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CHAPTER 4

THE MILITARIZATION OF NIGERIAN SOCIETY

Biko Agozino and Unyierie Idem

INTRODUCTION BY DR. KAYODE FAYEMI

The dominant wisdom, a year and a half after Olusegun Obasanjo assumed office as Nigeria’s president in May 1999, is that the country is now a democracy. It is true, of course, that elections were held and that candidates vied for various positions on the platforms of political parties, as a consequence of which a democratically elected government, along with a National Assembly and its counterparts in the states, are now in power. As I have argued elsewhere, however, polling booths and voters are not all that make a democracy. Indeed, democracy, at its core, is a state of mind, a set of attitudinal dispositions woven into the fabric of a society, the concrete expression of which are its social institutions. Undemocratic social institutions cannot, therefore, sire or sustain democratic governments, no matter how often the ballot box ritual is enacted.

This is the kernel of the argument advanced by Biko Agozino and Unyierie Idem in this important chapter, which takes a hard look at the country’s social fabric: the institution of the family, the educational system, the economy, the military, the judiciary, and traditional communities. It concludes that the more than thirty years of rapacious military dictatorship, which the Nigerian people have been forced to go through, have left an indelible mark on the collective psyche. This psyche has been so
militarized that it now embraces force and routine violence, and
instinctively shies away from debate and dialogue, the two all-
important props without which a truly democratic edifice cannot
stand.

Employing the refreshing method of participant observation,
and using the descriptive tools of anecdote, personal narrative,
and eyewitness account, the authors offer us a graphic and
troubling picture of a country at war with itself, where children
are brutalized by parents, students are terrorized by teachers
and government officials alike, and traders and other economic
actors are engaged in a vicious war of cat and mouse with rivals,
amused robbers, and security agents on the make. In churches and
mosques the talk is of spiritual warfare and jihad, cudgels, bows
and arrows rather than the tools of persuasion and conversion.
Military decrees have banished judges and the rule of law to the
margins of social life, and guns have usurped legal tomes as the
final authority.

It is an unflattering portrait of a society in a state of anomic,
a society where, to quote the Nigerian scholar Attahiru Jega
(1997), whose work is cited in this paper, the "prolonged nature
of military rule has constricted democratic space, entrenched
authoritarianism, and nurtured nihilism."

Is it possible, then, for democratic politics and the
institutions that sustain it to take firm root and blossom in this
harsh landscape? This is the burden of this chapter. Agozino and
Idem's contention is that Nigerians need to undergo a process
of "demilitarization" akin to a detoxification exercise that will
make them unlearn and discard the military ethos they have
unwittingly acquired over the years since 1966, before the
journey toward a truly democratic country can properly begin.
The main strength of this chapter is how the authors take great
pains to succinctly demonstrate how Nigerian society became
infected with the "military" virus. They implicitly argue that
what is learned can be unlearned, that society is not atavistically
bound to violence, and that, given the right mix of programmes
and policies, what is damaged can be made whole again.
And therein lies the importance of this chapter. It refuses to take the country's new democratic dispensation for granted, preferring to see it as a tender sapling that requires plenty of water and sunshine to take root and flower. And this water and sunshine are the country's social institutions that, as the authors make clear, are so battered and bruised that they are more likely to smother the sapling of democracy than nurture it if they are not reformed within the appropriate policy framework. Agozino and Idem have outlined the steps that, if taken conscientiously, not only will safeguard Nigeria's nascent democracy but also may be exported to neighbouring West African countries still grappling with dictatorship and militarization of the communal psyche.

This chapter makes a demand not only on Nigeria's political and civil society leaders but also on the international community, particularly policy-makers in Europe and the United States currently involved in the important work of rolling back military dictatorship, civil war, and poverty in Africa. If there is one thing that this chapter makes clear, it is that bad economics breeds poverty, and mass poverty in turn invites military dictatorship. Dictatorship, as Africa's recent history has abundantly demonstrated, is a key cause of civil war. And where there is war, democratic politics flies out the window.

The battle to shore up democracy on the continent must therefore adopt a holistic strategy, integrating the economic, social, and of course political in a marathon designed to firm up the institutional structures that ultimately must support democratic governance if it is to have any chance of surviving beyond the ballot box ceremonial.

CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

Between December 1998 and January 1999 we conducted an ethnographic study in six states in Nigeria on behalf of the Centre for Democracy and Development. While campaign groups in the country at the time directed their attention to the return of
the military to the barracks, we focused on militarization as a process that goes beyond the military, permeating the whole of civil society. And while donor agencies encourage a definition of civil society that refers specifically to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), we adopted a sociological definition that embraces the institutions of the family, education, religion, economy, community relations, and justice. Finally, while many commentators assume that Nigeria is unique, we assume that Nigerians have a lot to learn from and to teach their immediate neighbours in West Africa about the means of democratizing a militarized civil society.

This project aims to highlight the obstacles to democratization due to the institutionalization of a militaristic ethos in Nigerian culture and society. The project attempts to identify ways and means of strengthening civil society through a structured process of democratizing Nigerian culture and politics.

The project focused preliminarily on six states in the country: Enugu State in the east, Cross River State in the southeast, Lagos State in the west, Plateau State in the middle belt, and Kaduna and Kano States in the north. Approximately one and a half weeks of archival research, observations, and interviews were conducted in each of the six states. The fieldworkers also established contact with experienced researchers in these states who wanted to collaborate on the more definitive project.

While most campaign and research organizations in the country concentrated on the military handover to a civilian administration, we observed the militarization of family and kinship relations, with men assuming a militaristic attitude toward women and children, resulting in widespread domestic violence, abuse, and anti-democratic tendencies in civil society. Children were beaten all the time by adults, men beat women, some women were killed or maimed, while the culprits were accountable to no one.

Yet the institution of the family remains one of the strongest supporters of the struggle for democracy in the country. At a time when it was easy for political activists to be betrayed, family
members stood by their own in most cases. Also, in spite of the authoritarianism within the institution of the family, it remains one of the most open democratic spaces where genuine criticism is expected and given without fear of censure. We would like to extend this observation to the rest of West Africa to see if the countries that are less militarized are also less authoritarian in gender and kinship relations compared to the more militarized ones.

The educational system in Nigeria reinforces the authoritarianism of the family not only by widespread use of security officials to run institutions of higher learning but also because of the authoritarian orientation of the civilian educational administrators and government officials, who ban legitimate staff and student unions. In the reigning atmosphere of insecurity, intimidation, and frustration, some students and lecturers join or form secret cults through which they vent their pent-up feelings by murdering, raping, maiming, and terrorizing fellow students and sometimes staff.

Paradoxically, as in the case of the family, the educational institutions remain one of the gateways to democracy in the country, given their capacity to serve as places of open criticism and debate in spite of attempts to muzzle critical scholarship. This is evident in the fact that Nigerian students, lecturers, and many university administrators remain in the vanguard of the struggle for democracy even when a majority of their colleagues remain silent supporters of the repressive system.

The religious institution is also militarized. Members of religious organizations whom we interviewed emphasized that they were engaged in spiritual warfare, and this is not always too far behind actual wars against rival religious organizations. This strong militaristic ideology inherent in all organized religions needs to be studied in greater detail with a view to increasing the democratization of religious practices and beliefs. After all, underlying every religious faith in the country is the assumption that people should love one another, indicating that this divisive institution could yet be made to deepen democratic beliefs, more
so as key members of the priesthood and some clerics have been advocating the advantages of democracy in the country.

The legal institution in Nigeria is militarized through the role of special military tribunals in the trials of civilians; the widespread use of armed soldiers and police officers to shoot suspected criminals on sight, resulting in the killing of innocent people; the appalling conditions in overcrowded jails, where detainees are held without charge; the use of capital punishment; and the lack of democratic accountability by security agents. These issues will be explored further to find ways of demilitarizing Nigerian law and enhancing its democratization because the law remains one of the chief instruments of challenging authoritarianism in the country, albeit in a limited fashion.

The economy is one of the most militarized of Nigerian institutions. Traders speak of the practice of using army officers to collect debts or settle scores, the use of hired killers to murder rivals, and the use of religious rituals and sorcery in the spiritual warfare that is thought by some to accompany trade. Nigerian workers receive brutal treatment at the hands of employers and the government. Then there is interference with trade union activities resulting in seizure of the unions and their administration by government-appointed sole administrators, the sponsorship of rival unions often armed and used to attack genuine representatives of workers, the horse-whipping of striking workers and their summary dismissal, and the deprivation of the communities around industrial locations and the use of “carrots” to divide such communities, resulting in internecine conflict.

These conflicts sometimes spill over and affect industrial installations, thus giving security agents the excuse to use live ammunition against unarmed demonstrators. Are the economies of the rest of the Economic Community of West African States any less militarized than the Nigerian example?

Transportation companies routinely hire armed escorts to protect the passengers from robbers, but the armed men that the passengers usually encounter are at the countless military and
police roadblocks, brazenly extracting illegal tolls from every passing driver, thereby inflating transportation fares. While some traders kill innocent people for “money medicine,” others take the law into their own hands and execute suspected criminals, referred to by Aba traders in the eastern part of the country as “mice.”

These issues require a closer look to find alternative consensual ways of running the economy rather than perpetuate the militarization of this vital institution of Nigerian civil society. As in the case of the other institutions mentioned above, the militarization of the economy sits side by side with free-market beliefs and the deep-rooted democratic practice of haggling in which the buyer is encouraged not to be intimidated by the dictatorship of the trader but to make an offer based on a sense of fairness and decency, unlike supermarkets in the West, where the prices of items are not open to bargaining.

Some communities have adopted the barracks mentality of “might is right,” especially in the contest for elective political office characterized by thuggery and violence. Some traditional rulers run secret cults with which they intimidate people in rural areas and extort money from them as fines without due process. Young people who are thought to be delinquent are rounded up, blindfolded, and tortured with threats that they could be executed. At night armed vigilante groups patrol the streets with what one informant called “enough guns to wage a war.” Even in the cities the streets are barricaded, and armed watchmen take over at night. Indeed, people live in a state of war. Rather than resigning ourselves to this state of affairs, it is wise to search for alternative ways of policing the community that would be more democratic and less militaristic, given that many Nigerian communities have age-old traditions of democratic republicanism in the true sense of that phrase.

We propose that the questions raised about lessons from other parts of West Africa be pursued by extending the ethnographic research to the rest of the region. We also recommend that a group of three researchers/activists be set up in each of the six
Nigerian states visited and funded for three years to continue the process of observation and analysis, and to coordinate the implementation of the practical implications of the project in their areas. They would employ two full-time research and education officers (twelve altogether) from the fund. These hires will ensure that the paradoxical observations highlighted by the preliminary trip will be investigated more closely and documented in greater detail for the purpose of developing an educational programme that could help to disseminate the findings of the research and thereby help to end the militaristic ideology in civil society.

The education programme would be implemented through a series of radio programmes that would broadcast, in pidgin English and Nigerian languages, issues of democracy and “literacy.” A monthly journal could be funded for all the groups to contribute articles to and for discussions of the curricula of the weekly grassroots democracy literacy classes. An annual democracy literacy conference should also be funded for all the groups and the foreign-based partners to review progress and plans.

UNDERSTANDING MILITARIZED CIVIL SOCIETY: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Military rule in Nigeria seems to be the norm rather than the exception. The military has ruled the country for more than thirty years in its forty years of independence. According to Attahiru M. Jega (1997), “this prolonged nature of military rule has constricted democratic space, entrenched authoritarianism, and nurtured nihilism, while economic crisis and structural adjustment have battered Nigerians, and has indeed led to the increasing questioning, if not challenging, of the legitimacy of the State.” Such a crisis of democracy is compounded when the government becomes even more militaristic and authoritarian in an attempt to silence dissent.

This project focuses on the administration of justice, the conduct of trade and industry, the conduct of private life,
practice of religion, organized political activity, and the politics of traditional forms of authority. This empirical focus was complemented by interviews with individuals and archival research to determine to what extent the military style of exercising power has permeated civil society in the country. We interviewed experts and members of the elite, but went beyond their opinions to interview ordinary urban and rural dwellers to highlight the lessons that Nigerians need to learn about how to deepen the democratization of civic life.

The ongoing communal conflicts in Nigeria that threaten the process of transition to civil rule in the country make such a project urgent to ensure that the military is kept out of Nigerian politics. Previously, discussions focused only on the military in politics (Bell 1968), but by focusing on militarization as an issue that goes beyond the military the project stands a chance of making an innovative contribution to the search for solutions to the democratic crisis in the country. Ways of achieving such a goal were explored through interviews with ordinary Nigerians and experts alike, direct observation, and archival research. The implications of the findings for West Africa and the rest of the continent are highlighted in this chapter, and hopefully will be followed up in further research.

In the course of the research for this chapter we sought answers to questions of how to democratize a militarized civil society from diverse sections of Nigerian society, with a focus on how much civil society has been militarized. Answers to such questions were previously sought in the way to limit military involvement in politics or how to seek accommodation of the military in politics.

No matter which society we care to examine, the assumption that militarization is an essential aspect of social life goes largely unexamined. The few who have examined this link have restricted themselves to an examination of the role of the military in politics. Some argue that the military as an institution is needed for the defence of the territory of the state. Others point out that the interests of the state are often interpreted from the
point of view of the interests of the ruling classes. Some have argued that, when their nation is at war, they are duty-bound to support their country and fight in defence of the fatherland or motherland. Others point out that the defence of the homeland has been used as a slogan even when the competing interests of the ruling groups, especially in commercial activities, lead to war in which ordinary people are expected to back their country. Still others add that, even in aggressive wars or defensive ones, it is always the poor who are forced to fight one another in the interests of the ruling classes.

Consequently, some call for all the poor people of every country to refuse to fight one another just because they happen to live within different borders. They call for the poor to boycott all wars and mutiny once the ruling classes declare war on the working people of a different country. They also call on workers who are not in the army to support the soldiers by going on strike in order to force the belligerent ruling classes to settle their disputes democratically.

This approach has been dismissed as "heroic folly." It is all very well, it has been pointed out, for soldiers to desert as soon as war is declared. It is also heroic to call for workers to go on a general strike in opposition to imperialist war. However, this idea is sheer folly because it plays into the hands of the ruling classes, which could use martial law to suppress the working people. It is also folly to wait until war has been declared before opposing it.

This heroic folly has been contrasted with "opportunistic cowardice" among those who call for unqualified patriotism in defence of the homeland. Accordingly, those who adhere to this form of social chauvinism are accused of forgetting that the days of progressive national wars have been replaced by imperialist wars and that the working people should always try to turn these imperialist adventures into civil wars in their individual countries (Lenin 1974).

So even those who oppose militarism have focused on the army and on warfare. The present project aims to analyze the extent to which militarism has gone beyond the army and warfare
to penetrate and militarize civil society. We focus on different social institutions in turn to see how democratic they are and, if militarized, how to go about demilitarizing and democratizing them. At the risk of oversimplification, militarism is defined here as the use of force to settle any disagreement or to enforce order instead of relying on intellectual and moral leadership to command respect or obedience.

Eminent sociologist Stuart Hall (1996), in a paper originally presented to a colloquium on Theoretical Perspectives in the Analysis of Racism and Ethnicity, organized in 1985 by the Division of Human Rights and Peace, UNESCO, Paris, follows Italian intellectual and politician Antonio Gramsci in offering a clear view of a militarized civil society that is similar to the one adopted in this project. Gramsci (1971) argued that the intellectual or moral leadership of a class, or what Lenin called working-class hegemony, over other classes is exercised not only by the working class, who need to win the support of the peasantry and other exploited classes (by moral and intellectual leadership rather than by force) in their struggle against the exploiters (especially in underdeveloped economies such as that of Nigeria, where the industrial and office workers are numerically weak), but also by the ruling class, who are too few to rule by force alone and are thereby forced to lead as well, though not entirely without force.

Furthermore, according to Hall (1996, 426), such moral and intellectual leadership differs from pure domination, coercion, and economic-corporate monopoly over the legitimate forceful means, not because they are completely absent in a hegemonic situation but because “hegemony is not exercised in the economic and administrative fields alone, but encompasses the critical domains of cultural, moral, ethical and intellectual leadership.” Hall goes on to add that “it is only under those conditions that some long-term historic ‘project’—for example, to modernize society, to raise the whole level of performance of society or transform the basis of national politics—can be effectively put on the historical agenda.”
According to Hall, this clarification by Gramsci of the nature of hegemony is based on an important distinction Gramsci made in the *Prison Notebooks* (1971), the book he wrote when the fascist dictatorship of Mussolini clamped him into jail for his working-class politics. In the essay “State and Civil Society” Gramsci argues that, contrary to the assumption of liberal social contract theorists such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke that civil society is a state governed by rational civic law as opposed to anarchic natural law in the state of nature, there are two types of civil society in capitalist society, and both of them are extremely militarized. The first type is characterized by modes of struggle that Gramsci called the “war of manoeuvre,” in which the struggle between classes is concentrated in one decisive battle where strategic victory is won “in a flash” by breaching the defences of the opposing class. The second type of militarized civil society is characterized by modes of struggle that take the form of a “war of position.” This type of struggle is more protracted, taking place on many different battle fronts, so it is impossible to win the struggle through any single breach without taking into account the whole structure of society. These complex positionalities suggest that the struggle to democratize Nigerian civil society, for example, must abandon the antiquated tactic of the war of the trenches or the war of manoeuvre because these “wars” have a tendency to centralize and focus on a single issue: soldiers, regionalism, classes, or corruption. The war of position demands a careful look at the militarization of “the voluntary associations, relations and institutions of civil society—schooling, the family, churches and religious life, cultural organizations, so-called private relations, gender, sexual and ethnic identities, etc.—[which] become, in effect, ‘for the art of politics... the “trenches” and the permanent fortifications of the front in the war of position: they render merely “partial” the element of movement which before used to be “the whole” of war’” (Hall 1996, 428, expanding and quoting Gramsci 1971, 243).

Our approach extends the limited perspective of Gramsci by including the judiciary, one of the more coercive arms of the
state, in the conception of civil society. We do so deliberately to emphasize that juridification always goes beyond the law courts and that, even with specific reference to the courts, it is necessary to emphasize that civil society does not begin where the state ends but actually remains a part of the state, where leadership is or should be based more on consent (but never without force at all) than on force (with or without consent). By adopting the definition of a militarized civil society advanced by Gramsci and extended by Hall, we warn that Nigeria is not the only country with a militarized civil society. The problem of militarization is global, and differs from country to country and from time to time. Thus, our study of Nigeria offers important lessons on how to democratize militarized civil societies throughout the world.

We apply this broad conception of civil society in our project. A similar approach was adopted by Momoh (1998) in a paper presented at the Workshop on Comparing Experiences of Democratization in Nigeria and South Africa in Cape Town. He is critical of those influenced by “ahistorical and Eurocentric ideology” who deny the existence of civil society in Nigeria and of those who claim that civil society emerged in Europe before the state. To him, civil society has always been an arena of different forms of struggle—social, cultural, economic, and political. Mamdani (1995) also reviewed the misleading dichotomization of state and civil society in Africanist studies, and concluded that African problems should not be seen simply as evidence of primordial influences. Our focus on militarization illustrates that this is a global problem with African dimensions.

PRELIMINARY NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Before travelling to Nigeria at the end of November 1998 for the field trip, we needed to go to the Nigerian High Commission to renew one of our passports. There were only seven of us at the High Commission by 9:30 that morning. As soon as the receptionist signalled that it was time for us to queue, a fight broke out between a man and a woman over who should be
the first to be attended to. She slapped him, and he struck her in return. The woman began to cry: "You call yourself a man, and you are fighting a woman!" She struck out at him again and again, with her handbag, with her palm. He tried to strike back, and another man pushed him aside. They squared off and started a boxing match.

Temper calmed down after a while, and the man apologized to the embassy staff. We suggested that he apologize to the woman as well. He did so, but the woman said that an apology was not enough. The receptionist said that it was too late in any case because he had called the police. The police came and took statements. It was not until one o'clock in the afternoon that the man returned to join a much longer queue, but the woman was nowhere to be found. Perhaps she had immigration problems and she was detained for further questioning by the police. At about three o'clock we saw the woman outside the High Commission gesturing and talking animatedly with another man.

The lesson is that, even with only seven Nigerians queuing up to go into an office, there will be a rush to see who will be the first. It would have cost the man and the woman less time to allow the other to be attended to first. Much later, in a different context, the Nigerians waiting all day for their applications to be processed started offering explanations about why they were frustrated. Some said the reason is that Nigerians do not love one another. They said that, when you go to the embassies of people who love their country, you are not made to wait all day. They also said that, when foreigners come to the High Commission, they are treated better than Nigerians themselves.

How true is this idea that we do not love ourselves? Is it connected to the fact that we have been brought up under undemocratic regimes where people got nothing unless they were willing to fight for it? How do we encourage Nigerians to avoid *gra-gra* ("machismo") and settle their disagreements democratically when national problems are being settled dictatorially?
SIX MILITARIZED INSTITUTIONS

The Family
The family is the most ancient and most civil of civil society institutions, but ironically it is the most militarized in Nigeria. During the pilot study for this project we visited and observed a young Nigerian family with four lovely children, the eldest of whom was not yet five. We were surprised to find that canes were kept in the house for the punishment of the children. One was reserved for the father’s special use. The mother regularly threatened to use the cane. The maid used it freely, and the three aunts caned the children too. Two visiting uncles used the canes freely, and even family friends were allowed to use the cane whenever they thought fit. We raised this issue with the family, and they said that the children “do not hear” (are disobedient) until they have been beaten.

The logic is that if they (the children) are not disciplined corporally they will turn out to be delinquents. The father gave the example of a neighbour who returned from England with his family. According to him, the parents were so permissive that their children had no manners at all. The son of that family never carried out any chores until his father started “dealing” with him the “Nigerian” way by beating the devil out of him. The climax came when the teenage son shot his sister twice with their father’s shotgun and nearly paralyzed the girl. His father beat him nearly to death, with the result that the boy learned his lesson. Now he is of exemplary character.

One of us argued that treating children violently at home is partly why they themselves become violent. We suggested that the family should try to listen to the children more and talk to them gently rather than threatening them with force. The family agreed with our suggestion that many cases of corporal punishment of children are unnecessary, and that beating children makes them cry more than usual, thereby making the parents restless. As a result, the children were no longer beaten
while we were there. However, the threat of “I go beat you o!” (I am going to beat you) was still liberally used.

We also suggested that the parents try telling their children they loved them (something we never heard), because there was no doubt they loved the children, instead of telling them all the time they would be beaten. At one point we were being recruited into the disciplinary regime by the parents, who threatened the children that if they did not behave uncle or aunt would beat them. To this we usually retorted that we would not beat them because they were really lovely children, and this was true.

This issue was observed even among human rights campaigners who were worried about the inhumane treatment of prisoners in Nigeria yet were ready to forcefully discipline their toddlers for throwing tantrums in public. We came to the defence of a toddler by saying that she was simply being assertive, that adults threw worse tantrums without being beaten in public, and that even the law, with all its insensitivity, would not think of “punishing” a child who had no sense of right and wrong.

Greater manifestations of this use of force or militarism within the family came in the form of news reports that husbands had gone beyond what one newspaper called the “traditional right” of disciplining their wives through beating to the savage practice of disfiguring them with acid. Some of the women were attacked in this way simply because they were good breadwinners when their husbands lost their own jobs. The jealous men figured that their wives must have been seeing other men; otherwise, how were they able to sustain the family?

We saw campaign posters around the country (issued by the Legal Research and Resource Development Centre [LRRDC]) proclaiming, “YOUR WIFE IS NOT A PUNCH BAG. STOP WIFE BEATING TODAY!” The poster depicts a bare-chested man whose right hand has struck a woman with fright in her eyes and plasters on her face, while the children look on sadly in the background. The suggestion here is that wife-beating is a hobby enjoyed by some sadists rather than a premeditated strategy of command and control in the patriarchal family. The punching-
The bag metaphor oversimplifies the problem of militarized gender relations within the family. However, the LRRDC is likely using the metaphor mainly as a reference to an object to be dominated and beaten without any fear of retaliation or challenge. Even if some sadists see wife-beating as a hobby, it is because it is, first and foremost, a means of controlling the woman, or so they think.

A more direct manifestation of militarism in the family is the intimidation of family members by agents of the state when one member of the family (usually the man) is suspected of having done something disapproved of by the state. Indirect pressure can be applied by influential in-laws who might informally warn their son-in-law to stop confronting the authorities. Also, the wife can be arrested and detained until the husband gives himself up for arrest.

The militarization of the family is most clearly represented by the ceremony in military weddings during which a sword is offered to the groom by his colleagues in the regiment. At one such wedding that we attended the explanation given was that, although the sword is an agent of destruction, the groom should use it to protect his family. Similar symbolism (though not identical) is found in some traditional marriage ceremonies in which cannons are fired to celebrate the marriage of a daughter. In one that we witnessed the groom's party was escorted by a uniformed soldier to get past the numerous road blocks routinely mounted by security officials to extort money from drivers.

Concerns with the family as a militarized institution of civil society are summarized in a comic-strip poster produced by the Women, Law, and Development Centre, Lagos. The comic strip is captioned “VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: SAY NO TO... childhood marriage, wife beating [though the picture is that of a fight in which the woman is clutching the man’s crotch in apparent self-defence], sexual harassment, female child labor, rape, female circumcision, and negative cultural attitude” (illustrated with a woman carrying a baby on her back and an overloaded basket on her head while a man carries only a hoe and a gun). This poster
is a clear illustration of how militarized family relations easily spill out into the wider society. However, the poster focuses on women as a unidimensional group, listing a wide range of struggles and violent experiences under one category. While this focus draws attention to women’s struggles, the framework cannot take into account the diversity of struggles that women in diverse positionalities (e.g., age groups, socioeconomic classes, marital statuses, etc.) experience. Their struggles and violent experiences cannot be properly defined or addressed through the unidimensional, fragmented nature of this framework.

The poster highlights various campaigns that were going on in Nigeria, such as the Gender Specific Litigations and Protection Strategies Workshop organized by the Gender Action Project of the Shelter Rights Initiative (June 1998); the publication of Beasts of Burden in April 1998 by the Women’s Rights Project of the Civil Liberties Organization; the Status of Women in Nigerian Police, a special issue of Law Enforcement Review, April-June 1998, a quarterly magazine of the Centre for Law Enforcement; and the Democratic Alternatives Workshop on Women’s Participation in Politics, November 21, 1998, to mention but a few.

The militarization of family gender relations is summed up by Namiji in her article “Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women from Childhood.” In answer to the question “who is a man?” Namiji (1998) writes that “he is the boss of the woman... He is the commander-in-chief of the family and rules and regulations are established and maintained by him as a woman has no say in running the affairs of the house.” These issues were prominent in interviews with activists and researchers, and they will be taken up in greater detail to promote the democratization of family and gender relations.

The Educational System
We were still in high school when the distinguished historian Professor Ade Ajayi was dismissed from his post as vice chancellor of the University of Lagos, Nigeria, in 1978. That was also when Dr. Edwin Madunagu was dismissed from his
post as a mathematics lecturer at the University of Calabar and the late Dr. Ola Oni, an economist, from the University of Ibadan. They and others were removed because they expressed sympathy for students who were protesting against the killing of their colleagues by soldiers during the demonstrations against the commercialization of education that year. The students were demanding a candle-lit procession to bury their murdered comrades, but General Olusegun Obasanjo's administration saw this as evidence of insurrection because the students also called for the resignation of the education minister, an army colonel. Army officers with horse whips were sent to all the high schools in the country to act as disciplinary officers, and they ended up acting as gate men who arrested students for coming late to school and punished them corporally. Some students resisted this military discipline by deliberately sneaking out of the boarding houses at night to attend parties in nearby villages, just to prove that even army sergeants could not restrict their freedom of movement.

All the campaign groups, activists, and researchers whom we encountered during the field trip expressed profound faith in the ability of education to serve as the principal tool for the democratization of a militarized civil society. To provoke a critical evaluation of this faith, we pointed out that the militarists are often very educated individuals and that the educational institutions are militarized. We were told in response that a democratic educational programme has to be a special programme, but all agreed that educational institutions in Nigeria are in dire need of democratization and demilitarization. As Toyo (1998) put it,

> only the ideological education, organization and political action of the masses can get the country near democracy. Only the self-governance of the toiling people and their self-education through this can make democracy evolve. The foolish notion that democracy can result from someone's magic wand, wizardry or manipulation must be cast into the rubbish heap. The current antithesis is between military rule and responsible
and truly national civilian rule, not between military rule and democracy. With all the goodwill in the world, it is a gross error—to say the least—for military officers to stay long in office and excuse their doing so by the chimeras that this will ensure a “transition to democracy.”

The militarization of education takes two principal forms: (1) a lack of accountability and an authoritarian attitude among administrators who issue orders with “immediate effect,” undermine student and staff unionism, and seem to be scared of dialogue, and (2) the widespread use of secret cults to intimidate and attack activists on campuses, kill or maim rivals, rape female students, and intimidate staff.

During our fieldwork Professor Eskor Toyo told us that people mistakenly talk about the collapse of the educational system. According to him, the system has not just collapsed; it is dead, and academics were busy writing its obituary. A detailed analysis of Professor Toyo’s thesis is provided by Professor Idowu Awopetu (1998) in “The State and Democratisation of Education: Obstacles and Prospects of Independent Student Unionism under Military Dictatorship.” Awopetu argues that education is a human right and not a privilege. He outlines the historical struggles of Nigerian workers to expand educational opportunities as part of the struggle for political independence. These efforts resulted in a huge expansion of education, but when the military took power it began to commercialize education in the country.

This process came to a head in 1978 when the government of General Olusegun Obasanjo announced a threefold increase in the cost of feeding and housing students, resulting in the “Ali Must Go” protest (named after the military minister of education at the time) in Nigerian universities. The government responded with force, resulting in the killing of some students and the closure of the universities. The tribunal of enquiry set up by the government recommended sacking many renowned academics for expressing sympathy for the students. Government-employed
journalists were also sacked, and many students were expelled. From this time onward the military saw student unionism as a threat and routinely banned the National Union of Nigerian Students and the Academic Staff Union of Universities. Given the overall atmosphere of intimidation and authoritarianism, according to Awopetu, it was not surprising that secret cults had mushroomed in the universities and were fast spreading into the secondary schools.

The *Sunday Tribune* (Nigeria) of August 16, 1998, ran a story on the “rising menace of campus secret cults.” The paper reported that some of these cults in Nigeria’s tertiary institutions were “Pyrate Confraternity, Buccanneers, Maplates, Blood Suckers, Black Cat, Eye Confraternity, Vikings Fraternity, Mafia, Red Devils, Black Beret, Green Beret, Trojan Horse, Neo-Black Movement, Musketeers, Black Axe, Temple of Eden Fraternity, Mafiosi, Osiri, Burkina Fasso, Revolution, Mgbamagbu Brothers, Scorpion, Dragon, Panama Pyrate Confraternity, Airwords, Ku Klux Klan (KKK), Amazons, Barracudes, Wairus, Black Heart, Maphites, Mgbamgba, Ozo, the Pink Ladies, Frigates, Himalayes, Canary, Marpiates, Pirate, the Blood Spot, Ibaka, Ostrich, the Eagle, the Flamingo, the Woodpecker, even the Dove and the Seadogs!” According to the newspaper, “there have been frequent clashes between members of these cults and violent fights over matters as trivial as space for holding nocturnal meetings or rallies. Daggers have been drawn over such mundane issues as ‘ownership of girls.’ Moreover, they employ the auspices of their clubs to settle private scores with non-members by subjecting them to acts of terrorism, intimidation and brigandage. Besides, self destruction results from violent inter-personal clashes resulting in their own deaths and those of innocent persons.”

According to Professor Muyiwa Awe (the *Post Express*, March 30, 1998), when he and Professor Wole Soyinka formed the first secret cult in 1953 as students of University College, Ibadan, they had no sinister motive. All they wanted was a covert way to oppose the colonial administrators of the university on policies that went against the interests of student welfare.
Their cult, Pyrates Confraternity, remained the only one active in the universities until 1968, when the rival Eye Confraternity emerged with the aim of resisting oppressive government policies countrywide. Professor Awe blamed the militarization of campus cults on political violence and thuggery that led to the bloody coup of 1966, the pogrom against easterners in the north and west of the country, and then the civil war that nearly dismembered the country.

The violent clashes between these cults in the institutions of higher learning result in increased militarization of the campuses. Armed police officers are dispatched to the campuses to maintain order, and some people call for the setting up of special military tribunals to try cultists. Daily newspaper headlines tell the story graphically: “Nsukka Varsity Shut over Cult Crisis” (the Guardian, May 11, 1998), “Cults: Police Boss Accuses EDSU Administrator [a military-style sole administrator appointed by the Abacha dictatorship as an alternative to a vice chancellor] of Complicity” (the Guardian, May 29, 1998), “Police Return to LASU, UI as Cultists Clash” (the Guardian, August 27, 1998), “Oyo, Ogun Expel 256 Students over Cultism” (Vanguard, February 18, 1998).

The above stories are only a sample from a big file on secret cults in the library of one of the daily newspapers.

In a contribution to a Committee for the Defence of Human Rights publication Nigerian Students and the Challenge of Leadership, Dr. Kola Babarinde (1998) argues that, although secret cults are found in different Nigerian traditional societies, student cults can be explained thus:

1. Students’ mass protest is a worldwide phenomenon that differs from secret cults.
2. Government interference with students’ activism through repression of organized student bodies has encouraged inexperienced and ill-disciplined students who were frustrated or ambitious to join underground movements.
3. There is a link between the militarization of the society and an upsurge in cult activities on campuses.
4. The history of cultism and underground movements is linked with periods of political repression.
5. A lasting solution can only come through the democratization of the entire society.
6. Nigerian youths have a role to play in the democratization process.

During the African Studies Association meeting in Philadelphia, where this section of our chapter was presented as part of a panel honouring Nigerian history professor Ade Ajayi, he commented briefly on the details of events that took place at the 1998 convocation ceremony at the University of Ibadan, where he was then a research professor emeritus. According to Professor Ajayi, one of the staunch supporters of the Sani Abacha dictatorship in Ibadan attended the convocation ceremony with a motorcade of three bullet-proof limousines. The students allegedly got suspicious and decided to search the limousines to see why anyone would be visiting a university in bullet-proof vehicles. It turned out that the local politician had a cache of weapons. Outraged, the students burned all three cars. Later, the then head of state, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, sent word to find out if it was safe for him to visit the university for the occasion, and the students sent word back to say that it was safe since they had destroyed the weapons brought onto campus by a corrupt politician. It was shortly after this incident that some alleged cult members killed a number of students at the university, raising suspicions that the killing had been sponsored by external forces in retaliation against the students for “disgracing” local politicians.

The repression in Nigerian universities attracted the attention of activist musicians such as Fela Anikulapo Kuti. This was also the case with the late Jamaican singer Peter Tosh, who reasoned that, if education was for domestication rather than liberation, one should not blame youths for acting like gangsters. According to Iyorchi Ayu² (1986), the conditions under which Tosh was
teaching were similar to those of Kuti in Nigeria. He analyzed the aesthetic and the political in Kuti's musical education of the people, and concluded that it remains a powerful instrument for advancing the resistance of Nigerians against neocolonial fascism. Kuti was repeatedly brutalized, like many ordinary Nigerians, but he maintained his reputation as a social critic and popular educator until his death in 1997.

Community Relations
Interviews with scholars, journalists, and individuals in addition to archival research revealed the widespread use of force and violence to settle communal disputes in various parts of Nigeria. Members of the ruling class fall back on their respective ethnic groups to mobilize support. Even when they come from the same ethnic group, they still manage to manipulate different gangs of mainly unemployed youths into harassing and fighting one another. At other times false propaganda peddled by competing groups of rulers incites people into spontaneous violence against their fellow oppressed.

This was the case when British officials blamed severe economic hardship following the Second World War on the uncompromising attitude of the nationalists. Since the radical labour movement led by Michael Imoudu was openly aligned with the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), the leading nationalist movement, the British accused Nnamdi Azikiwe, the party leader, of inciting workers to embark on the 1945 general strike during which Imoudu was jailed without trial. The Hausa community in Jos came to believe that Igbo traders, against whom they competed for trade, were responsible for the shortages and high costs of commodities. In December 1945 ethnic rioting broke out in the Jos market between Hausa and Igbo traders.

This scene was repeated after Anthony Enahoro moved the historic motion for independence in 1956. Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, leader of the Northern Peoples Congress and the Sarduana of Sokoto, countered with a motion for independence "as soon
as practicable.” The northerners were called unprintable names, and their leaders adopted an eight-point programme of “northernization” that sounded like secession. Southern leaders concluded that their northern counterparts were imperialist stooges who did not represent the views of ordinary northerners. Thus, the Action Group sent a team led by S. L. Akintola to campaign openly in the north for independence in 1956. However, when rioting broke out at a Kano rally, the Hausa attacked mainly Igbo supporters of NCNC, perhaps because they were the more numerous and more conspicuous southerners in the north.

The Tiv had also rioted in 1947 against the imposition of a Yoruba as the chief of Makurdi. However, the major crisis in the middle belt was that of 1959 following the federal elections. In alliance with the Action Group, Joseph Tarka’s United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) appealed to the Tiv to leave the Hausa–Fulani-dominated Northern Peoples Congress (NPC). The UMBC won by a landslide, and the NPC resorted to scapegoating. UMBC supporters were sacked from their jobs en masse, and they embarked on civil disobedience. They refused to pay taxes and started attacking Native Authority policemen who were used to intimidate them. The situation became worse between August and November 1960 when 30,000 houses of NPC supporters were burned, 20 arsonists were killed by landlords and the police, and 5,000 “Tarka”-chanting Tivs were arrested.

History repeated itself in the western region following the elections of 1964. The NPC government had frustrated the efforts of United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) candidates to file their nominations in the north, paving the way for sixty-seven Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) candidates to be returned unopposed. This tactic forced Dr. Michael Okpara, leader of the UPGA, to call for a total boycott of the elections. The boycott was total in the east but partial in the west, north, midwest, and Lagos. In spite of the boycott, victory for the NNA was announced, but the UPGA refused to accept the results. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe could have used his powers as president to appoint a caretaker administration until a fresh election was
held, but he struck a compromise instead and got the NNA to concede some appointments to UPGA politicians.

The federal elections were followed by the October 1965 regional elections. The western region rejected Akintola and his unpopular Nigerian National Democratic Party at the polls, but Akintola went behind the scene to announce, over the government-controlled mass media, that he had won and that the winners had lost. The west went wild. Operation “Wetie” (or soak him with petrol and set him ablaze) became a rallying call. That was when the federal prime minister, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, chose to declare a state of emergency, but not before wondering aloud why people were saying that there was trouble in the west when Lagos, a part of the west, was calm (Nnoli 1978).

This was the last straw that brought five patriotic majors to attempt to shoot some “democratic” sense into the body politic (Ademoyega 1981). However, either by design or by error, their victims fell into an ethnic pattern, and the Hausa-Fulani were once again incited against the Igbo. This anger resulted in a countercoup and one of the bloodiest pogroms in human history. The civil war that followed this unscrupulous power struggle by the ruling class is now history, yet no lesson was learned by the politicians of the second republic, who tempted the military back into power (Falola and Ihonvbere 1985). However, even under the military, several parts of the country were convulsed in intercommunal conflict.

In Osun State in the west, during the preliminary fieldwork at the end of 1998, the people of Ife were fighting their Modakeke neighbours over the siting of a new local government headquarters. In Delta State in the south the Ijaw were fighting their Itsekiri neighbours for a similar reason, and in Ondo State in the west the Ijaws were fighting their Ilaje neighbours. In Taraba State in the northeast the Kuteb were fighting the Jukun and Chamba.

Toward the end of 1999 members of the Oodua People’s Congress were fighting northerners and Ijaw youths in Lagos.
Yoruba people in the north and the south were being attacked in retaliation. In Lagos factions of the same organization fought one another and engaged the police in armed confrontations, to the extent that the state governor was waylaid and nearly killed, and the Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, threatened to impose emergency rule. In Odi, Bayelsa State, some police officers were kidnapped and killed, and the military descended on the town, raping, looting, and killing the people, and eventually flattening the town.

According to a human rights lawyer interviewed in Kaduna, these ethnic conflicts reflect undemocratic conditions that do not allow for the peaceful resolution of disputes. The Human Rights Situation Report for July-October 1998, published by the Human Rights Monitor, stated that, although some of these conflicts revive ancient animosities between the warring ethnic groups, we must not forget that those communities were living peacefully, by and large, until the current crisis of democracy led to mass frustration and a loss of faith in legal institutions. These conflicts are worsened by discriminatory government allocation of facilities. Even after setting up public commissions to advise on the locations of those facilities, the government ignored the advice and submissions received, and went ahead to balkanize the communities in the name of local government creation.

The above observations are supported by activist and social theorist Dr. Edwin Madunagu (1998), who states that

Nigeria is a country of hungry, desperate, betrayed and cynical people. It is a country where public authority is completely alienated from the people, where there is no iota of faith between the governed and those that govern them. It is a capitalist country but one with an extremely corrupt, bankrupt and philistine ruling class and which combines all known maladies, inequalities, insensitivities and irrationalities of capitalism namely, oppression, poverty, disease, exploitation, ethnic domination and arrogance, religious manipulation, unemployment, armed robbery, drug trafficking, social anomic
and moral despair. It is a country of dialectical extremes: extreme of poverty and extreme of wealth; a country where some individuals are stingingly rich, but the society as a whole is very poor; where there are mansions, but no roads to get to them; where water is as scarce as petrol.

The Ogoni struggle and the Ijaw youth protests differ from the many ethnic wars slightly because, when they were not fighting their neighbours over ownership of oil-rich land, they were marching against the international oil companies and the military government that preside over the exploitation of natural resources from a land that they consider their own, without any compensation or reward for the people whose sources of livelihood have been damaged by oil spillage and pollution. Interviews with journalists who visited the Ijaw area indicate the bravery of the young people but also the devastating military repression that the government unleashed on them. Yet all are agreed that democratization would be a major step in settling the conflict.

Religion
The right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion is enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution. Section 35 of the 1979 Constitution, section 38 of the 1999 Constitution, and Article 8 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) all contain elaborate provisions for the freedom of religion. Section 35(1) of the 1979 Constitution states that "every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance."

This provision was copied uncritically by the 1999 Constitution, but there are problems even with this basic provision. Freedom of religion seems to be narrowly defined as the freedom to choose a religion. Implicitly, the freedom to choose
not to have any religion does not seem to be protected by the Constitution. The greater problem is with young people under the age of eighteen whose freedom of religion is to be exercised on their behalf by parents, who must choose the religion that they should be taught at school. Their choices ignore the militarized nature of family relations that could manifest here in the form of torture, physical and mental, of those children who do not share their parents’ religious beliefs. Once again the family and the educational institutions are being used to regulate the freedom of religion without examining the anti-democratic character of these institutions.

Although Nigeria is a secular state, there have been efforts to identify the country as a religious state, but these efforts have been successfully resisted to some extent. Biko Agozino and others conducted research for Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), a government agency, on the politicization of religion and its consequences in countries such as India, Pakistan, Spain, Ireland, Sudan, and Lebanon as a warning to those who were bent on politicizing religion in the country (Toyo 1989). The continuing politicization of religion in the country has resulted in many “religious clashes,” such as the “Maitatsaine riots, the Zangon Kataf, Kafanchan and Tafawa Balewa riots” in northern Nigeria (Sako and Plang 1997).

Contributors to Ethnic and Religious Rights in Nigeria, edited by Festus Okoye and published in Kaduna by the Human Rights Monitor (1998), contend that the increasing incidents of religious conflict in the country are linked to manipulation of religion by colonial officials followed by politicization of the volatile issue by neocolonial elites. In the first chapter of the book Sam Egwu argues that religious identity should be recognized as a problem instead of being seen simply as a taken-for-granted fundamental human right. Another contributor, Y. Z. Yau, analyzes the parties involved in most religious conflicts: the state and polarized religious groups. Yau argues that, far from being neutral, the state should be seen as a partisan actor in these conflicts. He warns that the state should not treat migrant beggars (Almajerai)
who flock to religious zealots for alms as repressively as it treats religious militants.

Most of these religious conflicts take place in the north, but the phenomenon of secret cults that are no less religious in character takes place mostly in southern universities. Also, in the north and the south, superstitious beliefs in spiritual warfare abound. People decorate their houses with charms or blood-stained paintings of Jesus Christ to ward off evil spirits. Books that teach people how to fight and win spiritual "battles" sell very well. The consequence is not only lack of trust in other people but also loss of faith in the ability of Nigerians to solve their own problems. Families are torn apart by accusations and counteraccusations of sorcery and witchcraft or demonology, resulting in high rates of mental illness and even murder.

Also in the south, some traditional rulers use secret cults to intimidate citizens in their localities and extract fines from them for offences such as playing music all night long or harvesting new yams from their own farms before the ruler ordains that the harvest is ready. Some of these cases end up in court, with the citizens claiming that they no longer indulge in nature worship and that the traditional ruler was abusing their human rights by forcing them to abide by such rituals. In many such cases the churches provide lawyers for the defence of their members in court.

It is for such reasons that the Political Bureau set up by General Ibrahim Babangida to moderate the national debate on the political future of Nigeria reported that most Nigerians rejected notions of diarchy (civilian-military joint rule) as well as triarchy (civilian-military-traditional rule). According to the report of the Political Bureau, "as regards traditional rulers, we cannot see in which way their inclusion can provide a unifying force... They compete against the nation for allegiance, represent a force against the principle of popular democracy and are dysfunctional reminders of national differences" (1987, 78-79).

Just like the educational institution, the religious institution helps to sustain the militarization of the family by preaching
doctrines that recognize the man as the undisputed head of every household. The duty of the woman is always that of obeying and serving the commander-in-chief of the house, and his only responsibility is to love and care for her.

The dangers of militarizing religion in the country were highlighted by the ongoing adoption of sharia as the dominant law in many of the northern states of Nigeria. Christians all over the country and pro-democracy activists have been calling for a halt to the adoption of what they regard as Islamic fundamentalism in parts of the country. Muslim politicians who are making a case for sharia have tried to reassure them that it would be applied only to Muslims. Agozino and Anyanike (1999) have contributed to the debate by arguing that it is wrong for some of the governors to declare that their states have become Islamic states, since Nigeria is governed by a secular Constitution that is supreme. Although sharia has always been allowed to operate as a customary law, it was restricted to civil matters, while the Nigerian penal code was applied in cases of criminal offences.

The declaration of sharia by some states in the country has been followed by vigilante groups who try to enforce strict adherence to segregation of men and women in public, even though such segregation was required only in the homes of Muslims in the past. It is feared that the vigilantes might begin to demand the segregation of public transport according to gender, to the disadvantage of women, who would have their freedom of movement curtailed. Moreover, a strict enforcement of the dress code might lead to the sexual harassment of women, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, who prefer not to wear the veil. Already one of the local governments in a state that adopted sharia has ordered unmarried women and widows to get married as proof that they are not prostitutes or face ejection from the local government area. The sharia issue is part of the overwhelming militarization of civil society in Nigeria.

Kayode Fayemi, in a paper presented to the DFID West Africa Governance Team in April 2000, has explored this sharia
controversy from a more holistic perspective that encompasses all of the social, economic, and political underpinnings of the phenomenon. For him the sharia debate has to be located first within the problematic identity politics prevalent in the country. In this regard the central question has revolved around the nature of the Nigerian state and the definition of citizenship. These fundamental issues, debate on which has hitherto been suppressed or scuttled by successive military administrations, are now openly expressed by the newly found democratic freedom in the country. Fayemi goes further to conceive of the sharia phenomenon in terms of the power struggle that has engulfed the country since the return to democratic rule. This power struggle has pitched the “political north,” which dominated national politics for much of the postindependence period, against the rest of the country. “Disappointed” northern elements that were the forces behind the presidency of Obasanjo now use sharia as a weapon to deal with him.

Yet another explanation for the sudden rise of the issue has been linked to the perceived leadership vacuum in the north and the possibility that the propagators of sharia are using it to fill this void. One of Fayemi’s (2000) many explanations that corroborated our own position on this issue is that sharia represents “a response of Islamic fundamentalism to a growing Christian fundamentalism under a ‘born-again’ Christian President.” A disturbing thing about this Christian fundamentalism, from the standpoint of Muslims, is its fundamental opposition to Islam, unlike the stance of established denominations such as the Catholic, Anglican, and some Pentecostal churches, which have been more accommodating in this regard. That these Christian fundamentalists have dubbed the present government as God’s government—in clear violation of constitutional provisions designating Nigeria as a secular state—does not help matters in any meaningful and peaceful way.

Finally, the sharia question, according to Fayemi, must be understood in socioeconomic terms as a demonstration of the lack of faith in the “democracy dividend” by those involved in
the sharia carnage, most of whom have been the greatest victims of the political and economic mismanagement of the country. All of these explanations are credible and carry enormous weight. Our contention, however, is that the militarization of the "national psyche," again to borrow from Fayemi (2000), makes it impossible for Nigerians to initiate democratic processes to address and resolve these fundamental issues.

The Judiciary
Ideally, the judiciary is one of the bastions against arbitrary power. In Nigeria, however, the institution has become completely militarized. Apart from the usual doubts about the independence of the judiciary, especially under a military regime in which the executive and the legislative arms of government are one and the same, successive military regimes in the country have tried to colonize this vital organ as well by using special military tribunals to try cases that would ordinarily be handled by normal courts. This issue was addressed by lawyers and activists in a book published by the Kaduna-based NGO Human Rights Monitor (Okoye 1997).

In the first chapter, "The Military and the Administration of Justice in Nigeria," Chris Abashi (1997) traced the history of the search for justice in Nigeria from colonial days to the present. He noted how the administration of justice became increasingly militarized under British rule with the introduction of both armed force and militarized law enforcement agents, in contrast to precolonial societies. He analyzed section 6 of the 1979 Constitution, which vested the judicial powers of the federation in the courts: the Supreme Court of Nigeria, the Court of Appeal, the federal High Court, the High Court of the states, the High Court of the federal capital territory, a Sharia Court of Appeal of a state, and a Customary Court of Appeal of a state.

The Constitution did not mention magistrates, customary and sharia courts, or special military tribunals specifically, but subsections VIII–IX cover "such other courts as may be
authorized by law to exercise jurisdiction on matters with which the National Assembly may make laws” and “such other courts as may be authorized by law to exercise jurisdiction at first instance with respect to which a House of Assembly may make laws.” These were the subsections abused by successive military regimes by authorizing the trials of civilians in military tribunals. The most notable instance was the kangaroo trial of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists who were hanged for murder following a conviction that did not allow any appeal.

Abashi (1997) also reviewed the Bill of Rights provisions in the Constitution designed to safeguard due process in the judiciary. Nigerian military regimes, he discovered, flouted every one of these provisions, including the simplest one, that cases should be heard in public. According to Abashi, judges now decide cases in their chambers without regard to due process. A panel headed by a justice emeritus of the Supreme Court, Kayode Esho, produced a report in 1997 detailing numerous problems ranging from corruption to excessive militarization of the judiciary. Up to the time of writing this chapter, the civilian government had not released an official report of the panel.

The trend was set by the Constitution (Suspension and Modification) Decree, 1966, which stated that

any decision, whether made before or after the commencement of this decree, by any court of law in the exercise or purported exercise of any powers under the constitution or any enactment or law of the Federation or any state which has purported to declare or shall hereafter purport to declare the invalidity of any Decree or of any Edict (in so far as the provisions of the Edict are not inconsistent with the provision of a Decree) or the incompetence of any of the government in the Federation to make same is or shall be null and void and of no effect whatsoever as from the date of the making thereof.

It is noticeable here that “Decree” and “Edict” are capitalized, while “court of law” is not.
Abashi (1997) noted the irony that, in spite of their authoritarianism, the standardization of the courts in Nigeria was accomplished by military regimes. Moreover, the excesses of the military are quite understandable, given that soldiers are trained to use force to resolve matters speedily and efficiently. This sounds like the ideal bureaucracy of Max Weber, but, as his critics have shown with the example of the Nazi Holocaust, an institution or process that is fast and efficient does not necessarily guarantee justice. The sad situation in Nigeria is that even the police are authorized to shoot suspected criminals on sight. Also, due to speedy arrests without sufficient evidence, the prisons are overcrowded, with the majority of inmates awaiting trials for years on end.

Arguing that more democratization is the only guarantee for the rule of law, Abashi (1997) quoted the late dictator General Sani Abacha to emphasize the decay in the Nigerian judiciary. According to Abacha,

>a just and fair society must enjoy a trusted judiciary. A judiciary that is not insulated from political control or financial pressures is soon weakened and put in disarray. Under such conditions brigandage replaces societal orderliness and the right to life and property. The judiciary is a vital custodian of our individual liberties. While no constitutional system or the instruments that govern it can be perfect or made watertight against human abuse, we demand that our judges be courageous, impartial and honest. In recent times our judiciary has been especially subjected to the strains and pressures arising from ethnic, political and social considerations. The events immediately preceding the annulled presidential election illustrate the aberration, which ha[s] intruded into our judicial process. We had the puzzling and unpleasant experience of our High Courts delivering contradictory judgments on the same issue within the same period, depending on where the litigation was instituted and by whom. (Abashi 1997, 24)
A careful reading of Abacha’s speech reveals an attitude of loathing toward the judiciary. Nigerian soldiers refer to civilians as “bloody civilians,” meaning that they are not disciplined and thus not efficient. It is part of the military’s self-appointed task in politics to discipline Nigerians, including judges, to make sure that they deliver judgments with immediate effects as in wartime. Abacha was surprised that the courts gave contradictory verdicts, but that is part of the democratic process that the courts must uphold. That is why there are appeal courts and the supreme court, but dictators will not trust independent-minded judges, which is why they make decrees ruling out the possibility that any court will challenge them even on the ground of incompetence. Yet the problem is not caused only by the military. Corrupt judges and lawyers, after all, draft the draconian decrees that help to militarize the Nigerian judiciary.

Just as Nigeria inherited its legal rules from imperialist Britain, so too the law courts in neocolonial Nigeria continue the colonial policy of administering repression and maintaining inequality by force. This oppressive legal practice was opposed by Nigerians right from colonial days by refusing to go to court and preferring to settle disputes in traditional settings or by venting their anger on the infrastructure of the courts. This was the case when Aba market women burned down Native Authority courts in 1929. The defiance of Nigerians later manifested itself in the refusal of the Zikists, a group of fiery young nationalists, to plead before a colonial judge. They were convinced that the colonial court had no jurisdiction to try the case because the matter was between Britain and Nigeria. More recently, Ken Saro-Wiwa advanced a similar argument when he was tried by what he called a kangaroo court.

As the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission to Nigeria stated in 1996, the Civil Disturbances [special tribunal] Act of 1987, under which the Ogoni nine were judicially murdered, was not valid because it violated the right to a fair trial. Although the Nigerian Constitution had a provision for such a tribunal to be set up, it required a commission of enquiry that was never
set up in their case. The defendants faced enormous prejudice, given the fact that they were tried in two separate groups for the same charge. The request by the defence to play a tape in which the military governor of Rivers State pronounced the men guilty even before commencement of the trial was refused by the tribunal, showing how biased it was. Similarly, the tribunal refused the introduction of contradictory video evidence given by a prosecution witness. That the defendants were denied the right of appeal made the trial deficient in the dispensation of justice.

The haste with which the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) confirmed the death sentences indicated that the outcome was determined in advance. Moreover, the PRC confirmed the sentences even without receiving the transcripts of the trial. The failure of the tribunal-appointed lawyers to present a case for the defendants before the PRC (after their own chosen lawyers had withdrawn due to military interference) indicated that the appointed lawyers were not representing the interests of the defendants. The fact that a military officer was a member of the tribunal meant that its independence was compromised. Even when the defendants instituted a suit in the High Court asking for a suspension of the tribunal, the tribunal ignored it and continued (Campaign for Democracy 1998).

It is not surprising that the Nigerian military prefers a repressive role for law. This, however, is not an exclusively military practice, given that the colonial and neocolonial civilian administrations share this preference. One of the first things that the Tafawa Balewa government did in office was pass the Banking Act of March 1961, aimed at liquidating the National Bank of Nigeria, on which the opposition government depended to finance its activities. Fortunately for the opposition, Justice Daddy Onyeama was bold enough to rule that the law was null and void. But that marked the end of judicial independence in the country.

The judicial crisis deepened when Samuel Ladoke Akintola was constitutionally removed from office as premier of the western
region, following a petition by the majority of the members of the Western House of Assembly to the governor, Oba Adesoji Aderemi. Rather than respect the Constitution, Akintola sat tight and announced that he had unilaterally removed the governor. The newly appointed premier, Chief Adegbenro, then took the case to the House of Assembly, seeking a vote of confidence in himself. Before any vote could be taken, the supporters of Akintola started a fight that ended in the breaking of the mace. Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa promptly ordered the police to disperse the members with tear gas. He went on to summon parliament, which declared a state of emergency in the western region, with Sir Moses Majekodunmi, a federal minister, as the administrator.

With the help of the NPC-NCNC alliance, Akintola was reinstated as premier, while the regional NCNC leader, Chief Fadahunsi, became the new governor. The federal government did so even though the matter was still sub judice. Akintola had gone to court, during the emergency, to challenge his removal. As expected, the federal courts nullified his removal, but the case went to the Privy Council in London, which ruled that the removal was constitutional and that Chief Adegbenro was the legitimate premier of Western Nigeria (Agozino 1989).

The ruling of the Privy Council was ignored by Balewa and Akintola, and instead the plan to annihilate the opposition was rigorously pursued. Thus, in September 1963, Justice Sowemimo told the nation that his hands were tied and that he had no choice but to convict Chief Awolowo and his co-leaders of the opposition to long terms of imprisonment for alleged treason. If the strong and mighty could be bruised in the internal struggles of the ruling class, then one can only imagine the fate of the powerless masses. An example is the case of Tiamiyu Banjoko, who was arrested on suspicion of breaking a windowpane. He was still awaiting trial for the seventh year when the chief judge of the former western region released him (This Week, March 28, 1988).

The courts seem to understand their role as that of maintaining order by keeping the people in check without worrying
much about the actions of the rulers and their agents. This is especially the case under military regimes when all manners of unchallengeable decrees are heaped on the people. The only serious effort to control elite crimes came with General Murtala Muhammad’s Corrupt Practices Decree of 1975, which created the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau and special tribunals to try those suspected of corrupt practices.

However, before the tribunals were established, the 1979 Constitution replaced the decree with the toothless Code of Conduct Bureau and Code of Conduct Tribunal. The same military government that was hesitant to prosecute millionaire thieves did not waste time in storming the popular musician Fela Anikulapo-Kuti’s home with soldiers, who caused the death of his mother, a foremost leader of Nigeria’s struggle for independence (Martins 1998). The same repressive measures awaited students who protested that the government of General Obasanjo was trying to commercialize education.

The second republic inherited and maintained this tradition of judicial repression. With the excuse of looking for the gunmen who had snatched some money from a multinational company in Apapa, the police gathered sixty-eight innocent poor people, detained them overnight, and then squeezed them into a security vehicle meant for a maximum of twenty-eight. They were driven to court and left in the scorching sun all day, and fifty of them suffocated to death. This was on March 3, 1980. Public outcry forced the government to bring the police officers to trial, but, as expected, none of them was convicted of any wrongdoing. Six weeks later, on April 26, more than 120 peasants were murdered in Bakolori. Their crime was that they had dared to ask for adequate compensation before multinational companies could take over their farmlands. Not even one police officer was brought to trial for this crime, even though the president of the country came from the same state as the farmers. The same police force was to stand watch while what one of the officers described as a “cooperative mob” burned Bala Mohammed, special political adviser to the governor of Kano State, to death on July 10, 1981 (Usman 1982).
These are mere snapshots from the judicial records of the second republic, a regime that was inaugurated by judicial fraud. To settle the quarrel among the leading bourgeois contenders for power, the Supreme Court “discovered” a new mathematical law claiming that two-thirds of nineteen states equal twelve. This method of winning elections became fully developed during the 1983 elections, when some petitions alleging fraud were dismissed on the technical ground that they were not properly filed, while other petitions with similar technical defects were allowed. The same internal struggle among the elites was the reason Jim Nwobodo used the colonial law of sedition—the crime of the Zikists—to jail Arthur Nwankwo, the author, who was lucky to be freed by the federal High Court on the ground that the law on sedition was contrary to the freedom of expression guaranteed in the Constitution.

Generals Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idigbon overthrew the second republic, and then got tough with millionaire thieves and innocent people alike. They launched the War against Indiscipline (WAI) on the assumption that ordinary Nigerians lacked discipline, and that they needed to be regimented and taught basic sanitary practice by force. The two dictators sacked many judges, allegedly on health grounds. Chief Justice Sowemimo confessed to This Week of March 28, 1988, that the judiciary was “sick” and that what the government was doing was “an exercise to rekindle the credibility of the judiciary.”

The regime made drug-trafficking a capital offence and immediately executed three young Nigerians as a deterrent. The militaristic tribunal that tried them did not allow any appeal. Under the two dictators a judge went to the hospital bed of Fela Kuti to beg forgiveness for sentencing him to prison on the orders of the military when there was no evidence against him. In almost all the states of the federation today there are armed patrols of soldiers and police officers authorized to shoot to kill on sight all those suspected of criminal behaviour.

Soldiers and officers still go on rampages against the civilian population, justifying this abominable behaviour with the excuse
that they were trained to be "mad dogs." Idiagbon and Buhari had jailed many second republic politicians for corrupt enrichment, until General Ibrahim Babangida overthrew them in August 1985 and gradually released all the politicians, before locking up journalists and executing those whom military tribunals found guilty of trying to overthrow his government. General Abacha drove this militarization of the judiciary to the extreme extent of using tribunals to settle old scores and eliminate rivals in his bid to succeed in office.

The Economy
The militarization of the Nigerian economy dates back to the scramble for territories by European multinational companies. The Royal Niger Company was the first colonial power that owned the country, ran its own army and police, and fought to repress resistance to the penetration of the interior by British traders at the end of the slave trade. When the British colonial administration took over the coercive role from the company to help maximize its profits and competitiveness against other European rivals, the colonial police and colonial army became the instruments for the repressive economic exploitation of Nigerians.

Evidence comes from the Women's War against Colonialism in Eastern Nigeria in 1929. The women were not simply protesting against attempts to tax them without democratic representation, but also directly attacking the properties of the multinational companies in the region, destroying local authority courts, and attacking the stooges of colonialism otherwise known as warrant chiefs. The women were massacred by the colonial police because they dared to challenge the double squeeze of Nigerians by the colonial economy, which guaranteed steady increases in the prices of manufactured goods and steady decreases for raw materials such as palm oil, from which the women earned the bulk of their incomes. A similar fate awaited the coal miners at Iva Valley in Enugu, who were mowed down for daring to demand a fair wage in support of the struggle for independence from Britain.
The Campaign for Democracy (1998) concluded its *A Special Report on Nigeria* by stating that "the state of the economy profoundly veers off the path of sanity. Like a rogue economy it is like a bandit state where consumption overlaps production, reward is to the indolent, order is macabre and reproduction is only of looting of future credit." In fairness, observers will say that this is a most unmilitary state of affairs, given that the military is usually associated with discipline, order, and efficiency. Sadly, when an economy is run like a battlefield, the result is that there will be widespread demolition of basic infrastructure, general disregard for the rules, an atmosphere conducive to looting and pillaging, and an attitude of winner takes all.

The above view was strongly demonstrated in a paper presented at the International Conference on New Directions in Federalism in Abuja, Nigeria, March 15-18, 1999, by J. Kayode Fayemi of the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD). In his paper, "Entrenched Military Interests and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria," Fayemi argued that, contrary to the received wisdom that Nigeria was democratizing irreversibly, there were indications that military officers were scrambling over booty and that the influence of militarism in Nigerian politics went beyond the handing over of power to a retired army general whose party won the presidential election of February 1999. Given the overwhelming role of the military in the transition process, Fayemi pointed out that there was a need to go beyond the simplistic debate over whether the military is the armed wing of the oligarchy or the oligarchy itself. Instead, the military "mindset" itself should be explored to see how militarism has become hegemonic in spite of the individual intentions of specific military officers. Fayemi suggested that the emergence of the "bureaucratic-economic militariat" could be traced back to the discovery of crude oil in the country, and the way in which the military tightly controlled the oil industry for the purpose of political patronage and primitive accumulation of capital, sanctioned by decrees that claimed to be making the economy more nationalistic at the same time that it was increasingly being cornered by the military top brass and their cronies.
In fairness, some will argue that senior military officers and leading politicians all over the world are always targeted for recruitment by big companies, precisely because they can use their strategic skills and government contacts to help such companies become more competitive. The difference in the case of Nigeria is that one retired army officer is able to own and control a conglomerate of thirty-five companies with interests in banking, shipping, textiles, and, of course, oil.

Further evidence of the militarization of the economy comes from the London-based newsletter *Africa Confidential* in its edition of April 2, 1999, which reported that, prior to their retirement, Nigerian army officers used their dictatorial powers to line their pockets and those of their families and friends. The report indicates that the president elect at the time, General Olusegun Obasanjo, was not happy because General Abudulsalami Abubakar awarded eleven oil exploration blocks and eight oil-lifting contracts soon after the presidential election. Out of the eleven exploration blocks only one went to an indigenous company with a track record in the industry, Amni International, whose chairman, Sanj Bello, is the father-in-law of General Abubakar's eldest daughter. Emmanuel Edozien, the economic adviser to General Obasanjo's winning party, is a director of the company.

Other companies were awarded similar licences due to their military connections, including Anchorage Petroleum (Chief of Defence Staff Air Marshal Al-Amin Daggash), Dajo Oil (Chief of Army Staff General Ishaya Bamaiyi and leading oil trader Mike Adenuga), Ozeko Energy Resources (Chief of General Staff Vice Admiral Mike Akhigbe), Totex Oil (Brigadier Anthony Ukpo and Texaco), Malabo Oil (former Minister of Oil Dan Etete, who uses his Ghanaian pseudonym, Kweku Amafegha, and senior diplomat Alhaji Aminu). Many of these companies lack expertise in oil exploration. However, according to the *Guardian* of May 11, 1999, the Nigerian military dissociated Al-Amin Daggash and Ishaya Bamaiyi from the controversial awards.
No matter how brazen the primitive accumulation of capital by military officers appears in Nigeria, we must not forget that the problem goes far beyond the military as such to include militarization of the wider civil society, even when military officers are not directly involved. There are widespread reports that the multinational oil companies have their own armed security guards, and that they import weapons for the police and the army to use in intimidating the people in their areas who are demanding compensation for the degradation of the environment. This is in addition to the lopsided spending on "security" in the national budget, as Table 4.1 shows.

Discussions with traders in Nigeria during our fieldwork revealed a militarized mindset that threatens the democratic tradition of haggling in the open market. According to the traders, police officers routinely arrest them and threaten to shoot them unless they part with their goods or money. Those who resist are intimidated by tales of people whom the police have shot and later claimed to have been armed robbers. Young traders often succumb to this intimidation and lose their money or goods. The traders themselves imbibe the ideology of force by arming their own vigilantes to keep watch over their shops at night and execute as "mice" those who trespass with the intent to steal.

On a different level, organized labour is subjected to dictatorial regulation even when it is simply challenging corruption that is killing the economy. This was the case during our fieldwork when it was reported that workers at the Enugu State-owned *Daily Star* had gone on strike to demand more financial accountability from the army-appointed director of the company. The managing director reacted by sacking the striking workers, including senior journalists on the editorial board. The workers rightly pointed out that only the board of directors had the power to hire or fire them. The managing director reported the incident to the military administrator of Enugu State, and he drove to the scene "with immediate effect." On seeing him the workers naively started cheering, thinking that he had come to support their call for accountability at the newspaper, which had been reduced to
Table 4.1: Federal Recurrent Budget in Million Naira

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total budget</strong></td>
<td>102,637.7</td>
<td>116,542.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presidency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief of general staff</td>
<td>292.9</td>
<td>337.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National security adviser</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police affairs</td>
<td>120.9</td>
<td>155.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other security</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>12,974.7</td>
<td>15,134.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police formations</td>
<td>9,744.4</td>
<td>11,734.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal affairs</td>
<td>4,316.9</td>
<td>5,281.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>27,455.0</td>
<td>32,677.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>As % of total</strong></td>
<td>26.75</td>
<td>28.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's affairs</td>
<td>136.4</td>
<td>231.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and rural development</td>
<td>350.3</td>
<td>407.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>12,632.2</td>
<td>13,926.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>4,720.4</td>
<td>4,860.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and sports</td>
<td>2,011.0</td>
<td>3,187.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>19,850.3</td>
<td>22,615.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>As % of total</strong></td>
<td>19.34</td>
<td>19.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


an occasional weekly due to financial mismanagement. To their surprise, the administrator asked the workers to step to his right if they wished to go back to work or to remain on his left if they did not wish to return to work. Of course, everyone wanted to return to work, but the military administrator was not satisfied. He asked for a list of the ringleaders of the strike and called out their names one after the other. The strike leaders were publicly
humiliated and horsewhipped before being told that they had been fired. The workers went to the state High Court, and it ruled that their sacking was null and void and of no effect. The military government refused to accept defeat and went on to appeal the ruling, until a visit by judges of the Court of Appeal to the state house managed to convince the administrator to withdraw the case and reinstate the workers with compensation.

This form of repression becomes more severe when workers become vocal about the need to democratize the whole society instead of concentrating on the usual demands for fairer wages. This was the case when the National Union of Gas and Petroleum Employees went on strike along with the National Union of Bank Workers in protest against the undemocratic annulment of the June 12th presidential election that Chief Moshood Abiola had won. The union leaders were clamped into jail without trial for more than five years, and because the Nigerian Labour Congress, the umbrella workers’ organization, supported the pro-democracy strikes the military government sacked the executive of the congress and appointed a sole administrator to run it for five years, 1994-1998. Unfortunately, as always, some trade unionists collaborated with the military by supporting decrees that disqualified experienced professional trade unionists from standing in union elections. Such anti-democratic unionists have also been reported to use intimidation and outright violence to silence their opponents in the unions, while others even try to bribe union members with food and other gifts for votes.

CONCLUSION

Follow-up of this information could be conducted in the form of further research combined with democracy literacy classes, national seminars on the democratization of everyday life, and an international conference on the relationships between militarization and civil society.

Seen as a whole, the project is a democracy audit of the country, starting with pilot fieldwork and a report highlighting
issues to be included in the curriculum for a series of democracy literacy classes in selected locations. Proceedings of the national workshop and the international conference, along with the original report of the fieldwork, will be published as a guide to groups and individuals who may wish to build on the findings by carrying out similar audits of democratic processes in an educational framework broadly defined.

We recommend that a group of three researchers/activists be set up in each of the six states visited and funded for three years to coordinate the project in their areas. They would employ two full-time research and education officers (twelve in all) from the fund. This would ensure that the paradoxical observations highlighted by the preliminary research will be investigated more closely and documented in greater detail for the purpose of developing an educational programme. The proposed programme could help to disseminate the findings of the research and thereby help to stem the spread of militaristic ideology in civil society.

As stated above, the education programme could be implemented through a series of radio programmes that addresses the public issues of democracy. This could be accomplished through the implementation of thirteen episodes of thirty minutes each on Radio Nigeria Kaduna because of its wide reach, with possible syndication by other radio stations in the country. This should be expanded at some point to include television programming to reach wider audiences. A monthly literacy journal could be created to allow all the groups to contribute articles addressing the curricula of grassroots democracy literacy classes. This would also include monthly enlightenment lectures through which face-to-face discussions could occur.

An annual democracy literacy conference should also be funded for all the groups and the foreign-based partners to review progress. The preliminary researchers should be retained to serve as consultants on the project, and to act as the foreign-based partners of local researchers and educationists.

This project and related activities will, we hope, bridge the gaps between academic and organic intellectuals in the local
communities in the way that Walter Rodney (1969) suggested, by holding "family discussions" in the universities and schools, over the radio and television, on the pages of newspapers, but also on street corners, in back alleys, in places of work, and in market squares.

NOTES

1 The critique of gender politics within the Black Panther Party by Michelle Wallace, author of *The Black Macho*, informed our decision to share this project equally, even though it was originally contracted to one of us. We thank the Centre for Democracy and Development for funding this project at short notice. Thanks also to the Criminal Justice Group in Liverpool, John Moores University, for providing one of us with replacement teaching during a sabbatical, affording ample time not only to finish editorial work on a book on migration patterns but also to travel to gather material for this chapter. We also thank colleagues, family members, and friends whose generous support and assistance supplemented our limited resources during the field trip.

2 The fact that Ayu later went on to serve a military regime as the education minister who challenged the University Staff Union was not lost on us.

3 *Act Cap 10 Laws of the Federation 1990.*

REFERENCES


