

Constitutional Conference charts the future of Nigeria

by Lawrence Freeman and Uwe Friesecke

All one reads or hears in the western media about Nigeria, is that it is a nation led by an oppressive military junta and that it is constantly accused of human rights violations. When we went to Nigeria in October, we found a totally different picture and were excited about Nigeria's potential for creating new and viable political institutions and policies promoting real economic growth. Leaders of government, policymakers, and thoughtful citizens are being fed a daily dose of lies about the intentions of Nigeria's current military government led by Gen. Sani Abacha. This issue of *EIR* reveals for the first time in print the truth about the efforts of the Nigerian National Constitutional Conference (NCC) in determining a new future for Nigeria.

All other media outlets around the world, led by the major media of Great Britain and the United States, have deliberately refused to cover this breaking story and have acted as a propaganda machine. With the publication of this feature, there is no excuse for gullible western leaders, particularly those in the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus, to continue to align themselves with the ongoing destabilizations and attempted coups organized by the British and Dutch, and carried out in large part by the grouping around Royal Dutch Shell. The fact that no western press has reported on the daily deliberations of the NCC should provoke thinking citizens to question why they are being deliberately lied to, and who is behind it.

While most people dependent on the major media only hear diatribes about the "oppressive military regime" of General Abacha, it is not generally known that one of the first acts of the Abacha government upon assuming leadership on Nov. 17, 1993, was the creation of a commission establishing

a conference to draft a new constitution for Nigeria. As a result of that action, 360 delegates now meet each day in a huge hall in the new capital of Abuja, guided by the fair and steady hand of Supreme Court Justice Karibe White.

In this unique democratic atmosphere, these delegates, 270 of whom were recently elected (nine from each of the 30 states), plus 90 appointed delegates (three from each state), debate the concepts and details of a new Nigerian constitution. The delegates come from every geographical area, and represent all ethnic groupings, religions, and parties, and include former opponents of the Nigerian government. Yet, everyone we were able to talk to—local chiefs, government officials, elected representatives, and businessmen—expressed great optimism and hope that this constitutional process will create the basis for a "new Nigeria."

It is precisely because this constitutional process is seen as a way of overcoming the divisions that have undermined Nigeria since independence in 1960—divisions which were deliberately fostered by Lord Lugard and the British from the end of the 19th century into the 20th—that the British-Dutch oligarchies today are intent on preventing this process from coming to fruition. The vision of what Nigeria could become is eloquently presented by Chief Ojukwu (see interview), who, even though he led the Biafra war against Nigeria almost 30 years ago, today enthusiastically supports the efforts of the NCC.

The so-called democracy movement

As detailed in the Nov. 25 issue of *EIR*, the Nigerian economy had been so weakened under the International Monetary Fund's structural adjustment program during the eight-

year regime of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, the country almost disintegrated. General Abacha brought the wrath of the British and the Dutch oligarchical families upon himself when he, immediately upon assuming office, reversed the destructive IMF conditionalities. In his first year as leader of Nigeria, he has attempted to rebuild the economy with a sound perspective of nurturing the development of the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, although progress has been slower than what the government desires for the Nigerian people (see speech by General Abacha on p. 67).

Among the major obstacles to economic progress were the strikes, disruptions, and outright sabotage of the economy led by the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers and the Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria. The truth of the matter, which the media never reported, was that the striking workers and various so-called pro-democracy groups who deployed this summer to force the overthrow of the Abacha government were orchestrated and funded by the British government, Royal Dutch Shell Oil Company, and Chief M.K. Abiola.

The propaganda line for the credulous, uninformed public was that Abiola had won the presidential election in June 1993, and that General Abacha, one year and two governments later, should have simply left office and handed the government over to Abiola. The truth is that the election conducted by General Babangida in 1993 was annulled before any official results were counted, so Abiola was never officially declared President and has no legal claims to head the country. M.A. Rimi, minister of communication and a member of Abiola's Social Democratic Party, exposes in detail the truth behind Abiola's attempt to take over the government through the June 12th Movement (see interview).

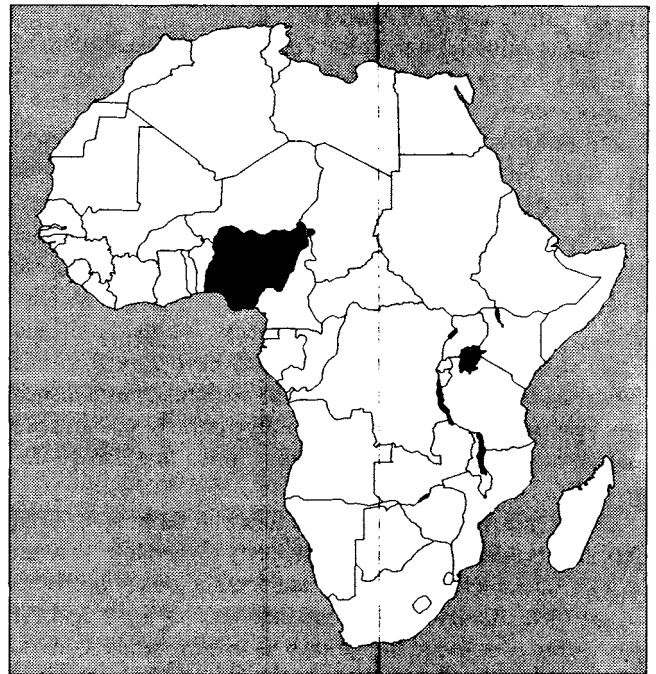
Abiola, a close friend of General Babangida, was well aware of the shenanigans that Babangida intended by calling and then canceling the 1993 election, and then requesting that General Abacha step in and take over the government in the fall of 1993. Only after several trips outside Nigeria, in coordination with British intelligence, did Abiola attempt an overthrow of the government earlier this year, an act that landed him in jail for treason.

Chief Abiola was a money dispenser for Uganda's leader Yoweri Museveni. It has been conclusively proven (see *EIR*, Sept. 19, 1994) that Museveni, guided by Lynda Chalker, Minister of the British Overseas Development Office, directed the hideous genocide against Rwanda and then had his military forces take control of a devastated and depopulated Rwanda. Given Chief Abiola's British pedigree, we have further evidence that the so-called Abiola democracy movement is really a British-run destabilization against Nigeria, one of the most strategically important countries in Africa.

What kind of constitution?

The future for Nigeria is tied up with two principal issues

The Federal Republic of Nigeria



which are closely related. There is little chance that significant economic progress will be possible in Nigeria unless it becomes part of an international effort to overthrow the IMF dictatorship's control of the world economy and rebuild the economy according to specific axioms of economic development outlined by Lyndon LaRouche (see *Feature*).

Second, Nigerians must guard against being influenced by British concepts of law and government in formulating the principles underlying the new Nigerian constitution. Many Nigerians are trained and educated in Britain and are susceptible to having their thinking tainted by British empiricism, exemplified by the writings of Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, David Hume, and Adam Smith. In fact, the British-concocted notion of free trade, identified with Adam Smith's "invisible hand," is not only the cornerstone of IMF ideology, but is also the basis for the oligarchy's commitment to destroy sovereign nation-states in favor of a world empire.

The clearest demonstration of the difference between the British concept of oligarchical law consistent with free trade, and the concept of natural law appropriate to the nation-state, is seen by comparing the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution to Locke's constitution for the Carolina colony. The U.S. Constitution begins:

"We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the gener-

al Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

The opening section of the Fundamental Constitution of Carolina, written by Locke on behalf of Lord Ashley, first Earl of Shaftesbury, reads as follows:

“Our Sovereign Lord The King having, out of his royal grace and bounty, granted unto us the province of Carolina . . . for the better settlement of the government . . . and establishing the interest of the Lords Proprietors . . . that the government of this province may be made most agreeable to the monarchy under which we live . . . and that we may avoid erecting a numerous democracy: we the Lord and Proprietors of the province aforesaid, have agreed to this following form of government, to be perpetually established amongst us, unto which we do oblige ourselves, our heirs and successors, in the most binding ways that can be devised.”

What follows is 20 pages of regulations for how the Lord Proprietors shall rule based on property ownership. In other essays, Locke writes that the fundamental rights of individuals are “life, liberty, health, and indolence of body: and the possession of outward things such as money, lands, houses, furniture and the like.” The Declaration of Independence states, in direct opposition to Locke’s ideas, that the inalienable rights of man are “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

The difference between the British concept of natural law and that of America’s founding fathers is profound and irreconcilable. The U.S. Constitution establishes the general welfare of our posterity as the basis of law, where the current behavior of society is measured against its success in providing for future generations of self-governing citizens. Locke, on the other hand, acting on behalf of the British monarchy, treats each individual as an animal only concerned with the immediate gratifications of money, property, possessions, and greed, with no concern for the common good or general welfare of society in the present or in the future.

For Nigeria to be a truly independent and sovereign nation, it must break completely from the House of Windsor, both economically and philosophically. Establishing a new Nigeria, based on a constitution rooted in the fundamental principles of natural law as expressed in the U.S. Constitution, which itself was written in direct and explicit opposition to the British oligarchy, will not only benefit Nigerians for generations to come, but will also serve as a shining beacon of hope for all of Africa.

Other delegates to the National Constitutional Conference who were interviewed include Dr. Peter C.O. Odili from River State and Prof. E.A. Opia from Delta State. They will be printed in future issues of EIR, as will interviews with other Nigerian officials who met with the authors during their Oct. 2-16 trip.

Interview: Karibe White

Nigeria’s fight for a just constitution

Justice Karibe White, chairman of the National Constitutional Conference, was interviewed by Lawrence Freeman and Uwe Friesecke in Abuja, Nigeria, on Oct. 6.

EIR: Could you please tell us the purpose of this Constitutional Conference?

White: Toward the end of the Babangida regime, there were a lot of problems. When the present regime came in on Nov. 17 [1993], they decided to set up this Constitutional Conference Commission, composed of 19 members, for the purpose drawing up the agenda for the Constitutional Conference. When the conference started on June 27, 1994, it had the agenda which was drawn up by the commission. But considering that the agenda included so many subjects, and that the conference was mandated to draw up a constitution, the conference decided mainly to take up those areas that dealt with constitutional-drafting, rather than spend so much time dealing with matters of general social importance that perhaps had no bearing on constitution-making.

Now, the head of state greeted the conference on June 27, and swore in the chairman. The chairman on his own then swore in the deputy and the delegates to the conference.

EIR: Could you tell us something about your background: where you came from, why you were chosen to be the chairman?

White: Why was I chosen? I wouldn’t know. I am a Nigerian. My parents are Nigerians, my grandparents are Nigerians; at least as far as I know, my family, up to the eighth or ninth generation, we have always been Nigerians of River State origin.

I had my earliest school career in Abbey State. I went back as secretary of education in my own state, the River State. I worked for a few years in the civil service and then went to study law in Britain. My second degree was at the University of London, and I became a researcher there, then went on field research to Gambia in 1963-64, returned to London in 1964, then came back to Nigeria in 1965. I was a lecturer at the Law University of Lagos, from 1965 to 1970. I was in Lagos throughout the civil war, and after the war, states were created. That was when the River State was created, in 1967. They needed manpower, and I was persuaded, I would say, to go to River State to assist. I went there as head