

**"MILES APART BUT WALKING THE SAME PATH:
CONTROL OF WEALTH AND NATURAL
RESOURCES-LESSONS FROM NIGERIA AND TANZANIA"**

Chris Maina Peter



NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES

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FOREWORD

The Institute's Founders' day lecture was instituted to provide a platform on which incisive examination of current legal issues of national and international concern would be made. The topic of this year's lecture effectively captures this objective and goes further to provide both a historical and comparative study of the approach of two African countries (Nigeria and Tanzania) to the control and exploitation of their natural wealth and resources.

The distinguished guest lecturer, Professor Chris Maina Peter of the Law Faculty of the University of Dar es Salaam takes a critical look at the activities of multinational corporations in relation to the key natural resources of the two African countries and the role played by State officials in that regard. Using appropriate statistics, records, references and other information, he presents a serious critique of the approach often adopted in relation to the terms and scope allowed multinationals in their exploitation of these resources.

His discussion on the consequences of these activities on the economy and psyche of the citizens of the host States sounds a very clear warning to all. From his analysis, one can locate the root causes of the agitations of the people of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the violence that has continued to erupt there.

He situates the quest for a different approach, indeed for the peoples' right to control their natural wealth and resources in the global struggle by the developing countries. This struggle resulted in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (December 1974) and developments following. The lecturer laments the fact that little or no progress has been made since then. Several decades after this struggle for control of resources got to its peak, Africa is back where it was.

Professor Peter's presentation is informative and well thought out. It challenges African states to promote their best interests by their economic policies. In many respects, the lecture points out the shared and common problems of African States – their evolution, their colonial heritage and what in the lecturer's socialist orientation is often dubbed a new round of colonialism.

Professor D. A. Guobadia

Director General

October 2007

Miles Apart but Walking the Same Path: The Right of the People to Control their Natural Wealth and Resources in Nigeria and Tanzania*

Most people have vague notions about the oil industry and the conditions of work. More annoying is the total ignorance about the attitude of the companies to labour. The companies do not and have never liked unions; particularly the big ones and the service companies. They use threats, blackmail, bribery, infiltration of unions, the police, victimisation, manipulation, lies, in fact, any trick under the sun to divide and destroy trade unions.

An Oil Worker¹

It is well known that our oil wealth has become a nightmare for the people of the oil producing areas. Demands for their fair treatment and environment protection have always elicited firm refusal, more repression and State violence. What is not well known is how much worse the nightmare has become recently.

Claude Ake²

Incidentally, we are told that Tanzania was paid a paltry US \$ 78 million as royalty and peripheral taxes in the last ten years by the six major gold mining companies in Tanzania!

Karl Lyimo³

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1. Quoted in IHONVBERE, Julius O., "Class Struggles in the Oil Industry, the 'rentier' State and Labour Control in Nigeria," in ONYIGE, P.U. (ed.), *Energy and Social Development in Nigeria*, Ikeja, Lagos: Longman Nigeria, 1996, at p. 74.
2. See AKE, Claude, "A People Endangered by Oil," *The Guardian* (Nigeria), 18th August, 1994. Quoted by AKINWUMI, Olayemi, *Crisis and Conflicts in Nigeria: A Political History Since 1960*, Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 2004, p. 116.