulders of the 'oppressed, popular forces'. Ake (1992) does not even agree any longer that democracy in the libertarian conception is feasible in Africa any longer, rather he now prefers direct community representation unmediated by political parties.

The whole linkage between politics and economic development arises precisely because of the failure of economic policies of the past and the growing uncertainty and insecurity arising with the misery and poverty SAP has brought. Hence it is argued that '... without renewed economic growth, many emergent democracies in Africa will fail'. (Joseph 1991:194). Turok (1990:110) shares a similar view, 'Development strategy is a matter of politics and therefore a function of democracy in form as well as content. This implies that aspirations to democracy must be linked to development within a single project'.

It is in the foregoing context that the debate between Nyong'o (1988a, 1988b) and Mkandawire (1988) was set. One major oversight in this debate is that although Nyong'o made as his starting point a comparison between

practising democracies and autocratic states he however does not demonstrate in his subsequent rejoinder that the identification of principles of accountability, etc., are meant to show the limits or the extent of the impact of liberal democracy in Africa. In all, the entire debate failed to reconcile their arguments with the character of the state which in both the struggles to implement SAP and exercise political control, reflects a contradiction between national and international capital, and between the two and the toiling people. Such then is the premise of our own analysis.

This is why the democracy and the conditionalities the west preaches are both suspect and dubious. Not so much because liberal democracy is not worth embarking upon, but because imperialism has not demonstrated a capacity to market it. Above all, the failure of the neo-colonial state is essentially an indictment of international capitalist activities in the peripheries.

African countries demand multi-party system but reject SAP through national conferences (Mkandawire 1992) and open debates. But the imperialists and their agencies insist that SAP has to be implemented and impose harsh conditionalities but then go ahead to say they support the clamour for democracy and multi-partism. Meanwhile African governments are encouraged by any means necessary to defend the 'gains of SAP' and protect them from those wishing to reverse them. Even in industries, MNCs try to defend the 'gains of SAP' through authoritarian means, intolerance towards trade unions, hostility of management to workers, cut in pay and welfare packages, etc.

It is clear that SAP programmes can only be sustained by authoritarian as opposed to democratic regimes. This is why donor countries and imperialist agencies do not feel strongly about their 'political conditionality' for the economy and loans, but feel strongly about 'economic conditionality' for political support i.e. implement SAP and you shall be given all the political backing. General Ibrahim Babangida's nebulous concept of 'guided democracy' and the Two-Party system were celebrated by the West because Babangida was one of the most faithful prosecutors of SAP.

Apart from the arguments of welfare benefits and political alienation or authoritarianism SAP has wrought, we could pose a dispassionate question. In what ways has SAP helped to build a virile or lay the foundation for a capitalist economy?

The adjustment process constitutes a derailment of a process of capitalist transformation of colonial economies into 'normal peripheral capitalist economies, with more or less national control. It is a defeat of the 'nationalist project' by International Capital (Mkandawire 1991:91).

The political implication of the foregoing quote is that, the failure of SAP can create room for broad alliances of struggles for building the liberal democratic project especially by social classes, both dominant and

dominated who do not stand to benefit from SAP. What does the Nigerian experience tell us about this and how has the state responded? We shall return to that presently. It is only apt to state here that much of the political interest of Nigerians had taken place at the level of popular participation or resistance to SAP and this has engendered a certain level of political consciousness. By some miraculous coincidence in May every year since 1988, the Nigerian toiling masses have come out en masse to resist SAP. As Beckman (1991:69) correctly submits:

In resisting SAP, interest groups seek to secure greater autonomy from the state. The confrontation enhance their stake in a pluralist order. While in pursuit of the material interest of their members; interest groups enter into alliances in defence of autonomy and rights of organization. Demands for democratic reforms at the level of the state, including the reform of legal institutions and procedures, become tied to the defence of such organizational rights. They serve as a bridge between the material grievances of members and the questions of the democratic constitution of the state. Interest groups conception of the legal and political regulation of their mode of operation is central to the process of democratisation.

Economic Transition Programme (ETP) vs. Political Transition Programme (PTP)

We have dwelt extensively on SAP, that by itself constitutes the ETP, to the extent to which it was incorporated into the general Transition Programme that was meant to have terminated in July, 1988. However it was not terminated, because government now realised that it required to be made part of the 'institutional mechanism and workings of the state'. In other words SAP is to last forever ! But by this time the biting effects of SAP on the toiling masses, retrenchment, unemployment, cut in provision of social services, etc., had commenced meanwhile the SAP accumulating class was emerging. The government had to meet the ever increasing conditionalities set by the international financial system. The fragile nature of the economy and the uncertainty of the role of the popular forces, now made the military government to set in motion a correlating political transition programme which will serve as a stop-gap, a safeguard for whatever follows as the backlash of the SAP or ETP. In a word, *the objective of the Babangida regime was to create the necessary political condition for the implementation of SAP through the ETP*. And as Diamond (1987:201) argued the prospects of democracy in Nigeria were conditioned upon the economic adjustment. Although Ihonvbere (1991:89-90) will not agree that what was initially intended by Babangida was a transition to Democracy. Ihonvbere (1991:92) contends:

The crisis of dependent capitalism and the negative pressures generated by the SAP will make transition to bourgeois democracy impossible. If a

transition is made, through repression, incorporation, intimidation and manipulation, it will not live longer than the defunct Second Republic.

The PTP started in 1987 with the establishment of the Political Bureau which conducted a Nation-wide debate to decide which political system Nigerians needed. Nigerians voted for socialism. But the government rejected it on the ground that it did not want to impose an ideology on Nigerians. Conversely when Nigerians debated and rejected the IMF stand-by loan a year earlier, Babangida jumped at the verdict to implement the SAP. The implementation of SAP has created and realigned social classes such that the now dominant political class encourages the military which produced it to consolidate its stronghold over the state. The pre-SAP domestic fraction of the bourgeoisie are divided between Northern and Southern bourgeoisie, in NACCIMA, Manufacturer Association of Nigeria (MAN), etc. For example, a fraction of the Northern bourgeoisie sees the privatisation of public enterprises as an attempt to favour and cheaply handover Nigeria's asset to the southern, especially Yoruba fraction of the bourgeoisie (Agbaje 1992:126). There is a contradiction between ETP and PTP, while the former preaches liberalization and the market logic, the latter is increasing becoming authoritarian and repressive. We shall document this presently.

To Mbembe (in Bratton and Rotchild 1991:278-279):

There cannot be a transition to a market logic, if alongside Structural Adjustment Programme, no attempt is made to reduce the weight of authoritarian institutions on society.

Although four arguments can be made to counter this view. The first is that SAP was never faithfully implemented. Second, it is argued that the domestic bourgeoisie has not exhausted its means of accumulation through primitive, and authoritarian methods that do not require accountability. In this sense, democracy is seen as a threat to the interest of the bourgeoisie, at times heightening intra-bourgeois conflict (Ibrahim 1993:129). Third, it is contended that authoritarianism seen in the foregoing sense addresses formal participation. Shaw (1991:206) identifies when he calls 'Informal democracy' and this occurs at the level of the civil society and it also encourages shrinkage of the state under adjustment.

Fourth, it is argued that the military has set itself apart through it is inherited and created professional privileges and entrenched interests that are not predisposed to democracy or require authoritarian means to defend or consolidate (Ihonvbere and Ekekwe 1991; Vivekananda and James 1990; Yacub 1992; Adekanye 1993).

Quite contradictorily, however, the struggle for democracy and against authoritarianism are created by the same conditions and forces which created SAP. As Beckman (1991) rightly noted:

... it is resistance to SAP, not SAP itself, that breeds democratic forces. SAP can be credited with having contributed to this development, not because of liberalism but because of its authoritarianism.

What are the social forces that facilitated the authoritarian state in Nigeria in the era of transition to civil rule? What is the content of this authoritarianism and how was it resisted? It is to these we now turn.

The SAP Political Class

The SAP political class in our usage is that emergent appropriating class which benefited from the exploitative situation created by SAP and therefore had enough wealth and resources to take part in politicking in spite of the booby traps set by Babangida. Indeed many of these SAP political class members were consciously sponsored and promoted by Babangida to subvert the transition programme. This class emerged by four different means. First, through the ban on so-called 'old Politicians' and the promotion of the 'New Breed'. Second, those who fell within this category were mostly a group of new rich, 'walking on the fast lane' upstarts, who exploited the system by laundering and speculating currency, peddling drugs, etc. Third, were a group of AGIP (Any Government in Power) who sang *halleluya* chorus, some of them either directly participated in the Babangida regime and later resigned or were at the sideline as consultants, contractor, etc., they were all encouraged by Babangida to join politics. Fourth, are those who were part of the 'settlement' (an euphemism for Babangida's bribe to individuals) under the regime.

The SAP political class was at the outset a compromised political class they therefore had nothing to lose by throwing their money around even when they knew it would not translate to civil rule. Several of the genuine politicians who knew that Babangida was not going to leave office as promised either engaged in sit and watch *à la* Bola Ige or joined politics with caution and curiosity in the hope that through the politics of *entrism*, Babangida could be forced out of office to allow for proper transition to take place. In order to uniformly compromise the entire political class, Babangida ensured that when he imposed his two political parties on the politicians he stated that they would be financed by the government; their secretariat and other facilities including cars were also provided by the government. Soon, allegations of corruption and lack of accountability emerged necessitating in part the dissolution of the two political parties.

It should be stated that Chief M.K.O. Abiola and Alhaji Bachir Tofa, the two presidential candidates who stood elections under the aborted transition to civil rule programme both benefited immensely from SAP. The way they exploited the option A4 formula which legalised party corruption from the Ward level to the National Convention, is unprecedented in the annals of Nigeria's history of political corruption (Collective 1993).

Militarised Transition

The Babangida junta ensured that it supervised a transition programme that fulfilled its objectives of implementating SAP. Although people looked forward to the elections with enthusiasm, because they were suffocated by the effects of SAP, however Babangida made the PTP hostile and unencouraging or worthy of participating in. This was done in several ways.

First, a group of old politicians who participated in the first and second Republic were banned. Second, Babangida stimulated the Political Bureau into recommending a two party system for Nigeria and he subsequently dissolved (Akinola, Agbaje 1991), by discrediting the 13 political Associations that seek registration from the National Electoral Commission. Third, the working class especially civil servants were barred from participating and if they so chose they must first resign their jobs. Fourth, the government said it knew those it would not handover power to (Gahia 1993), and these were the 'extremists' (the left). Fifth, tribunals were brought to subvert and undermine the role of the civil courts in both civil and criminal matters, including the PTP. NEC was given unbridled and unsurpassed powers to disqualify candidates without any explanation to the person involved and he had no right to go to any civil court.

This era then heralded the politics of departicipation. For all the 13 associations that seek registration, Babangida gave them a set of questions to answer, cardinal among them being whether or not they would continue the implementation of SAP. And in the name of the 'Politics of Registration' all the 13 associations accepted to implement SAP — to avoid the Babangida political blackmail.

The regime came out to say there was no alternative to SAP. All those who challenged government on this and proffered alternatives were either hounded, maimed or incarcerated. They were accused of attempting to 'Derail the Transition Programme' or having 'A Hidden Agenda'.

The government continued to subvert the rule of law (Anonymous 1990). Those who spoke against the government were arbitrarily arrested and detained. It was in this context that the human rights group started emerging in 1986. People such as Gani Fawehinmi, Beko Ransome Kuti, Femi Falana, etc., have gone into detention no less than sixty times under Babangida's rule.

Ouster clauses (Fawehimi 1991) were introduced into the law at will, and the powers of the Courts subverted on several political matters involving the state and citizens. During a Court proceedings, the Lagos State Chief Judge Ligali Ayorinde, had to confess that Babangida was a 'Kabiyesi' (an absolute monarch in the Yoruba language). The press was gagged and suppressed and journalists arbitrarily imprisoned. Eight press houses were closed down during the campaign for upholding the June 12 mandate.

Several Vocational trade unions, the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) were banned and unbanned several times for their opposition to or resistance to government authoritarianism (Jega 1993).

But government unleashed all this in the name of 'guided democracy'. Under this model, whatever Babangida and his retinue of technocrats, and experts on political engineering, led by a formidable team of professors of political science, said was infallible and unquestionable. Any contrary opinion is seen as opposition to the regime and an attempt to derail the PTP.

Popular Resistance

At the risk of repetition, the resistance to the Babangida Junta started as a resistance to SAP. Soon, it became apparent that the Nigerian people needed more enduring structures for waging the struggle against the regime. The first major opportunity for waging such a struggle was provided by the May 1986 mass killings of defenceless students by the regime at the Ahmadu Bello University. The working class, students and market women genuinely showed interest in the repressive act.

Subsequently, those forces found a common ground for resistance and struggle in the anti-SAP and anti-withdrawal of fuel subsidy struggles of 1987-1992. Within this period the National Consultative Forum and later the Campaign for Democracy (CD) were formed. The latter became the platform for forty-two mass democratic organisations to struggle.

Although CD had articulated its principled disagreement to the PTP, dismissing it as a charade and insisting that Babangida had a 'hidden agenda' not to leave power, however, their view was dismissed by the SAP political class as coming from 'skeptics and cynics'.

The social base and the struggles of the CD became solidified for three reasons. First, Babangida shifted the handover date four times (from October 1990 to October 1992 to January 1993, and finally to August 1993), and on all occasions, he blamed the political class for his action. It became very apparent, that Babangida was unwilling to leave in spite of his swearing by the Holy Quran, on one occasion. Second, Babangida began to reconstitute new boards, create more states, promulgate new decrees that further consolidated his rule and people saw in these not the intent of transiting but the objective of consolidating military rule. Thirdly and more importantly, was the Presidential (Anonymous 1993) elections held on June 12, 1993 and Babangida attempted to find dubious reasons to justify its cancellation which he eventually did, but the Nigerian people were no longer willing to take anything further from him. Hence the national resistance that commenced for the upholding of the June 12 mandate. The struggle lasted between July and November, 1993 and started to wane due to the opportunism of the political class.

The point must be made that a preponderant number of the SAP political class supported Babangida on the annulment of the June 12 elections. And they ensured that the two imposed Babangida political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) were demobilised and insulated from the struggles. Indeed, the two parties at a joint meeting reached a consensus to accept the Babangida formula of an Interim National Government which was nothing more than another booby trap. A few of the genuine politicians supported the CD campaign. However, when the SAP political class and some of these genuine politicians found that CD had taken the political steam out of them, they started clustering around ethnic and other primordial sentiments to rebuild their power base. The SAP political class from the North opposed June 12, a few genuine politicians there supported it and over time when they discovered that the stakes were no longer high for them they finally abandoned it. Same was the case in the East. In the West where Abiola, the winner of the election came from, the SAP political class and the genuine politicians wanted to out do themselves in demonstrating commitment to June 12; However they could not contend with the powerful force of CD, which organised its struggles not because of Abiola but because of the objective and principle he represented in the attempt to push aside military dictatorship. Soon, the politicians of this part of Nigeria appealed to ethnic sentiments, Egba, Ijebu, etc. Some of them now traded these ethnic clout for money either directly from Babangida or from Abiola or from both. On a national scale this was what happened to the political class except for a very few of them.

Meanwhile, the resistance against Babangida to leave was high, and he eventually left, after he constituted the Interim National Government (ING) with his cronies in charge. They were also resisted by the Nigerian people. General Sani Abacha, seized the opportunity to take over power on November 17, 1993. He then quickly dissolved the ING; the two Babangida political parties and proclaimed full military rule.

Unsure of their future, the SAP political class and the opportunistic genuine politicians now started hobnobbing with the regime seeking political appointments. At one time there were nine former presidential aspirants serving as ministers on the Abacha cabinet. Three reasons have been advanced for their action. First, a lot of them want to recover the monies they expended during the Babangida PTP. Second, some of them hope to use ministerial offices as leverage to do some political spade work that would facilitate government's implementation of welfare and populist programme. In this way they hope that the electorate will vote for them under the next civil dispensation.

The Manufacturer Association of Nigeria (MAN), a group of 'concerned professionals', the working class, a minor segment of the traditional rulers and the international community also supported the June 12 cause. However,

because the struggles of June 12 paralysed the economy for four months, multinational corporations and a large sectors of the money launderers, and the domestic bourgeoisie began to explore means of overcoming this paralysis. In desperation, whatever was going to restore normalcy, was acceptable to this class.

But the toiling masses and particularly the working class saw the military as a chronic problem. The military was seen as the epitome of authoritarianism and the social hardship in the country. Seen in this sense, democracy and improvement in the social well being of the toiling people became the logical negation and basis of the popular struggles of the Nigerian toiling people. Whether conceptually this could be said to amount to 'Development Democracy' remain an issue open to discourse.

A word on the international community. Initially, several European countries sent representation to join the international monitoring group during the election. And when Babangida annulled the elections, some of them placed sanctions and strongly condemned it. For others as the United States of America, palliative measures were taken. The bold condemnation of Babangida's action by the Director of USIS in Nigeria was very impressive. With time, the initial enthusiasm showed by the EEC countries and the US frizzled out. This is not unexpected against the four months losses of MNC's and their subsidiaries. But this goes a long way to show to us how much Western nations are concerned about liberal democracy in Africa.

When the General Abacha military junta took over on November 17, 1993, very few Western nations condemned it. Several salient lessons and implications emerge from this attitude. First, it shows that Africans alone have to struggle for and build democracy in Africa. Second, Africans have to construct the kind of democracy they need.

Conclusion

The Nigerian toiling masses are not at all happy with the manner Abiola squandered his mandate, first by agreeing to meet with Babangida, details of their discussion were never made known to Nigerians. And second, the opportunistic manner the politicians (including those in the June 12 Campaign) joined the Abacha regime.

It should be stated that the future of the struggle for democracy has been truncated by two events first, the diversionary 'Constitutional conference' which is meant to nip in the bud the CD's call for a sovereign national conference. Second, there is the internal wrangling within the CD itself which has led to a split in the organisation at its National Convention in February 5, 1994. It is apparent that this would have a demobilising effect on the toiling masses, while the politicians were busy recomposing

themselves around Abacha and the Constitutional Conference in order to counter and overcome the force of popular forces.

Abiola is one of the leading members of the bourgeoisie in Nigeria. However, the Nigerian toiling masses engaged in a protracted struggle to ensure that the mandate given to him by his victory at the presidential polls on June 12 was upheld. This presupposes that the toiling masses are interested in the liberal democratic project. And there are three reasons for this. First the belief that civil rule no matter how bad is more acceptable than military rule, because the former involves popular will and choice. Second, liberal democracy courts accountability. Third, military rule is inherently and intrinsically authoritarian and this is unacceptable in this era of human civilization.

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