

beria, Sierre Leone, all trouble spots, sometimes violence, wars—do you see a role for Nigeria in helping build a better future for Africa as a whole?

Ogundokun: Yes. Most of these troubles are internationally sponsored and financed. Africans do not really have the intention of fighting among themselves. But the external, powerful forces have the financial and economic power to sabotage the efforts of the developing nations. How do they do it? They find out that if we are united, they will not be able to achieve the control which they have been dreaming about. . . .

EIR: Recently, when there was the attempted coup in Nigeria, there was also an activation of a U.S.-based group called TransAfrica, which is heavily funded by the Ford Foundation and the British. They are now campaigning actively, and they held a demonstration last week at the Nigerian Embassy, saying that sanctions must be placed on Nigeria, and that Sani Abacha and the military must immediately hand over power to civilians. Having been through almost a year now of the National Constitutional Conference, discussing the issues of civilian rule and democracy, how do you answer Randall Robinson and TransAfrica?

Ogundokun: Robinson is a personal friend of Chief M.K.O. Abiola. His main interest is to see Abiola back in power. Where was Robinson in 1983, when the Army took over power from Shagari? Why did he not come out and campaign for Shagari? Why is he now just interested in the 1993 election? Because he is dancing to the tune of his masters, his friends—he wants his friend in power.

He is not in Nigeria; he cannot know better than a Nigerian what is going on here. He should come here, to see what is on the ground. For him to be championing the cause of democracy and civilian rule in Nigeria, he must first understand the true position of the country. He is working for money: I am saying that, because if he is not working for money, he should come here, study the situation, like President Carter came, and like some parliamentary people came. If Carter could say that Americans are being misinformed about Nigeria, then Robinson must be talking rubbish. The campaign of Robinson is not a campaign of honesty, but a campaign of destruction, designed to satisfy his masters and to get his friend into power.

The 1993 elections were an inconclusive election. The results have not been announced. There is an electoral law, defied by Abiola himself on Election Day, which forbids you from wearing your party emblem at the polling station—which Abiola did. He would not have been declared elected by anybody. So what are we making noise about? It was an inconclusive election. I know the other candidate; Bashir Tofa was out. They took Abiola's photograph, because he defied the law which has to do with electioneering. There was wanton use of bribery for the election, which is one of the reasons that the former President annulled the election.

Interview: Chief Emea Udu Oji

Our key problem is the unity of Nigeria

Chief Udu Oji is a delegate to the National Constitutional Conference from Abia state. He was interviewed by Uwe Friesecke on April 26 in Abuja, Nigeria.

EIR: Could you give us your view of the work of the National Constitutional Conference?

Udu Oji: I would describe the Constitutional Conference as a coming together of minds, people from different professions, from different experiences, old and young. The problem of Nigerian unity is what knocks the country right, left, and center, and I would say that in our practices and our deliberations, we saw that the unity of this country comes first and foremost. As an individual, sometimes I have been very critical of north, east, west, or south, and that is where the problem of this country comes in. As for the conference, we did as much as we could to make sure that we would talk together as Nigerians, and not as Yorubans or Ibos. I think this is one of the best jobs that the conference tried to do.

The problem of this country is uneven development. The problem of this country is with the politicals, the military, with ourselves. Under it is the canker of corruption. You see it all over: with the Army, with the politicals, with the police, with the businessmen.

As for the writing of the Constitution, sometimes I regard it as a tongue-twisting exercise, because it is not the Constitution that is holding the country back; it is the government.

We have tried to educate the people about what our problems are, and tried to offer solutions.

EIR: You said the most important thing was that people came together as Nigerians. How would you define the essence of being a Nigerian? How would you define the character of Nigeria as a nation?

Udu Oji: During colonial days, sometimes we saw the British as somebody we thought was [our enemy], and we tried to come together. But when the common enemy, the person we regarded as our enemy, was away, then the problem became ourselves. In 1954, when they had elections in the west, in Yoruba land, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe did win an election, but because he was not from that group, he was refused! These have been our problems, before independence. These are the aspects of our life that we really would like to change, and that is what the Constitutional Conference is trying to achieve.