

religious riot. But the government itself accepted that the riots were more than just religious riots even though the combatants' and properties destroyed were along religious lines.

The most expressive reaction to SAP, however, was that of the Obafemi Awolowo University students during the University's 1987 Convocation. The Chief of Naval Staff, representing the President as Visitor to the University was not only called such names as "thief" and "akotileta" i.e. a prodigal child who sells properties in the home cheaply to outsiders, but his entourage was in addition pelted with stones to the extent that he had to flee in a car abandoning the helicopter that he was to use in returning to Lagos.

Prior to the action of the students and in line with what is to be expected from a government that supervises a policy like SAP, labour leaders across the nation were clamped into detention for publishing a newspaper paid advertisement that called the claims of government on petroleum products subsidies a pack of lies.¹⁸ The labour leaders were to be charged with sedition, but with popular support from the masses, government decided to drop the sedition charges and later released the labour leaders. Before this overt use of brute force on the Nigerian Labour Congress, various divide and rule tactics and manipulation of the media had been used to destabilise various groups that could stand up against government in undertaking its policies. One of such groups has been ASUU.

Conclusion:

An examination of the socio-political implications of SAP demonstrates the fact that the package is externally foisted on debt-ridden countries. The twin problems that President Dennis Sassou-Nguesso of the Congo expressed at Abuja in June 1987 are genuine and real fears. It is beyond doubt that we cannot come out of the present crisis as a nation that is unsubjugated. It is also beyond doubt that the standard of living of majority of Nigerians who constitute the dominated classes has been on the decrease. And with such decrease in the standard of living, the second problem that President Sassou-Nguesso defined as human tragedy in terms of upheavals, the hunger riots and the explosive socio-political situations is more than potentially real in Nigeria.

With such popular reactions, one cannot but expect the unmasking of the masquerade in a regime that claims to respect fundamental human rights. There is bound to be continuous efforts at muzzling public opinion in terms of restriction of access to the mass media by critical opinions, or governmental denouncements of highly placed and sacred voices like that of a former Head of State or the outright incarceration of people like was the experience of the Nigerian Labour Congress leadership.

1. Dennis Sassou-Nguesso address as the then Chairman of the OAU to the International Conference on "Africa: The Challenge of Economic Recovery and Accelerated Development", held at Abuja, Nigeria on 15-19 June, 1987.

2. A. O. Phillips, "A General Overview of SAP" in Adedotun O. Phillips and Eddy C. Ndekwe, eds., *Structural Adjustment Programme in a Developing Economy: The Case of Nigeria*, (Ibadan: NISER, 1987), p.6.

3. Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Structural Adjustment Programme for Nigeria: July 1986 - June 1988*, (Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1986), pp. 8-9.

4. See T. A. Oyejide, et. al., *Nigeria and the I.M.F.* (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Limited, 1985) and Babafemi A. Badejo, "State and Class in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Babangida Administration's 1986 Budget", Proceedings of the University of Lagos, Faculty of Social Sciences Second National Conference, 1986, forthcoming.

5. See Babafemi A. Badejo. *Ibid.*

6. See E. J. Wilson III, "The Future of Public-Private Sector Relations in Africa: What Prospects for Privatization?" Public Lecture at NISER, 1986

7. See the *World Development Report* for 1987 for the World Bank's encouragement of Debt-Equity Swap.

8. General Babangida has come out clearly in the 1988 Budget as embracing both the debt-equity conversion strategy and privatization. For details, see *Daily Times*, January 1st, 1988.

9. See the 1988 Budget's breakdown by the Minister of Finance. See *Daily Times*, January 5th, 1988

10. The initial resistance to I.M.F. devaluation strategy was just on what is now a paltry devaluation by 25-30%.

11. M. J. Obadan, "Theory and Practice of SFEM", in Phillips and Ndekwe, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 47.

12. See Adamson Momoh's report on a Seminar sponsored by the Indigenous Business Group on October 14, 1987. For the report, see *Daily Times*, October 26th, 1987, p. 7.

13. For details on the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria's announcement, see *The Guardian*, December 29th, 1987. For other measures, see President Babangida's Budget Speech in *Daily Times*, January 1, 1988 and the Minister of Finance's Briefing on the Budget in *Daily Times*, January 5th, 1988.

14. For a more detailed refutation of government's claims that it has been subsidising petroleum products, see Babafemi A. Badejo, *op. cit.*