

next attempt at democracy. Because of the way in which we take democratic government seriously here, the military will not be allowed to rest until they make sure that the process of restoration of democracy is in the offing. This conference is a major step.

The problem is the false propaganda. These "democracy groups"—what is the criteria by which the western governments give them money? Many are operating out of their own living rooms. They go out and hire thugs and hooligans in the streets; they are connected to drugs. Is this democracy? Democracy is not going to be obtained through arm-twisting, fascistic methods. Democracy can only be obtained through the promotion of dialogue between various contending interests and forces.

EIR: The fact is that your government has backed away from market reforms and the International Monetary Fund [IMF] dictatorship is connected to what is going on right now.

Ofonagoro: I'm speaking for myself now, not for the government, but as an individual, a thinking individual. Do you know any country in the world where a free-for-all economic policy is allowed; a country where you can bring in anything you like and take out anything you like without controls, where their currency can be hawked in the streets like toilet paper?

When I left New York to come back to Nigeria, \$1 was exchanging for 50 Nigerian cents. Then it was half a dollar; now it is 70 naira. There have to be controls of some sort. The idea of free-market society doesn't exist anywhere. I know what you are saying: The reversal of the SAP [structural adjustment program] of the Babangida regime by the Abacha regime could be responsible for the kind of pressure we are now getting from the so-called pro-democracy forces. I agree with you. In fact I said it in July of last year, when this operation began in the streets of Lagos. I said that judging by their methods, it sounds like CIA-orchestrated disinformation. I then found out that in fact, these groups are being funded by funds provided for democratization by the State Department and various parts of the U.S. government. I think they should be much more concerned with our well-being; we are not communists. We have a population of 100 million people.

Keep in mind there has been no military government without the injection of a lot of civilians who make it possible for them to rule. Otherwise it is not possible. The ratio of soldiers to civilian population is such that you could not impose a military regime in this country. We've never had one before. We had to make certain adjustments to the policy of hook, line, and sinker acceptance of IMF prescriptions, because no Third World country has survived their prescriptions to date. Do you know any Third World country that accepted those prescriptions and survived? We don't want to die!

Interview: Gov. D.M. Komo

The Ogani ethnic 'cause' is a sham

D.M. Komo, administrator/governor of Nigeria's eastern state of Rivers, was interviewed by telephone on May 31 by Lydia Cherry.

In early February, Ken Saro-Wiwa, a representative of the small Nigerian Ogani ethnic group, was afforded a heavy interview schedule by U.S. media to protest "human rights abuses" by the Nigerian government. The sponsor of the trip was the U.S.-based Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. According to Harry Lewis, a spokesman for UNPO, his organization is currently acting as a liaison between the Ogani people and the Nigerian government; the Ogani people and Shell International; and the Ogani people and Shell Nigeria. Governor Komo makes clear that the fight for the Ogani "cause" is not what is being packaged in the West.

EIR: Can you explain what is happening with respect to the news reports that the Ogani people who live in your state are having their rights violated?

Komo: After the first attack by the Oganis on Shell Oil, Shell has now stopped operations into Ogani land. Their installations are still there, but they are no longer operating in Ogani land. However, on the 21st of this month, the youth wing of Movement for the Survival of the Ogani People, led by Ken Saro-Wiwa, attacked some prominent Ogani leaders who were holding a meeting to decide on how to organize a reception for two of their distinguished sons, one who had just been made a commissioner in the state, and the second who was appointed chairman of a local government in Ogani land. The youths killed four of the leaders. Right now, security agents are making arrests of the youth that carried out that attack, and investigation by police is continuing.

EIR: Is this youth wing connected with other international non-governmental organizations?

Komo: The Movement for the Survival of Ogani (MFSO) has been dealing with the United Nations. Nicop is the youth wing—a sub-organization under MFSO; MFSO itself is connected to the Endangered Peoples Movement.

Some of the leaders killed, were not only prominent citizens of the state, but were those who founded MFSO, to advance and fight for the rights of Ogani people. It was only later that the militant wing, the Nicop sub-group I mentioned, was introduced by Ken Saro-Wiwa, and the difference of opinion developed between those who wanted a non-violent

approach and those who wanted to use militant methods. Those who did not want this violent method have dissociated themselves from the present MFSO as constituted and led by Ken Saro-Wiwa. So it was these people who had dissociated themselves who were targeted and killed.

EIR: When the Ogoni situation is brought up in western news reports, it has the flavor of the Nigerian government violating the rights of the Ogoni.

Komo: It is a propaganda campaign that Saro-Wiwa has been using for quite some time. Let me give one example. They make so much about the petroleum produced there, and claim the federal government is in collusion with Shell, persecuting the Ogonis. But even in River State, the Ogoni total output is at maximum only 4%, compared to what River State produces. Since last year, not a single barrel—I repeat, not a single barrel of oil—has been lifted from Ogoni land. The whole issue is so overblown, as if the Ogoni area were the only part of this country that has petroleum. You remember that the Ogonis attacked Shell installations operating in Ogoni land.

EIR: The whole United Nations apparatus is causing great grief in country after country.

Komo: Precisely. In the case of the Andoni-Ogoni conflicts which took place last year, it was the Ogonis that attacked the Andoni people and destroyed their houses, killed many of them, and then the Andonis retaliated. At that point, the Ogonis themselves asked the federal government to send troops in to save their people. But then what did we see? Later the same Ken Saro-Wiwa's MFSO turned around to claim that the federal government was carrying out genocide against their people, when troops had been sent in to protect them.

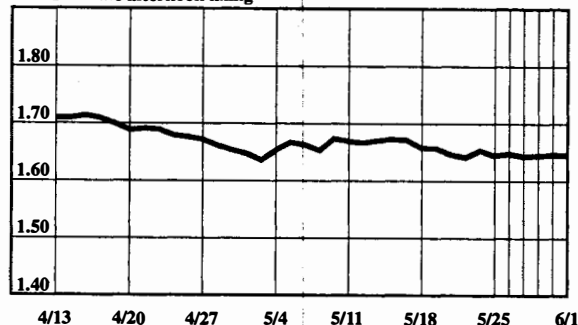
This year on Easter Sunday, while Christians were in church worshipping, the Ogoni people, led by Ken Saro-Wiwa's MFSO, attacked Andoki village, which is a largely Ibo-speaking community, and destroyed their houses there. Troops were sent in to protect and restore order. But then what do we see in the international scene? Ken Saro-Wiwa's MFSO turned that around to say that the federal troops had gone in and burned Ogoni houses, and that this represented the war of genocide against the Ogonis.

What is needed are some neutral media coming over here to go and visit the locations, to interview the people directly—both the Ogonis and the other side. Then the picture can be cleared up. I think it is a big joke to see Ken Saro-Wiwa as a human rights campaigner, when under his leadership, they have caused so much havoc and so much pain. It should be noted that Ken Saro-Wiwa has no family on Ogoni land itself. His children and his wife are all in London. He has two houses in London. He doesn't share in the grief of the Ogoni people at all. And yet it is he who makes all the noise, who gets the aid from the foundations; and who knows if any of this ever gets to the Ogoni people or not?

Current Rates

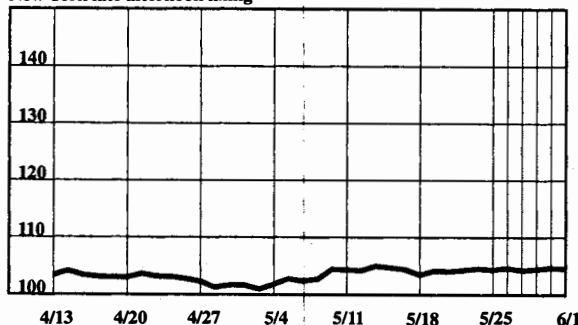
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



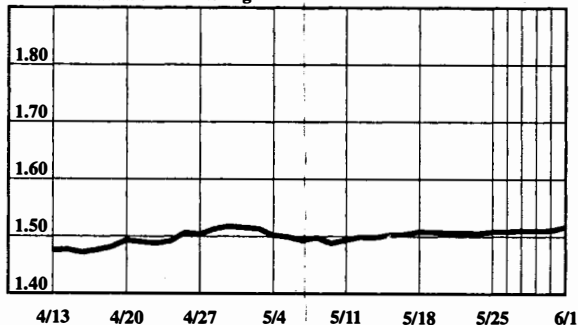
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing

