JUNE, 1978



# work in progress

# editorial

'Every day is June 16th' ran the legend of a poster issued in Johannesburg to record 2 years since the beginning of the student revolt in Soweto. If, by 'June 16th' we mean the intensification of crises, not only in South Africa, but on the whole sub-continent, then every day is indeed the beginning of a new crisis, and the continuation of already existing conflict.

The South African military raid on Casinga served again to demonstrate that the ruling classes are intent on the forcing of a neo-colonial 'settlement' on the people of Namibia. This raid, the operations of SWAPO, FNLA and UNITA in Angola, and the 'invasion' of Zaire's Shaba Province also indicate the complexity and interconnection of political conflicts on the west coast of Southern Africa.

Rhodesia nears the day when it will become Zimbabwe, but the conflicts and tensions which have been brought to the surface through the implementation of Smith's 'internal settlement' seem to imply that civil war will continue, even if the formal reigns of power are handed over to an opportunistic black leadership.

While in South Africa itself, conflict intensifies as every institution of the ruling classes loses its little remaining legitimacy in the eyes of the popular classes. Political trials, strikes, bannings, detentions, censorship, police action and the like are now institutionalised, having become a part of South African capitalism and the State which maintains it.

A long article on Nigerian literature and the civil war is not as removed from these events as may seem at first glance. For, using the prism of literature, Tom Lodge demonstrates the processes of political and personal degeneration which follow the attempt to remake a society without the active involvement and participation of the popular classes. We believe that this lesson is as valuable today for Zimbabwe, Namibia and a future South Africa as it was for Biafra in 1967. The dangers of petty bourgeois politics (as exemplified in the opportunistic and individualistic politics of Muzorewa and Sithole), masquerading as being in the interests of the exploited masses, is most obvious in the charade presently being played out in Salisbury.

Only an awareness and an understanding of what is happening beyond our borders will allow us to act in such a way as to avoid events following a similar direction in South Africa.

-THE EDITORS.

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# STRIKES: isithebe

EARLY IN 1973 industrial unrest broke out in Natal, mainly in the Durban-Pinetown-New Germany industrial complex. Approximately 80 000 black, mainly African, workers went out on strike for higher wages, paralysing industry and commerce in Natal and introducing urgency into debate on possible incorporationist strategy towards the working class - insofar as this is possible in South Africa.

Although strikes have been a regular feature of struggle in the years since then, the numbers of workers involved in strikes have declined. Figures are extremely dubious because of the various definitions given to strike action and the number of unreported occurrences, but some idea of the decrease may be gained from official statistics:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1973 | 246 strikes (African workers only) |
| 1974 | 194 strikes involving 38 961 workers |
| 1975 | 123 strikes involving 12 451 workers |
| 1976 | 113 strikes involving 16 170 workers |

(Source: Survey of Race Relations, 1974:326; 1977:305)

Since 1973, however, conflict has increasingly moved into the political/military and ideological fields and has taken place around many issues unconnected with directly economic demands. That many of these issues can be fairly easily traced, at least in part, to the economic crisis in South Africa is not being denied.

These issues have included Black Consciousness demonstrations - the Biko and Sobukwe funerals - ; Bantu Education - June 1976 and its aftermath - ; rent and bus protests; bomb attacks and political assassinations; armed incursions from across the borders by black South Africans; squatter protests; etc.

However, several strikes have already been reported during 1978, for example at Sigma motor plant and of weavers in the Transkei. In February strikes occurred in Isithebe, the industrial 'growth point' of the kwaZulu bantustan, involving about 1 000 workers directly and closing down all factories employing some 1 700 workers.

Figures released by Chief Buthelezi in his 1978 policy speech to the kwaZulu Legislative Assembly (page 36) show that there are thirty industrial plants operating in Isithebe, employing 1 910 African (1 201 male and 709 female) workers, 141 whites and 55 'Indians' and 'Coloureds'.

This is the pathetic employment figure after five years of operation of the one growth point in kwaZulu, bringing "employment, training, prosperity, and all the social benefits which are part of that package deal." (Buthelezi policy speech, 20.4.78:35)

That "package deal" has been of direct benefit to the capitalists moving there as the state, through its agencies, had already spent R5 029 044 on infrastructural and service developments (e.g. water scheme, housing for key white personnel) (Horrell, M - The African Homelands of South Africa, SAIRR 1973:124) The benefits of the "package deal" to the foreign investor have been spelt out by Buthelezi and other bantustan leaders in full-page advertisements in overseas papers.

On the other hand, the "package deal" for the workers employed at Isithebe are not as well publicised, but include exemption from the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation and Wage Acts (through Proclamation 84 of 1970 and 94 of 1972). This exemption applies to "industries established by corporations or white agents in the African homelands" (Horrell, 1973:122). The isolation of these factories from other industry and other workers hamper organisation - not that it is encouraged by the kwaZulu authorities.

On May 26, 1977, Buthelezi, Chief Minister of kwaZulu opened the factory of Akulu Chemicals, subsidiary of the Dutch company Akzo Chemie BV. This is a capital intensive plant, creating jobs for a mere 36 blacks and 5 whites. The Chief was in fine fettle and his speech one of his contradiction-riddled classics.

He reiterated his position in support of foreign investment "because we need jobs so we and our children may live to struggle for justice" - how the struggle for justice, and exploitation by foreign capital can be separated is not dealt with. This is one example of the poverty of a position that sees as synonyms "discrimination" and "exploitation".

(Buthelezi had in November, 1977, said that queues of the unemployed were a vote for the jobs created through foreign investment, a statement repeated in mid-June, 1978. This is a completely fallacious argument as the record of foreign investment in other African countries has shown.)

He asked the Akulu firm to exercise a social and political conscience and quoted extensively from a "Zulu economist (who) presented a most interesting paper on the issue of foreign investment in South Africa". Chief Buthelezi presented these views without any comment.

The extract starts:

> Now then, what tactics are suggested by Marxist theory with regard to the issue of foreign capitalist investment in South Africa. Do the tactics flowing out of this theory coincide with the tactics of fighting for the withdrawal of foreign capitalist industry from South Africa?'

The Zulu economist answers this question with a "No!" quoting Engels and Lenin in support of the "spread of capitalist industries in the colonies". Those who oppose this spread are said to be petty-bourgeois and misguided intellectuals.

The quotation ends with words that must have amazed the gathered dignitaries and representatives of national and international capital:

> "The more capitalist industry develops the more numerous, sophisticated and educated, self-confident and courageous becomes this (African industrial) working class, the more able will it be to fight for democracy and freedom in our cause to strike the death blow to white domination".

At this same place, Isithebe, less than a year later, the strikes occurred, but these got no mention in the 1978 Buthelezi policy speech.

(Information in the following section from reprts in the Daily News, Natal Mercury, Beeld, Rand Daily Mail - from 20.2.78 to 25.2.78)

The strikes started on February 20. The causes related to wage demands and non-replacement of 'Indian' and 'Coloured' foremen by trained Africans. Other complaints reported were that workers

were not entitled to sick pay; that racial pay discrimination existed; and that workmen's compensation forms were not completed in all cases. The sequence of events seem to have been as follows:

MONDAY, 20.2.78 — 1 000 workers reported to be on strike. Police 'standing by' and turning back cars. Two policemen were reported to have been injured and vehicles stoned. A delegation was formed to meet with the kwaZulu government. About half the total workforce at Isithebe were said to be involved in the strike, while the rest were 'sent home'. Police said they would protect those workers who wished to return to work.

TUESDAY, 21.2.78 — A CED beer-hall was reported to have been stoned. Factories were closed. It was reported that 'non-employees' from the surrounding areas joined strikers and by the afternoon the crowd had swelled to several thousand. KwaZulu Minister of the Interior, Dr Dennis Madide, stepped in and said he felt employers would negotiate. Wages were reported to be as low as R6,50 a week. Further complaints, including the blacklisting of workers and lack of protective clothing, were voiced. Workers were said to be asking for a minimum wage of between 40c and 60c an hour. Dr Madide suggested the workers set up a committee to coordinate worker committees from all factories.

WEDNESDAY, 22.2.78 — Some 600 workers were reported back at work. Pickets ('agitators') were dispersed by police. Factories were said to be willing to negotiate. Voting in the kwaZulu election was said to be slow at Sundumbili township (near Isithebe) and the Inkatha office was closed. Dr Madide said he would send one of his labour inspectors 'to help the workers, unskilled in labour negotiating, to set up works committees'. Factories had been working on the 'induna system' - a euphemism common in Natal for giving orders.

Thursday, 23.2.78 — Wage talks broke down at the Stallion clothing factory and 90 seamstreeses were fired - apparently the full female labour force. They had been paid R11 per week and wanted R15. By the afternoon, ten men had been arrested for 'being in possession of dangerous weapons'. Mr Schmidt (MD of Skema Engineering, employing 205 African men) said his workers were 'all happy' but 'they had messed things up by striking' because pay increases planned for February would have to be postponed. As was the case in Durban in 1973, many employers claimed to have been on thepoint of giving an increase.

The Corporation for Economic Development (CED, formerly BIC) was reported to be paying a minimum monthly wage of R54.

SATURDAY, 25.2.78 The Rand Daily Mail reported that by late on Friday 'the strike-torn Isithebe Industrial Township near Mandini seemed to have returned to normal' and that no incidents had been reported. Police dressed in camouflage uniforms continued to patrol the industrial complex and nearby township. The report went on to say that 'workers accepted their weekly pay packets, and it is believed most are satisfied to wait until their next annual increases next month and April'.

The editors would appreciate further information on this and other strikes. Coverage similar to that given to trials in WIP would be very useful.

Who were the 'non-employees' who participated in the Isithebe strike?

**n.b.**

# CRIME ?

THE PAST two months have seen a series of massive police raids, aimed primarily at blacks in white, urban residential areas as well as in townships. According to reports, well over 5 000 people have been arrested in the Transvaal alone in what police have described as 'crime prevention' activities.

The beginning of this series of actions on the Reef can be traced back to the combined police and army operation in early April. Cordons were thrown around Soweto, Alexandra and neighbouring townships, while police, traffic police and armed soldiers manned road blocks. Vehicles were stopped and searched.

On the pretext of hunting down the killer of two Hillbrow schoolboys, police launched a series of raids in Hillbrow and surrounding areas. At least 3 080 people were arrested, 95% on charges relating to contraventions of pass laws, curfew and trespass regulations. Veteran police officer Theuns Swanepoel -- Rooi Rus - was in command of the alleged murder hunt.

For three consecutive weekends in April, police blitzed Johannesburg's southern suburbs. They refused to say how many arrests had been made, or how many police were involved.

At the end of April more than 300 people were arrested in similar raids on Kliptown and Lenasia, townships south of Johannesburg.

Early in May a further 100 people were arrested in Lenasia in a single raid. The arrests all related to contraventions of pass laws, trespass and general urban areas legislation affecting Africans.

At about the same time, East Rand police arrested 500 people in the Germiston district, covering Edenvale, Bedfordview and Alberton. Road blocks were set up on all roads leading to townships and house to house searches were conducted.

Continuing their 'Eastern campaign' about 400 people were arrested by police in the Springs-Delmas area on the East Rand in mid-May. This was the third major swoop in the area, bringing the number of arrests there in May to 1 150.

In the third week of May, police began moving north of Johannesburg and hundreds raided the Randburg area. It is not known how many were arrested, but reports state that 'scores' were taken into custody, again mainly for pass offences. Police said afterwards they had been out to catch 'loafers' in the area.

Police have subsequently warned that they would be taking action in Pretoria.

Predictably, the commercial English Press misinterpreted these events, largely accepting police explanations that their function was crime prevention. Although occasional editorial comments expressed some disquiet about the number of pass law arrests ( RDM 4/5/78), reports continued to speak of crime prevention operations (RDM 4/5/78)and crackdowns on crime (The Star 17/5/78).

Equally predictably the centre-right Progressive Federal Party supported the principle of the raids. Unofficial spokesman for the party's right wing, Harry Schwarz, called for a police crackdown on crime in other black townships, saying these should be on the same scale as the Hillbrow raids. Naturally enough, even moderate black opinion rejected this call while police minister Kruger welcomed it.

Just what have these raids signified at this stage of South Africa's ongoing crisis?

Firstly, they must be seen in the context of massive and widespread unemployment - running at about 2-million. This affects mainly blacks, but there is evidence that white unemployment has also reached serious proportions.

This unemployment is principally the result of an economic crisis basic to the capitalist system. It is not incidental to the functioning of such an economic system, but is fundamental to its development and operation.

Like all economic relations and structures, the crisis has profound socio-political effects and results. If hundreds of thousands are out of work, for how long will the state be able to control and keep them in order ?

Unemployed workers with no legal means of income to keep their families and dependants alive are unlikely to abide by laws which keep them in that position. Crimes against the profit-making property of the rich are likely to increase.

These factors all lead to a crisis of control in any situation of mass capitalist unemployment. Different societies develop their own ways of dealing with this crisis.

In contemporary South Africa the specific mechanisms of control of the unemployed revolve around pass laws, influx control and the 'homelands'.

Those who are unemployed and are without residential rights in urban areas - the vast majority of unemployed Africans - have been the real target in the recent police raids.

Arrested and charged under the various laws which control and exploit the labour force ( pass laws, trespass and curfew regulations), most are fined or sentenced to jail terms and endorsed out. In the short term this means many unemployed go to jail - for how does a person with no income pay a fine?

In the longer term, unemployment and all its social consequences - instability, crime against private property, political activism and direct political action - are exported to the 'homelands'.

This is of course most convenient for the state and capitalism, which relies on the state to maintain law and order, stability and respect for private property. The problem of controlling and physically maintaining an angry and increasingly desperate unemployed mass is transferred to rural areas far from the sensitive and explosive urban environment.

It is the task of the Buthelezis, the Matanzimas and the Mangopes to control this mass, through the institutions of 'homeland governments'.

It is now widely accepted that the main function of the African reserves was for many years an economic one. The worker's family lived in the reserve and supported itself by cultivating the little land available. This situation was forced on workers and their families by influx control and the pass laws and allowed the mines to pay each worker barely enough to keep himself alive.

From the capitalist perspective, the family of the worker did not exist and workers were treated as bachelors without dependants. This allowed - and still does - an exceptionally low wage to be paid to migrant workers.

However it now seems that the main function of the 'homelands' has changed to one of 'social control' - the creation of dumping grounds for the export of urban problems, especially growing unemployment.

This is why the Buthelezis et al, and their homeland structures are rejected by progressive forces - not merely because they are stooges or sell-outs, although this does describe the individuals to a greater or lesser extent.

Rather they are rejected because their function and very basis of existance is one which serves the interests of both the state and the capitalist way of production. No matter what the individuals or groups who man the 'homeland' structures say or do, they fulfil this function.

Whether or not they ideologically support apartheid, they serve the political and economic interests of apartheid society by maintaining the 'homelands' as areas viable for the export of urban conflict.

'Homelands' and those who maintain their structures of control are built into the very interests of the South African system of political control, as well as the capitalist system of production,

Since the above article was written, the following raids have occurred:

30/5/78: Vaal Triangle police mounted a house to house raid in Sharpeville between 9-30pm and 3-30am.

31/5/78: Police erected roadblocks in Soweto, Eldorado Park, Lenasia, Kliptown, and Western Township. They declined to reveal how many arrests were made.

3/6/78: More than 300 people were arrested in Soweto, Lenasia, Kliptown, Eldoado Park, Randfontein and Bekkersdal in 'a routine crime prevention operation'.

7/6/78: Roadblocks were set up on all roads leading out of Soweto, and manned by police and traffic police.

7/6/78: Over 460 people arrested by police in the Durban North area in an 'anti-crime' swoop.

9/6/78: About 100 people arrested in Sea Point, Cape Town, during 'Operation Clean-Up'.

11/6/78: Over 200 people arrested at road blocks in Brakpan, Benoni, Alberton, Kempton Park, Boksburg and Springs.

11/6/78: Over 500 people were arrested in raids, house to house searches, and at roadblocks in Soweto, Lenasia, Kliptown, Eldorado Park, Brakpan, Daveyton and Benoni.

In May, of the 3,080 people arrested on the Reef in police raids, 2,933 were for pass offences.
Of the 3,000 arrested thus far in June, over 2,000 were held for pass offences.

# SWAZILAND

In a previous briefing (WIP 4 pp 1 - 5), it was suggested that developments in Southern Africa were leading to the increasing integration of the Swaziland ruling classes with the interests and objectives of the South African State.

This was seen as a predictable step in the context of increased conflict and struggle on the sub-continent, the emergence of anti-imperialist governments (Mocambique, Angola), and Swaziland's subordination to South African imperialism.

Illustrating this trend, WIP drew attention to
+the abduction of exiles in Swaziland, probably by agents resident in South Africa;

+the detention by the Swazi State of people involved in ANC or PAC activities;

+the trial of 3 young ANC recruits, apprehended in Swaziland, and sentenced by Swazi courts for possession of arms of war and firearms.

The briefing commented on the "scale and obviousness of both South African agents' activities, and the increasing assistance offered by the Swazi State (to South Africa) in controlling the activities of South Africa's banned organisations."

Since independence in 1968, Swaziland has been categorised as one of the more conservative African States. No doubt, this has something to do with its proximity to, and reliance on, South Africa. But its internal class structure, and corresponding form of state, ensure that its pro-imperialist stance is maintained, despite the opposition of the popular classes in the country.

In 1973, King Sobhuza suspended the Swazi constitution, and declared political meetings and demonstrations illegal. At the same time, Dr. Ambrose Zwane's opposition Ngane National Liberation Congress was also banned.

The recent crack-down on refugee elements in Swaziland cannot be seen simply as a move forced on the State by South African interests. ANC, PAC and Soweto refugees resident in Swaziland are unlikely to be sympathetic to the Swazi government, and the actions taken against them can best be seen as a congruence of interests on the part of the South African and Swazi ruling classes.

Opposition politics in Swaziland is illegal at present, despite the planned 'election' scheduled for June (the first since 1973). In this 'election', political parties, speeches and even ballot-boxes remain banned. One can see that the Swazi state fears the political activity of refugees, even if that activity is directed towards South Africa. For it could easily become a rallying-point and example for the opposition-minded classes in Swaziland itself.

These internal factors, combined with South Africa's obvious interest in controlling ANC and PAC activities, are the most important factors in understanding what is happening to the exile community in Swaziland at present. (There are, of course, as in the case of all complex events and processes, other factors and causes which must be taken into account as well).

Early in April, at least 50 PAC members were detained by Swazi police. A number of them were subsequently declared prohibited immigrants, and expelled from the territory. The remainder are, presumably, still in one of Swaziland's jails.

It is widely believed that these detentions followed the wishes of Potlako Leballo, until recently second to Sobukwe in the PAC hierarchy. Leballo, in a recent visit to Swaziland, seems to have encouraged State officials to detain PAC activists in the territory. The PAC is split over the succession to Sobukwe, and the Swazi group oppose Leballo's bid to take over the presidency. On this basis, Leballo was willing to support the detention of PAC members in Swaziland.

Shortly after these events, a group of young people marched on the office of the Deputy Prime Minister in Mbabane, demanding the release of the detainees. Such demonstrations are, of course, illegal in Swaziland. It is difficult to know how many people were arrested on the march. Initial reports claimed 15 arrests, but that figure was raised to 30, then 45, and most recently to 59. A number of those arrested were refugees from Soweto, attending Thokoza school in Mbabane which caters exclusively for students who fled Soweto during the riots.

Some sources report that the march was joined by a number of

Swazi citizens, dissatisfied with the form of government in the country, and that the demonstration became a focus for opposition to the State. Whether this is the case or not, the demonstration certainly evoked memories of last year's teachers strike in Swaziland, which led to joint teacher/student action, and resulted in a series of ugly clashes with police. It may have been this memory, and the fear of exile activity functioning as an agent in focussing political opposition, which caused the authorities to act so quickly.

The day after the demonstration, a special Government Gazette dealing with the status of refugees was published. Its major provisions ordered that refugees

+have to carry identity cards at all times;

+may not possess any arms, ammunition or vehicles without permission;

+may be ordered to remain within refugee camps. Only people authorised by the State will be permitted to enter these camps;

+refugees may be deported to their country of origin if the State is satisfied that they will not be punished for political offences on their return;

+any trials held in connection with the contravention of these regulations will be held in camera, the proceedings being closed to public and press.

By the end of April, it was reported that at least 108 of the registered 180 South African refugees in Swaziland had been detained, and that exiles would no longer be welcome to stay in Swaziland. Early in May, 8 members of the ANC and PAC were arrested at Hlathikulu during a surprise police raid. They were allegedly in the possession of AK47 submachineguns, ammunition, medical supplies, army boots and food supplies. At least 3 of the 8 arrsted, Joseph Mngomezulu, Richard Malinga and John Mvelase are currently on trial in the Swaziland High Court. Their defence council argued that they were freedom fighters, on route to South Africa, and accordingly entitled to freedom of movement in terms of the Organisation for African Unity Declaration. Earlier, defence council had argued that the presiding judge, Justice Nathan, recuse himself because he was a South African. The application was refused.

At the conclusion of these court proceedings, one of the accused, Mngomezulu, was acquitted and immediately rearrested by Swazi police. Police sources claimed that he was being held pending a request from South African authorities for his extradition in connection with faction fighting in KwaZulu.

The other two accused were found guilty on two counts - possession of arms of war, and illegal possession of arms and ammunition of war. On the first count, Malinga was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment, and Zulu to 21 months imprisonment. On the second count, Malinga received 18 months or R750, and Zulu 21 months or R900.

Meanwhile, a legal tussle is developing in Swaziland over the proposed handing over of Mngomezulu to South African authorities. The Swazi director of prosecutions confirmed that Mngomezulu would be handed over to the South African Police, while legal advisors are considering bringing an urgent application to the Swazi high court restraining Swazi authorities from carrying out their intended hand over.

Recently, 59 of those arrested during the demonstration protesting the detention of PAC refugees, were released. 3 of these were past members of the Soweto Students Representative Council, and have been declared prohibited immigrants and deported from Swaziland. Of the remaining 56, only 38 attend Thokoza school, lending credibility to the allegation that local Swazi citizens used the march as a vehicle to express opposition to Sobhuza's government.

It is in the light of the above that one looks with interest to countries like Botswana in an attempt to understand how the conflict unfolding in Southern Africa is altering the internal structures of independent nations.

Item: SECURITY LIGHTING (RDM 15/5/78).

Security lighting costing R122,000 is to be installed at eight Swaziland border posts, a public works department spokesman said.

Deputy public works secretary, Mr. J. Marais, said new generating plants would ensure the border posts had 24-hour security lighting and would, among other things, help the night traffic flow.

The lighting would be installed at the border posts of Golela, Onverwacht, Bothashoop and Mahamba in Northern Natal, and the Transvaal border posts of Houtkop, Nerston, Waverley and Oshoek.

# ZAIRE invasion

The second invasion of Zaire's Shaba province within fourteen months has once again demonstrated the weakness of the Mobutu administration: its widespread unpopularity and its dependence on foreign military assistance to defeat a relatively small, if well-equipped, invading force. But while the position of the Mobutu government appears increasingly unstable is there an opposition which could replace it? In particular, does the movement which organised the current revolt, the Congolese National Liberation Front (FLNC) present a possible alternative? What forces does the FLNC represent, what chances does it have of gaining a national following, and what is the significance of the support it appears to be receiving from Angola and the socialist countries? The following notes may help to provide an indication of how these questions can be answered.

The origin of a Zaireian refugee community in Northern Angola can be traced to the departure of the Katangan secessionists in 1963. Zaire became independent on June 30th 1960 after five months of hurried preparations by Belgian administrators and Congolese nationalists to establish a political structure. Nine days after independence the Congolese army mutinied: African soldiers were angered by the retention of Belgian officers. The premier of Katanga, Moise Tshombe, suppressed the mutiny with the help of Belgi troops and on July 11th declared Katanga an independent state. Congolese soldiers were disarmed, and all but 300 sent out of the province, and Tshombe's government created a new force, the Katanga gendarmery. The gendarmery was made up of freshly recruited men, drawn mainly from the Balunda people who inhabited the southern part of the province. Most of the support for Tshombe's political party, CONAKAT, came from this area. Belgium was to provide the equipment, the officers and the expertise needed to train this army. The gendarmery was reinforced by mercenary units mainly recruited in Rhodesia and South Africa. Tshombe's secession in its early stages was backed by Belgium (until a change in Belgian government), as well as the Belgian-controlled Union Minière du Haut Katanga which owned the Katangan copper mines. In contrast to the anti Belgian stance adopted by the MNC

Lumumba administration, the Katanga government was careful to state its concern that economic ties with the former colonial power should be retained.

The secession provoked United Nations military intervention and eventually, in February 1963, the Katangan government capitulated after the gendarmery had been defeated and most of the urban centres occupied by UN troops. Tshombe went into exile in Spain. The sporadic fighting had lasted over two years and had included an exceptionally brutal suppression of an insurrection against the Tshombe Government in Northern Katanga among the Baluba peoples who had remained loyal to the central government. Only a small proportion of the gendarmery was integrated into the Congolese army, the remainder resorted to banditry or regrouped with the mercenaries in Angola where a 'Forces Katangais Libres' was being formed.

However, the FKL was next to be employed by the Congolese Government. In 1964 there was a rebellion in Eastern Congo led by the Comité Nationale de Liberation (CNL), a group which had developed from a nucleus of radical Lumumbist politicians dissatisfied with the increasing conservatism of the Congolese administration. The CNL, or Muleleists (named after their leader Pierre Mulele), were a peasant movement: their ideology was hostile to the city and all its influences. Though the rebels used traditional beliefs to sustain morale and discipline, their leaders were also inspired by Mao's writings on guerilla warfare. Initially extremely successful, by July 1964 the Muleleists controlled nearly half the Congo. At this point the Congolese Government decided to invite Tshombe to assume the premiership in the hope of ensuring Katangan loyalty and with the intention of using Tshombist forces to crush the Muleleists.

The rebellion took over a year to suppress. The Katangan Gendarmery, working in close coordination with the mercenaries paid by the Congo Government, played a decisive military role. The regular Congolese army led by General Mobutu was a much less significant factor in the defeat of the Muleleists. Counter-insurgency tactics did not include trying to win the support of the civilian population: both white mercenaries and gendarmes behaved abominably to non-combatants.

when the back of the revolt had been broken, Tshombe was dismissed and returned to Europe. Shortly afterwards a military administration under Mobutu assumed control of the Congolese Government. Mobutu was careful to station Katangan military units in areas remote from their home region. However, in 1966 and 1967 there were two unsuccessful gendarmery mutinies. The first mutiny resulted from discontent among Katangan units who, unlike the rest of the army, had not been paid for three months. The 1967 revolt was led by mercenaries and had as its objective the reinstatement of Tshombe. The uprising was dispersed, badly coordinated and localised and the mercenaries eventually retreated over the Rwanda border. Survivors from the Katangan units returned to their old bases in the Lunda-speaking parts of Northern Angola.

It was from these units that the National Front for the Liberation of the Congo (FLNC) was formed in June 1968. Its founder was Nathanael M'Bumba, who had originally been appointed by the Tshombe administration as commanding police officer in Kolwezi in 1961. During the next few years, FLNC units, based in Tshikapa and Texeira de Sousa, were used by the Portuguese as a counter-insurgent force against the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) which itself was based in the Kikongo-speaking region of South-western Zaire. The FLNC had good reason to oppose any extention of FNLA influence: the Angolan movement led by Holden Roberto was favoured by the Mobutu administration and was regarded by the FLNC men as its surrogate.

During the Angolan civil war of 1975, the FLNC transferred its allegiance from the outgoing Portuguese administration to the Luanda-based Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). They played a crucial part in the defence of Luanda against the invading FNLA column and later retook several important centres in Northern Angola from the FNLA. With the defeat of the FNLA, the FLNC units numbered 6,000 men; probably one of the most experienced and effective military formations in Central Africa.

Though the FLNC presents a serious military challenge to Mobutu, could they provide an effective alternative administration? Given the history recounted above, on the face of things, this would seem unlikely. Traditionally the gendarmery were drawn from a narrow ethnic base and most of the present FLNC following seems

to come from Lunda-speaking areas. One might expect the role they played during the secession and in crushing the Muleleist movement in 1965 to militate against them acquiring any national support. Then their original loyalty to Tshombe brings into question the sincerity of their proclaimed aim of liberating the whole of Zaire. Shaba province (Katanga) contains a vast proportion of Zaire's mineral wealth and contributes 70 per cent of the country's foreign exchange earnings.

It is possible that the FLNC has transcended the limits of its historical origin. First of all, FLNC units could have been effected by the Portuguese armed forces movement (MFA): it is known that Admiral Coutinho, one of the more radical MFA leaders approved of them. Similarly, the MPLA, which drew much of their rural following from the Angolan Balunda community might have had some influence. Then it is likely that only a small proportion of the FNLA units are ex-gendarmes: such men would now be in their forties and fifties. Newspaper reports have stressed the youthfulness of the Kolwezi invaders. After the defeat of last years FLNC offensive, the Zairian army's behaviour caused thousands of Balunda to cross the border into Zambia and Angola. Shaba province has for some years had an exceptionally harsh governor. Finally, the Katangans seem to have gained the support of some of their traditional opponents. Last year it was rumoured that Antoine Gizenga, a veteran Lumumbist and leader of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Kinshasha (successor to the CNL) was in Luanda helping to plan the FLNC attack: in any case, the Democratic Forces publicly welcomed the invasion. This is not insignificant; over the last three years there has been a revival of Muleleist activity in Eastern Zaire. A recent edition of Jeune Afrique (31 5 1978) reported that the FLNC was being joined by refugees from Kasai. Kasai, a province neighbouring Shaba, also seceded from the Congo in 1960: a genocidal campaign was fought by the Congolese army under Mobutu to end the secession. It is quite possible that hostility to the current administration persists in Kasai from that terrible time. So there are grounds for contending that the FLNC could find support outside Shaba itself.

But what makes one a little sceptical of this is the strategy adopted by the FLNC. This does not appear to be geared to mobilising mass support: there are no indications that the FLNC

sent organisers before the invasion to any provinces other than Shaba. This was not to be a peoples' revolutionary war on the classic pattern established by FRELIMO or MPLA. Instead a swift sabotage operation was envisaged. The brutal intimidation of the European population in the mining towns was neither purposeless nor indiscriminate. The main victims were of French or Belgian nationality: the two countries supply many of the mining technicians employed in the area. In contrast, the Portuguese community was left relatively unmolested, reportedly at the request of the Angolan government. Without European technical expertise mining operations would come to a halt and the Zaireian economy would collapse, bringing down with it Mobutu's government. Popular support would be an irrelevant factor in the assumption of power in the resulting political vacuum: this would not be a guerilla campaign, conventional military competence would be the deciding factor. The FLNC was very careful at first to ensure that mining installations were not damaged. Only after the arrival of the French paratroopers did they flood the mines. This reinforces the argument that they saw the invasion as a quick decisive final action.

There is evidence to suggest that dissatisfaction with Mobutu's regime is fairly general and therefore the limitation of operations to Shaba represents a foregone opportunity. Though inflation has dropped slightly from its 1975 peak of 100 per cent and Zaire has managed to avoid financial bankruptcy, this has been at the cost of cutting already minimal social expenditure and increasing taxation. A major purge of the army in the wake of its humiliating performance in 1977 has left it demoralised and fearful. A less dramatic more discreet effort to enlarge the isolated pockets of resistance left over from the Muleleist revolt would have been a sensible preliminary to the invasion. A dispersed low intensity revolt would have been less likely to have provoked foreign intervention.

Why have Angola and her allies been prepared to sanction and support the FLNC invasions? First one should be careful not to overestimate the extent of their help or control. Eye witnesses do allege that Cuban soldiers took part in the initial stages of the operation, and FLNC weapons captured were of Eastern European manufacture. But the number of Cuban soldiers involved seems to have been very small, and the FLNC could have been

issued with Czech and Russian equipment during the Angolan civil war. There is no evidence to suggest that the Shaba invasion represents a major effort on the part of socialist forces in Africa. The Angolan Government has good reason to support any offensive against Mobutu. The activities of the Zaire-based FNLA have increased in Uige recently; in May there were no less than eight attacks on Angolan units by FNLA insurgents. It should be remembered that the degree of control the Angolans can exert over the FLNC must be limited. As well as the FNLA there are also UNITA guerillas fighting the Angolan army. The MPLA is in no position to ultimately determine the activities of an independently organised fighting force. The involvement of the Cubans (which the Cuban government strenuously denies) is not easy to explain. Cubans have been helping Congolese revolutionary movements since 1963. It could be argued that support for the militarily experienced and competent FLNC is consistent with the Debrayist thesis of the necessity for concentrating leadership in the hands of military experts as opposed to subordinating their role to a 'pure' political leadership. But this seems a little far fetched: Cuban support traditionally has gone to the Muleleists (whom the Katangans fought against in the sixties). Ideologically they are a considerably more coherent group. If leaders provide any clue to the nature of the movement, a Zaire controlled by the FLNC would not be much of an improvement on the present set-up. M'Bumba's part as a police functionary of the exceptionally repressive and reactionary Tshombe regime is scarcely reassuring.

There is a possibility that Soviet, Cuban and East German interest in this region might stem from purely strategic concerns. In 1976, Mobutu signed an agreement with a West German firm, OTRAG, leasing parts of Shaba as a rocket-testing area. OTRAG insists that the project is non-military but other sources suggest that both West German and American military interests are involved. The invasion could be viewed by the Warsaw Pact countries as a convenient means of persuading OTRAG to withdraw from the region.

The nature of the invading force, the limitations of its strategy, and the anxieties of its host country and possible backers, make it seem likely, that whatever the intentions of the FLNC itself,

this was not a serious attempt by its allies to promote revolutionary change in Zaire. Rather it should be seen as an opportunist endeavour to eliminate threats to their more immediate interests.

An article in the Star (14/6/78) reported that a meeting of Zaire's international creditors, among them the United States, Britain, France, Japan, Iran, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, "had considered the appointment of foreign representatives to the governing board of the Zaire Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance in Kinshasa.

"The representative to the Central Bank is to be nominated by the IMF and will have almost total control over Zaire's financial system...

"A spokesman denied however that there would be any discussion of general political and social reforms".

The Shaba "episode" must rank as one of the most blatant and crude exercises of neo-colonial intervention to prop up the economic interests of western capitalist countries. The conditions that are necessary for the exploitation of raw materials and labour had to be restored.


# NIGERIAN Literature and the Civil War

## by Tom Lodge

Introduction.

BIAFRAN PROPAGANDISTS called the war a people's war. The Federalists claimed to be fighting a struggle for unity.(1) Both claimed they had the solution to Nigeria's political problems: General Gowon's twelve state decree was intended to end the three-cornered struggle between the ethnically based political alliances; Colonel Ojukwu's Biafran secession offered the Ibo community security and hinted at a fairer more egalitarian social order.

By 1965 it had become increasingly obvious to those who desired radical social change that the Nigerian political system was incapable of producing it. The class-oriented, anti capitalist section of the Western Action Group had been emasculated and its leaders removed from the political scene by the ruling coalition of a Northern aristocracy and Southern businessmen and professionals. The 1964 general strike had merely demonstrated the weakness of the labour movement. Simultaneously, army officers (many of whom were drawn from the Eastern region) were questioning the legitimacy of the government. As well as finding their own position being undermined by a promotion and recruitment policy that favoured the hitherto neglected Northern region, Southern officers disliked the increasingly repressive role in which the army was used to quell political or communal challenges to the ruling group's authority.(2) Their intervention in politics in January 1966 was welcomed by the intelligentsia whose radicalism was echoed in the first public statements of the leaders of the coup d'ètat. The corruption, paralysis and eventual breakdown of the political system had become a common preoccupation of Nigerian writers whether they worked in the universities or the increasingly alienated civil service.(3) Though the optimistic mood which had prevailed at independence had long since disappeared, writers could still believe that the army's intervention provided a chance for national reconciliation.(4) The brutal communal revenges of May, July and September ended such hopes; the Ibo exodus and the Eastern secession left the writers, hitherto a fairly closely-knit group, bitterly divided. Most Ibo writers returned to the East and many were to play an important role in the organisation and bureaucracy of the secessionist state.

The others remained convinced of the need for unity though they never identified themselves so enthusiastically with the Federal cause as did the Biafrans with theirs. Even Soyinka, who during the war was imprisoned, was opposed to the nationalism of the Ibos which he reckoned to be ultimately reactionary.

Nigerian writers are historically important not just because their work commented on the Nigerian scene. Their position was different from those idealists who went to Spain in the thirties: few writers actually took up arms in the conflict. They were involved not as anonymous figures on a battlefield but in the administration as propagandists, diplomats and planners.

The alienation of Nigeria's writers was a significant factor in the political disintegration of a country which depended for its bureaucracy on a relatively small and well integrated educated elite. The officers that planned the first coup were remarkable in that most of them had university degrees. The democratic government of Nigeria fell not just because of the violence of the army but because the civil servants and sections of the business community no longer supported it and welcomed its downfall. The writers relected and influenced the thought of the educated elite, though it should be said that their influence declined with their political extremism. An example of this influence was the series of discussions held between young army officers and Ibidan University intellectuals (including Okigbo, Soyinka and Clark) which occured some months before the January coup. Another was the formation of a secessionist group at the university of Nsukka in the early months of 1967. Both had some part in deciding the outcome of the following events.

The 'People's War' was ironically named. It was a people's war in the nature of its victims - but not because of its causes or motives. An economic analysis of the conflict shows an increasinoly educated section of the community frustrated by the mid-sixties with the lack of opportunities. Competition for senior posts began to get regionally or ethnically oriented, worsening mutual distrust and misunderstanding. Decree number 34 which unified the civil service ending the 'northernisation' policy of recruitment sparked off the pogroms, for the decree was read by Northerners as another attempt by Easterners to dominate the federation. Hence the student demonstrations and the popular

outburst that they helped to precipitate.(5) Oil became an important factor in the decision to secede: with the twelve state decree the East stood to lose vital reserves. Such an analysis (6) is unduly harsh and simplistic - but it does help to emphasise that this was a struggle between elites fought for them by uneducated men brutalised by atrocities and propaganda. The writers were part of this elite and few of them attempted to defuse the situation by remaining objective. With their occasionally violent partisanship their artistry deteriorated.

Public opinion, foreign intervention and propaganda abroad were three factors that prolonged the struggle and here the Biafran writers were important in providing articulate, respectable and imaginative spokesmen. The poetry, drama and fiction arising out of the events leading up to and during the conflict are not merely commentaries. They were symptomatic of Nigeria's political tensions and difficulties.

Part One.

Chinua Achebe's work is tied to the historical development of Nigeria. His writing is helpful for the historian not just because it reflects events but because it can offer a different set of values to those of the European observer. In A Man of the People the narrator tells of 'a critic who committed a crime in my view because he transferred to an alien culture the same meanings and interpretations that his own people attach to certain gestures' (p.56). Later on in the conversation the narrator, put on the defensive by the Europeans' mockery of his government's flambouyant corruption, retaliates: 'Your accusation may be true but you've no right to make it'. The irony is that he too is to regard his own society with the same mixture of condescension and insensitivity.

The plot revolves round the relationship between a young teacher, Odili, and a successful politician from the same village, Chief Nanga. At one level it is possible to sympathise with Odili's increasing sense of moral outrage. Nanga's vindictive and opportunistic behaviour in a parliamentary debate puts him in a most unattractive light. His luxurious house is built with public money, he rides in a cadillac and his children attend a snob English school. This affluence is contrasted with the

surrounding poverty: turning away from Nanga's house you see 'a lunatic sitting by a basket of garbage he called his possessions' (p. 79). But this moral concern is filtered through Odili's own self-righteousness: Nanga's wickedness is not dramatically realised. when we actually meet him he immediately appears a warm and likeable figure. This is the irony: it is Nanga, not Odili who is "The Man of the People". Odili despises the beliefs that underly village culture. Nanga may live in a house with ten flushing water closets but he has not altogether forsaken the morality of those he exploits. He understands the problem posed by a prospective servant: 'How man wey get family for make bitterleaf and egusi? Unless if the man no get shame.' (p. 52) Nanga sympathises: cooking african food is traditionally womans work, a man would lose his self respect if he consented to cook anything less than the European dishes that required education and sophistication. However, Nanga prefers bitterleaf and egusi to chicken puri. On a deeper level he realises the problem of being a man of power in West Africa - for such a man is expected to be ostentatious and generous. 'I no de keep anini for myself na so so troway' (p. 16) and patronage causes politics to be endemically corrupt. Nanga's position with his people is secure: He can risk the joke: 'Don't you know that minister means servant' (p. 9).

Odili's position is complex. Achebe distances himself from his hero with a well-controlled irony. Odili is aloof from the 'poor contemptible people' (p. 2) round him; he can criticise a colleague's 'primitive loyalty' to the chief who came from the same village, but apart from his hypocrisy in accepting Nanga's hospitality and patronage ('I didn't want anyone to think that Odili Samulu was capable of stooping to obtain a scholarship in any underhand way (p. 22)), he loses any integrity in his treatment of Elsie. Elsie is his girlfriend -'she was a beautiful happy girl' (p. 28)- and he claims to love her, but one of her main attractions is that 'she made no demands whatsoever' (p. 28). Nanga seduces her, but only after Odili has spoken of her as 'just a good time girl'. Nanga's offence is trifling compared to the breach to the conventions of age and hospitality which Odili commits by insulting Nanga. The rift between the two men is what sparks off Odili's political campaign against Nanga. From his tolerant view that 'the trouble with our new nation...was that none of us had been indoors long enough to say "to hell with it"',

he now realises correctly that 'the man was a minister bloated by the flatulence of ill-gotten wealth' (p. 82). From his personal selfish grievance Odili is willing to regard himself as a victim of the political system. He is determined to revenge himself by seducing Nanga's prospective second wife. Joining the anti-capitalist CPC party is incidental to his main purpose.

Odili's attitude is no less materialist than that of the whole people who will only protest after the politician 'has taken away enough for the owner to notice' (p. 100). But if the great mass are apathetic, relying on the supernatural for change -'he holds the knife and he holds the yam' (p. 102) - they also have an integrity which rests on the values of the village. There is the law of hospitality symbolised in the Kola nut. 'The village had a mind; it could say no to sacrilege'. But as in all Achebe's novels the old values and customs are in conflict with something more powerful: 'You do not belong to this age, old man, men of worth nowadays simply forget what they said yesterday'.'In the affairs of the nation there was no owner; the laws of the village had become powerless'. (p. 167). Once the moral framework of village custom is removed or interfered with, little remains. The villager knows that 'they are eating....but we are eating too'. All politics means is that the village's 'own son should go and bring our share'(p. 140).

Odili's cynicism is checked by his friend, the political activist, Max. Max wants to form a revolutionary vanguard to lead the common people in a struggle against exploitation. His CPC is made of young professionals with a vaguely marxist outlook. Mixed with Max's idealism is a streak of pragmatism. He is willing to accept political bribes and use them against his rivals. He is a possible rival to the man of the people. In his company things, for Odili, 'seem so mixed up; my revenge, my new political ambition and the girl'. Odili's campaign against Nanga is an undignified if courageous farce; only for him is it 'a stirring monumental action untainted by hopes of success or reward'. The grandiose terms he uses to describe his electoral battle are juxtaposed with the terse statement that 'that same night Max was killed in Agbada'. After political tumult and rioting the army intervenes. The coup d'ètat is not a revolution betrayed for there was no hope of one anyway:

> The people as we have seen, have become even more cynical of their leaders and were apathetic into the bargain..... the people had nothing to do with the fall of our government (p. 162).

A Man of the People ends on a note of despair. But Achebe has lost some of his control. While he is still able to view his hero with a degree of detachment- Odili decides after the coup to appropriate party funds - he seems to be in complete agreement with Odili's verdict of the people as a 'vast contemptible crowd' (p. 158). In the face of popular indifference to social injustice political action is meaningful only in terms of maintaining one's individual integrity:

> ....in such a regime, I say, you died a good death if your life had inspired someone to come forward and shoot your murderer without asking to be paid...(p. 167).

Achebe's social pessimism was shared by Wole Soyinka, the author of The Interpreters. Like Achebe, Soyinka was educated at Ibadan university. Though in his early dismissal of negritude Soyinka seemed to imply that the writer had a unique social function,

> Only through the confidence of an individual art can the African emerge as a creature of sensibilities (7)

by the 1960's he was to identify himself as one of 'the strong breed': a man who could not hide behind his vocation to avoid direct and personal involvement in events (8). He once wrote: 'a committment to absolute ideas cannot plead the excuse of immobilisation' (9). With other radicals, including the poet Christopher Okigbo, he associated himself with the socialist wing of the Action Group (10). During 'the Akintola days when public clowning was the special prerogative of politicians' (11), Soyinka focussed his hopes on the industrial unrest which culminated in the 1964 general strike. The strike ended in disunity within the joint action committee of labour organisations (12), and betrayal of the militants by the orthodox political opposition group UGPA which refused to endorse radical labour candidates in the ensueing elections. To hope for a workers revolution in Nigeria was surely unrealistic: against a population of about 55 million in 1966, Nigeria's wage labour numbered 466,000 - less than 1% - and less than half those belonged to a trade union (13). Moreover,

they were concentrated in the South, whereas the base of political power lay with the peasants of the North (14). Soyinka claims that in 1965/66 there was the possibility of a popular rising, but quite how the masses were to be mobilised or organised he does not make clear (15).

Reinforcing his political disenchantment is a tragic poetic vision. A poem written in 1963, Death in the dawn (16) takes two events during a drive from Ibadan to Lagos. One is the death of a cock caught by the car's windscreen and the other a motor accident passed by some minutes later. The incidents have a double significance: they represent the price to pay for technological advance and they are associated with political tragedy: Awolowo's son's death in one was followed by the father's imprisonment (17). The first section of the poem describes the dawn; it is one of regeneration, of cleansing the fears of the night: 'wipe your feet upon the dognose wetness of the earth'. Hope and beauty come with sunrise, the crops are being planted: 'cottened feet to break the early earthworm on the hoe'. Gentle wit on the pun on the early worm is followed by soft passion 'now shadows strech with sap'. The harmony and promise is jolted 'burdened hulks', the overloaded mammy wagons with their 'faceless throngs' of potential victims to wake the silent markets. This image of uneasy menace is allayed for a moment by the picture of awakening, but the counterpane is savagely transformed into a bloody bundle of feathers. Here the idea of sacrifice, of a cock sacrificed to the ravenous hunger of the road. Sacrifices are to no avail, the cock is merely the presage of another death. Violent shock on seeing this death: 'But such another wraith' and profound sorrow; the dead man is a brother who must be realised as a human individual, despite the hideous mask of violent death. A dubious progress exacts such sacrifice but the wrath of old gods cannot be appeased. Regeneration, passion and beauty are presented in tragic conflict with the sudden and meaningless moment of death.

But Soyinka is not nostalgic: the old framework has been corrupted. The Interpreters would seem to show that there are no simple solutions: social disintegration and moral corruption have been too total. At the opening of the novel a choice is presented to Egbo, a young civil servant. His father is a village chief in the swamplands behind Lagos whose authority and people are threatened

by the 'cozening half men' from the Lagos bureaucracy. Egbo is offered the chance to inherit his authority, to draw on an older vitality to fight the modern impotence. But what was once virile is now vegetating. To surrender to its cloying power, though tempting, would be a negation of personality:

> Voluptuous mermaid arms...infinitely coy and maternal..(p. 14),
> gnarled tears of mangrove....dead air....(p. 8).

The choice is between two evils: the creek's ugly mudflats or the sewage ridden ports of Lagos. Egbo's refusal to commit himself emotionally to either renders him powerless. His political impotence stems from both a revulsion for the new order and a refusal to seek comfort in nostalgia. Unlike Fanon's intellectual revolutionary he cannot repudiate his individuality and reintegrate himself with rural culture. Egbo attempts to break out of this political and emotional paralysis by violent sexual fulfilment. This would seem to offer a regeneration and a means to 'earthing' oneself to some current of life present in the countryside, free from the clutches of the past, which can transform a sterile present. After making love, Egbo is 'born again' and he lies beneath a bridge by the river of Ogun, God of creative energy. Symbolic of hope is the steel bridge, 'a rainbow' (p. 127) above him. At this point the answer appears to lie in a violence harnessed to technology and spiritual redemption. Egbo realises this but is incapable of channeling force constructively; he can only destroy with his love and use his hate to futilely insult the oyinbo (18) by spitting on him. Sexual love becomes an indulgence and a form of drowning and returning to the creeks.

Then there is the fate of Sekoni. As a recently qualified engineer he has a chance to change things within the system, to channel force and energy to a constructive end. Eventually the bureaucracy allows him to build a power station but Sekoni is to be betrayed and maddened:

> Sekoni.....sought the hand of kindred spirits for the flare
> of static electricity but it slipped with grease...(p. 26)

Sekoni's power station is declared by a corrupt expert to be unsafe. The local chief deserts him: 'electricity is government thing'. For as the chairman of the board points out, the write-

offs pay better than the fulfilled contracts. Sekoni's technical skill has no relevance for either the rural authorities or the city bureaucrats. He is killed in a car accident and 'the blood of earth dwellers mingles with the blanched streams of the mocking bull' (p. 155). For Sekoni's death is the final futility, the culmination of despair in the barren irony of the harvest of the road.

The despair is not just felt by the middle class interpreters. They are at first cynical about the revivalist movement of Lazarus - 'Its good business, these days religion' but at a deeper level Lazarus's following expresses the desperation of the urban poor. The resurrection represents a defiant dismissal of death and tragedy; the new order is to be one of God's making and 'God does not take a bribe' (p. 165). Lazarus forecasts a second coming, a flood and a new Noah, and he too becomes an interpreter. But he fails because his symbolic Noah is a common thief who cannot be transformed; a new order cannot be founded on those 'rejected by society' for they too are cynical, treacherous and pessimistic (p. 280):

> The world cannot stand prophets of joy. Everyone is in love with Agonies (p. 180).

Soyinka's contempt is mixed with pity. At a poor man's funeral 'they were clumsy and their grief seemed true', but 'need they mahe death seem so ignoble'. 'The coffin, like a turd, like a tongue stuck out in mockery of mourning'. There is 'the automatic respect of the poor for opulence' (chapter 7). In derinola's epitaph there is the tragedy of hope for a future Nigeria (p. 114).

Soyinka identifies with Lazarus, for the myth is about a man who has survived death. Like Lazarus, Soyinka is to 'become hungry for ..the moment when I must choose between death and surrender'. Lazarus is a heroic creation; a charlatan, but one with a vision of revival and hope wreathed in a rainbow. Like the author, his vision is apocalyptic and one of a social outcast.

For Soyinka cannot find his answers inside society; the poor are merely pitiful, the bourgeois are the scum of Nigerian life. Professor Oguazor, the archtype 'new oyinbo', 'slavishly imitating

anglo saxon behaviour'. Suddenly there is a shaft of pity: he has a bastard daughter who 'causes him much sorrow and pain' (p. 151) because he cannot have her but must hide her away. But she is 'the plastic apple of his eye' and with the reference to his vulgar taste Soyinka has lost control, deadening his compassion with shrill mockery. He is more successful with Chief Winsala, delighting in the charisma and wit of the Yoruba politician. Winsala is a 'man of the people', his grossness seems lovable: 'we only despise the small criminal'. His ignorance and hypocrisy are somehow magnificent. To demolish him, Soyinka shows him humiliated. But unlike the destruction of Oguazor there is no vicarious pleasure in his humiliation: 'It is no matter for rejoicing when a child sees his father naked'. Finally there is Sir Derinola, a member of the old colonial élite who cannot move with the times. Sago has a dream about Sir Derinola which features Soyinka's favourite technique of sexual mockery to belittle him: he appears with a brassiere on his chest and only a worm between his legs. All three men are shown to have a capacity for suffering and Soyinka's judgement of them seems forced and unbalanced. The social criticism in The Interpreters can degenerate into self indulgence.

We are left with an inner circle who can transcend the social corruption by their disaffection and uninvolvement. The stress is on youth, on violence and on Lazarus's vision of the flood and the recreation. Excepting Matthias, the office messenger, who is allowed a rather unconvincing conversion to the nihilistic cult of Voidency, the group has no outside sympathisers. Egbo says 'If you seek to transform, you must not be afraid of power' and by the close of the novel the choice would seem to be between wrenching control of that power or drowning.

Soyinka's historical view is cyclic, violent and deterministic. History is a 'remorseless arc'. A purely political interpretation of Idanre would be absurdly literal, but Soyinka does invite us to make some comparison:

> In detail in the human context of my society, Idanre has made abundent sense....since then the bloody cycle of Ogun's pilgrimage has been, in true cyclic manner, most bloodily re-enacted.....

Idanre is drawn from the Yoruba legend of Ogun, god of Iron. He

interprets for man's use, energy, represented by Sango, god of lightening. In the legend he is persuaded to fight the enemies of his worshippers; in battle his violence is aroused and he kills many on his own side. In The Interpreters he is identified with the inherently violent Egbo. In the poem, Ogun stands for man's dual capacity for mastering energy and turning that energy against himself. Idanre, a small village in the West, has a rock-strewn plateau and a great boulder which was once rolled on the Gods, splitting their unity of purpose. The myths are evoked to show the potential tragedy and hope in people's existence. The only solution is to 'earth' oneself, to channel the electricity within to some useful purpose.

In the storm, Ogun is catching Sango, forging lightening and thunderbolts. He protects men with his iron as they shelter beneath a corrugated roof. In the storm is promise of harvest: '...welcome rain, and Earth prepare, that seeds may swell'. Hope through technical progress and earth's harvest. But the present is 'inchoate', working against the promise is a hint of menace presented in the language of political intrigue: 'rumours rise on grey corrugations'.

In the next section he describes the wine girl whose charity is to root him, to attempt to restore belief and faith against a 'rising sediment of disquiet'. But there seems little time for innocence or private solace:

> Darkness veiled her little hills poised
> Twin nights against the night, pensive points
> In the leer of lightening, and sadness filled
> The lone face of the wine girl; the thatch
> Ran rivulets between her breasts.

Soyinka can only describe the threat he feels as a 'certain knowledge....the apocalypse'. To express the ambiguity he sees in progress, he takes the harvest and shows how its fruition is based on tragedy: 'growth is greener where rich blood is spilt'. The road awaits famished; the earth must have its dues paid to it..'A lethal arc completes full circle' and men struggle to resist it, to 'earth themselves'. Ogun's creativity, the harvest; the comparison of the wine girl and the public hope of pylons and high tension wires: here is an attempt to synthesise and thus break the lethal arc - or at least twist it

and avert the consequences. It is a synthesis that the interpreters cannot achieve: creative violence and social compassion are beyond them as much as Ogun.

And in the satire Kongi's Harvest Soyinka closes in with a bitter attck on the African leadership. The climax is reached in the harvest feast of the new yam. The tyrant Kongi's new five year plan is to be announced and the reactionary king Danlola is to submit to his authority. The play is an attack on the charismatic emptiness of African ideology: the 'enlightened ritualism' and 'glamourised fossilism'. Kongi's pose as the national messiah in his agony on the mountain recalls both Nkrumah's cult of the redeemer and Azikiwe's claim to be one of the apostles of new Africa. The comedy of Kongi has a sour edge. For beneath the flamboyant wit of Nigerian political life was brutality and betrayal. You can laugh at Kongism but then you 'look over the wall to find that agony is the raw commodity that Kongi has spent lives to invent.' The only hope seems to lie in a total disruption of power and the dispersion of its holders. They must be replaced by a younger and saner generation. (19)

Christopher Okigbo, like Soyinka, distrusted negritude: 'there is no such thing as African writing: there is good writing and bad writing'. (20) It has been argued that his poetry expressed a struggle to preserve African cultural values from being suffocated by European christianity, an interpretation which rests on a rather literal interpretation of his admittedly extremely obscure work. More helpful is to use the echoes deliberately evoked from modern English poetry. To argue that these are merely borrowings which can be read independently of the context of their derivation is irresponsible. (21) Okigbo's meaning was esoteric: his poetry was not intended to be popular: 'I don't read my poems to non poets'. (22) He saw poetry as 'one way of supplementing life' and life could fulfill the purpose of poetry. (23) This helps to explain the contradiction between his refusal to corrupt art with nationalism and his own identification with a national cause. For the body of his poetry describes a journey from innocence, through disillusionment to maturity and death. His radicalism of the early sixties was to be transformed by the massacres and he was one of the very few intellectuals who died in battle, fighting against

the 'one Nigeria' that he had once hoped could be reformed. His death has been praised as a 'piece of poetry at its deepest'. Like Soyinka he discovered that universal concerns were inadequate abstractions: 'it was time for him to respond'. (24)

In 1962 his response was one of retreat, an attempt to define poetic and private attitudes: 'the ultimate response is to be sought only in terms of each poet's response to his medium.' (25) '<u>Silences</u>' is in two parts: the first written in 1962 and the second in 1964. Okigbo claimed that the sister's lament was inspired by the 1962 crisis in the West and the death of Congo's Lumumba, whereas the <u>Lament of the Drums</u> arose out of Awolowo's imprisonment and the death of the politician's son. <u>Silent Sisters</u> first uses Gerard Manley Hopkins' images of despair: the leaden echo and carrion comfort, and blends them with the hopeful vision at the end of <u>The Wreck of the Deutshland</u>. The poem asks throughout: how to say 'No' - how to emulate Hopkins' nun who can make her own and her sister's death a matter for rejoicing. But in Okigbo's poem there is less hope. Hopkins' nun is christened whereas the Lament's crier has no such faith. Stronger is the indulgence of grief:

> ...globules of fresh anguish
> immense golden eggs empty of albumen
> sink into our balcony.

The storm of the first section is like that of <u>Idanre</u>, or the flood in the <u>Interpreters:</u> it is associated with calamity - 'What cast iron step cascading down the valley, all forged into the thunder of tanks'. This becomes specific with Lumumba's murder: 'They struck him in the ear, they struck him in the eye'. With Soyinka, Okigbo realised the futility of public protest - 'to cry to the mushroom of the sky'. The poet must deny himself and say no (27) <u>by keeping silent</u>. For with the cynicism and teachery of a hollow society, martyrdom would have little effect or meaning.The writer can only at this stage wait, listen and remember to numb his disappointment:

> One dips one's tongue in the ocean
> Camps with the choir of inconstant
> Dolphins, by shallow sand bank
> Sprinkled with memories
> Extend one's branches of coral
> Silence: this silence distills in yellow melodies.

The voice of the drums is a collective one. It is no longer the problem of a private response, of individual creativity. There is rather the feeling of an angry crowd. Eliot's hollow men are no longer silent; they are 'the hollow heads of long drums': the traditional spirits anticipating war, the ancestors awakened to a betrayed promise. The silence is no longer that of numbed reflection but the quiet following cry of pain cut short by death: 'The unheard sullen shriek of the funerary ram'. With the signs of impending war, the 'liquid messengers of blood', the voices rent by javelins is 'Babylonish capture', 'martyrdom'. Awolowo's betrayal is equalled with Lumumba's death. For the faithful there is disillusion in the 'broken tin gods'. Hopelessness lies in the calm that follows the drums's fury: the sense of drifting, of a society that flows, like water under a bridge, with no deep impression or memories:

> Silver of rivulets this side of the bridge,
> Cascades of lily-livered laughter,
> Fold-on-fold of raped, naked blue -
> What memory has the sea of her lover?

From far away the drums can be heard again, mourning a harvest, a crop, a people and a promise that had been betrayed, shamed and despoiled.

In the two parts of Silences there has been a shift in mood: from private anguish to public despair. The focus narrows from the troubled continent to Nigerian politics and the failure of the radicals in Awolowo's party. (28) Like Soyinka, Okigbo realised that it was time to actively respond.

The intellectual's tendency towards active participation in political events was paralleled by a developing interest taken by the army. The army was created and trained by the British and its senior officers still believed that it should be above politics: 'It is not the nature of officers of my upbringing to want to interfere in politics' (Brigadier Ogundipe). This tradition was strengthened by the fact that unlike the civil service and Native Authority police, the army operated under a central command not subordinate to regional interests. But by 1965 amongst the middle rank officers there was increasing political consciousness. By 1966 the army had fought in the Congo, it had been used to suppress the Tiv riots and it had

itself become a political issue with the Action group's attack on the Anglo-Nigerian defence pact.

The politicisation of intellectuals and the officer corps was matched by a growing mass involvement in politics. This was mainly the result of the 1963 census which showed the north to be in numerical superiority to all the other regions. Thus it became vital for the Southern regional parties to extend their mass base to the north so as to prevent a monopolisation of power by the N.P.C. with its 'one people, one north' ideology. Thus it can be argued that for the first time a national election was fought. The result was blatantly rigged after opposition (U.G.P.A.) candidates were imprisoned and in the ensuing regional elections a desperate Action group took to the streets. In Ibadan there were several days of rioting. Nigerian marxists have described this as a 'spontaneous mass uprising' (29) and Soyinka shared their view. But rather than attempting to channel, lead and organise this force, the intellectuals and soldiers were in favour of by-passing this stage with a coup d'etat which could then turn to the masses for vocal support. The coup was on behalf of the oppressed but it had no wish to involve them.

There are signs of this impatience in Soyinka's contempt for ordinary people in The Interpreters, in Okigbo's drifting river with no deep impressions or memories. 'The proletariat was not capable of any leadership.....the peasantry unconscious...' writes Laval. During the electoral crisis, officers were beginning to discuss intervention; in the bitterness that followed it, by July 1965, a group of soldiers and civilians were planning a radical alteration in the national government. The civilians (who were not included in the operational planning) included J.P. Clark, Soyinka, Okigbo, and the socialists Ikoku and Otegbeyi. (30) The military inner circle was led by Majors Ifeajuna and Nzeogwu. (31) The soldiers were the elite of young officers: they represented a third of the 1958/59 Sandhurst intake - all had university or equivalent qualifications. Their presence in the army (a career with little social status) was symptomatic of the limited opportunities for educated men in Nigeria at that time. The officers, like the poets, saw the past as a violation, something to be ashamed of: 'my compatriots, you will no longer be ashamed of being

Nigerians (32). Their 'Ten decrees' proclaimed a revolution against looting, arson, homosexuality, rape, embezzlement and bribery. Their proclaimed enemies were the profiteers, the 'ten-per-centers', the 'VIP's of waste', the tribalists and nepotists. (33) A year later, Nzeogwu, then in Enugu, still maintained that he was hostile to secession and tribalism. He desired 'a strong centre...to cut the country to small pieces, making the centre inevitably strong'. (34)

Azikwe called these men young Turks, and it was a good description of their national revivalism. Unity was the first goal, attainable only by the army: 'Only in the army do you get true Nigerianism'. (35) Nzeogwu supported the East, not because he believed in Biafra, but because he felt that only by violence could the 'northern feudal monolith' and the 'national bourgeoisie' be destroyed.

The soldiers aimed to establish a government of 'proven honesty and efficiency', of handpicked civilians including Awolowo whom 'the soldiers would stand behind with fingers on the trigger' (35). Like the interpreters, the January men were ultimately irresponsible - unprepared to actually assume power themselves. They capitulated to military discipline and their commander in chief.

The victims of the coup were chiefly northern, the participants mainly Ibo. This was statistically inevitable: the balance of power in Nigeria at that time ensured that northerners filled many prominent positions; the pattern of army recruitment in the late fifties caused a very high proportion of army majors to be easterners. The self-conscious motives of the coup were ideological - but in an atmosphere where ethnic and regional loyalties were being played upon by the parties (37) it was naive of the majors to assume that the coup would not be interpreted as an attempt by the Ibo to reassume political dominance. Soyinka's verdict later was a recognition of 'the genuine revolutionary zeal' and a criticism of the 'one sided killings'. (38)

But the intellectuals cannot disclaim responsibility for the violent consequences of January 1966. A radical intelligentsia

with military contacts is influential in a country where power is held by a small undeveloped ruling class and exercised through institutions whose competence is constantly eroded by regional interests. Soyinka, whatever his later reservations, at the time viewed the coup as having 'honour late restored' (39). Its emphasis on youth, personal integrity, honour and radicalism helped Soyinka to identify with the new regime who had a popular representative in the west - governor Fanjuyi. Soyinka formed a pressure group to petition for the majors' release. But the regime was not the apocalypse the poets were waiting for; the coup attempted to alter the course of history - 'spring the lock of time's denial. (40) January was a swift piece of political surgery but it could do little but aggravate the tensions that had been building up. Soyinka, Okigbo, Nzeogwu and Ideajuna made a fatal misjudgement when they ignored the factor of public opinion, failing even to attempt to organise some mass support, and concentrating their attention on a small elite. whatever Nigerian scholars may claim today, 1965 was not the year of mass participation in Nigerian politics. That came later with the communal slaughter in the Sabongaris of Kano, Kaduna and Zaria.

Part 2: Biafra.

In 1969 Ojukwu admitted that the secession had been a 'revolution in reverse' (41), that 'the revolutionary act seized us before we were fully prepared for it'. He was oversimplifying. Biafra was born out of several impulses. First was terror, the conviction that there was no going back: 'it was no longer possible for Eastern Nigerians to live outside their region without fear of loss of life or property.(42) The impact of the massacres and the Ibo exodus had been reinforced by the propagandists of Kaduna and Enugu. Thus Cyprian Ekwensi wrote:

> Any anthropologist looking for material must get hold of a Northern brain and try and find the ingredient in it which has now become so atrophied that the megalocephalitic apes are two million years ahead of its owner. (43)

The obverse of this xenophobia was an emphasis on the virtues of Ibo traditions and the Ibo community. Stanley Diamond wrote: 'Their political and social cohesion of former days has been

transmuted into an authentically modern nationality' (44), and during the war Ojukwu appealed to the democratic tradition and the social welfare of the extended family system - 'we are all our brother's keepers'. (45) Racial self-consciousness could also develop into a sort of negritude: 'Leave us alone to lead our black lives'. (46)

But interwoven with the appeal to feelings of ethnic communal solidarity was the theme that Biafra represents the creation of a new social order. Some individuals saw the secession as a continuation of the stillborn January revolution. Ojukwu claimed that his mandate to secede came from the various demonstrations in the east. The myth was created of a government carried forward by an irresistable urge of the people. Prominent amongst those cited by Ojukwu are the students of Nsukka university who demanded secession as early as May 15th, 1967. They were probably more influential than the dockers of Port Harcourt or the farmers of Abakaliki. (48) For Nsukka had, since 1965, been the rallying point for a seemingly threatened and dispossesed Ibo elite. When Njoku was dismissed from the Lagos vice-chancellorship many Ibo students left with him and went back home to follow their studies at Nsukka. (49) In May 1966, these were joined by a group of lecturers who, previously at Ibadan,had formed a secessionist discussion circle. Later on they were joined by Christopher Okigbo who in August 1966 was negotiating an arms deal with a firm in Birmingham. His brother, Pius, an important civil servant, was also a secessionist by this time. Soyinka visited the east in mid 1966 and found his radical friends 'turned inwards'. (50) He also described the frustration of the Nsukka people with the 'smug elitism' of Ojukwu's governorship. They were later joined by Achebe. They were a powerful pressure group, for they had links with an increasingly disaffected civil service, as represented by Pius Okigbo and Cyprian Ekwensi. A lot of the 'January boys' were now in either Enugo or Nsukka: Philip Alale, Victor Banjo, Ifeajuna and Nzeogwu who had 'near idolatry popularity with the troops'. (51) These men saw secession as only a means to the radical transformation of Nigeria. They were a 'third force', in general in agreement with Soyinka that war 'must shatter the foundations of thought and recreate'. (52) Ojukwu's declaration of secession in May was partly an attempt to cut the ground from beneath these men's

feet, for even after the failure of negotiations with the Federal government in February, he was still denying that he wished to secede. When he did so, Biafra was backed by the full weight of the conservative Ibo establishment: Azikiwe, Michael Okpara, Louis Mbanefo all gave vocal support.

In his pronouncements, Ojukwo balanced between the respectable forces that enhanced his republic - the elder statesmen, politicians and high court judges - and the radicals who were popular with the army and civil service. It is therefore scarcely surprising that as his moderate supporters waned with the fortunes of war, Ojukwu himself adopted a radical posture. He claimed to have been a constant enemy of neo-colonialism since his days at Oxford (53) but there is nothing in his early speeches to support this. In 1966, as governor of the east, he projected a populist image, justifying the January coup as the inevitable result of exploitation and the poverty of 'the toiling masses' (54) and attempted to right things with an attack on civil service priviliges. (55) The declaration of independence bore a close resemblance to that of the U.S.A. - both appeal to the 'supreme almighty' and both refer to certain 'inalienable rights'. Beyond that, the Biafran declaration seems chiefly concerned with the protection of Ibo property. In January 1968 Ojukwu declared Biafrans to be determined to free themselves 'from the fetters of neocolonialism' but he was also ready to guarantee the interests of the British businessmen. (56)

By the first anniversary of independence, his vision of Biafra was beginning to be defined: it was to be a society based on the welfare of the extended family, handiwork and economic initiative, government by consensus, protection of private property, the overthrow of class priviliges, and accountable public officials. Social equality was not mentioned, for 'an inferior position in society is to the Biafran ....a challenge to his god-given talent and initiative'. (57) The Biafran revolution finally spelt out was to be a revolution in values and morals rather than property relationships. In April 1969, Ojukwu spoke in almost Fanonist terms of a 'moral force that enabled a total mobilisation of the oppressed....the revolution within'. (58) The Ahiari declaration of June 1969 stated that 'all property belonged to the community' but it was

immediately made clear that this implied only a change in attitude - for those who were wealthy could remain so provided they recognised that their wealth was simply held in trust by them for the people. The declaration rejected rigid class differentiations, stating that 'no condition is permanent'. A workers' charter would be drawn up and a National orientation college instituted to propose new values for society. (59)

John St. Jorre dismisses all this as empty rhetoric. But the Ahiari declaration attacked many of the social attitudes which accompanied the disintegration of Nigerian political life. It was not that Ojukwu was being simplistic or confused when he spoke. He was, rather, a cynical poseur with a flair for publicity. For the final force behind the Biafran adventure was Ojukwu himself and the military clique he headed. What democratic bodies there were in Biafra were only advisory and never opposed his decisions. Opposition was swiftly suppressed: the radical part of the army was eliminated after the midwest debacle:Banjo, Ifeajuna and Alale were publicly executed. Uweche claims that there were numerous arrests of young idealists including a group of Onitsha lawyers. He quotes Ojukwu as saying 'While I live, Biafra lives. If I am no more, it would only be a matter of time before the noble concept was swept into oblivion'.

The secession in May 1967 was greatly assisted by the presence of a disillusioned Ibo establishment and a radical group of intellectuals, but it needed the ambitious opportunism of Ojukwu to make it inevitable.

The earliest artistic response was that of Christopher Okigbo. He finished revising a cycle of poems, Path of Thunder, just before his death during the defence of Nsukka. They are 'poems prophesying war': a conflict that Okigbo felt he 'should stay with till the end'. (60) Death had by this time assumed a double meaning: one of terrible indifference:

> Death herself
> The chief celebrant
> in a cloud of incence
> paring her fingernails.....

and joy, the prospect of renewal:

.....among your variegated teeth...I have entered
your bridal chamber; and lo
I am the sole witness to my homecoming.

The final sequence of poems show the poet trembling but emerging from the threshold of his private anguish into 'the course of wider waters' into a plain of barren farmlands and burning crops at the end of which there may be yet 'the gates of light'. There is, in the image of circumcision, suffering but purification:

The bleeding phallus, dripping from carnage, cries out
for the medicinal leaf.....

Occasionally the transition from private dilemna to public concern is clumsy:

Jungle tanks blast Brotain's last stand.

But generally a tension between rhetorical denunciation of public events, a sense of a shadowy threat and a more personal lyricism, is successfully maintained. The present is a time for action: 'This day belongs to a miracle of thunder' and joyful release:

White light, receive me your sojourner: O milky way
let me clasp you to my waist.

But Okigbo is alive to the risks, for life is now reduced to its simplist; to the doggeral law of the jungle:

the snake says to the jungle
I will swallow you
the mongoose says to the snake
I will swallow you
the elephant says to the mongoose
I will strangle you.

The oncoming war is going to be 'an iron dream unnamed and unprintable'. There is no going back, for between the slow agonised rythmn of condolences in flight 'under the burden of a century, caressing the swollen eyes of bleeding mourners and appeasing the fever of a week, the panther is about to pounce, parliament is now for sale and an iron mask covers the general's face'. Instead of the conciliatory image of the

northern egret, the sky is filled with eagles and 'the elephant ravages the jungle.' In the last poem, Elegy for Alto, written at some point between January 1966 and May 1967, Okigbo recognises that whatever was hoped for by the January men was now lost: the politicians are back in the giant hidden steps of the howitzers, and robbers descend to rob people of their laughter.

> The glimpse of a dream lies mouldering in a cave.

But beyond the iron path and its remorseless journey, Okigbo saw some faint cyclic vision of hope and beauty:

> An old star departs, leaving us on the shore
> Gazing heavenward for a new star approaching
> The new star appears, foreshadows its going
> Before a going and coming that goes on forever....

And in his own death Okigbo saw a homecoming, not a futile sacrifice:

> Earth unbind me; let me be prodigal; let this be
> the ram's ultimate prayer to the tether.

In Path of Thunder the individual can no longer stand aside. Okigbo saw himself in the grip of events over which he had no control. All he could hope for was that his own death would give some meaning to them.

Other men were more partisan than Okigbo. Achebe described 'A blueprint showing the basic principles of a new Biafran order... arising from their traditional concept of man in society.... they had no kings and princes, only leaders who rose.... through merit'. (61) Even a year later, the journalist Richard West praised 'the first place in Black Africa where graduates and professional men have joined peasants at manual work'. (62) A young bio-chemist writing to his friends in Canada insisted at the end of 1968 that 'our war of self determination has the revolutionary dimension of a new society. .....Biafra is an idea about Freedom'. (63) The writer was a member of the 'Science Group', a group of scientists and technicians who turned their talents to devising salt substitutes, soap, ink, landmines, rockets and handgrenades. Some remained

believers until the very end:

> We in Biafra will come a little closer to our goal...in accordance with the Ahiari declaration....

So far, though, most of the fiction written by men who lived in Biafra has been disillusioned. Achebe's Girls at War is harsher and less humorous than A Man of the People; but it is also less pessimistic. In his earlier story, the one person capable of real self sacrifice was the woman who kills her husband's murderer. But her action sprang from personal, rather than idealistic motivation. Girls at War is about how idealism is betrayed, and yet survives. Despite the hypocrisy of the Biafran authorities, which the central figure, Nwankwo, represents, the girls of war are shown to be clouded but not tainted, morally intact. Their faults are merely a reflection of the maggoty centre that the Biafran revolution had done so little to destroy. Gladys and her type will act and 'not ask to be paid' and they will do so for the sake of humanity. For Achebe, it would seem that Biafra, notwithstanding its failure, allowed some proof of the goodness of human beings. Gladys acts on an uncomplicated impulse: she goes back to a burning car and attempts to pull a wounded soldier from it. She is killed by the exploding petrol tank.

Achebe is merciless with the 'senior service' of which he was a part. The story's central figure is an intelligent civil servant who can see the faults of the'maggoty society' accurately, but who plays a role in it in spite of himself. There are no Nanga's whose corruption and brutality are masked by charm and ingenuousness. The social divisions have no 'man of the people' to bridge them. A New York Times reporter wrote 'the prosperous could still eat chicken sometimes while it was the poor who died'. The callousness of surviving, of refusing a lift to a woman who wanted to visit her dying son, of obtaining rations by graft before the eyes of a starving crowd, of girl prostitutes in the latest Paris fashions when gari cost a pound a tinful: all these facets of the peoples' war are sensed by Nwankwo. Yet he would pass judgement on Gladys, and though he concedes that she is merely a mirror reflecting rotteness, he cannot realise that he is himself part of that rot. He exploits her in the mockery of love that follows a party: no passion, just the

heartlessness of re-using an old condom, of using terms of war to describe an act of love. He attempts to make amends and help the girl. But this is not enough. He repents and gives a lift to a mutilated soldier, and his one unselfish act is horribly perverted when that lift causes the death of the soldier. Nwankwo runs away screaming, surviving, but utterly unable to help Gladys or himself.

Like Girls at War, Achebe's poetry illustrates a vision that has broadened since the isolation at the end of A Man of the People. The poetry is at times sharply descriptive - a mother arranges her starving child's hair: 'she did it like putting flowers on a tiny grave'. The best war poem in the collection is Christmas is Biafra. A lost Christmas of 'pure transcendental hate'. A mother and child look at the bland figures in a creche outside the convent. It is not the pathos of the pitiful offerings but the terrible dullness that suffering brings that gives the poem its strength:

> She shrugged her shoulders, crossed
> herself and took him away.

But acute observation does not compensate for the plethora of portentous rhetoric - 'the bird of death from evil forests of soviet technology', and laboured imagery:

> prudence like a diaphram across wombs beckoning doorway
> to bar the scandal of seminal rage.....(66)

To reinforce this barren feeling are two novels written about the war: A Wreath for the Maidens by John Munonye, and S.O. Mezu's Behind the Rising Sun. Both are written from the Biafran point of view and both illustrate the dangers of basing fiction too closely on historical events. A novel should be essentially creative: what we have here is thinly disguised journalism. A Wreath for the Maidens is a straightforward account of the events leading up to the secession and of the war itself....seen through the eyes of two students, Roland and Biere. Their response is intensely highminded and the novel is didactic in tone. Roland, as a result of a traumatic incident in his childhood when a European struck his father, has a deeply entrenched hatred of imperialism, and sees it as the root cause of all the events.

there is more suspicious of the local rulers 'who parade their nationalism in public cars' (p. 87). Eventually they resolve their differences by agreeing that exploiters are native to any society. This is the only development that occurs in the plot. It is written around the friendship of two men, but this remains constant - apart from the slight ideological disagreement, they fight for the same side in a rather curious propaganda department and both end up in the same hospital. The book is of some interest because it attempts to record the reactions of ordinary people. The feeling of alienation: 'this is not the time to start thinking about others: let everyone shrink into his own house' (p. 110); or the cynicism before an election: 'let them pay me and I'll vote for them'. Its themes are historical and there is a conflict between two points of view: The first would excuse African society on account of its underdevelopment. The nation is at a wild west stage, an adventurous phase and 'adventure is usually the metier of the rough and tough guy'. The second is more ethical: 'The sooner you people begin to build a nation instead of monuments to the god of greed the better'.(p. 78). Munonye dismisses any liklihood of the people acting spontaneously. Like most Biafrans he believed that the northern massacres were instigated by powerful men. He also shows how the population of the east was roused: special committees are instituted with the task of mobilising the masses in favour of secession (p. 178). He notes how the demonstrations which allegedly pressurised the leadership were controlled: 'the people never went into real mob excesses....they spared all foreign owned business houses' (p. 179). And with the secession all the 'old practitioners make sure they are riding on the crest of mass sentiment' (p. 172).

The title of the novel is taken from a line by Virgil: 'He was to pacify the wind with a maiden's blood', and the lesson derived is that the blood can never be fairly distributed: 'It's mostly innocent ones who have been shot or hacked to death' (p. 159). Admirable sentiments, but where there should be pity or shock there is merely moralising, and substituted for intensity is turgid self-conscious imagery:

> Red stains on the green leaves and patches on the ground
> Urging the groans from dark mother's heart.

The pity of it is that Munonye knows how to write. Occasionally scattered through the breathless melodrama there are moments calm and with depth:

> .....the general atmosphere seemed normal. Face to face with actual realities, with idle imaginings giving way to stark facts. What else could they do? I asked myself, staring at a trio who were smoking a cigarette between them. Two of them counted the puffs as the third smoked his turn. They cared for nothing else at that moment but the cigarette that was aglow in their colleagues mouth...(p. 191).

The stirringly titled Behind the Rising Sun begins promisingly. A Biafran delegation is negotiating a series of complicated arms and currency deals in Paris. Amongst their number are Chief Iweke, Chancellor Obelewata and lawyer Afoukwe. The device of indirect reported speech which Mezu uses throughout the novel here serves him well, highlighting their cynicism, dispassionately ironic. Their greed and opportunism is compared with the austere living of Professor Mwoke and the ideals of the Science Group. There is a double irony when one of them says 'Those who worked abroad deserved real credit for winning the war', for their activities were in fact vital. The irony at first saves the novel from the sort of sermonising we find in Munoye. There is a flash of humour in Mezu's description of Oblenewata's welcome to the two West Indian con men:

> ....Thanks to the white man they had discovered their identity...a brief lecture on the slave trade....by the end of the speech, it became apparent that probably the forefathers (of the West Indians) came from the heart of Biafra....(p. 29)

While one deal falls through after another the delegation continues to go on shopping expeditions and patronise expensive restaurants.

But the novel swiftly deteriorates. For in the delegation is the sincere idealist, Freddy Onuaha. He is convinced that the ruling classes, having mobilised the people for their own ends, 'have sown the seeds of their own destruction'. Moreover, we are told that he has a 'tormented and unfaltering' love. The latter theme is only cursorily attended to; it ends with his beloved betraying him 'lips and hips wet with adulterous embrace'. Freddy's adventures take him through Europe and then

to West Africa before returning home. He quickly becomes disillusioned with the delegation, but discovers that there is another side to the war: 'These were the heroes who gave their lives willingly so that others might survive'. Muddled philosophising on the 1968 French student revolt leads Mezu to surmise that 'a little bit of humility, personal, corporate, ideological could have saved the nation' and later his hero is to mistily reflect on the 'uncertain course of world history and the impossibility of forecasting anything'. Worse is to follow. Though Mezu is quite well aware that all is not utopian within the enclave ('In Biafra, it pays to know people') the latter part of the novel is devoted to the crudest possible propaganda.

A lurid account of a guerilla action behind enemy lines in which Freddy's new and purer girlfriend helps to strangle a couple of 'vandals' is followed by a ham-fisted attempt to underlie the horrors of war: one of her victims is a close friend's brother. Red Cross teams in Enugu are called a propaganda stunt laid on for U.N. observers. The chapter ends with Onuaha's trite musings on the Nigerian National Anthem. By the end, Mezu has retreated into complete escapism. He describes the community of refugees set up by Onuaha and his friends. Decisions are made at a democratic village assembly, farming is done on a communal basis and barter is the chief medium of exchange. The book ends with an exhortation to remember the strength and weaknesses of the noble revolution. It is significant, for it embodies much of what people in and outside the country believed about Biafra. In its final chapter it illustrates quite graphically the hopes and illusions of many eastern intellectuals: that the revolution could achieve the blending of the old virtues of communal life with modern technology and administration.

The achievement of Achebe's short story is that the ideals are not just abstract, but are cut down to human terms, and yet, convincingly, they survive. Mezu and Munonye are not concerned with the private life; their hero's love affairs are as profound as the human interest angle in a newspaper story. Like most of Achebe's poetry, their novels are little more than a collection of emotionally charged public statements. No attempt to explore the dilemnas presented by power or social change

is presented, or even at a simpler level, how the war affected friendships. Just a manichean world where the good are incorruptible and the bad are very bad. Their writing is revealing for it indicates an almost puritanical reaction of middle class Ibos to the events of the sixties. And this helps to explain the weakness of the reformers and secessionists. They lacked any political ideas at all, inspired instead by moral outrage and a utopian vision.

Part Three: Behind Federal Lines.

With the Federal victory arose a myth of national unity. The army had fought under the slogan 'to keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done'. Gowon's speeches dwelt on the theme of brotherhood and reconciliation, and attempted to win over the intellectuals, for the 'ordinary man is no problem ....he has never been involved in the struggle for power and jobs'. (67) Some were convinced: the Ibo, Ukpaki Asika, Federal administrator in Enugu found he could believe in a new Nigeria, where the north, shorn of its Alkaii courts had 'withered away'. (68) Both he and Ben Enwonwu, the Ibo sculptor, recognised that a 'bond of blood' had been shed, binding a nation, that the war had achieved what the old nationalists had not. (69)

But all this was to forget the invasion of the mid West when Federal soldiers and non Ibo civilians indulged in a dreadful jacquerie leaving 500 dead in Benin, 700 in Asaba, 300 in Warri. (70) Or the bitterness that followed the capture of Onitsha by the second division, which having suffered 2,000 casualties in the fiercest fighting of the war, killed 300 men and women who had taken shelter in the cathedral. The Renaissance, successor to the Biafran Sun, complained in its first editorial of the 'revanchist' attitude of the two embittered southern states to Ibos living there. (71) During the war, Radio Lagos may have broadcast reassuring banalities, but Radio Kaduna and The Voice of Biafra tried to out do each other in pouring out vindictive hatred.

And whatever unity existed in Nigeria, the writers were sharply divided. J.P. Clark's poetry records a sharp feeling of betrayal by his eastern friends. It was a reaction which drove him, for a time, into the arms of the Federal government which

he claimed had realised many of the January mens' intentions (72). But for Soyinka, imprisoned during the war, Asika's echo of Lincoln, that there had been no victors and no vanquished, seemed cynical. While his denunciation of profiteers and military dictators appeared shrill and unbalanced, it had some justification. Industrial production in Nigeria went up during the war, conscription did not effect the sons of the increasingly wealthy bourgeoisie, and the newspapers reporting on the rapid resurfacing of the Ibo elite began to ask sardonically 'did anyone die' in the war? (73) Soyinka's Madmen and Specialists and Clark's Flagellation at Warri both give the lie to the Federal myth.

Soyinka's madmen live in a mutilated world where the old moral order has been deformed. Dr. Bero is no longer a healer, he has become a torturer. In the first act, it is revealed that the doctor has turned cannibal. With this revelation comes an exposition of the cult of As. As is derived from an ironic interpretation of the christian blessing in Holy Communion. The rite of eating Christ's flesh and blood has now been perverted by a new deity, the healer turned torturer, who has no mercy, who cannot tell the beggar to throw away his crutches: 'because you blackmailed one Christ into showing off once in a while, you think all others are suckers for that kind of showmanship. Well, you've met your match in this kind of generation'. (p. 45). Rather than the purification of communion there is vomiting after a meal of humanity. The old man, Dr. Bero's father, invents the cult of As as a defence of ironic mockery to the new order. As does not attempt to provide any answers, rather it is a recognition of the ultimate inhumanity of men. It tries to blunt the senses, to cauterise, to provide a philosophy of survival:

> Probe the wound or it will never heal
> Cut out one root to save the other -cauterise (p. 20).

Bero's father has attempted to drive men to a point where they will rebel against dehumanisation. The tragedy is that he too at last recognises that men are only 'intelligent animals' that have lost 'the gift of self disgust' (p. 55). The war has produced a state where all human solidarity is destroyed. The traditional rules stemming from nature ('you can cure with

poison if you use it right') no longer work, ('the old women no longer help') (p. 17). For Dr. Bero has discovered the secret of power: 'power comes from bending nature to your will'. Si Bero's christian forgiveness is also no longer relevant. She 'has the power of a mother over him' but there is no more time. The new Christ shoots the old maddened deity and dehumanisation triumphs. For the cripples and the madmen, cynicism is left as the only refuge.

The intense despair at the end of the play is, however, only part of Soyinka's response to the war. It can be coupled with the feeling of isolation at the beginning of The Man Died:

> my experience, which it strikes me more and more, is unique among the fifty million people of my country (p. 14)

But there is a more positive side to his suffering. He learns while listening to Ibo detainees in prison of 'the brotherhood sacrament of blood and pain': 'The bounds of gaoler and gaoled are erased and a mutually comforting humanity begins' (p. 112 and p. 202). Moreover, in his prison writing, after the realisation of this solidarity, he reaches a point near to death: 'I felt a great repose in me, an ennervating peace of the world and the universe within me'. Thus a search for a meaning to death, which is inherent in the Interpreters, finally ends:

> I annoint my heart
> Within its flame I lay
> Spent ashes of your hate
> Let Evil die.

The book ends with an exhilarating storm crashing through the barriers of insulation.

Soyinka claimed that Madmen and Specialists 'recognised reality but not necessarily accepted it', that it represented an occasional feeling of hopelessness which by writing I can exorcise'. (73) In his poetry written just before and during the war there is the hopelessness alternating with 'mutually comforting humanity'. In the group of poems written during the 1966 massacres, Soyinka returns to the theme of the harvest. He develops the idea touched upon in Death at Dawn of sacrifice,

echoing the bloody sacrifice of July which had taken Sekoni's life in The Interpreters. In Idanre, we are told how growth is greener where red blood is spilt; now there is a grimmer inheritance. In Ikeja. Friday 4-00 men were killed in open trucks and are but gourds of blood from which the earth drinks - a ghastly libation: 'unbidden offering on the lie of alters'. The traditional period of feasting and sacrifice has been distorted to the 'eternal retch of human surfeit'. In the place of the normal groundnuts, the North has produced 'a crop of wrath'. In the final couplet, there is a dreadful realisation that this was just a beginning, still using the out-worn and now perverted theme of harvest:

> let nought be wasted, gather up for a recurrent session
> loaves of bread, lusting in the suns recession.

The harsh monotonous rhythm echoes an earth unwilling to forgive; all the poet can do is record his horror and pity.

From his grief stems a deep revulsion. The beauty of a European autumn can bring no comfort - only reminders of the catastrophe. The acorns fall from the trees, and as they crack beneath his feet each 'aped the skull's uniqueness'. From this parallel comes the link between acorns as pigfood and the 'brains of thousands pressed asleep to pig fodder'.

But in Civilisation and Soldier, to Soyinka, while 'death twitches him in the eye' the plight of the soldier becomes clear: 'do you friend, even now, know what it is all about'. He resolves, somehow to restore the harvest:

> No hesitation then
> But I shall shoot you clean and fair
> With meat and bread, a gourd of wine.

His later poems are a similar unresolved struggle between despair and desperate hope. Roots repeats Idanre's plea for earthing: 'reach in earth for deep sustaining draughts'. The imagery of thirst, the need for water for sustinence, fertility and purification doubly alludes to a bloody and arid north. Somehow 'springs and vaulted lakes' must be reached to wash 'a fouled communion earth'. In the final couplet it is still

conceivable that

> The heart may yield to strange upswelling thrusts
> promising from far to slake immortal thirsts.

But the overall impression is not so much positive belief as the conviction that 'the human heart may hold only so much despair'.

When Seasons Change calmly and bitterly reflects on the dilemna this despair poses. The dry season has arrived and earth has sucked the life from all plants and trees. The Nigerian tragedy: the change from promise of fertility to a macabre procession of death. A Wordsworthian image of Earth the hermit, but one that brings no comfort; for 'thoughts are old hoar rimmed as sunked eyes on the forgotten face'. Ghosts return and shuffle and wander 'full of old hints'. The present is shabby and worn. An elaborate image of the mind borne through the air on a cross, an image of personal powerlessness, 'a deep futility in all far ideas and urgent action'. Any new sensations, any call to action is futile: hope is merely 'an old earth stirring to fresh touch of old pretensions', love and sacrifice will end in cold betrayal and greater loss. The protest that:

> This progression has been source
> For great truths in spite of stammering

is savagely answered. A poet's function is to record the truth and the truth is despair, not ecstacy. But to tell this truth, to reflect reality, is to 'lime' the mind, to succumb to 'mouse eaten thoughts'. Here there is an admission of self defeat, transcendence is merely escapism, and realism is self destructive, the worship of death on his throne.

John Pepper Clark's Casualties is an attempt to express in poetry 'a real historical unhappiness'. He includes a series of annotations, and the poems give a dramatic account of the personalities and events of the conflict. They need no further analysis. Throughout there is the theme of friendship which is now dead: 'to look at them I dare not, though I can look the sun in the face'. He describes Okigbo, the weaverbird who came into contact 'with the black kite' and cannot return to sing

another song.

In Benin Sacrifice he describes the execution of two federal officers found guilty of war crimes. He sees their death as a sacrifice to placate public opinion, to assuage the common guilt of 'the governor, trader and parlour wife'. One of them is wounded, tied to a stretcher. Their death is curiously inadequate - even unwarrented:

> A message mortal at once to two rams
> Now men again in the city of blood.

In his sad and angry title poem, Clark gives his judgement. The poem is dedicated to Achebe, formerly a friend, now a stranger. The victims of war do not only include those who are dead, wounded, bereaved or imprisoned; for the men who survived that are casualties too.

> The casualties are many, and a good number well outside
> the scenes of ravage and wreck.

He attacks the propagandists who 'beat on the drums of the human heart'. But he is not merely concerned with the profiteers and 'emissaries of rift'. Rather, 'We are all casualties', 'Characters other than before' because 'eyes have ceased to see the face from the crowd'. With this assumption of responsibility is an awareness of universal suffering:

> We are all casualties
> All sagging as are
> The cases celebrated for Kwashiorkor
> The unforseen camp-follower of not just our war.

It is an adequate and eloquent comment on the writers of the Nigerian War. Throughout the sixties they disassociated themselves from a society they dismissed as morally bankrupt. Then, when they tried to manipulate it, they ignored its limitations and realities. With the rest of the Nigerian ruling order, they emerge from the war as its moral casualties.

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NOTES.

(1) Rex Niven. The Struggle for Unity. London and Ibadan. 1971.

(2) E.W. Natziger. African Capitalism. Stanford. 1977. p. 52.

(3) See for example T. Aluko's Chief the Honourable Minister. Aluko from 1960 was Director of Public Works in the Western Region. His novel is a satire on post-colonial development in an imaginary African state.

(4) Cyprian Ekwensi in Iska gives a sympathetic treatment to the themes of love between an Ibo and a Hausa in the face of communal tensions. Ekwensi worked in the Federal Information Service when he wrote this novel, but shortly after its publication, he took a similar post in the secessionist administration.

(5) It has been claimed that the killings in the north were instigated by the feudal powers and Hausa/Fulani bureaucracy. No real proof exists but it does seem unlikely that the massacres were part of a deliberate policy. In Kano where the popular reaction to the Ibos was especially savage, the Emir was young and noted for his progressive views. He was also chancellor of Nsukka university and a personal friend of Ojukwu. His voice was one of the more conciliatory ones towards the Ibos during the secession.

(6) E.W. Natzinger. The political economy of disintergration in Nigeria. Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. II, no. 4, 1973.

(7) R.W. July. The Origins of Modern African Thought. p. 477.

(8) Gerald Moore. Wole Soyinka. p. 75.

(9) Wole Soyinka. The Man Died. p. 80.

(10) Initially a party set up by Chief Awolowo to resist Ibo hegemony. It was to develop a rift between those like Awolowo who wanted it to develop a national following and were willing to employ a vaguely socialist rhetoric, and a right wing faction headed by Chief Akintola who saw the AG's future as a regional party with a Yoruba communal base.

(11) Wole Soyinka. Ibid. p. 162.

(12) The unions were divided in their affiliation to one or other of the international trade union federations.

(13) P.C. Lloyd. Africa in Social Change. p. 338.

(14) The northern population supported the ruling Northern Peoples Congress.

(15) Wole Soyinka. Ibid. p. 164.

(16) Wole Soyinka. Idanre and other poems.

(17) 'In memory of Segun Awolowo' in Idanre. An older echo in the death of the Ibadan polician Adelabu in a car accident which was followed by rioting and the killing of forty people.

(18) Oyinbo - white man. Used here in the sense of a 'black Englishman'.

(19) Significantly Kongi's Harvest is one of the most popular if the least subtle of Soyinka's plays; several successful performances were followed by a film of the play.

(20) 1964. Quoted by Mazuri in The Trial of Christopher Okigbo.

(21) Romanus Egudu and D.S. Izeubeye in African Literature Today, No. 6.

(22) At a conference in Kampala. Reported in West Africa, 30. 6. 1962.

(23) Mazuri p. 80.

(24) Mazuri p. 90.

(25) Soyinka in 1965 - quoted by Mazuri p. 89.

(26) Okigbo. Labyrinths. Introduction, p. xiii.

(27) Nigeria's conservative position over the Congo crisis brought her condemnation from radical opinion in and outside the country.

(28) Awolowo himself was no radical - his 'democratic socialism' simply involved expropriation of foreigners and the encouragement of indigenous private enterprise. But his party was an umbrella for a more radical blend of Nkrumist pan Africanism and marxism. The radicals included Rotimi Williams, Enahere, J.S. Tarka and S.G. Ikoku.

(29) Jimoh Lavel. Nigeria - class struggle and the national question.

(30) Luckham. The Nigerian Military. pp. 17-18.

(31) Clark. Casualties. p. 57.

(32) West Africa. 22. 1. 66.

(33) Kirk Greene. Crisis and Conflict. Doc.2.

(34) Kirk Greene. Doc. 8.

(35) Nigeria Tribune. 2. VII. 67.

(36) Ibid.

(37) One example: great tension was created by the replacement for no adequate reason of the Ibo vice-chancellor of Lagos university by a Yoruba.

(38) Soyinka. The Man Died. p. 148.

(39) For Fajuyi in Idanre and other poems. p. 54.

(40) Idanre and other poems. p. 54.

(41) Ojukwu. Selected Speeches. p. 360.

(42) Proclamation of the Republic of Biafra.

(43) Nigeria Outlook. Enugu. 8. 12. 1966.

(44) Africa Report. February 1968.

(45) Selected Speeches. p. 256.

(46) Selected Speeches. p. 360.

(47) Ojukwu. Random Thoughts.

(48) 3. 1969. Selected Speeches. Diary of events.

(50) The Man Died. pp. 179 - 183.

(51) R. Uweche. Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War. p. 30.

(52) The Man Died. pp. 179 - 183.

(53) Ojukwu. Selected Speeches. Introduction.

(54) Speech on 25th January, 1966.

(55) Survival Budget. 24.4.1967.

(56) Selected Speeches. p. 239.

(57) I. Kirk Greene. Doc. 159.

(58) Random Thoughts. Introduction.

(59) This was actually set up with a team of marxist-inclined academics led by Chinua Achebe.

(60) The Man Died. p. 155.

(61) Sunday Times Magazine. May 1968.

(62) Sunday Times Magazine. March 1969.

(63) Chi: Letters from Biafra. Ed. Betty Nichason. p. 97. I.II.1968.

(64) Chi: Letters from Biafra. p. 134. 2.10.1969.

(65) West Africa. 27.9.1969.

(66) Chinua Achebe. Beware Soul Brother. Poems.

(67) Kirk Greene. Doc. 188.

(68) Asika. No Victors, No Vanquished. p. 27.

(69) United Nigeria. October 1969.

(70) Figures quoted in both Forsyth's and St. Jorre's accounts.

(71) West Africa 7.6.1970.

(72) West Africa i.10.1970.

(73) The Times 9.10.1972.

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# SCHOOL unrest in kwaZulu

CIVIL UNREST that started with the pupils' protest in Soweto on June 16, 1976, left Natal remarkably untouched - to such an extent that commentators have felt it necessary to explain the absence of unrest. One of the reasons advanced is that Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and his Inkatha movement have succeeded in controlling the black population in the province.

Buthelezi has made frequent statements to the effect that while he sympathises with the initial protest by the students, change is not going to come about through "the match and the stone". In its place he offers a strategy of organisation and education. Schools are seen as belonging to the community and should, therefore, not be destroyed. JAW Nxumalo (kwaZulu Minister of Education) said in his policy speech early in 1977 that kwaZulu had been little affected ("acts of arson were reported in three Senior Secondary Schools") and he expressed "(t)hanks to my goverment and the officials for the timeous action."

At the end of 1977 Buthelezi said that kwaZulu "will definitely accept students from Soweto and other areas if they want to come to our schools" (RDM, 24/12/77). This was after Lebowa and BophutaTswana had refused admission to these pupils. KwaZulu's secretary for education, George Steyn, said that the influx of Soweto students could be one of the reasons for severe overcrowding in Natal African schools (Star, 8/3/78).

Overcrowding is one of the aspects of a crisis in the educational system in the bantustan. It was reported (Natal Mercury, 18/1/78; Sunday Times, 14/5/78) that kwaZulu expected a pupil population of 850 000 for 1978. This many students were to receive their education in 2 140 schools and from 14 700 teachers, 2 684 unqualified (307 hold degrees). In primary schools the pupil- teacher ratio was expected to be 65:1. Some schools were without any furniture.

Squatter settlements had put further strain on schools. At Malukazi squatter settlement an "800-pupil school ... would probably take in 1·600 children this year on the platoon-system" (Natal Witness, 2/2/78). This situation could be multiplied many times throughout the province.

On the night of Sunday 23 April, 1978, pupils at St Augustine's High School, near Nquthu, stoned the school and killed a teacher, Godfrey Ndawo. Nquthu is a notorious resettlement area and marked by overcrowding and poverty. (See briefing in WIP 2 - "Unemployment, 'Homelands', and Social Control")

Some of the complaints and demands from pupils at St Augustine's related to:-
- better food and water;
- "apartheid" between boys and girls to be abolished;
- discipline should be enforced by pupils;
- school hours;
- wearing of school uniforms during outings.

(Star and RDM, 25/4/78)

It was reported that at least three other schools had previously been disrupted - the Nthembeni High School near Melmoth; Mlokothwa High School near Nongoma, and; Kwa-Dlangezwa near Empangeni (see box - "Row Brews...").

At Mlokothwa "staff-student disagreement" led to the closure of the school - "Students were given the ultimatum: Attend lessons or leave - and most of them left" (S Trib., 30/4/78; RDM, 25/4/78). At the other schools mentioned "Soweto students" were blamed (a variation of the agitator thesis?). Four Sowetans at Ntembeni were overheard planning to burn down the school and the headmaster, furthermore, claimed to have received a letter from Soweto demanding that children from there should return. Fifteen boys and 22 girls were reported to have gone back to Soweto. Kwa-Dlangezwa parents claimed that children from Soweto "made it clear that they had not come there to learn but instead would teach Zulus to fight" (S Trib, 30/4/78). Police, who had arrested some 160 pupils from St Augustine's (some were soon released), were said to be investigating a Soweto link.

It was reported (Post, 27/4/78) that a pupil at Nthembeni had been killed by Zulu students after a meeting attended by police who subsequently searched trunks and confiscated knives. The principal then allegedly said, "Why are you dogs (from Soweto) not beaten up and sent back to your homes." The attack on the Sowetans then occurred. "Threats of further attack by the Zulu students on all the students from Soweto forced most to return home." The death was denied by the hostel superintendent and does not appear to have been reported elsewhere.

Oscar Dhlomo, new Minister of Education in kwaZulu, said that his department, with the help of Inkatha, was investigating "rumours that Soweto students are causing trouble".

In May the kwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) instituted a "riot deposit" to be paid by parents and said that Soweto "instigators" would be weeded out. Dhlomo said that these measures followed "numerous riots and class boycotts culminating in the murder of a teacher on the staff of St Augustine's in Nqutu" (Daily News, 9/5/78). Interest on the riot deposit, it was said, would be used "to purchase non- lethal but effective anti-riot equipment".

Control measures did not end there and the Inkatha movement has been directly brought in. Buthelezi said: "The Cabinet decided that time should be set aside for the Inkatha Youth Brigade in KwaZulu's schools after it had been seen how it had saved the schools from bloodshed and chaos" (Daily News, 10/5/78). If principals did not allow the Youth Brigade to meet they would be guilty "of insubordination".

Winnington ("I want to bring West Street to Umlazi township") Sabelo, an Umlazi businessman and new KLA member said Inkatha youth should be able to convert those with violent aims "to our own ideals" (Post, 11/5/78), and warned that 4 unregistered schools with 1 400 pupils existed (2 in Umlazi and one each in Lamontville and KwaMashu). The teachers were allegedly members of SASO and BPC. "After school hours, said Mr Sabelo, the teachers and students held political discussions and they were planning to cause disturbances on June 16" (RDM, 12/5/78).

Oscar Dhlomo said that teachers "whose conduct did not fit in with the Inkatha movement's policy of education for liberation through peaceful means" would be "investigated". Although this did not mean that teachers would have to join Inkatha, "any troublemakers with alien viewpoints would be swiftly dealt with" (S Times, 14/5/78).

About 120 pupils appeared in the Dundee Magistrate's court on 12 May on charges of murder, attempted murder and public violenc violence. No further details were available at the time of writing.

Star, 15/5/78: Police were called to the Mlokothwa High School at Nongoma, Zululand, last night after about 250 pupils went on the rampage, smashing windows and damaging a car. Chief Gatsha Buthelezi said the cause of the unrest was unknown.

# Row brews as Gatsha's son gets 'no' from his Zulu school

Voice 20/5/78

CHIEF GATSHA Buthelezi's 16-year-old son, Nelisuzulu, and 37 other students, who were held briefly at a police station in March following a disturbance at a school, have been refused admission at the Kwa Dlangeswa High School by the headmaster.

The headmaster took the decision despite a ruling by the KwaZulu government that the children should be taken back.

Chief Buthelezi, "Prime Minister" of KwaZulu, told the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly in Ulundi that the KwaZulu might now have to take action because of the headmaster's decision. He said that a disturbance at the school resulted in many pupils being held overnight by the police on the recommendation of the staff. The recommendation did not have the blessing of the KwaZulu government.

Chief Buthelezi said his son, Nelisuzulu, was involved and "because he happened to be my son the whole thing was hung on him as one of the ringleaders."

But the Chief Inspector of KwaZulu education investigated the situation last month and made a number of recommendations. He found that 38 boys, among whom was the Chief's son, were not connected with the damage done to an electric cable and should be allowed to return to the school.

The boys and their parents were asked to report to the school but after they had spent the whole day at the school, the principal ordered them to leave.

Two other boys were found to have been accomplices but it was recommended that they be allowed to continue at the school until the end of the year, as dayboys. Two other boys were found to be guilty and it was recommended they be expelled.

# THE COURTS

Abram Sello Thinanane (34), Sephire Mlanyane (19), Mpule Matsobane (21), Solomon Mphofo (22), Elias Mabaso (24), and Thabiso Matsomo (19).
Charge: Sabotage, in that the accused conspired to burn down two schools in Sebokeng Township, outside Vereeniging. The accused made petrol bombs for this purpose. One group threw these bombs at a school, but they did not explode. The other group did not actually throw their bombs, as there was a meeting in progress at the school which they intended attacking.
The accused pleaded guilty. In mitigation, they testified that a Major Steyn promised them that, if they pleaded guilty as charged, they would be released. (Note: Sabotage carries a minimum 5 year sentence, no part of which may be suspended). They also claimed that they had been held in solitary confinement after being arrested by the police.
Verdict: Guilty.
Sentence: 5 years each.

Themba Muzibuku (20) and Jonas Mtlokoa (20).
Charge: Public violence, in that they stoned a bus and attempted to burn it at Kagiso, outside Krugersdorp.
Verdict: Guilty.
Sentence: 2 years each, suspended for 5 years.

Dean Takalane Masilo (24).
Charge: Public Violence. Released on bail of R100 on April 27th after having been in detention for two months.
Two days later, he was knifed to death in Soweto.

Isaac Moroe and 7 others.
Charge: Riotous Assemblies, in that the accused took part in a demonstration outside the Bloemfontein Regional Court after Winnie Mandela was convicted of breaking her banning order.
The magistrate found that Mandela had activated the illegal procession by using the power salute and shouting 'Amandla', while in the view of the crowd outside the court-room. The crowd had reciprocated, and Mandela had then handed out lapel badges of Albert Luthuli.
A group of between 30 and 50 people then marched down the street, singing and giving the power salute.

Verdict: Guilty.

Sentence: R30 or 30 days.

(Note: Just before the incident described above, Isaac Moroe, who is a free-lance journalist, wrote a story in which he claimed that Security Police had tried to trap Ms. Mandela into breaking her banning order. This was prevented only through a large crowd beating up the provocateur allegedly sent to trap Mandela. Moroe was then subpoenaed to appear in court to disclose his informant on this matter. At the time, he said that he would not do so, as this would contravene the ethics of journalism.
Then, in May, Moroe was elected chairman of the newly-formed Bloemfontein branch of AZAPO. Almost immediately after his election, he was detained by Security Police under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act).

Derek Arthur Kotze.
Charge: Possession of banned literature, in that police found a copy of a banned Christian Institute publication, 'Torture in South Africa', in his possession on October 19th, 1977.
When police found the publication, Kotze said "I thought I destroyed all of those."
Verdict: Not guilty.

Vusumuzi Vitus Mdelase, former chairman of the Umlazi Residents Association.
Charge: Breaking his banning order by taking a job in Pinetown while being restricted to Durban and Umlazi districts.
Mdelase told the police of his intended move to Pinetown before being arrested, believing that his restriction order had been lifted.
Verdict: Guilty.

Fana George Sithole, also formerly of the Umlazi Residents Association.
Charge: 8 counts of contravening his banning order, in that he left his Umlazi house while being restricted to it between 6p.m. and 6a.m. on weekdays.
Sithole claimed that he had been forced to leave his house during his restricted hours to look for a job.
Verdict: Guilty.
Sentence: 56 days, suspended for 4 years.

David Gasa, also formerly of the Umlazi Residents Association.
Charge: 4 counts of contravening his banning order, in that he left

his house on a number of occasions while confined to it in terms of a banning order.

Gasa claimed that he had been assured by the Kwa Zulu Minister of Justice J. Mthethwa, that the order served on him was invalid, as Umlazi is part of Kwa Zulu.

An article in the Natal Mercury last year reported that Gasa's banning order had been subject to a discussion between Police Minister Kruger and Mthethwa. Mthethwa also allegedly said in the Kwa Zulu Legislative Assembly that he had attended to Gasa's banning order.

Sentence: 20 months, all but 16 days suspended for 5 years.

(Note: It has been alleged that in a number of these cases involving ex Umlazi Residents Association Members, Kwa Zulu Minister Mthethwa led the accused to believe that they were no longer subject to the banning orders imposed. It was further alleged that attempts made to contact Mthethwa to get him to testify in the accused's defence, proved unsuccessful).

Mzwandile Maqina, priest and playwright from New Brighton, Port Elizabeth.

Charge: 4 counts of contravening his banning order, in that he attended 3 funeral wakes for people killed during the revolt in New Brighton, and entertained members of the Port Elizabeth Students Representative Council at his home.

Initially detained, Maqina was refused bail when brought to court, and at least part of his trial was held in camera.

Verdict: Guilty. The magistrate found that Maqina's presence at the various gatherings was 'not so innocent'. A state witness claimed that Maqina had said at one of the wakes, "Again their bullies have killed one of us."

Sentence: 56 days, 28 of them suspended.

(Note: A few hours after Maqina was detained by police, his home in New Brighton was fire-bombed).

Robin Holmes and Benedict Martin:

Charge: Manufacturing and distributing undesirable articles, in that they made and posted a number of T-shirts bearing a picture of Steve Biko.

It will be recalled that some of the T-shirts were sent to Donald Woods, and found to be impregnated with acid which burnt Woods' young daughter. Holmes admitted sending them to Woods, but said that he did so as a friend of the family, and insisted that the acid had not been on the T-shirts when

posted. Wood's wife has accused two members of the Security Police of intercepting the shirts, and treating them with acid.
Just before this trial was due to start, charges were suddenly withdrawn against both Holmes and Martin.

Tom Waspe.
Charge: Possession of banned literature and an unlicenced firearm. Waspe, former chairman of the National Federation of Catholic Students (NCFS) was detained under section 6 of the Terrorism Act for nearly 3 months before his first appearance in court.
Verdict: Guilty of possessing a Christan Institute publication, 'South Africa - A Police State?' and an unlicenced ,38 revolver.
Sentence: R250 or 250 days.

Zolile Msenge.
Charge: Msenge was charged with 4 counts of arson, one of attempted arson, and 2 of malicious damage to property. He pleaded guilty, the state accepted his plea, and no evidence was led.
Subsequently, senior council was obtained to defend him, and he applied to change his plea to one of not guilty. Inter alia, it was pointed out that he had pleaded guilty to two counts of arson which had taken place at exactly the same time, at schools 5km distant from each other.
Verdict: The presiding magistrate refused to enter a new plea of not guilty, and found Msenge guilty as charged.
Sentence: 20 years, 10 years to run concurrently with the other 10.

Nicolas Louis Bartman (19), Isepo Jacob Hlaetwa (23), Steven Modiga Motsumi (19) and a 17 year old youth.
Charge: Sabotage, attempted murder, and malicious damage to property, in that they threw a petrol bomb at a South African Railways train.
The accused pleaded not guilty to Sabotage and attempted murder, but guilty to malicious damage to property. They admitted throwing a petrol bomb at a stationary train in Ga-Rankuwa station on June 16th last year, and then sprinkling petrol on the floor of the train, attempting to set fire to it.
Verdict: Guilty of malicious damage to property.
Sentence: 2 years, suspended.

THE CAPE TOWN SABOTAGE CASES:

In the last issue of WIP (no. 4), it was reported that 10 of Cape Town's young section 6 detainees had made their first court appearance. Their cases were split up, and at least three have now been heard. For reasons best known to the State, all cases were held in Hermanus, some considerable distance from Cape Town.This meant that family and friends of the accused found it difficult to finance both transport and accommodation during the trials. Initially, families slept in a church hall, but were evicted from the hall by Bantu Affairs Administration officials.

Cars entering Hermanus on the mornings of the trials were stopped at police road-blocks and searched, and the court-house in which the trials took place were surrounded by armed police.

The first three accused to stand trial were Joseph Mxolisi Pantshwa (24), Nxiwonke Solomon Jack (19), and Sipho Benjamin Singiswa (18), all of Nyanga.

Charge: Sabotage, alternatively arson and assault on a state witness. The charges related to the burning of classrooms at a school in Nyanga last year.

At the beginning of the trial, the prosecution asked that certain witnesses give their evidence in camera, and not be identified. Despite defence opposition, the magistrate ruled in favour of the State.

A 20 year old female witness testified that she had been in solitary confinement for 7 months, interrogated from 7-30a.m. until 5-00p.m. for a period of 2-3 weeks by a team of security police, and threatened that she would be kept in jail for 10 years if she did not make a statement.

She eventually did make a statement, and claimed that she was influenced by the 10 year jail threat. She also claimed that much of her statement "came from the mouths of the interrogators."

Another witness, a 20 year old man, said that he had been in solitary detention since October 1977. While in detention, police had wrapped plastic around his toes and set it on fire, kicked him and assaulted him with batons in an attempt to force him to make a statement.

Defence council R.D. McDougall told the court that he was refused permission to interview a vital potential defence witness who is in detention. He approached the attorney general on this matter, who

suggested that he table questions for the police to present to the detainee. But, said McDougall, "I don't want to hold a consultation through the police. My information is that this man was an eye-witness to the arson, and his evidence may lead to an acquittal.The Deputy Attorney General still declined to grant me a consultation."

Verdict: Guilty of Sabotage. In mitigation of sentence, council for defence argued that the charge should not have been one of Sabotage. The Sabotage Act was very wide in its definitions, and could include minor actions of limited effect. It was at the discretion of the attorney-general whether to invoke the Sabotage Act or not, and in this case, it was claimed, the correct charge should have been arson.

Sentence: 5 years for each of the accused.

The second trial involved Lawrence Mvula, listed as 20 years of age, and a 17 year old youth, both of Guguletu.

Charge: Sabotage, following a fire at a school.

Verdict:Guilty. The court found that the two were part of a student group which set fire to a classroom in Guguletu on the night of September 11th last year. Before the group attacked the school, it had discussed setting buses on fire.

The magistrate said that he had approached the evidence of the State's four detained witnesses, who may not be named, with caution. But he felt that it was unlikely that they could have come together to agree on a common story as defence council had suggested.

The magistrate agreed with the defence that the evidence of the second witness contradicted that of the first, and also that the third and fourth detained witnesses gave evidence different in detail from the first. However, he was still able to convict the accused.

Verdict: Guilty.

Sentence: 5 years each.

A week later, Mvula was again brought to court, this time charged with Kildas Bongwana (18). In this case, Mvula was listed as being aged 18.

Charge: Sabotage, in that the accused attended meetings where arson was discussed, and were involved in starting a fire at a school last September.

Verdict: Guilty.

Sentence: 5 years each.

(Note: Mvula now has an effective sentence of 10 years. If he had been charged with both counts at the same time, it is possible the sentences would have run concurrently. However, the State chose to charge him

in this particular manner; he now faces 10 years in prison for the burning of classrooms.)

There are even more disturbing features about this set of trials than in the 'usual' South African security matter. Why was it necessary to detain those involved for seven months to investigate relatively simple charges of arson? Why were people charged with the offence of Sabotage, carrying a minimum sentence of 5 years, when their actions resulted in arson of a relatively minor nature? And what of the refusal of the State to allow defence access to a witness whom the State must have known could possibly rebut the charges in the first trial?

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Only a few days later, Mvula was in court yet again, this time appearing on a charge of public violence. Appearing with him was Boy Makana (18) and 2 youths. The charges related to a stone throwing incident in Guguletu on October 31st last year.
Verdict: Makana and one youth were acquitted. Mvula and the other youth were found guilty.
Sentence: Three years each. However, this sentence of Mvula's will run concurrently with the ten years he already has. The youth already has a 5 year sentence for Sabotage, and his sentence will also run concurrently with the 5 years.

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Sheila Weinberg.
Appeal against conviction of contravening her banning order by attending a previously arranged lunch date with one other person. The appeal was rejected by the Transvaal Supreme Court. The effect of this decision is that a planned meeting between a banned person and one other is an offence.
The decision is being taken to the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein, and if refused there, it will have a very harsh effect on the already limited lives of South Africa's ± 175 banned people.
Sentence: Original sentence of 9 months, suspended, was reduced on appeal to 3 months, suspended.

4 black youths, aged between 15 and 16.
Charge: Public Violence, in that the accused stoned the homes of 2 black school principals in Atteridgeville, outside Pretoria.
Prior to the stoning, the accused had attended a meeting on Bantu Education where 'fiery political speeches' had been made.

Verdict: Guilty.
Sentence: 6 lashes for 3 of the accused, 7 for the other.

Victor Nkandi.
Charge: Terrorism and Murder, in that the accused took part in the assassination of Ovambo 'homeland' leader Elifas in August 1975.
Nkandi, a SWAPO member, was originally called as a State witness in an earlier trial relating to the Elifas murder. He had been detained under section 6 of the Terrorism Act, and refused to give evidence. He was sentenced to 1 years imprisonment.
On his release, he was re-arrested, and charged with the murder of Elifas in September 1977. He was held in custody, bail having been refused.
In May this year, the State withdrew charges, and Nkandi was found not guilty and released from prison for the first time in 2 years.

Peter Manning, (31), detained in Windhoek on January 9th this year.
Charge: Official Secrets Act, alternatively Terrorism. Manning was alleged to have conveyed information 'useful to an enemy' about the military situation in the North of Namibia.
In May, charges were dropped, and Manning left for London on an exit permit.
Prior to the dropping of charges, two people were subpoenaed to make statements in connection with Manning's case. They were his sister, Kathy Burt, and Fink Haysom, immediate past president of NUSAS.
Ms. Burt refused to make a statement, and was sentenced to 4 months imprisonment. She is currently appealing against sentence.
Fink Haysom also refused to make a statement, and was initially sentenced to 4 days. He was then resubpoenaed, again refused to answer questions, and was sentenced to 12 months.
A feature of Haysom's second hearing was the refusal of the magistrate to grant bail pending an appeal. He stated that his job was to force Haysom to speak.
An urgent application to the Supreme Court for bail was turned down on rather different grounds to the ones put forward by the magistrate. However, bail was subsequently granted when charges against Manning were dropped.
Haysom is now out on bail pending an appeal against both conviction and sentence.

Illona Kleinschmidt, Jackie Bosman, Helen Joseph and Barbara Waite.
All of the above were originally subpoenaed to answer questions relating to a possible contravention of Winnie Mandela's banning order. All 4 refused to answer questions, and were jailed: Kleinschmidt, Bosman and Waite to 12 months, and Joseph to 4 months.
They all appea led against sentence and conviction: In the case of Kleinschmidt and Bosman this was upheld, and their conviction was set aside. In Waite's case, sentence was reduced to 2 months, and Joseph's sentence was reduced to 2 weeks. Joseph has served her sentence, and Waite is currently serving hers.
However, this was not the end of the matter. The State resubpoenaed Bosman,Kleinschmidt and Joseph. Kleinschmidt again refused to answer questions, and was sentenced to 3 months; Bosman also refused to answer any questions, and was sentenced to 4 months. Both are currently out on bail pending an appeal.
Helen Joseph, 73 years of age and recently released from prison, is due to appear in the Bloemfontein Regional Court on June 1st.
One is forced to question the motivation of the State, not only in hounding these 4 women on so trivial a matter as the breaking of a banning order, but also in the ongoing attempt to convict Winnie Mandela.
Not satisfied with having detained Mandela twice for lengthy periods, charging her once under the Terrorism Act and once under the Suppression of communism Act (the trial of the '22'), where she was both times acquitted; not satisfied with banning her twice, banishing her to a miserable township outside Brandfort in the Free State; not satisfied with sending her to prison for contravening her banning order, and with charging her with breaking that order on numerous occasions; and not satisfied with detaining her in 1976 under the preventive detention clause of the Internal Security Act, the State now seeks every method at its disposal to build yet another case of contravening a banning order against her which, if successful, will probably send her to jail yet again. (Note: Late in May, the subpoena served on Mrs. Joseph was withdrawn, allegedly on account of her age.
Petrus 'Bushy' Molefe.
Charge: Terrorism.
Details of this case are rather vague. The accused was detained under section 6 of the Terrorism Act, and although attorneys had been briefed on his behalf, they were not informed of his trial by either the police or the attorney-general's office.

It appears that Molefe was not represented at his trial.

Verdict: Guilty.

Sentence: 15 years.

Tim Dunne.

Charge: Contempt of court, in that he wrote a letter to the press in which he suggested that a black list of people who worked for the Pretoria regime be drawn up in that their activities made them guilty of crimes against humanity.

The State claimed that this implied that public prosecutors in political trials committed crimes against humanity.

Verdict: Guilty.

Sentence: R150 or 150 days.

Indhira Chetty.

Charge: Arson, in that in 1972 he set fire to the house of Fatima Meer in Durban.

According to press reports, this arrest was made after "5 years of intensive investigations by the police." (Star 16/1/78). This statement is open to serious doubt. It is widely believed that police have known who was responsible for the attack on the Meer household since 1974, when leading members of the black consciousness movement were detained for lengthy periods prior to the SASO/BPC trial.

Chief state witness in that trial was Harry Singh, who was warned as a co-conspirator and was in detention at the time.

Chief state witness against Chetty was the same Singh, again warned as a co-conspirator. It is reasonable to assume that, while in detention during 1974 and 1975, Singh told police of his and Chetty's role in the attack on Meer's house.

The arrest of Chetty, immediately following the assassination of Rick Turner, seems to have been a contrived event, aimed at proving that left-wing forces were responsible for that, and other acts against anti-apartheid activists. It may also have been designed to convey the impression that police vigorously investigate all attacks against people, regardless of the political outlook of those attacked.

If this was the motivation for police acting when they did, then it is a clumsy and transparent attempt to improve the image of a discredited force.

Verdict: Guilty.

Sentence: 5 years, 2 suspended.

13 Mdantsane students.

Charge: Murder, alternatively public violence.

The accused were detained in September and early October 1977, shortly after the funeral of Steve Biko. They were charged with murdering black policemen killed after the funeral. They appeared in court on January 31st, 1978, when bail was refused for the 4th time. On February 27th, they again appeared in court, when bail was again refused, although the state was still not ready to begin the trial.

The accused are aged between 15 and 19, and include two school girls. Most of the accused are under 18. The four who are aged 19 are Ntsekelelo Vellem, Andile Jele, Muzphela Ngwane, and Xoliswa Zeppe.

In May the trial finally began, over seven months since the arrest of the accused.

A female state witness, aged 18, alleged that police had assaulted her in detention; another teenager said that he was made to learn his statement off by heart; a doctor testified that a witness he examined in detention had said that she was suffering blackouts, fits and amnesia, and that this was probably the result of prolonged solitary confinement.

In a surprise move, 10 of the accused changed their plea from not guilty on all charges to guilty of one of the alternative charges.

10 of the accused pleaded guilty to public violence;

2 pleaded guilty to theft and attempted theft.

The other accused stood by his original plea of not guilty.

Verdict: These pleas were accepted by the state.

Sentence: (Note: the accused had all been in custody for over seven months by the time sentence was passed).

Ms. Xoliswa Zeppe and Mzuphela Ngwane: 7 years, 2 suspended.

Andile Jele, Lumka Nyamza, 3 sixteen-year olds, and a 15 year-old: 4 years, 2 suspended.

A 16 year old: 3 years, 18 months suspended.

A 17 year old: 3 years, 2 suspended.

A 14 year old: 4 lashes.

Ntsekelelo Vellem: 6 lashes.

A 17 year old: acquitted.

Vusumzi Lucas Mbatha, a teacher from the Nqutu district of Kwa Zulu.

Charge: 2 counts under the Terrorism Act, 1 of furthering any of the aims of communism, and 1 relating to the distribution of banned material.

Mbatha allegedly belonged to an organisation called the People's Organisation Front for the Liberation of South African Blacks, which

aimed at sending blacks out of South Africa to undergo military training. Mbatha is also alleged to have recruited members for the organisation and/or the ANC, and encouraged certain people to make petrol bombs and explosives.
It is also claimed that he tried to arrange a tour to Swaziland for a number of black pupils so that they could be sent for military training.
A number of witnesses, as well as Mbatha himself, claim that they were assulted and tortured in various ways by the Security Police while in detention. At the conclusion of the State case, the charge of distributing banned literature was thrown out by the court, although the defence had called for Mbatha's acquittal on all counts.
At the end of the defence case, Mbatha was found guilty on one count of Terrorism, and sentenced to 5 years.

Fatima Meer and Baptiste Bobby Marie.
Charge: Contravening their banning orders by attending a dinner party.
Evidence was led that a ten man Security Police team had kept watch outside the house where the dinner party was being held for almost three hours. They had then entered the house, and taken photographs.
The case continues on July 4th in the Durban Regional Court.

Two 16 year-old youths from Soweto.
Charge: Terrorism, in that they attempted to leave the country for military training.
Giving evidence for the State, the sister of one of the accused testified that she had told her employer that she had seen her brother with a 'wild and strange' group of men. "I Don't know who he was going to fight. He is my brother - I had to take action - he made a mistake."
At the end of the State case, the accused were acquitted. It appears that State witnesses allegedly going with the accused for training gave contradictory evidence. One of the accused was immediately re-detained.

Daniel Maseko (20), Geelbooi Skosana (20), Peter Ndlovu (19), 4 youths aged 16, 12, 14, and 14.
Charge: Public violence. These charges follow two incidents in the Middelburg township of Mhlunzi (Eastern Transvaal). In April, a protest meeting was held over proposed rent increases which were about to be implemented. After police had thrown tear-gas in an attempt to stop the meeting, the crowd stoned the police who then opened fire, wounding 8.
A few days later, a delegation of women was elected to represented the views of the township inhabitants, but police broke up this meeting with

tear-gas as well. At least one of the accused (Peter Mdlovu) was wounded when police opened fire.
The case continues.

Piti Mthejane.
Charge: Refused to give evidence against Paul Langa in his Terrorism Act trial last year. Mthejane was sentenced to 3 years for refusing to give evidence. An application for leave to appeal was refused in the Rand Supreme Court at the end of 1977.
At the end of March this year, the Appellate Division in Bloemfontein granted Mthejane leave to appeal, thus overturning the lower court's refusal.

Edwin Mankoe (22) and Thomas Mashele (21).
Charge: Belonging to SASO, a banned organisation, and possession of SASO documents.
An employee at the place the accused work testified that she saw one of them making copies of a SASO document on the firms photo-copy machine. Mankoe claims that he found the document from the floor of a railway station. He then asked Mashele to make copies of the document.
The case continues on July 2nd.

Phil Mthimkulu and Juby Mayet, both executive members of the banned Union of Black Journalists (UBJ).
Charge: Theft, alternatively fraud, in that they withdrew an amount of money from the UBJ account on the morning that it was banned.
Thami Mazwai, POST reporter, was called to give evidence against the accused. He was arrested by police immediately after giving evidence on the basis of deviations from his police statement. Mazwai has been charged with perjury, and is out on bail.
Verdict: Not guilty. The magistrate found that although the order banning the UBJ had been printed in the Government Gazette before the money was withdrawn, the order only became law after the accused had withdrawn the money.

Clive Emdon, Editor of the Rand Daily Mail 'Extra' edition.
Charge: Possession of banned literature.
The trial continues.

Jacob Lamon.
Charge: Sabotage, in that he conspired to burn a school, the home of a

school principal, and a student's home in Kwa Thema.

Elleck Nchabeleng, (18).
Charge: Terrorism. Nchabeleng is the son of Petrus Ndebeleng, recently acquitted in the Pretoria ANC trial. Elleck refused to give evidence against his father in that trial. Nchabeleng is alleged to have undergone terrorist training, persuaded two men to undergo similar training, and possessed weapons and ammunition.
Verdict: Guilty of recruiting others to undergo military training.
Sentence: 6 years.

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Solomon Rakgatsi and Victor Nkosi.
Charge: Terrorism, in that they left the country to receive military training. Confessions allegedly made by the accused to the police have been submitted by the state. The accused claimed that these confessions were not voluntarily made, in that extreme violence was used against the two men to obtain them.
At the end of the state case, both accused were acquitted. It appears that confessions which the accused made to a magistrate had to be treated as hearsay, as the interpretor who had been present during the confessions could not be found to testify.

Saul Andre Tshotsi (22), from Sebokeng.
Charge: Terrorism, [illegible] taking part in a discussion concerning military training for freedom fighters.
The case has been referred to the Attorney General of the Transvaal.

Pretoria ANC trial (S vs. Sexwale and others).
As was fairly widely reported, six of the accused in this very important trial were found guilty, and six were acquitted. Sentences ranging from 18 years to 7 years were imposed on the six convicted after the State had called for the death penalty.
One of the accused found not guilty, Elias Masinga, has been redetained under the Terrorism Act by Security Police. 3 state witnesses who refused to give evidence in the trial, and were sentenced to 6 months imprisonment, were redetained under section 6 when released. They are Billy Masetla, Super Maloi, and Mafeson Marobi.
This trial is important enough for a WIP reader to undertake a detailed study. Any offers?

Bethal PAC trial (S vs Mothopeng and 17 others).
This is an important trial, expected to last for at least a year. It provides some insight into the alleged operations of the banned PAC in South Africa. Fragemented press reports provide no idea of the trial proceedings, and as most evidence is currently being given in camera, WIP has nothing additional to offer.

Aitken Ramudzuli and Enoch Duma.
Charge: Terrorism and Sabotage, relating to the undergoing of military training, possession of arms and explosives, and acts of sabotage. Evidence related to ANC activities in Botswana and the Transvaal.
Duma, a senior Sunday Times journalist, was acquitted on all counts.
Ramudzuli was found guilty of offences relating to ANC activity, and the possession of explosives. He was sentenced to 12 years on each count, with all but 2 years on the one count to run concurrently with the other 12 years. This is an effective sentence of 14 years.

Christie Mokone (18), Petrus Senabo (19), Anania Molepo (18), and Lucas Bodiba (18).
Charge: Sabotage, in that the accused are alleged to have bombed the home of a school principal in February 1978.

Anthony Gazi, Vusi Nkosi and Patrick Nonkasa.
Charge: Terrorism, in that the accused allegedly attempted to leave South Africa and enter Swaziland to undergo military training.
Verdict: Nkosi and Nonkasa were acquitted. Gazi was found guilty as charged.
Sentence: 5 years.

Solomon Posu (23), Johannes Matsobane (21), and Abram Thinane (43).
Charge: Sabotage, in that they attempted to burn down a Vereeniging school. They failed in this attempt, and no damage was done to the school.
Verdict: Guilty.
Sentence: 8 years. During the trial it emerged that all three accused were already serving 5 year sentences for a previous act of 'Sabotage'.

Patrick Mavundla (18), Paulos Mlangeni (18), Chamberlain Nzondo (18), Herbert Eland (18), George Lebethe (18) and six others under 18.
Charge: Attempted murder and malicious damage to property. The accused are alleged to have burnt a house and kombi belonging to a school vice principal in Krugersdorp. They are also alleged to have set fire to the house of a school principal in Kagiso.

Livingstone Mokgesi (21), David Mokgesi (21), Mashudu Modau (21) and 2 youths aged 17, all of the Northern Transvaal.
Charge: The accused are facing nine charges under the Sabotage Act. All incidents are alleged to have occured in October 1977 in Sibasa. The acts relate to the burning of cars belonging to the Venda homeland government, burning classrooms and cutting telephone wires.

Samuel Tlou (19), David Montsho (22), Joshua Kamalo (18), and 4 youths aged between 14 and 16.
Charge: 4 counts of public violence related to a riot in Sharpeville on April 19th, 1978.

Johannes Kombela, Simon Hlojane, and Andries Njelwa.
Charge: Murder. It is alleged that in June 1976, the 3 accused threw a rock through the windscreen of a car on the Johannesburg-Potchefstroom road, killing a passenger in the car.

Gilbert Nyatlo (21), a first year medical student, and Moses Ngoasheng (20).
Charge: Terrorism, in that they attempted to leave the country intending to undergo military training, and attempted to recruit others to do the same.
The accused were arrested in Zeerust, on their way to Botswana.
Verdict: Guilty on the first count. Not guilty on the second count.
Council for defence asked for the minimum sentence of 5 years to be imposed. This was not opposed by the prosecutor.
Sentence: 7 years each.

David Mokgosi (20), Hendrik Molefe (19), George Motsei (19), and Stanley Moalusi (18), all of Kagiso, outside Krugersdorp.
Charge: Sabotage, in that the accused attacked the homes of school teachers and Kagiso Urban Bantu Council members, and threw petrol bombs at those homes. The alleged attacks took place on March 1st, 1978.

Augustine Sithole.
Charge: Making a false bomb threat. The accused is alleged to have telephoned an ex employer of his, and told him that a bomb had been planted at the home of the assistant production manager on behalf of the ANC. The offence allegedly took place on April 27th 1978.

Rajee Vandeyar.
Charge: 22 counts of contravening his banning order. Vandeyar was banned after serving a ten year sentence on Robben Island for Sabotage. One of his co-accused in that case was Indres Naidoo.

Don Mattera.

Charge: Contravening his banning order.

At the start of this trial, 8 state witnesses refused to testify against Mattera. Subsequently, they agreed to give evidence. At the end of the state case, Mattera was found not guilty and discharged. The magistrate presiding commented that the state witnesses had been obstructionist. Subsequently, 6 of the State witnesses were detained by Security police. They have all been charged with perjury.

Tim Jenkins and Stephen Lee.

Charge: Terrorism and Internal Security. The accused were alleged to have produced and circulated, by the use if pamphlet bombs, 17 pamphlets on behalf of the ANC. They were also alleged to have taken part in the activities of the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto We Sizwe. The accused pleaded guilty to charges under the Terrorism Act, but not guilty to those framed under the Internal Security Act.

Verdict: Guilty under the Terrorism Act charges.

Sentence: Lee was sentenced to 8 years, Jenkins to 12 years. Council applied for leave to appeal, pointing out that these sentences were much higher than those handed down for similar offences. For example, in similar trials, Tony Holiday was sentenced to 6 years, Raymond Suttner to 7½ years, David Rabkin to 10 years, and Jeremy Cronin to 7 years. Leave to appeal was refused by the trial judge.

# NAFCOC

The National African Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC) is playing an important role in the mobilisation and organisation of capital on behalf of black entrepreneurs. This is especially the case in the urban areas.

NAFCOC, whose president Sam Motsuenyane plays a particularly prominent role, has been instrumental in establishing a number of enterprises such as the African Bank of South Africa, Black-chain Ltd., and a newly-acquired publishing company. These small-time capitalists have a particular relationship with bigger white capitalists, the black working class and the State. The South African State has imposed a large number of restrictions on black businessmen, such the Urban and Group Areas Acts. Some of these have been lifted since June 1976, including the ban on the formation of black companies and partnerships and the regulations restricting black traders to the provision of essential consumer goods.

However, because of the large number of monopolies in South Africa (ie. businesses completely dominating the market, and able to exclude competitors), there is little room for these black entrepreneurs even if all the restrictions were to be lifted.

These traders lack finance or money. One of the most important reasons for this lack of finance is that black businessmen have not had the right to freehold land ownership, and accordingly land could not be advanced as security for bank loans. Traders can, however, obtain money from two other groups: white capitalists and the black working class.

The provision of money to black entrepreneurs by large financiers can be seen in the establishment of the African Bank, and more recently, The African Development and Construction Co., Ltd. This is a consortium of black businessmen under the umbrella of NAFCOC, with Roberts Construction holding 49% of the shares. (RDM 13/2/78).

Certain white companies have an interest in obtaining a greater share in the black consumer market. Joint ventures with black entrepreneurs assists them in gaining access to this market. Thus Motsuenyane has said that NAFCOC was approached by Pick 'n Pay to form two joint companies.

Furthermore, a representative of one group of white capitalists, commercial capitalists, has said:

> "The rapid creation of a strong non-white middle class is the best answer to the communist ideology and to the possible exploitation of grievances. Assocom still wants more speed in the removal of technical obstacles that put a brake on the development of black businesses..... (B)lack traders still labour under too many restrictions." Mr. R. Parsons - Executive Director of the Association of Chambers of Commerce (ASSOCOM) (Star 9/2/78).

Obviously many members of Assocom can afford to compete with black businessmen who have not the resources to compete effectively. Opening up the Johannesburg central business district to a few black entrepreneurs might also prevent a trade boycott of the area by blacks.

Apart from white capitalist groups, black businessmen can also generate finance by mobilising the savings of the black working class. The establishment of Sizwe - a medical aid fund 'conceived by a group of well-known black doctors on the Reef and catering exclusively for blacks' - can be seen in this light. Motsuenyane is chairman of the fund. 'A sum of R5-27 per month is estimated as the average contribution per member and will bring monthly contributions to R263,000 if targets are met'. This money can then be invested by black entrepreneurs. (In mobilising working-class savings for a purpose such as this, ideologies such as Black Consciousness and 'self help for blacks' could be very useful).

The scheme also has advantages to others:

> "Advantages to the employer of black labour include reduction in absenteeism through ill-health, less loss of time through the travelling and use of state services and the potential of improved health of both the employee and his family - all leading to an improvement in productivity and increased well-being of employees".
> -Business South Africa, vol. 13 no. 3, 1978.

This is not to argue that there is no conflict between black businessmen and large financiers, or that there is no conflict between black businessmen and the working class.

Conflict between black businessmen and large white capitalists, and co-operation between black traders and the state is illustrated by the struggle over the establishment of a supermarket in Soweto. The basis of the struggle is over the R175 million of annual turnover of money from Soweto which is spent in Johannesburg. This represents some 70% of Soweto's spending power.

A group of white businessmen had planned to build a shopping centre twice the size of Sandton City, costing R20million, and with an estimated R25 million turnover (sales) per year. It was to be built on an enclave of white-owned land in Soweto, together with a black 'controlling corporation'.

(The Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner for the Witwatersrand advised against the project because of the risk factor involved, ie. the possible destruction of the supermarket. The Johannesburg City Council agreed to it 'if black traders withdrew their objections').

Last year Blackchain Pty. Ltd. , in association with NAFCOC and the African Bank 'made formal application to the WRAB for a site on which to erect a R3 million supermarket in Jabulani" (FM 3/2/78). Subsequently, the site was refused by WRAB. In April this year, the company was registered with capital of R1 million - each share being worth R1. The company had been formed to establish large supermarkets and warehouses of a cash-and-carry type in black areas. It had also been formed to enable blacks to run large competitive stores and thereby stop the outflow of black buying power. (RDM 10/3/78). The company is negotiating for premises in Kwa Thema, Springs and in Sunlight Beach near Umkomaas.

NAFCOC opposed the establishment of a supermarket by the large white capitalists: "Soweto traders will seek help from the government through NAFCOC to prevent a white group from developing a giant shopping complex in the township. NAFCOC will recommend to the Minister that the small white area on which the complex is to be erected be re-proclaimed as a bantu area so that only black businessmen may use it" (RDM 10/3/78).

According to the Citizen:

> "The Minister of PRAD, Dr. C. Mulder....promised the executive of NAFCOC that he would use his power to prevent a group of white businessmen erecting a large shopping complex at Klipspruit on the outskirts of Soweto. The plans have yet to be approved by the Department of Planning and of Community Development and the possibility is now that Dr. Mulder may kill it at these two points in favour of the black tradesmen of Soweto".
> (Citizen 29/3/78).

Thus it seems that black entrepreneurs have an interest in the maintenance of 'seperate development'. It was to this that the Sunday Times referred in commenting on a speech made by Motsuenyane: "There appeared to be a contradiction" in what he said. "In one breath he called for more competition, and in the next pleaded for protection for black businessmen in urban areas such as Soweto". (Sunday Times 12/3/78).